

1. **Name:** Mark Price
2. **Current Position:** Lead Pastor, Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, California
3. **Congregational Membership:** Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, California
4. **Date of Birth:** May 5, 1963
5. **Date and year of Ordination:** April 7, 1990
6. **Previous Positions:**
  - 2002-2005 Lead Pastor, First Lutheran Church, Kearney, Nebraska
  
  - 1996-2002 Lead Pastor, Saint Timothy Lutheran Church and School, Lakewood, California
  
  - 1990 – 1996 Solo Pastor, Saint Mark Lutheran Church, Columbus, Ohio
  
  - 1988-1989 Vicar, Grace Lutheran Church, Upland, California
  
  - 1983-1986 Youth Director, Lutheran Church in the Foothills, La Canada, California

**7. Education and Earned Degrees**

- 1990 Master of Divinity, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio
- 1986 Bachelor of Arts, History, California Lutheran University

**8. List up to three current or past synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.**

***Consultant to pastors and congregations in transition:*** Facilitating discussions with over 20 congregations/congregational councils in the Sierra Pacific Synod gives great insight into the depth and variety of ministry joys and challenges and contexts in which our ministry occurs.

***Mission Development:*** Serving as a mission re/developer some of which was funded by the churchwide expression of the ELCA has given me real world experience serving congregations in the midst of changing demographics, societal shifts and conflicts and the challenges related to renewing and revitalizing ministry.

***Infrastructure:*** My service as Synod Treasurer made me very familiar with the possibilities and challenges presented by the synodical infrastructure, and its vital relationship to the mission and ministry of the synod.

**9. List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.**

***Inclusion:*** Establishing a Spanish language bilingual-bicultural ministry is a significant challenge in the Central Valley and it is an act of inclusion, a protest to racism and an advocacy for the humane treatment of all people regardless of documentation. This is just one example of how my service as bishop would be informed.

***Advocacy:*** In Lodi there are significant race and class issues with school transportation and its lack of availability to the poorest neighborhoods in our local school district. I successfully led the

advocacy challenging the political leaders to enact change. The church must use the power of the gospel to be prophetic and enact change on the public square.

**Peace:** The work of peace must be done on the local level if there is any hope for peace on a regional or global level. I have been the prime mover in establishing interfaith and interreligious relationships in our community, including the creation of an annual Peace Walk that advocates for peace and the eradication of racism

**10. What gifts would you bring to the synod office.**

Christ has gifted each of us. We are **baptized children of God**, gifted to love and serve all people and work for peace and justice throughout the world. With Christ we offer the gift of **determined advocacy and dedicated experience** leading communities in developing ministries that are reflective of their neighborhoods, inclusive of all people, and which seek to value all people without exception. I bring **established experience in organizing a community in the development of a vision** and then leading it in the pursuit of that vision. **Christ offers understanding, love and care for our rostered and lay leaders.** We must be encouraged by this love as we serve congregations challenged by numbers, demographic shifts and hatred for that which God has declared good. I believe that if we can commit to **“Connecting with God, each other and the world”** we will experience a cultural shift and an abundance of gifts for ministry.

**11. Describe your leadership style.**

I am often described as an enthusiastic infectious leader. I am able to visualize adaptive change needed by our church community, collaborate with others regarding this vision, and help implement changes needed for the future of the church. [For example, Spanish language ministry.] While I do not enjoy conflict, I do not shy away from facilitating conflict resolution and healthy boundary setting from our hurting constituents. For example, I have worked with congregations that have experienced recent traumas such as embezzlement, child molestation, and other challenges to forge a path of healing and renewal. I also enjoy challenging and inspiring members of my parish and the larger community to utilize their own time, talents and resources to care for each other and provide access to power to those that have none.

**12. Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as bishop of this synod**

For two months I have prayed, wondered and doubted if I should make myself available. When I read the profile I realized I might be the right fit. I have **experiential familiarity** with the needs of small congregations, large staffs, hurting pastors who consult with me, successful public advocacy, ethnic and language specific ministries, redeveloping and renewing ministries, synodical infrastructures, and ecumenical affairs on the local, national and global levels. I am regularly called upon as a visionary leader to help other communities discern their vision for ministry. I love our synod and I love the congregations of our synod. We are fiercely determined to share God’s love no matter the challenge. I consider my greatest privilege to serve this Church in whatever capacities it needs. Our understanding of the teachings of Jesus, and because we are a Church that is defined by who we include not who we exclude. I am pushing send and letting the Holy Spirit take care of it.

**13. What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six years and how would you address it?**

We need a fundamental cultural shift in our understanding of what it means to be synod and how we are going to “walk together” and do the ministry to which Christ is calling us. Institutional shifts can happen somewhat quickly – one only has to look at the leadership of Pope Francis and its effect on the Roman Catholic Church to see this. I would begin to address this by developing systems in which trusting relationships can be built between and among rostered leaders, lay leaders, congregations and synod staff. Our ministry can not be one in which the prime motivation is to attract 5,000 more members so we can pay our bills. Nor can we be motivated to fill volunteer positions in an outmoded synodical structure. I believe that the solutions to all of the challenges that we face as a synod are present in the current members of the synod. Once we strengthen these relationships we then can develop our roles and renew our sense of vocation and definition of our ministries and mine the immense talent and commitment that is currently present.

**14. What are your top three priorities for this synod?**

Connecting with God, Connecting with each other, Connecting with the world. That’s it. Anything else would just be creative writing on my part. I am serious. Everything that the synod does would be evaluated on the basis of these three priorities.

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