

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM

Pastor identified as possessing the gifts for the office of

BISHOP OF THE SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD

1. Name:
2. Current Position:
3. Congregational Membership:
4. Date of Birth:
5. Date and Year of Ordination:
6. Previous Positions:
(please do not exceed this space)
- Spiritual Care Team, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, (2013 onward); Pastor, First United Lutheran, SF (1990 - 1999)
Mission Developer, Lutheran Lesbian and Gay Ministries, SF (1990 - 1995); HIV Education Director, Lutheran Social Services of No. California, SF (1988-1989); Assistant Night Minister, San Francisco Night Ministry (1987 - 1988); Intern, Lutheran Office of Public Policy & First English Lutheran, Sacramento
7. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):
(please do not exceed this space)
- 1988 - Master of Divinity: Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA

1984 - Bachelor of Arts, German; 1984 - Bachelor of Arts, History
California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, CA
Honors: Summa cum laude, 1984 Honors Colloquium of Scholars Speaker,
Departmental Assistant - History, President's Scholarship, Dean's Honor List
8. List up to three (3) current or past synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as bishop of this Synod. (please do not exceed this space)
- 1) My service on ELCA Churchwide Boards (e.g. LuMin National Board for Campus Ministry), two terms on Synod Council, and two terms as Conference Dean in San Francisco, informs my commitment to create structures, systems, and policies that are respectful, nimble, and responsive. 2) Being a leader in the movement for the full participation of lgbtqia+ people within the ELCA (as a founder of Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries and the Extraordinary Candidacy Project), informs my resolve to be accountable to those most affected by policies, directions, and decisions. 3) My leadership in creating and supporting an East Bay network of volunteer houses with the Lutheran Volunteer Corps highlights my devotion to collaborative, regional ministry.

9. List up to three (3) current or past community activities that would inform your service as bishop of this Synod. (please do not exceed this space)

1) My leadership with Religious Witness with Homeless People (San Francisco, 1990s), Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy (Oakland, 2005-2015), and the East Bay Interfaith Immigration Coalition (Berkeley, 2008-present), underscores my deep commitment to interfaith cooperation in the work of justice and advocacy. 2) My service on the Mayor's Sanctuary Task Force (Berkeley, 2018-present) and the Telegraph Area Association's Recovery Task Force (2005) emphasizes the important role faith leaders play in civic life. 3) My role on the Board of Directors of SHARE El Salvador (2010 to present) and my participation on delegations like the one to Occupied Palestine (2012, Bright Stars of Bethlehem) spotlights the prominence I give to work of international solidarity.

10. What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this Synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

Thirty years ago, I was ordained at a time when the policies of the ELCA were not yet ready to affirm the contributions of openly lgbtqia+ clergy. I know a great deal about the power that synodical leaders hold over the lives of professional clergy and over the ministry of congregations. I know as well something about the against-all-odds courage, bravery, innovation, and fidelity of so many faithful members of our church. You inspire me to deepen my commitment to this work. Throughout my years of ministry, I have baptized, confirmed, and married. I made liturgy, preached, and organized in community; balanced budgets and created endowments; served on councils, boards, and committees; cultivated vocations, nurtured service, and forged solidarity with others seeking justice. I organized protests, invoked sanctuary for undocumented people, picketed alongside day laborers, and marched to dismantle white supremacy. And through it all, I've held onto joy, energy, and enthusiasm because of the freedom we share in Christ, who shows us the way to love God and our neighbor, especially when the way of loving is difficult or heartbreaking. "For freedom Christ has set us free." (Gal 1:1)

11. Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum)

Resilience, honesty, and boldness are some of the words colleagues have used in describing my leadership style. "Resilience," because it's not always going to go the planned way -- flexibility, energy, and creativity are needed to adapt and reorient. "Honesty," because I work best in environments where leaders are direct with one another and where people are encouraged to say hard and difficult things to one another for the sake of our common mission. "Boldness," because this is not the time for small tweaks to our models for ministry but for bold experiments in our neighborhoods as we connect with our neighbors, invest in their lives, and make a justice difference for those most in need.

I have always worked diligently to build strong leadership teams where new ideas can be cultivated, robust and difficult conversations are cherished, and relationships are respected. I believe in delegating power and in building a synodical structure that shares responsibilities and financial resources with deans and regional ministry leaders.

12. Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as bishop of this Synod.
(1,000 characters maximum)

For some time, we have been in discernment about our next bishop. I am grateful for your prayers and sustained deliberation, and for the care you have shown each of us being considered. It is a pivotal moment for our synod. I have approached your inquiries about the possibility of my serving as your bishop with openness and curiosity. Thank you to each of you who have spoken and prayed with me. I have heard you confess frustration, fear, and anxiety at the enormity of the challenge facing us. I have heard you identify changes you want. And I heard your expressions of hope and your dreams for our collective work together in the world. Your courage inspires me. Your willingness to embrace difficulties sustains me. Your readiness to entertain hard decisions encourages me.

In the familiar words of a prayer used at Holden Village, I would be honored to walk with you in this synod as your bishop, "to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown, giving faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that God's hand is leading us and God's love supporting us; through Christ."

13. What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum)

It is a grave error to "chase after growth." It can feel warmly nostalgic. There's no shortage of growth consultants you can pay to help you do this. Tempting as it sounds, it is a diversion. It diverts our attention from the more important work of sharing mission, resources, and power among Lutherans in the same community. It keeps us from connecting liturgy to our work of justice and mercy, and from building strategic collaborations with civic, ecumenical, and interfaith partners. It sidelines our work of engaging the power of whiteness within our church and dismantling the structures, policies, and systems that privilege white over BIPOC in our congregations, seminary, and synod.

"Chasing after growth" is a way to steal our attention from more urgent work ahead of us and we don't need it. With greater regional cooperation, priorities for our work together, alignments to our structure, and a bit of flexibility, creativity, and courage, we will be able to more boldly and effectively bear witness as Lutherans who believe that loving God means loving our neighbors, especially those most in need.

14. What are your top 3 priorities for this Synod? (1,000 characters maximum)

Loving God, loving one another, and loving our neighbors, in ways that resonate more boldly with those we serve, we should: 1) Go deeper into the work of exposing white supremacy and dismantling racism at all levels of our church (e.g. using the recommendations of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly's "How Strategic and Authentic is our Diversity" as a map with specific attention to structures, policies, and procedures for mobility, interim ministry, and candidacy); 2) Create incentives for congregations to build more interdependent relationships with other Lutherans in the same area (e.g. sharing joint facilities, creating area pastoral teams, jointly facilitating call processes, and establishing financial methods that channel legacy gifts to support ministry now and into the future); and 3) Stimulate deeper engagement with neighborhood partners (e.g. training in faith-based community organizing; offering transformation grants around strategic issues — i.e. sanctuary and asylum, housing insecurity, and climate justice). These priorities would require new staffing patterns, a renewed operations plan, and a budget that is sustainable and renewable.

Please submit this completed Biographical Information Form along with a digital photo by emailing the Sierra Pacific Synod Nominating Committee at nominations@spselca.org no later than March 15, 2021. Information will be posted publicly on the Sierra Pacific Synod website (www.spselca.org) approximately six weeks prior to the Synod Assembly.

