

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)

7. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):
(please do not exceed this space)

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)

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)

Founding Member, Foothill Interfaith Collaboration, El Dorado County, 2019-present
Community Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist, 2018-present
Board Member, Lutheran Development Society of Sacramento, 2010-2018
Advocate, Homelessness, El Dorado County, CA 2012-present
Community Mosaic Art Teacher, Sacramento and El Dorado Hills, CA 2009-present
Development Team, Faith Based Nomadic Shelter, Sacramento, CA 2009-2011
Development Team, LEVN (Lutheran Episcopal Volunteer Network) The Belfry 2008-2009

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

I am a deep listener who strives to understand the full human experience. I have always valued multicultural work. I gather information from a variety of sources and synthesize workable plans. I am drawn to the marginalized and tend to find myself at the edges of groups. I strive to include all people. I am creative, innovative, and tolerate change well. I am a flexible person who works hard to have compassion and patience. I am a good teacher and am an organized person who uses calendars and deadlines. I am trained in Appreciative Inquiry and Dynamic Dialog, both Asset-Based modalities for listening deeply and discerning direction with others. I find that when I listen well, advocate for change, but not demand specific outcomes, I am successful. I am a prayerful person. In the time that I have been at St. Stephen's in El Dorado Hills, we became a Reconciling-in-Christ Congregation, piloted an alternative staffing plan with a Presbyterian Minister, begun Racial Healing Circles, and hosted four seminarians. Spiritual discernment is a passion, and Christian vocation a topic that graces my sermons often.

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

Lao Tzu wrote, "Go to the People; Live among them; Love them; Learn from them; Start from where they are; Work with them; Build on what they have.
But of the best leaders, When the task is accomplished, The work completed,
The people all remark: 'We have done it ourselves!'"
This poem exemplifies my work. As a teacher, nothing fulfills me more than to see my students excel and outgrow me. I love to listen to the ideas, dreams, and visions of others and ask questions that help them discover the gifts that reside within them that will help new things come to be. In many ways, people often need permission to think new thoughts and implement new ideas. Every supposed "failure" is simply another lesson learned. An educator with whom I worked used to say, "Fail forward." That is to say, when you fail, get the most out of it that you can and move forward with what you have learned.
I have learned that it is much better to come into a situation listening for all that is beneath it before making any sweeping statements or generalizations about "this is how it shall be." That is rarely successful.

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

I have been thinking about this nudge from God for about three years. Periodically, different people from different places in the church would suggest it to me. Up until January 6, 2021, my answer to God was usually, "Yes, but please pick someone else." Or "Yes, but I do not want to." Or, "Yes, but XX would be so much better than I." When I witnessed the insurgency at the Capitol on the day of Epiphany, something "clicked" in my head and heart and I said, "Yes, let it be as you will." It is evident that we are surrounded with very talented and skilled pastors who would do a fine job leading us as our Bishop. I do not see myself as better in any way, just different. I have every belief and trust that God will lead us to a good place and will empower the people for a new challenge. The question should not be "Who shall be our leader?" or "Who will do this work for us?" but rather, "How shall we be going forward together, fully listening for God?" The word "Synod" does mean "walk together." In what ways have we been yearning to walk together?

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)

Like most other leaders in our Synod, I agree that we need to spend serious time and effort in building relationships. One of the reasons why we felt we had to do a "pre-nominee" process may be because so few of us really know each other. We elect folks to positions to Synod Council and other ministries based on outward appearance and the articulation of concise soundbites. Many are content to gather once or twice a year with colleagues and otherwise stay to ourselves. It is hard to trust someone one does not even know. For many years I have yearned for meaningful collaboration and have had to content myself with Ecumenical and Interfaith groups instead of Lutheran ones. Part of this is geography, as my congregation is a 20 minute drive to the next ELCA congregation. Part of it is a lack of willingness to collaborate and and share resources. We will share when we are forced to share and cannot find any other way. We are a fractured group, but we are not shattered. The way together is to recommit to a shared mission that is not yet perfectly revealed. Time will tell if we are willing to lay down our personal desires and perceived advantages for the good of the whole.

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

The Synod will need an extended time of listening. The work has begun with LEAD/CORE and will hopefully continue for at least a year or two after the election. My personal sensibility is to be a "pastor to rostered and lay leaders" in the Synod. I would seek to empower, inspire, encourage, and build as Lao Tzu's poem suggests. One of my personal cardinal rules is, "If there is anyone in this room that can speak to this issue better than I, I hand over the microphone." My first task would be to build diverse and healthy relationships. When we work with those we truly love and trust, even the hardest situations can be fulfilling.

Secondly, I would build trust, transparency and communication. In the world, it is common practice to view information as a commodity that should be held by few. Decisions are made by a few and then the public is informed. If a Synod is to be engaged in building relationships and ministries together, this is not an effective method.

My third priority is to thoroughly discern changes to the Call Process and Candidacy. We have a very comprehensive process in the ELCA for both call and candidacy, yet no Synod does it exactly as another.

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.

