

The following individuals have agreed to be identified as pre-identified possible nominees for the position of Bishop of the Southwest California Synod of the ELCA.

The Rev. Pamela Joan-Swarts Challis
Lead Pastor – Christ, Long Beach
Ordained November 19, 1995



Previous Positions

- Pastor/Developer at Living Faith Lutheran, Santa Clarita, CA
- Interim Pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Granada Hills, CA
- Senior Pastor at Esperanza Lutheran Church, Ahwatukee (Phoenix), AZ
- Co-Pastor (then Solo Pastor) at Ashburn Lutheran Church, Chicago, IL
- Associate Pastor at Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Barrington, IL

Education

- Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) in Preaching, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC), 2003
- Master of Divinity (M.Div), Trinity Lutheran Seminary, 1995
- Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education, Olivet Nazarene University, 1980
- Stephen Ministry Leader Training Certificate, St. Louis, 2016
- Certificate in Congregation Systems & Family Process, 1999

Current or past synodical or churchwide activities and/or positions

- Synod Executive Committee
- Synod Council
- Chair of the Southwest California Candidacy Committee
- TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) mentor
- ELCA Behavioral Interviewer for candidates wishing to become Mission Developers and/or Redevelopers

Current or past community-related activities

- Participant in Long Beach and Los Angeles Pride Festivals
- Monthly prayer service for Peace in the Middle East participant
- Participant in Long Beach homeless summit, 2018
- Pastor to LSS Staff in Long Beach on numerous occasions
- Public Distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday in both Santa Clarita and Long Beach

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

While I understand that the office of the bishop has many parts to it, I believe the primary job of the bishop is to be pastor to the rostered ministers of the synod. I have been every type of pastor there is in our church, so I understand the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament from its many angles. I have a deep passion for the ELCA in all of its expressions and I believe that we are in a time of great transition. I would like to help in whatever way I can to make that transition as smooth as I can. I bring the internal gifts of compassion, intelligence, humor, kindness, love of God, and ALL human beings, a Pastor's heart and a vision for the future of this amazing synod. I have lived in six synods in our denomination and served in three as pastor which means that I bring some other ways of doing things than what has been in this synod.

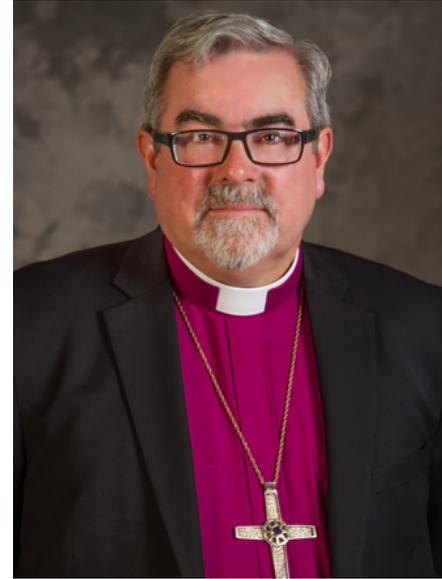
What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address that challenge?

Our denomination, thereby our synod, is in a time of change and transition. It can be frightening to be in a state of flux when change comes in so many directions. The Bishop must bring a calming presence and a clear vision for people to grasp when times are frightening. I know (deeply believe) that God knows what the future holds! We need to find ways to be open to the Holy Spirit's leading while being creative in the use of our many and varied gifts in this time of so much transition and change. Bringing the best of the synod's gifts and talents to the congregational expression is a primary challenge and opportunity. That said, our synod must be excellent stewards of the gifts we have in our assets of: congregations, Rostered Ministers, lay leaders, finances, and public ministries. The synod must be excellent and trustworthy partners in every phase of a congregation's life.

Describe your leadership style.

I am a collaborative leader, meaning that when people work together, the decisions are better. As bishop, I believe that finding the very best people for the jobs at hand is essential for the synod to be at its best. I am not a micromanager - empowering the staff to do the job, make necessary decisions, and move forward with my complete support is crucial for a well-run, empowered office. We elect women, youth and men to serve on Synod Council and working with these elected leaders, as well as with the Deans of each conference, we can do great work – each playing their part! Communication is essential, so I strive for honesty and clarity, compassion and humor in my own communication, and pray that this clarity of communication is translated to all who serve with me, as well as in the deployed leaders, so that decisions, vision, and mission are clearly understood. Joy is my foundational principle – *the joy of the Lord is my strength* – and I strive to lead with, and in, joy.

The Rev. R. Guy Erwin
Bishop – Southwest California Synod, ELCA
Congregation Membership: St. Luke Lutheran Church,
Woodland Hills, CA
Ordained May 11, 2011



Previous Positions

- Gerhard & Olga Belgum Professor of Lutheran Confessional Theology, California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, CA (2000-2013)
- Interim Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Canoga Park, CA (2012-2013)
- Interim Pastor, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA (2011-2012)
- Interim Pastor, Living Faith Lutheran Church, Santa Clarita, CA (2010)
- Minister for Worship and Education, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, North Hollywood, CA (2004-2006; 2007-2009)
- Principal Instructor, Lutheran Studies Program, and Lecturer in Church History and Historical Theology, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT (1993-1999)
- Parish Associate, Emanuel Lutheran Church, New Haven, CT (1986-2000)

Education

- Yale University, New Haven, CT: Ph.D. 1999; M.Phil. 1984; M.A. 1981
- Seminary study at Yale Divinity School (1980-1981) the University of Tübingen (1981-1983, 1984) and the University of Leipzig (1983) in Germany
- Harvard University: B.A. cum laude 1980

Current or past synodical or churchwide activities

- ELCA Conference of Bishops Executive Committee (2016-present)
- Region 2 Liaison Bishop to the ELCA Church Council (2018-present)
- ELCA representative to the Faith & Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (2004-present)
- ELCA Churchwide Assembly voting member (1989, 1999, 2005, 2009, 2016)
- ELCA Higher Education task force member (2002-2004)

Current or past community-related activities

- United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia & Gettysburg, PA, Board of Trustees (2018-present)
- Solheim Lutheran Home, Eagle Rock, CA, Board of Directors (2013-present)
- Lutheran Social Services of Southern California, Board of Directors (2013-present)
- Vesper Society, (a private healthcare operating foundation, San Francisco, CA, Board of Directors (2008-2013)
- Bethany College, Lindsborg, KS, Board of Directors, (2009-2013)

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

This is not a new call but (I hope) a renewal of one in which I have served for six years. I am very thankful for the preparation and skills I brought to the call, and I have gained new abilities to meet the challenges any bishop faces but which I couldn't have known before holding office. I now approach each new day with joy and confidence. Most of all I feel certain that the church's call to me is God's call—and with God's help all things are possible.

I bring optimism and deep love for this church, which I think are the best things I can offer. I am happy, emotionally balanced, and I care deeply about the people of our congregations and the pastors and deacons who serve them. Our church's great strength is the loyalty of its members and their love of their church. That is the rock on which our Lutheran church stands—solid and strong.

I also bring a strong call to proclaim the gospel in our place and time. There is no greater joy than being a messenger of God's love shown us in Christ, and no task more urgent than calling our society to account for its care of Creation and of our siblings in Christ. Serving as bishop has energized me with passion for justice, and I am excited to carry the work forward!

What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address that challenge?

We live in a troubled time of uncertainty and polarization. Our church is made up of many kinds of people, with many points of view, where we gather in a single identity: as baptized children of God, heirs of God's promise and members of Christ's Body. United in faith, joined together by promises of love and care, we offer our troubled world an alternative to fighting and strife—by following the Christ who calls us together into one.

Some trends in our church promote a sense of decline, but only, I believe, if we fail to see the good our church does every day in the life of our communities. We worship God, and we feed the hungry. We proclaim a saving Word, and we teach children how to care for one another. We gather at table and font, and we change the world around us, calling it back to God.

I don't have all the answers; nobody does. I even see the challenges a little more starkly after serving for six years. But my hope has grown, too. Not a pie-eyed hope, but a clear, practical trust that the people of our church see that the faithfulness they have shown for years in their congregations can best be shown now by their generosity—to new ministries and new experiments in caring for our neighbors.

Describe your leadership style

Our church's history in Southern California has been one of rapid growth and constant change. We live in dynamic, diverse, and rapidly-changing communities. But we represent an old

tradition of Christianity that has lost much of its status. To lead this church today requires strong nerves, a long view, and a good sense of humor. I have needed all three: it is not simple to be Native and LGBT in a church that still doesn't know how to handle difference.

Those who work with me would say I am calm, inclusive, and strategic in the way I lead. I try always to think of those who will come after us, who will need our commitment and our care. I am not afraid of conflict, but I am a peacemaker and mediator by nature. I have a quiet, patient strength, and I do not let myself be shaken by the anger of others.

But the most important thing that keeps me balanced is that I know it's not about me. I hold an office and a responsibility that I honor and respect. I wish to continue to exercise this office for another term, to build on what I have begun. While the synod and the Spirit keep me here, the office of bishop will be filled with good energy and strong influence for our church, in this synod and for the whole ELCA.

The Rev. R. Sheldon Hess

Retired

Congregation Membership: St. Timothy, Lakewood, CA

Ordained January 6, 2000



Previous Positions

- Pastor, St Paul's Lutheran Church, Monterey Park, CA, 2000-2016
- Solo Intern/Interim Pastor, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Monterey Park, 1999
- Security Officer, Fuller Theology Seminary, Pasadena, CA, 1996-1997
- Director of Music, First Lutheran Church, Northridge, CA, 1995-1997
- Senior Manager, Process Improvement, McDonnell Douglas Corp., Long Beach, CA, 1993-1995
- Senior Manager/Director, System Engineering, McDonnell Douglas Corp.:
- Principal Design Integrator, C-17 Globemaster III USAF Transport, 1981-1993
- Performance Engineer, Product Development/Proposals, McDonnell Douglas Corp. 1963-1981
- Aircraft Certification Engineer, Champion Aircraft, Osceola, WI, 1961-1963
- Teaching/Research Assistant, Aerodynamic Retardation, University of Minnesota, 1957-1963
- Office Manager, Super Value Stores, Robbinsdale, MN, 1956-1957

Education

- Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, M.Div, 1995-1998
- Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, Parallel Theological Studies, 1996-1998
- California Colleges, including CLU, Choral Conducting and Vocal Studies, 1966-1990
- University of Minnesota, Graduate Studies in Aerospace Sciences, 1961-1963
- University of Minnesota Institute of Technology, Aerospace Engineering, BS, 1956-1961

Current or past synodical or churchwide activities

- Serving as Dean, San Gabriel Valley Conference, Southwest California Synod of the ELCA, 2 Full Terms
- Serving on Bishop's Consultation Team, helping bring Clarity/Resolution to Congregations in Conflict
- Assisting Synod Staff with MET Process for Congregations entering Pastoral Call process
- Enabling Change through workshops of:
 - Transformational Ministry Team, including application of NCD and Coaching disciplines
 - Renewal Team of the EOMT
- Providing Pastoral and Music Leadership, Lutheran Cursillo of Southern CA and Via de Cristo

Current or past community-related activities

- Serving developmentally and educationally disadvantaged persons through work of:
 - MERCY Board of Directors, Monterey Park, past president and treasurer, current member
 - MERCY Consulting Group Board of Directors, current treasurer
- Working to end homelessness:
 - Past President, SGV Housing and Homeless Coordinating Council
 - Current member, SGV Consortium on Homelessness
 - Leading founder/past treasurer, Family Promise of SGV, housing homeless families with children
 - Serving as Court-appointed Conservator of Person, homeless and mentally challenged individual
- Serving Community through process/projects of the Lions Club of Monterey Park, past president
- Coordinating community ministries, past active member, Monterey Park Ministerial Association
- Bringing sound business practices to the church, led Southland Lutheran Home out of bankruptcy

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

I have a lifetime of exposure to the wisdom, examples, and teaching of exceptional people who were my pastors, including Carl Braaten, Gerhard Belgum, Paul Egertson, Paul Blum, Chistine Buma, and Dana Hanson, to name a few. I have also served in essentially every lay congregational office and position of leadership starting about age 14. These have shaped me for service.

I am a process specialist and scientist and artist with a long history of community and professional engagement locally and nationally. Such variety and depth of experience informs my understanding of the gospel from the inside of the church and the natural world out. I am dedicated and resolute in task completion, being in the words of a prior bishop, a bit of a “workaholic;” I get things done; but I take time to do puzzles and read cartoons.

I care deeply for all of creation and all that lives. I am able to indulge in its beauty and wonder, and experience joy every day, just in living. I am story and a story teller, open to the privilege of suffering with Jesus, while owning a strong voice to advocate and act for others in need.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address that challenge?

Being relevant and clearly heard in the communities our congregations serve.

I would speak loudly through voice, media, and print regarding the challenges of the times:

- Global Warming – to repeat my words from six years ago: “The world is warming with potential catastrophic consequences. We must be trendsetters in our communities, in native plantings and renewable energy, for example. Science supports evidence of God at work; young and old alike need to know the church does not thrive on ignorance any

more that it does intolerance.” We have not spoken with sufficient volume – I will turn up the volume

- Homelessness and substance abuse – I would encourage our congregations to merge effective programs, such as 12 Step, with our devotion to worship and service, especially in offering our abundant facilities. A 12 Step Liturgy would serve well
- Gender Identity, Ethnic/Racial/Immigrant tolerance and understanding, and Economic equity are all elements of our basic Lutheran teachings. We can speak louder – I will.

Describe your leadership style

I am a facilitator and catalyst for action. I lead by example and motivate with stories, recognizing that good ministry results from good process flavored with surprises blown by the Spirit, founded on intentional prayer trusting Jesus' promise to do anything we ask.

I seek to convey an attitude of gratitude in thanksgiving for what has passed and in hopeful expectation for what lies ahead. I open the door when someone knocks; I believe God has sent them, perhaps for something totally new, and I dare not ignore them. We cannot do everything but we are called to always do something, to act. "Not to act is to act," to quote Bonhoeffer.

I bring innovation and imagination to preaching and teaching. Media helps stir the spirit and the mind. I use film and art in telling stories and motivating people. Social media is informative and essential in communicating with people of all ages. I bring “what’s happening” into each day’s leading: our communities? the world? Who is suffering, where? What’s the latest amazing scientific discovery? What do you think of that! Every culture has unique offerings; I welcome all and embrace diversity.

We are community.

The Rev. Erik Gunnar Rundquist
Pastor, Svea Lutheran Church, Svea, MN
Ordained: June 8, 2014



Previous Positions

- Vicar of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Warren, IL
- Assistant Summer Program Director, Luther Crest Bible Camp, Alexandria, MN

Education and Earned Degrees

- M.Div, Wartburg Theological Seminary, 2010-2014
- B.A, Bemidji State University, 2005-2009

Current or past synodical or churchwide activities

- Lutheran Campus Ministry at Ridgewater College, President
- SWMN synod discipline committee, member
- SWMN synod assembly contemplative worship leader

Current or past community-related activities

- Blomkest Volunteer Fire Department
- Willmar Fire Department Technical Rescue Team: Fireman and EMR, Blomkest & Willmar, MN
- Family Promise of Kandiyohi County Funding Team -Willmar, MN
- Leadership Advisor to Willmar Area Ministerial Association- Willmar, MN
- Board of Directors, Caring Neighbors Food Pantry- Warren, IL

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

I am first and foremost a Pastor called to shepherd God's people through Word and Sacrament. I am highly creative and passionate concerning the expression of the Gospel through the means of Grace. As a listener, a team leader, and an organized administrator I have worked to contextualize experiences for the service of the Gospel. I have considered myself a minister of the Good News of Jesus Christ for the past 32 years, 5 of which I have been ordained. For the past 16 years I have been an educator of adults, youth, and children in the E.L.C.A. through Sunday school, confirmation, bible study, outdoor ministry and Campus Ministry. Through work experience on farms, in factories, restaurants, and emergency services; through those experiences I have come to understand a fuller perspective of people who don't often sit in our pews. I believe fervently that these are gifts to be shared within and beyond the congregation I currently serve.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address that challenge?

Water is both our greatest challenge and our greatest strength. Our baptismal identity remains our calling to the world. The lack of physical water in an ever-warming climate is for us a natural and spiritual challenge. We will need to be creative in our stewardship of all the gifts of the synod including financial, personal, and natural. As Bishop of this synod I would encourage and empower all of our congregations to continually remember their baptism and live out that calling to their neighbors as those who are to be poured out for the sake of the world. The changing world with increased strain on our water resources will continue to stress our brothers and sisters in Central America and Mexico into migrations further north. We will need to work towards being places of advocacy and sanctuary. As Bishop I will continue to build awareness and understanding of the AMMPARO initiative and encourage closer congregational relationships with Iglesia Luterana Salvadorana.

Describe your leadership style.

The Lutheran understanding of the “priesthood of all believers” stands at the center of my leadership style. I believe the calling of a Bishop is to be an office of humility, encouragement, and empowerment for the whole of the Christian community. Through transparency and encouragement, I work to practice servant leadership. I listen to all ideas presented and work to build consensus among differing approaches. It is always important to explore every possibility and avenue even some that seem extraordinary. There is rarely only one solution to any given conflict; we must be open to new approaches, considerate of historical successes, and traditional failings in our formulation of a cooperative vision.

The Rev. Lorre Burnett Tatum
Interim Pastor – First, Carson
Ordained March 23, 2014



Previous Positions

- Pastor, Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands (June 2015 – June 2017)
- Intern/Lay Minister, Messiah Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA (November 2009 – May 2015)
- Youth & Family Minister, Ascension Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA (April 2005 – October 2009)

Education

- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA – Certificate, Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM), 2013
- Biola University, La Mirada, CA – Bachelor of Science, Organizational Leadership (2002)
- Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles, CA – Associates Degree, Liberal Arts (1998)

Current or past synodical or churchwide activities

- Board Member, ELCA Church Council, Region 9, Caribbean Synod 2016-2018
- Coordinator, African Descent Ministries, Southwest California Synod, 2013 – 2015
- National President, African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA) 2012- 2015
- Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries Team, ELCA 2012 - 2015

Current or past community-related activities

- Member, Social Concerns Committee, Inland Empire Concerned African American Churches (IECAAC), San Bernardino, CA 2017 – 2019
- Senior Community Organizer, Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE) 2012 – 2017
- Member, Los Angeles Minister's Conference, Los Angeles, CA 2010 – 2014
- Member, The Utility Reform Network (TURN), San Francisco, CA 2009 – 2014

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod?

Recruiting and equipping new and emerging leaders: I intentionally seek ways to engage and discover the passions of the people in the pew and the pulpit. The goal is to build relationships, network, and seek areas for participation/partnership in ministry.

Community Organizing: I have been instructed in various community organizing strategies and I have worked for over two decades with local, state, and national faith-rooted and community based organizations in the area of grassroots policy advocacy, civic engagement, social justice, and leadership training. The campaigns include criminal justice reform, public school equity, consumer education, voter registration/education/participation, and immigrant justice.

Preaching/Teaching: Through the power of the Holy Spirit, I am able to contextualize the Word of God to help the hearer understand the historical setting and meaning, but also explain to the contemporary audience both theory and praxis of the sacred text.

Faith: I endeavor to model and teach that “*we walk by faith, not by sight.*” Ministry can be daunting, however my faith in the Word of God encourages me that “*God is able to do exceeding and abundant.*” A good and faithful steward recognizes everything belongs to God, therefore my faith sees abundance, not scarcity, and I spotlight assets, not liabilities. My faith declares that even in the wilderness, Our Father in heaven shall supply all our needs.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address that challenge?

I believe there are several challenges facing the synod and our congregations over the next six years. The principal challenge in my opinion is *Congregational Vitality*. In Southern California (and across the country) we are seeing a decline in the number of people who regularly attend church services. Creating more meaningful experiences in the local church will enhance our ability to “love our neighbor” and “seek and save the lost.” I plan to, and I ask God to help me pray fervently and work cooperatively with the three expressions of the ELCA to amplify and grow the synodical and congregational capacity in the following areas:

- 1) Clergy Support – I will endeavor to bring in the leading practitioners to offer training and assistance in personal wellness, personal care, continuing theological education on preaching, worship, social justice ministry, community organizing, grant writing, evangelism, and outreach for our rostered and lay leadership.
- 2) Congregational Development – Provide ongoing training and workshops that inform and inspire council members and ministry chairpersons in the area of financial management, facilities care and maintenance, legal clinics, human resources, insurance and overall church administration.

Describe your leadership style.

Through baptism, we have been called to love God, love our neighbor and make disciples. Therefore, I see myself as a servant leader with a combination of both a strategic and democratic leadership style. As it relates to strategic leadership, the scriptures outline a specific purpose and expectation of the church. I will serve the synod to ensure the Gospel mission is kept at the center, but also steward the people, gifts, talents, resources and capacities of all that God has entrusted to us. As it relates to democratic leadership, I affirm the importance of and will pursue the vast resource of knowledge, experience and wisdom of diverse groups and individuals in our synod even when the final decision can be made by the bishop, an executive board or synod council.