

From the 2021 SWCA Synod Bishop's Election Committee

During the 2021 Southwest California Synod Assembly on June 4 - 5, voting members will elect a new bishop. The Southwest California Synod Constitution and the latest edition of the ELCA's Guidelines for Synod Bishop Elections provide instructions for conducting this process. The Synod's Committee for a Bishop's Election, selected by the Synod Council, has reviewed the ELCA Guidelines and is following its recommendations. The ELCA Churchwide Office – in its collection of procedures and practices across the country preceding a Bishop's election – strongly recommends that Synods initiate, as they enter their transition year, a formal review of their state-of-affairs. This assessment of the Synod's capacity, its ability to provide guidance, direction and assistance provides for a greater appreciation of the challenges that lie ahead for any incoming Bishop and Synod Council.

The Southwest California Synod began its transition period in July 2020 with the creation of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) review of its practices, activities and mutual ministries with and among the conferences, congregations and congregants. The results are linked on the synod website (www.socalsynod.org).

By action of the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2009, “background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synodical officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election.” (S9.12) The Committee will oversee this constitutional provision so that these background checks are completed for all those pre-nominated by the time of the Synod Assembly.

The first ballot of the election process during the Assembly will be the nominating ballot. In order to be elected as bishop, a candidate will need to receive three-fourths of all legal ballots cast in this ballot. Those who have been lifted up as candidates during the pre-nomination period, as well as any other qualified candidate, can be nominated on this first ballot. Any person nominated on the first ballot may withdraw their name from further consideration. Those who desire to move ahead in the election process and have not been pre-nominated will be required to complete the biographical information form before having their name placed on the second ballot.

Please note the following from the SWCA Synod Constitution regarding the percentage of ballots cast necessary to elect a bishop.

S9.04.01. The procedure to elect a bishop shall be as follows. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the four persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fifth ballot shall be limited to the three

persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the fourth ballot, and a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The sixth ballot shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot, and a majority of the legal votes cast shall constitute an election.

Information regarding pre-nominated candidates is available [here](#).

We encourage you to be in prayerful reflection, preparation and discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as our Synod moves forward in the nomination and election process for a bishop of the Southwest California Synod.

Southwest California Synod – 2021 Synod Assembly Bishop Election Questions & Answers

1. What is the Bishop Election process?

Bishops are elected for a term of six (6) years. The Bishop Election Process is governed by the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the Synod. ELCA Churchwide procedures, guidelines and suggestions are also used. The Bishop Election is also a call process. It involves discernment of individual potential nominees and of the Synod and its members as a whole. *Engaging in prayerful reflection and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit are indispensable aspects of the process of nomination and election.*

2. What type of ballot does our SWCA Synod use for bishop election?

In light of COVID-19, and the prospect that the 2021 Synod Assembly may require virtual attendance, voting would then be done using e-communications. A company/vendor specializing in member identification and balloting procedures will be sought to provide this level of expertise.

3. Who will manage our Synod's Bishop Election process?

Our Synod's Bishop Election Committee will manage the Bishop Election Process. This Committee is comprised of: Pr. Dean W. Nelson, Bishop Emeritus; Randall Foster, Synod Vice President; Pr. William Hurst; Pr. Ruth Sievert; Carol Bjelland; Terri Pyle; and Laura Kruger. Sheri Dillon and Samantha Henderson of our Synod's Staff will help the Committee in its work. The actual election of the Bishop at the Synod Assembly (counting of ballots) will be conducted by the Synod's Election Committee with assistance from the Bishop's Election Committee, as needed. Again, if a virtual assembly is required, assistance from a vendor to count e-ballots will occur.

The Bishop Election Committee will communicate with the Synod's Conferences and Congregations about the Bishop Election Process including written communications and informational Conference meetings. A Churchwide representative will confer with our Synod's Bishop Election Committee in advance of the Assembly and oversee the Bishop Election. An executive from Churchwide will be either on-site or virtually present for our Synod's Bishop Election Process.

4. What information will be requested from candidates?

All candidates will be asked to complete biographical information and background check forms. All candidates will also be asked to respond to certain open-ended questions addressing their leadership, experiences and their vision for the Synod and its members. Forms will be provided.

Pre-nomination candidates will be asked to provide this information in advance of the Assembly. Candidates who are nominated at the Assembly will be provided with the forms to be completed at the Assembly. If virtual, then email transmittals will be used to provide candidates with the aforementioned documents.

The Synod uses the ecclesiastical ballot for electing the bishop. The first ballot is the nominating ballot. Any pastor of the ELCA in good standing may be nominated. Persons identified in the pre-nomination process must be nominated by someone on the first ballot in order to be considered as a candidate in subsequent ballots. Their names will NOT be printed beforehand in the first ballot.

5. What are the steps in the Bishop Election Process at the Synod Assembly?

The Bishop Election will be conducted at our Synod's annual Assembly (whether in-person or virtual), which will be held June 4 - 5, 2021.

The Bishop Election portion of the Assembly Agenda will open with prayer and reflection on the role and responsibility of Bishop and the important decision the Assembly will make in the election process. Following prayer and reflection, the Churchwide Representative conducting the Bishop Election will describe to the Assembly the procedures regarding the ballots to be cast, the required margins for elections, the timing of balloting, and other aspects of the election process. Following is a brief summary of steps in the Bishop Election Process:

1. The Credentials Committee shall report the number of eligible voting members at each ballot round.
2. At the First Ballot and subsequent ballot rounds, the required number of votes to elect will be announced.
3. Paper Ballots and electronic voting devices will be distributed to all voting members.
4. The First Ballot will be the nominating ballot.
5. The Assembly will vote.
6. The results will be published, including the number of votes received for each nominee.
7. A candidate may withdraw his or her name from further consideration after the First Ballot.
8. Second and later ballots rounds will be conducted as needed; results will be published after each ballot round.
9. If the Bishop Election progresses to a third ballot, the process will include an opportunity for nominee speeches to the Assembly. A question and answer period will take place should the Election progress past a third ballot.
10. At the conclusion of the Election process, final results will be published. The elected nominee will be announced.
11. The elected Bishop will have an opportunity to address the Assembly.

6. Will the Synod's Conference-driven assessment of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats be shared with the candidates?

Yes, the results from this three-month extensive process of information gathering will be summarized and reported with an executive summary highlighting the challenges and opportunities facing the synod, its conferences and congregations. Moreover, concerns lifted during this process will help guide the Q/A process during the third ballot in which candidates are given a chance to present their perspectives and executive platforms.

The Rev. Brenda Bos

Assistant to the Bishop for Rostered Leadership,
Southwest California Synod

Member, Christ the Shepherd, Altadena

Ordained August 16, 2014

**Previous Positions:**

- Pastor, Christ Lutheran, San Clemente 2014 - 2019
- Assistant to the Bishop, Pacifica Synod, 2019
- Long-term Pulpit Supply Faith, Canoga Park 2013 - 2014
- Vicar – St. Paul's Santa Monica, 2012 - 2013
- 6 years as unit production manager in television production, Warner Bros. Burbank.
- 18 years in television production

Education:

- Certificate of Theological Studies – Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2013
- Master of Divinity - Claremont School of Theology, 2012
- Bachelor of Arts in Broadcasting - Pepperdine University, 1986

Current or past synodical or churchwide positions/activities:

- Assistant to the Bishop for Rostered Leadership - all call processes and candidacy accompaniment for seminarians
- Co-Chair Pacifica Synod Assembly planning team 2019 - coordination of all elements of synod assembly
- Dean of Saddleback Conference, Pacifica Synod - 2016 - 2019
- ELCA Churchwide Assembly Representative for Pacifica Synod, 2016
- Two-time main-stage speaker for ELCA Youth Extravaganza and frequent contributor for ELCA Middle School Youth Gathering

Current or past community-related activities:

- Founded task force of clergy and non-profits in San Clemente & Dana Point to create drop-in center for unhoused people in South Orange County
- Created South Orange County clergy forums on homelessness crisis in Orange County, working with United Way and County Supervisor's office
- My wife and I adopted our son through the foster care system and that has given me knowledge of child protection, adoption, legal, mental health and criminal justice
- Active participant in Proclaim, the professional network of LGBTQ rostered leaders and seminarians in the ELCA

- I participated in national advocacy and Marched in Black Lives Matter, marriage equality and immigration rights protests in Los Angeles and Pasadena area

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

I love people. I see patterns and behaviors in healthy and unhealthy systems in congregations, families, and workplaces. I bring acceptance and curiosity to my work, asking questions in order to understand people better. I like to determine next steps when leaving a conversation, whether it be business or pastoral. I constantly ask "What is God doing here?" I know and trust each person I encounter has a significant answer to that question.

I speak easily about money. I believe there are several ways to approach any problem. I think "no" can be as sacred as "yes."

I believe God is calling us to a transformative relationship. I preach, teach and inspire people to discover how close God is. I use humor and relationship to build trust and influence. I have worked as a mediator, confidante, and coach. I do this work to help people find God in themselves. I am honored to nurture that call and tend their spirit. This is not just for clergy; this is for every child of God.

What do you think are the principal Challenges of this synod in the next six years and how would you address it?

It goes without saying that we have gone through terrible crises in the past years with the pandemic, racial unrest, and economic strife. Our synod has had its own challenges, from our unexpected bishop transition to the economic uncertainty of this past year.

We have also adapted. We found wisdom in surprising places.

The principal challenge I see in this synod is to have enough people to give thoughtful, specialized care to each ministry as it moves into the future. I would organize staff, synod council and a wide network of trained volunteers to assist congregations to find unique path forward. We found God was moving in our hearts and in the lives of our neighbors, even while our sanctuaries were vacant. We have realized the inequities of race, education, healthcare, and technology and we must respond. Synodical leaders must trust God, the people in the pews and our unchurched neighbors. Jesus predicted this way of being church when He said, "The kin-dom of God is like this..."

Describe your leadership style

It is very important for the people I work with to know what I am thinking. As a television producer, I would explain the budget, my decision-making and my goals to junior staff. This made the team work more efficiently, and it also raised up the next generation of leaders. The synod staff has worked in the last year to work

more collaboratively and we have noticed the difference. Communicating honestly is difficult, but I have seen the strength which emerges as trust is built and each voice is heard.

I value the input of others. I listen to my official collaborators, but I have also learned startling truths from unexpected advisors. I am a collaborative leader, but I have come to trust my own voice. God has often used me to speak truth into a situation when I thought my idea was so obvious everyone must be thinking it, only to have folks be surprised and relieved by my idea. Once I have a sense of an issue, I speak with humility and confidence.

The Rev. Joseph Castañeda Carrera

Assistant to the Bishop for Authentic Diversity
and Ethnic Specific Ministry, SWCA Synod

Member, Adore LA

Ordained September 22, 2018

**Previous Positions:**

- Pastor Developer, Adore LA
- Nonprofit/Ministry Leadership & Management
- Consultant Pastor of Hollywood Lutheran Church
- Executive Director of El Centrito Family Learning Centers

Education:

- Theological Education for Emerging Ministries Seminary Program, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
- Master's of Public Policy, California State University Northridge CSUN
- International Ethics & Welfare Systems Concentration, University of Birmingham, England
- Bachelor's Degree of English Literature, Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles UCLA

Current or past synodical or churchwide positions/activities:

- I presently serve as part of the Executive Staff Team of the Southwest California Synod, collaborating to understand and respond to needs of the people in our congregations and long-term goals rooted in values and a gospel-driven vision.
- I facilitate training for New Start Developers and laity on how to evaluate neighborhoods for ministry possibilities, connect with people in local contexts, and renew/experiment with worship at ELCA Churchwide Congregational Vitality Conferences.
- I serve on Churchwide's Authentic Diversity Advisory Committee to support and measure our churches' progress in diversity/inclusion practices and policies; I served on the Task Force that reviewed past strategies and wrote current recommendations.
- I served on synod staff, prior to ordination, supporting the synod's antiracism efforts, grant/memorial/resolution processes, synod assembly and colloquy planning, day of learning presenters/logistics, and ecumenical/interfaith meetings.
- Served on the synod's Lay Leadership Team before seminary, partnering throughout the synod to offer a series of "Tending Our Garden" workshops on community engagement advocacy, and living as a public witness to our faith.

Current or past community-related activities:

- I developed ADORE LA, a new ELCA faith community, as I pastored of Hollywood Lutheran Church. Pastoring two congregations at different stages of the organizational life-cycle and connecting with neighborhoods informs how I will care for our synod.
- I have supported community-based groups/organizations with strategic plans, community organizing, and implementation, including Unique Woman's Coalition, McCune Foundation, TransCanWork, and synod groups in Puerto Rico, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, etc.
- I served on the City of Los Angeles Interfaith Council to collaborate with diverse faith leaders, advise the mayor and his staff on arising issues, and partner in addressing problems like housing scarcity and homelessness.
- I served as board member of CAUSE 401c3 and CAUSE Action Fund c4 during a crucial merger of organizations to ensure financial sustainability and organizational efficacy to create social impact in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties.
- I served as Executive Director/Fundraiser of an educational/community organizing nonprofit in Oxnard, and I won a county innovation award for programming and fundraising to support diverse families "reach for their greatest potential."

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

I'm a painter, which helps me practice the gift of seeing what is before me without judgment, so I can be true to what I am painting. We are in a time of great shifts that affect our churches, and too often we rush to label them as bad. This self-judgment makes being honest and transparent feel scary. It makes connecting with others who struggle similarly shameful and blocks a way forward through God. I will use my gift to create spaces absent of shame/fault for our synod, so we may better consider and understand the issues we face and connect congregations in our shared problems/experiences to partner in solutions. We are not alone and all painting one canvas together. I am naturally strategic, empathetic, collaborative, relationship-centered, inclusive of others. Through my education and training, I bring gifts of ministry development/evaluation, fund development, financial management, infrastructure/systems creation, governance, policy, communications, and organizational management.

What do you think are the principal Challenges of this synod in the next six years and how would you address it?

Our synod will face the challenge of navigating continued societal and cultural shifts that impact how we gather, worship, interact with our neighborhoods, raise up leaders. We will need to navigate these shifts while honoring and reconciling a long Lutheran legacy in the United States of America. To respond to God's call to Christian faith, worship, and neighbor-love, we will cherish our roots and our Lutheran theology and begin a process of becoming an organization that is more nimble, creative, connected, neighborhood-focused and antiracist/diverse.

Through God's Grace, we are liberated from the heaviness of fault so we may be a church interested in being grounded in taking responsibility. We are active in God's Gospel when we are relevant to those in most need around us, addressing systemic and root causes of social issues. We are a brave church led by God to decentralize organizational authority and expertise, and to increase transparency and cooperative, localized governance.

Describe your leadership style

My leadership style centers on being adaptable and a servant leader. Since decision-making groups are different, I assess and adapt my style to round-out and balance teams. Although I am adaptable, my commitments hold closely to vision, values, and an abundance mindset, focusing on generative and justice-making work instead of scarcity. Some have experienced my style as fierce while others have seen me as consensus-building and healing. Depending on context, balance of team, and how crucial an issue is, I adapt. But I always strive to be kind (but accountable), transparent, respectful, and honest. I care about responsiveness more than perfection. As a queer person of color and a feminine boy who was not picked for any teams, my leadership is rooted with people at the margins and those who are left out. I thought I was too broken to serve God, until God showed me that is the whole point. I lean to shared decision-making and deeply recognize full accountability for the synod's decisions.

The Rev. Dr. Marjorie Funk-Pihl

Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop, SWCA Synod

Member of Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church, San Luis Obispo CA

Ordained March 23, 1997

**Previous Positions:**

- Senior Pastor, Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church, San Luis Obispo 2006 - 2014
- Associate Pastor, First Lutheran in Richmond Beach, Shoreline, WA (1997 – 2006)
- Actor - theatre and local commercials - Los Angeles and Seattle (1978 – 1990)
- Waiter and Bartender, Queen Anne Bar and Grill, Seattle (1981-1986)

Education:

- Doctor of Inter-Cultural Studies: Congregational Vitality, Fuller Seminary School of Inter-Cultural Studies, 2020
- Certificate of Advanced Theological Studies, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1996
- Masters of Biblical Studies, Seattle Pacific University, 1993
- Bachelors of Fine Arts: Drama, University of Southern California, 1981

Current or past synodical or churchwide positions/activities:

- Churchwide: Regional Dean for Directors of Evangelical Mission (DEMs) 2018 - 2020
- Synod: Regional Consultation and Rostered Leader Mobility gatherings 2014 - 2021
- Churchwide: Holy Innovation Team 2017 - 2019
- Churchwide: Planning Team for DEM Gatherings 2017 - 2019
- Synod: Staff Facilitator for Evangelical Outreach Mission Team.

Current or past community-related activities:

- Leading synod Evangelical Outreach Mission Team to award grants to support congregations' work with their neighbors.
- Initiated and continued to support 7 New Start congregations designed to work with their neighbors.
- Supporting 3 congregations who serve God and their neighbors in contexts of poverty.
- Leading 20 congregations through the Living the Resurrection process to develop mutual relationships with their neighbors for the good of their shared community.
- Facilitating conversations in 40 congregations to explore the opportunities they have to participate in the mission of God in their neighborhood.

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

I am motivated by the Biblical vision of all tribes, nations and languages standing in the presence of God. This gathering maintains the distinctiveness of each group and person. No culture is overwhelmed by any of the others. God's mission pulls humanity toward this vision and compels me to push for equity for any person or group marginalized by the dominant culture.

I developed and implemented, Living the Resurrection, a proven vitality process that has helped congregations strengthen their love for God and one another as well as develop mutual relationships with their neighbors. As we come out of this pandemic my experience helping people recognize opportunities and adapt to pursue them will serve both the synod office and our congregations. The goals of this process help people overcome their resistance to change so they can innovate and achieve shared goals. I look forward to applying these principles so we can more fully support God's vision.

What do you think are the principal Challenges of this synod in the next six years and how would you address it?

Our synod membership isn't as diverse as our neighborhoods. To increase our diversity, we need to work on inclusion and equity. For example: the primary language of many of our members, and many in our territory is not English, yet the synod communicates mainly in English and rarely offers translation. To nurture diverse leadership, we need to prioritize accessible communication. This isn't difficult, but it means changing our ways and using our finances to encourage equitable inclusion in all we do. One aspect of the problem is that many of us have been seduced by the narrative of scarcity. We have millions of dollars in assets, yet our funding goals support the status quo instead of the mission of God. The pandemic taught our congregations to adapt. Moving forward we need to build on this ability to do something new and explore options that will free up our assets so we can freely support what God is up to in our neighborhoods.

Describe your leadership style

I'm a collaborative leader because I want my decisions to be informed by the wisdom of others. Synod Bishops have access to various teams including; staff, council, mission teams, deans and conference teams. I will rely on the members of these teams to express their opinions and join in lively discussions on the issues facing our synod. I believe that a good idea should be able to come from anywhere. My goal as a leader is to create a culture of trust to encourage people to contribute their ideas, concerns and hopes in every conversation. I once asked Bishop Erwin how he experienced my leadership and he said: "You are quick, and direct, you are kind, but it's not always comfortable." I promise to temper my directness with kindness and work to nurture brave spaces that are safe, though not always comfortable. I hope you will engage with me there so we can work through whatever the future holds, together.

The Rev. Stephanie Jaeger, Ph.D.

Pastor/Redeveloper, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
(9/2014 - present)

Executive Director, NoHo Home Alliance (3/2018 -
present)

Ordained August 5, 2007



Previous Positions:

- Senior Pastor, Augustana Lutheran Church in Hyde Park, Chicago, Illinois (8/2012 - 8/2014)
- Pastor, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Santa Monica, California (8/2007 - 8/2012)
- Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Illinois--Urbana, Department of German (9/2003 - 6/2004)
- Coordinator of Continuing Education Network, Seattle University, School of Theology and Ministry, (6/2000 - 5/2001)
- Assistant Professor (tenured), Queen's University, Department of Germanics, Kingston, Ontario (7/1991 - 6/1998)

Education:

- Antioch University—Los Angeles, MFA in Creative Writing, 6/2017 - 12/2019
- Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, M.Div., 9/2001 - 12/2006
- Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri, Ph.D. in German Studies (Reformation literature and culture) 5/1986 - 12/1991
- University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, MA, 9/1985 - 5/1986
- University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, BA, 9/1981 - 12/1985

Current or past synodical or churchwide positions/activities:

- SWCA Synod Property Committee, Member (2018-2019, 2021-present)
- Lead Dean (since 12/2020), SWCA Synod, Dean and co-Dean, Twin Valley's Conference (2016-present) and LA Metro Conference (2010-12)
- Candidacy Committee, Metro Chicago Synod, Member (2012-2014)
- Consultation Committee, Southwest California Synod, Member (2010-2012)
- Churchwide Voting Member (2011)

Current or past community-related activities:

- Founder/Executive Director, NoHo Home Alliance, homeless services/housing advocacy (2018-present)
- Faith Rep (2016-present) / VP (2018-2020) /Planning and Land Use Vice Chair (2021 - present), NoHo Neighborhood Council, City of Los Angeles
- Treasurer and Trustee, Goethe International Charter School, Board of Trustees (2010 - 12, 2015 - 16)
- Board Chair (2015 - 17) and Board Member (2018), New City Parish

- Trustee, Pafenberg Family Farms (family farm coop in Southern Indiana), (2020 - present)

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

My gift as a religious leader is to bring churches to new vitality, shared purpose, greater equity, sustainability, transparency, and public witness grounded in a public theology rooted in God’s promises in scripture. I believe this gift might be of significant service to our synod in this season. I have a profound love for the people and churches/organizations in our synod, and a vision for what better ways of being the church of Jesus Christ together are possible here. I believe our synod can lead the ELCA to a future focused on Jesus’ call to healing and justice. I also bring substantial Biblical/theological understanding and teaching ability gained as a professor. I am an effective community organizer, communicator, and administrator shown in my work as executive director of the non-profit NoHo Home Alliance. The people of St. Matt’s-NoHo will tell you I am dynamic, caring, visionary, strategic, joyful and a catalyst for living out our faith. My family will say I am loving, thoughtful, hard-working, creative and just. Our dogs just like to misquote Jesus: Feed my dogs.

What do you think are the principal Challenges of this synod in the next six years and how would you address it?

The principal challenge to our synod is this: proclaiming the transformative Gospel of Jesus Christ more impactfully & with greater relevance to the lives & situations experienced by the diverse people in this synod. Especially post-COVID, when we are acutely aware of the persistence of racism, & as church affiliation continues to decline.

As Bishop I will:

- Guide churches to expand public witness & face issues of sustainability;
- Expand practices & processes in our synod that achieve broad engagement, and create equity and authentic diversity;
- Lead us to expand ministries with people in poverty;
- Promote inclusive & innovative evangelism;
- Empower us to advocate for God’s vision of justice;
- Implement practices to support the holistic wellness of rostered leaders & laity;
- Expand Biblical, theological & spiritual formation & education;
- Implement a sustainable synod funding plan that leverages synod real estate to provide funding for strategic ministries & underserved communities; and
- Rebuild trusting relationships between the synod & people across the synod.

Describe your leadership style

I lead by asking questions, listening, observing & articulating a shared vision. I strive to be present & accessible. The most impactful leadership is shared leadership. I look forward to working with a broad team—council, staff, deans, advisors & others—to embody the Gospel in our synod. I empower team members

to discern their gifts & seek to align organizational responsibilities to match. I urge co-workers to find for themselves the best way, in their areas of responsibility, to get the outcomes we are working toward together. I believe the church must be a just, inclusive and equitable workspace enlivened by new perspectives and new leaders. As the granddaughter of a farmer and daughter of an immigrant I feel deep solidarity with those who do essential labor. My training in Non-Violent Communication (NVC) teaches me in conflict situations to name & attend to underlying needs. I dedicate myself to our common work. But I am human, & imperfect. When I miss the mark, I confess, ask forgiveness, & work on for the sake of the Gospel.

The Rev. Dr. Kenneth Johnson

Senior Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection

Ordained September 1989

**Previous Positions:**

- Pastor, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Buffalo, NY
- Pastor, St Andrew's Lutheran Church, Van Nuys, CA
- Interim Pastor, Lutheran Church of Master, Santa Monica, CA
- Interim Pastor, Christ the King Church, Rancho Cucamonga, CA
- Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Anaheim, CA

Education:

- BS Finance/Accounting CSULB
- MBA Pepperdine University Malibu, CA
- M.Div Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus Ohio
- D.Min Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA

Current or past synodical or churchwide positions/activities:

- Church Representative for Interfaith Aids Network of Western New York
- Youth Representative in Metro DC Synod
- Mission Team Member in SWCA Synod
- Led Men's Retreat at El Camino Pines

Current or past community-related activities:

- Habitat for Humanity
- Site Member for Family Promise
- Lead weekly post addiction resource counseling
- Meet with Peninsula Pastors Community Group
- Lead Interfaith Thanksgiving Service for South Bay

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

My gifts include strong knowledge of Lutheran Confessions. A very contemporary and engaging speaking style. I have a sophisticated background in contemporary music and liturgy. I bring an understanding of Lutheran K-8 and Preschool operations. I have a strong knowledge and understanding of Southern California politics and policies. I am in a financially strong position where I am able to donate 100% of my salary to benefit underprivileged families. I have a good understanding of our mission church and school in El Salvador. I am in perfect health. I have an extensive knowledge of business strategy and implementation thanks to my MBA and work in corporate finance.

What do you think are the principal Challenges of this synod in the next six years and how would you address it?

The challenge of the synod is simply to focus on conversations. Ineffective conversations produce organizational situations that pastors and leaders find threatening. Also, vagueness and ambiguity produce anxiety that pastors and leaders find threatening. This leads to withholding important information and makes issues undiscussable. Counterproductive dialogues that persist over years of non-discussing causes pastors and leaders to back away from involvement. Sending out surveys and collecting information only amplifies the problem. Effective progress depends on the exchange of valid information and being willing to make conversations that make people feel understood, accepted, appreciated, safe and in control. This is my approach, and this is no minor task.

Describe your leadership style

Paying attention is my most basic leadership skill: emotional, organizational and strategic attention. As said, a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention. Therefore it takes a certain courage to place attention in the right place and not be derailed by distractions. I see a Bishop as the pastor's pastor. Bishop Ed Perry was my mentor and model of how a synod could be run. My style if there is such a thing would be to place pastors first. I feel leaders are not only good listeners but are good question makers as well. Living a prayerful life makes the day both possible as well as productive caring. I like to share my devotional insights freely as I am given them. Most of all effective, caring conversations are the critical thing for me

Candidate Disclosure

While under a five-year term call at a UCC church during 2001 in Manhattan Beach, a church member approached my wife to buy her business. After giving her a deposit, my wife discovered during the due diligence process the buyer had no credit and was in jeopardy of tax avoidance. My wife terminated the deal and the buyer launched an extortion scheme involving several allegations against my wife, myself and our family to force the sale of the business to him. We hired an attorney to defend us and the buyer eventually ceased his activity. I finished my term call with the UCC church and remained friends with the senior pastor and many of the members.

The Rev. John Westly Miller

Interim Pastor, Ascension Lutheran Church and
Another Level Ministry in LA.

Permanent Supply Chapel of Peace, Los Angeles

Member of Chapel of Peace, Los Angeles

Ordained August 5, 2001

**Previous Positions:**

- Interim Pastor of First Lutheran Church, Carson, CA, 2019 - 2020
- Interim Pastor of Olivet Lutheran Church, Hawthorne, CA, 2015 - 2019
- On Leave from Call 2011 - 2015 (consistent supply throughout the synod)
- Pastor for Community Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA, 2004 - 2011
- Interim Pastor for New life Lutheran Church, Camden, NJ, 2002 - 2004
- Associate Pastor for Hope Lutheran Church, Reading, PA, 2001 - 2002

Education:

- Clinical Pastoral Training, Emory Center Crawford Long Hospital, Atlanta, GA (August 1998)
- Clinical Pastoral Training, Hoag Presbyterian Hospital, Newport Beach California. Completed a residency in 2018 - 2019. Certificate of CPE (5 Units)
- Master of Divinity Degree, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA (May 2001)
- BA Sociology / Family Studies, Minor in Religion Wagner College, Staten Island New York (May 1998)

Current or past synodical or churchwide positions/activities:

- Chairperson of the Pentecost Black History Month worship service: featured Preacher for Reformation SWCA Synod, 2020-2021
- Podcast presenter "Black Lutherans in History" SWCA Synod, 2021
- Chairperson of MLK worship service for the SWCA Synod, 2004 - 2006.
- Discipline Committee SWCA Synod, 2011
- Representative of SWCA synod for Installation of Bishop Davenport, 2018

Current or past community-related activities:

- Current member - Laity and Clergy United for Justice Organization Los Angeles
- Current Committee member - food distribution for Chapel of Peace Lutheran Church, Los Angeles
- Current Chaplain for Valley Best Hospice - serving the community as spiritual care counselor.

- Past member of Family and Friends Community Organization of Los Angeles.

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

1. Developer and planner for worship services
2. Worship leader.
3. Ability to preach effectively in both European descent and multiethnic settings.
4. Supporter of fellow clergy.
5. Mentor of new pastors in the SWCA synod.
6. Lifelong experience in the Lutheran Church as a Baptized member from the age of 11 years old.

What do you think are the principal Challenges of this synod in the next six years and how would you address it?

1. Stewardship: The church cannot function without resources to do effective ministry. I would take a closer look at how we use our resources in doing effective sustainable ministry and what would be the best use of those resources for congregations' missions. I would evaluate and encourage congregations to take a deeper look at their effectiveness through their gifts of stewardship by meeting their expectations in terms of sharing their time, talents, and resources.
2. Support clergy and other rostered leaders: This has been a great concern of mine. I really feel having a healthy clergy and other rostered leaders is key to the mission and ministry of the Church. My goal would be to have a relationship with are clergy and our rostered leaders, so that they would not feel abandoned. As bishop I would have the Deans of the Conferences genuinely focus on the needs and concerns of rostered leaders. In doing so in my thought process this could have major effect on how we serve our congregations and the work of the wider church body.
3. Mission Development: This should be a high focus in our synod. The Gospel calling "go ye therefore and make disciples..." My goal would be to teach and preach evangelism and challenge our synod to focus on rebuilding membership and developing new leadership. I would encourage our congregations to support our synod in this challenge by providing resources. Scripture tells us to be cheerful givers. In giving, we can see what God can and will do when we are faithful.

Describe your leadership style

Leadership style is a leader's approach to providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people.

I see myself as a facilitator, but would best describe my style as participative, offering guidance to our synod, clergy, and congregations, requesting their input and decision making, but retaining the final say.

Members should feel included and part of the team. This creates commitment in the group.

My commitment is to be honest, open, authentic, show grace and humility. My promise is to have clear and responsive feedback and communication in a timely manner.

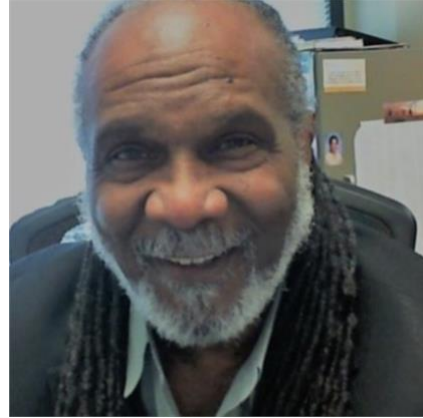
This is what the people want, need, and expect in a leader.

The Rev. Albert Starr

Senior Advisor for Ethnic Diversity, ELCA
Churchwide Organization

Member of Bethel Lutheran Church,
Chicago IL

Ordained September 19, 1982

**Previous Positions:**

- Director for Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries ELCA Churchwide Organization
- Program Director for African Descent Ministries, ELCA Churchwide Organization
- Pastor, Ascension Lutheran Church and School, Los Angeles

Education:

- Master of Divinity, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio (May 22, 1982)
- Bachelor of Arts, Capital University, Columbus, Ohio (June 2, 1974)

Current or past synodical or churchwide positions/activities:

- Served as co-convener for the Strategic Authentic Diversity Task Force, in the development of the report and recommendations adopted by 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.
- Co-convener for the Authentic Diversity Advisory Team currently tasked with advising and monitoring implementation of Authentic Diversity Strategy.
- Serve as staff support to the ELCA Churchwide COVID-19 Grant Response Committee.
- Staff member of Public Messages Working Group, providing as needed support in preparing public statements from the Office of the Presiding Bishop.
- Churchwide staff working relationships with: Church Council, Conference of Bishops, all six ELCA Ethnic Associations and Presidents, the network of ELCA Seminary Presidents/Deans.

Current or past community-related activities:

- Work with cohorts of congregation leaders and ministry teams focusing on building capacity for sustainable ministry.
- Participation in and with faith-based community organizing models.
- Organizing churchwide multicultural leadership summit.
- Staff leader for ethnic ministries team of program directors for African Descent, African National, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islander, Arab and Middle Eastern, and Latinx ministries. I have had opportunity to be involved with these communities around issues and initiatives concerning congregational vitality and leadership development.

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

I bring passion for seeing the gospel of Jesus Christ engaged as guidance for the church's continuing work of building the beloved community. Ten years of experience as churchwide staff has afforded me the opportunity to interact with synods, networks of congregations and leaders, across the country and internationally. I have first-hand experience of being called on by Bishops, synod staff, DEMs and other leaders to assist with visioning for new ministry, addressing challenges of existing and declining ministries, identifying and equipping new leaders and the work of resolving conflict. I bring with me twenty-six years of experience as a parish pastor in Los Angeles, over some of the most socially and economically tumultuous times in recent history and the birth of the New City Parish. I have a gift for active listening and creating intentional space for sharing the stories, passion, interests and concerns of people from a broad and diverse range of cultural contexts.

What do you think are the principal Challenges of this synod in the next six years and how would you address it?

A culture of resistance is the principal challenge. In the next six years I would aggressively call this synod to a fresh reclaiming of our shared purpose and power as disciples of Jesus. The restrictions of the viral pandemic, inequities impacting full inclusion of black, indigenous, and other people of color, LGBTQIA and transgender persons, all loom large across the landscape of this synod. Equitable calls and compensation for rostered women, persons of color and those serving in economically depressed ministry contexts are long standing issues facing this synod. Aging and declining congregations, and helping young people find meaningful ways of living out faith in daily life, all these call for significant strategic engagement. I would challenge this synod to a fresh and engaged knowing of Christ in the power of the Resurrection. Where a culture of holy enthusiasm for the gospel overwhelms a culture of distrust, grief, uncertainty and fear, our strategies and plans come alive.

Describe your leadership style

"Equipping the saints for doing the work of ministry" informs me as a leader. While I am very much excited and personally energized by being fully engaged with people and investing myself alongside others in the work to be done, I recognize and value greatly the power of building and engaging gifted teams. As a leader I will often ask others "who is your team, who are you bringing with you into the work you are most passionate for doing." It is a part of my approach in leadership to continuously keep an eye on and communicate the clarifying "Why." In my experience in leading teams, I find that if we can get clear on the motivating "Why," the spirit of trust and creativity within the community or team will give rise to plans, strategies and solutions for attaining the agreed upon goals. I believe in investing in those called to do a particular work. I hold to a manner of accountability that respects persons and their capacity to achieve.

The Rev. Tracy M. Williams

Pastor, Holy Redeemer Bellflower

Ordained October 21, 2018

**Previous Positions:**

- Associate Pastor, Trinity Baptist Church
- Therapist
- Teacher

Education:

- PLTS 2018
- California Baptist University - MS, Behavioral Science, Counseling (2010)
- Biola University - BS, Organizational Leadership (2007)

Current or past synodical or churchwide positions/activities:

- Dean of the Long Beach Conference
- Cooperative Candidacy Committee
- Disciplinary Committee
- New City Parish and African Descent Lutheran Association
- Women of the ELCA

Current or past community-related activities:

- Board of the Bellflower School District
- Member of the Bellflower Ministerial Association
- Worked on task force of former DA Jackie Lacey
- Member of the Clue (Clergy & Laity United for Economy)
- Member of the Baptist Minister's Clergy

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

As a single mother, teacher, counselor and advocate for justice and mental health are the tools that God has gifted me to serve the office of Bishop. The insights and skills to deal with all manner of humanity; its triumphs and tragedies, joy and hardships, are well ensconced in my abilities and approach to the work God has blessed me with in the Lutheran Church. On a leadership level, I am among the most active pastors in the region. I know our pastors and strive for their success. Having immediately made both myself and my church available for any number of large-scale events, the organizational, budgetary, and congenial nature of the events, facility and participants speaks to the reason these events have been well attended and reviewed. I love the work of these many churches and activities seek to burnish and bolster the positive with verve and a vision. I seek bold solutions to re-energize and re-vitalize a church with hidden potential.

What do you think are the principal Challenges of this synod in the next six years and how would you address it?

The challenge facing our synod and congregations is recognizing and implementing the pathway between deep-seated tradition and the vitality of change. Congregations are declining and aging. Some of our services are slow and outdated. There is a reason that the same gospel we preach to a handful in our churches is bringing in literally thousands at a non-denominational church across the street. Youth and vitality can merge with age and tradition if we "seek and you shall find" as we teach. There is more meaningful service and outreach that can extend the love of Christ to our neighbors and families of all ages, ethnicity, economic background, and cultural diversity. It's time for real and substantive change. I seek the role of bishop as I believe that God has given me the ability and gifts to work across a spectrum of people and situations to bring about a regeneration of our churches. With an open mind and heart, truly the fresh change in image I bring to the leadership.

Describe your leadership style

Having worked as an elementary and high school teacher, the one element I guarantee will be in full capacity is creative leadership. I am a visionary leader. We will all follow Christ with fresh perspective and enthusiasm as my gentle guidance would lead. We will work together as a team to strengthen what we have, expand to where the Lord would direct and bless, and roll up our sleeves to engage and complete the work before us. I can articulate what will energize us and explain the strategy to get the task done. Talk to those who have seen my work, heard my words, attended events I've sponsored. It takes courage to step out and lead. If the synod seeks to blaze a new trail to new horizons, a very dynamic and highly confident leader is truly needed to captain the ship into the uncharted waters. Speak with me, and you will find that fearless captain to take the helm.