

**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.

**Rev. Hazel Salazar-Davidson**

Campus Pastor, California Lutheran University  
Member, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church,  
Thousand Oaks  
*Ordained November 2, 2018*

**Previous Positions:**

- California Lutheran University, Campus Pastor, 2018-Present
- Mesa Sagrada: PLUME Latino Outreach, Anchorage, AK, 2014-2018
- Trinity Lutheran Church, Intern Pastor, Palmer, AK, 2017-2018
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & Mat-Su PLUME, Intern Pastor, Wasilla, AK, 2012
- Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection (DOOR), City Director, Hollywood, CA, 2007-2008
- Hollywood Urban Project (HUP), Director of Administration, 2001-2005
- Presbyterian Church USA Young Adult Volunteer Program, Site Coordinator, Hollywood, CA, 2002-2005

**Education:**

- Fuller Seminary, Master of Divinity
- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Lutheran year, TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries)
- Pacific Institute for Community Organization, VIA Valley Interfaith Action, Matanuska Susitna Valley, AK
- Citrus College, Azusa CA, A.A. in Social Work
- University of the Nations: Youth With a Mission (YWAM), Lakeside, MT
- Universidad Autónoma de Centro América, University of Costa Rica, Fine Art Studies

**Current or past synodical or churchwide positions/activities:**

- Synod Assembly 2021 planning team
- Synod Assembly 2019 planning team and host site
- Speaker for 50th Anniversary of Women's Ordination, Churchwide, 2019
- Western States Youth Gathering planning team

**Current or past community-related activities:**

- Co-Founded Queeranteen Camp, a virtual community created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic specifically for LGBTQIA+ youth from around the world

- Works closely with DACA and other Latiné students on CLU's campus, ensuring they feel safety and support. Serves on a team that acts as the points of contact in the event of a visitation from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Co-created an affinity group for faculty and staff of color on CLU campus to come together and be in community
- Developed Mesa Sagrada, a ministry in the Mat-Su Valley of Alaska that is a place for persons of Latin American descent to practice traditional, culturally meaningful celebrations within the church and broader community
- Mentor for Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) leaders and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS) students.

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

In the last almost two decades that I worked in ministry, I worked with a lot of young adults, congregations, new start ministries and redevelopments that are navigating what the next step is for them. I worked with evangelical, Pentecostal, and ecumenical partners to the ELCA. I witnessed God's work in the world in ways that extend beyond the borders of any one denomination. This is a gift that allows me to journey with individuals and communities as they are in the midst of discernment. In that journey, I remind them that we are not limited to any one thing, but are blessed by the gift and creativity of the Spirit.

I find that having not grown up in the church, as well as being an immigrant, bilingual and a first-generation graduate of higher education, places me in a role that allows me to ask faithful questions of God, of our communities and of one another. When I first came to the Lutheran church and heard about the message of grace, I had many questions. Those questions have led me to serve in the role I am in today as Campus Pastor at California Lutheran University where I journey with individuals and a community who are discerning their calls and vocation.

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

Our church is changing and shifting. One of the ways we are changing is the demographics of the areas around our congregations. This growth looks like a large number of Black, Indigenous, Asian Pacific Islander, Latiné\* people of color entering neighborhoods that were once predominantly white.

I remember moving to one of those neighborhoods as a child. As a Latina child, I developed the ability to be able to access both worlds - the affluent and the urban neighborhood my extended family still lived in. I often felt isolated because I didn't look like my new neighbors and very few people took the time to get to know our family or culture. Those who did extend grace and hospitality walked with me as I navigated new experiences, encouraged me to seek out opportunities and nudged me when I was uncertain and afraid.

There is an opportunity here for outreach and growth in our communities, but often, we feel incapable of reaching out to those communities because they are different from us

and because we carry our own hindrances and pain that don't allow us to see one another as God's children.

However, it is in our difference and in our pain that the Spirit breaks in and creates new life.

In Acts 2 when the Spirit moved among the people and everyone was able to understand one another's languages, that's when the church was birthed and grows. Now is the time to learn new ways of speaking and listening to communities that have been on the margins. Only when we listen to the Spirit and sit with one another, that's when the church is going to grow.

**Describe your leadership style.**

I am a visionary, a storyteller and a community organizer. These gifts directly impact how I lead. One of my main values is community. Therefore, I cannot help but be a leader who is interpersonal and a collaborator. I focus on the people I'm working with and the relationships we foster prior to our goals. I strive to identify our common interests so that we can better serve the community.

This community is blessed to not be made of any one specific demographic. We have people of all generations, racial and ethnic backgrounds, gender and sexual identities and abilities. As a leader, I strive to be intentional in the ways I journey with people as we build the kingdom of God together, to ensure that nobody gets left behind, or forgotten.

Often in my listening and reflecting, I find myself at the pottery wheel. As a potter, I understand that while we may want to create a certain kind of vessel, the outcome always changes depending on the amount of pressure we apply to the clay, the wetness of the clay, and the speed of the wheel. As a leader, I am willing to let the Spirit work as we work together to create something wonderful and am always amazed at the outcome.

\*Language is a tool to help us understand one another. For a long time, the term "latinx" has been used to reference and embody individuals of all gender identities and experiences. But many in the Latin culture have found that "Latinx" crosses out a part of them. So, Latiné is an attempt to better embody those of all experiences and identities.

**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.