

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)
- Assistant to the Bishop, Sierra Pacific Synod, ELCA 2011-2020

Associate Pastor, Advent Lutheran Church, Citrus Heights, CA
2008-2011

Assistant Athletic Trainer / Instructor, University of Kansas,
Lawrence, KS 1993-2002
7. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):
(please do not exceed this space)
- MA, Liturgical Studies; Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA 2009

MDiv; Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA, 2006

MSe, Kinesiology/Exercise Physiology; University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 2001

BS, Athletic Training; University of North Dakota, 1991
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)

Above all, my almost 9 years of experience as an Assistant to the Bishop will inform my work. The knowledge, relationships, and experience I have would be a benefit. Second, my current work as a member of a seminary faculty - and specifically my work in contextual education. The conversations and work that PLTS is doing around the future of the church and how to train leaders for that church we do not yet know, has been challenging, fruitful, and exciting. Third, a recent continuing education experience - an ELCA Hispanic Ministry Immersion in Austin, TX. In that class I learned with seminary students, lay people, pastors, professors and dance teachers. We dug into language, spirituality, culture, music and dance. That time renewed my spirit and my appreciation for how relationships with others broadens my own understanding of, and experience with, God.

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)

My recent community involvement has mostly been with St. Mark's Lutheran, San Francisco and St. John's Lutheran, Sacramento. I have been blessed to be a member of both, and I have been involved to my capacity - in worship leadership, youth and children's ministry, book club, and short-term committees. The experience of being a 'regular' church member again has broadened my view and increased my perspective on congregational life. Pre-pandemic I trained to help with Asylum Workshops in Sacramento where asylum seekers can come to get help with paperwork and process ahead of their court dates. The pandemic has radically changed how the work is done, so I have yet to participate; but the training where 60+ people attended to lend their time and gifts to help others was enlightening and encouraging.

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

First and foremost I love Jesus, and I am secure in the knowledge and experience of God's love for me - that love then enables me to better love the people and the world that God loves.

I have a healthy sense of self, and the ability to laugh at myself and with others. I seek to find joy in the world, in my relationships and interactions, and in my work. I am graced with a brain that retains details and I can keep multiple balls in the air. I speak honestly - I believe that being clear with information and boundaries is kind, loving, and essential. I am excited for the opportunity to develop new, and deepen already standing, relationships: in the ELCA and the conference of bishops; with ecumenical and interfaith partners; and with siblings in Christ around the world. I have a wide and deep web of friends and family that support me, bolster me, and love me. I am intentional about spending time with them and tending those relationships, as well as time with God and with myself. I am honest, authentic, and able to be appropriately vulnerable.

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

I am collaborative, consistent, joyful, and available. In staff supervision, I trust others to do their work, and am intentionally available for questions and guidance. On a 'larger field' I generally have a vision of the experience I would like people to have, and then work with a team to expand and morph that vision, and then make it a reality. I can function as a vision-holder, big picture person, as well as one of the people in the gritty details of the work. Through observation and careful listening I help people identify their gifts, and help to plug them into roles and ministries where hopefully they will thrive - and I know the importance of training and support for growth and success.

I am honest, warm, and genuine in my approach with others. I am willing and able to speak the 'hard truths' in the room - with the intention to build up the community and further the work of the Reign of God, and not out of an intention to shame or belittle others.

In the church we have the gift of knowing God's love for us - and through our work we get to share that love with others - this is the greatest source of joy!

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

My discernment has taken place over a number of years. Colleagues, friends, and mentors have encouraged me to imagine myself in the role of bishop and affirmed my gifts.

Through prayer, conversation, spiritual direction, learning, and experiences, I have grown to see in myself the gifts that others have named, be clear in the gifts I identify in myself, and in both cases see how those gifts and skills intersect with the work of a synodical bishop. In the past year, after the 2020 Synod Assembly was postponed, I spent even more time in reflection, conversation, and prayer. I have experienced both internal and external affirmations to continue make myself available to this process.

With a healthy sense of fear and trepidation, excitement about what might be, and the support and encouragement of a variety of people in my life, I have decided to remain open to the possibility of this call, and to move forward into this process - trusting in the work of the Spirit and the discernment of the Assembly.

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)

One of the biggest challenges I see that this synod faces is also a great opportunity. Congregations and leaders - (lay and rostered) feel isolated - and it's only been exacerbated in this time of physical separation. I have seen this expressed in "going it alone", and sometimes it manifests in a competitive spirit between people, ministries or regions of the synod. I believe the opportunity is to commit to being together in this work of Christian discipleship. I would love to see the ministries and people in our synod share, create, and build on pandemic-created, opportunities to deepen their spiritual lives, work for justice, find support and inspiration, share joys and sorrows, and experience community in new and varied ways.

The Office of the Bishop could lead the way in gathering diverse planning and leadership teams that include synod council, deans, discipling teams and many others that dream, plan and execute opportunities for these connections to happen. And the Office of the Bishop could follow the lead of those already deep in this work, amplify their voices, and help foster connections.

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

My top three priorities are: 1) Helping ministries and their leaders and people grow in their understanding of and work on dismantling white privilege; improving cultural competency; increasing competency in work to be more anti-racist, and work against homo/transphobia, ableism, sexism, and all of the ways we humans find to “other” our neighbors, near and far. 2) Fostering a culture of inter-relatedness. As the Body of Christ in Northern CA/Northern NV, we can grow in our connected to God through Jesus Christ, our collaboration with each other and within our communities, and build relationships with our neighbors and community partners. 3) Working with the synod council and others to assess and grow the resources of the synod – financial, human, and other – in order to accomplish these goals and the other goals and work of the Office of the Bishop and the synod at large. In times of scarcity thinking and diminishing resources for congregations, ministries, and synods, creative thinking, imagination, and experimentation will be needed moving forward. I don’t have the magic sauce to fix it, but I do have a commitment to be in the conversation and work together.

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.

