



BROKEN
yet Whole
35TH ASSEMBLY
OF THE SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD

guidebook



Sierra Pacific Synod
committed to being re-formed

Dear Voting Member,

This guidebook is intended to help you fully engage in the 2023 Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly. In it, you will find the most essential information. In our desire to be good stewards of our resources, there are additional resources and materials that are not included in this paper guidebook.

Some materials will be in your check-in packet. Other materials are available to you from our Mission Partners and may be picked up from them at your leisure. New materials that are developed during the assembly will be available on the staff table in the ballroom.

Please remember that you can always find the full range of available materials in the most timely format in our digital guidebook. You can access our digital guidebook on any computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone for free. To get started, go here: <https://guidebook.com/g/2023spsassembly/>

In Christ,
Your Synod Assembly Planning Team

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Sierra Pacific Synod
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2023 Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly

Draft Agenda

Burlingame, CA

Friday, September 15

- 11:00am Voting Member & Visitor Check-in opens
Hospitality & Display area open
- 12:30pm Gathering Music
- 1:00pm Opening Worship
Voting Member & Visitor Check-in closes
- 2:00pm Business Session 1**
Welcome and greetings
Explanation of voting machines & voting practice
Credentials Report
Procedural motions
Motion to receive La Iglesia Luterana Santa Maria Peregrina as a congregation
1st ballot for Bishop election
Synod Council elections Instructions
Announcements & Recess
- 4:15pm Workshops
Voting Member & Visitor Check-In opens
- 5:30pm Cash Bar Reception
- 6:00pm Voting Member & Visitor Check-In closes
Dinner
- 7:30pm Pacific Lutheran School of Theology & California Lutheran University
hosted reception

Saturday, September 16

- 8:30am Voting Member & Visitor Check-In opens
- 9:00am Keynote
- 9:45am Coffee break
- 10:00am Business Session 2**
Voting Member & Visitor Check-In Closes
2nd Ballot for Bishop election
Report of the Synod Treasurer
Budget & Resolutions
Vice President Report

	Announcements & Recess
12:00pm	Lunch
1:15pm	Business Session 3
	3 rd Ballot for Bishop election
	Report of the Bishop
	Synod Council election: Youth Member
	Synod Council election: At-Large Member
	Budget & Resolutions
	Announcements & Recess
4:00pm	Bishop Nominee Q&A with top 3 candidates
5:30pm	Cash Bar reception
6:15pm	Banquet Dinner (pre-paid ticketed event)
8:00pm	Live band & dancing

Sunday, September 17

9:00am	Business Session 4
	Churchwide Report
	4 th Ballot for Bishop election
	SPSYC Report
	5 th Ballot for Bishop election
10:30am	Closing Worship
12:00pm	Depart

For updated schedule during the Assembly, please refer to our Guidebook. On the app, search for "2023 Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly"

Arrival & Hospitality

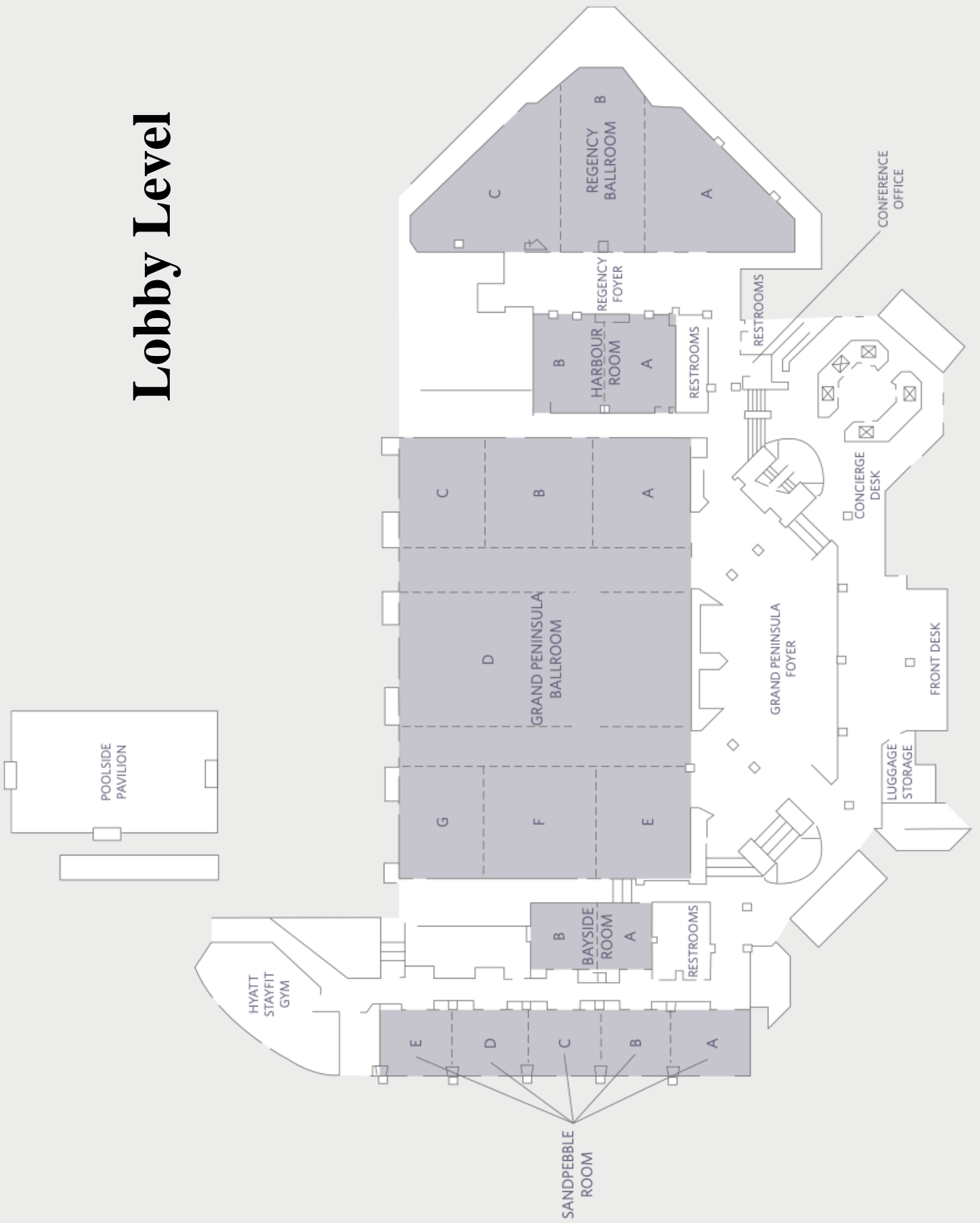
Code of Conduct and Critical Incidents

When you registered for this event, you signed a code of conduct and agreed to a process for reporting critical incidents. A copy of this Code of Conduct, term and definitions, implementation process, and a reporting form were provided to you at check-in.

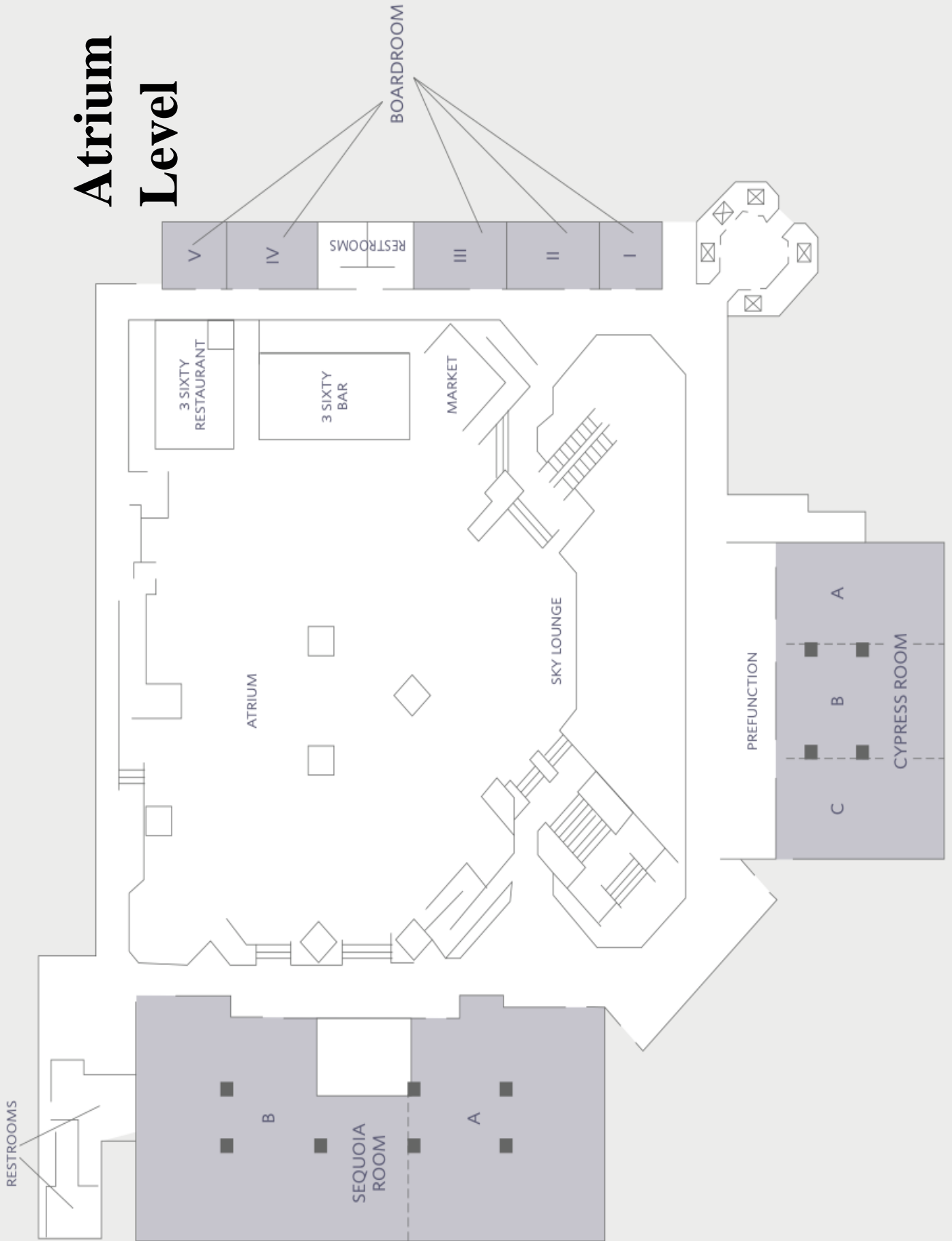
If you need a reporting form, additional copies are located on the staff table in the ballroom. If you need assistance with anything related to the code of conduct or misbehavior of a member of this assembly, please contact our assembly chaplains:

The Rev. Kim Williams	559-212-9469
The Rev. Karen Ann Campbell	978-835-2672
The Rev. C. Brent Hoy-Bianchi	530-559-4470

Lobby Level



Atrium Level



EMERGENCY ESCAPE PLAN
CALL 911 FIRE/POLICE/MEDICAL

- Familiarize yourself with the location of the hallway fire exits, alarms, and extinguishers.
- Alarm will sound as a whooping horn and strobe lights will flash. Public address system will be used for announcements. Listen for instructions.
- If an alarm is sounded, or if instructed to evacuate, test your door for heat or smoke, and if clear, go to the nearest exit stairwell.
- Do not use elevators.
- If you must remain in the room, place wet towels under the floor, and tell the operator your room numbers.
- Turn off all air conditioners and stay low to the floor.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:

- Call 911, report location, proceed to nearest stairwell and await assistance.

SECURITY: Do not leave valuables in your room. Place all valuables in a safe. Close the door securely whenever you are in the room and use all locking devices provided. Be sure that windows as well as connecting and sliding doors are locked properly. Before opening your door to anyone, use your peephole and be sure that you know the person. If the person claims to be a hotel employee, verify by calling the front desk.

Fire Alarm – listen to the announcements, and follow instructions

Earthquake – shelter in place, then once the shaking ends, exit the building and listen for announcements

Active Shooter – if safe exit the building, if the shooter is close by, barricade in a closet or room and block the door as best you can, and stay put until police instruct otherwise.

Snacks & Drinks

All of our participants have provided snacks and drinks, including homemade chai made by Christ Community Multicultural Ministry, coffee donated by Mt. Cross, and tea donated by WELCA. It is located in Regency Ballroom. Snacks and drinks will be available between breakfast and dinner on Friday and Saturday.

In Hotel Dining

3SIXTY Bistro

Breakfast 6:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Lunch 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Takeout Only 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Dinner 5:00 PM – 11:00 PM

3SIXTY Bar

Open daily from 5:00 PM – Midnight

3SIXTY Market

Open daily from 6am – 11pm

Area Attractions

General Exploring:

Burlingame Avenue-downtown (aka “The Ave”)
Burlingame Bay Trail (part of the 500-mile Bay Trail)
Sunday Morning Fresh Market
Peninsula Museum of Art
Kohl Mansion
Hillsdale Shopping Center

Local Parks:

Bayfront Park
Coyote Point Recreation Area
Washington Park

Places to eat:

New England Lobster Market and Eatery
Maverick Jack’s (burgers)
3sixty (new American)
Millbrae Pancake House
Lai Lai (Chinese)
Westbay Café (California)
La Collina (Italian)
Taqueria nochistlan (Mexican)
Ben Tre (Vietnamese)
Falafio (Mediterranean)
Bashamichi Sushi (Japanese)
Peter’s Café (American)
Zorba’s Pizza and Pasta
It’s It Ice Cream Factory & Store
Preston’s Candy and Ice Cream

Kid/Family Friendly Activities

CuriOdyssey Museum/Zoo (inside Coyote Point Park)
Color Me Mine (paint your own pottery)
Peek-a-boo Factory (indoor playground for “littles”)
Ninja Republic (indoor play for “olders”)
ABC Tree Farms (inflatable water park)
Sandbox VR (virtual reality adventure)
K1 Speed (go karts)
Bel Mateo Bowl
Poplar Creek Golf Course
Red Room Escape Room

This list is certainly not exhaustive. Check out the amazing area of the South SF Bay and see for yourself what adventures you can find!

Churchwide Representatives & Parliamentarian



Maurice Henderson
Parliamentarian



Secretary Deacon Sue Rothmeyer
Churchwide Representative



Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe
Churchwide Representative



Deacon John E. Weit
Churchwide Representative

Chaplains, Keynote Speaker, Banquet Entertainment



Rev. Kim Williams
Chaplain



Rev. Karen Ann Campbell
Chaplain



Rev. C. Brent Hoy-Bianchi
Chaplain



Dr. Yohana Junker
Keynote Speaker & Artist



Rev. Paul Larson
Banquet Master of
Ceremonies



**San Francisco Bay
Jazz Ensemble**
Banquet Band

Synod Bishop & Staff



Bishop Claire S. Burkat
Bishop, Sierra Pacific Synod



Rev. Manda Truchinski
Assistant to the Bishop for
Leadership & Strategic
Organization



Rev. Ron Valadez
Interim Assistant to the
Bishop for Candidacy & First
Call



Deacon jj Godwin
Director of Operations



Rev. Dr. Dawn Roginski
Director of Evangelical
Mission (DEM)



Melanie Gordon
Administrative Assistant



Mandi Slagle
Synod Communications



Carolyn Hanrahan
Director of Finance



Debbie Cook
Finance Assistant Contractor



Lance Kelly
Synod Statistician

Synod Council



Simon Wong
Vice President



Jeff Pennington
Secretary



Rev. Sharon Amundson
Treasurer



Makayla Holeman
Youth Representative



Autumn Scherf
Young Adult Representative



Christine Sinnott
At-Large Representative



Rev. Eduardo Trejo Soto
At-Large Representative,
Primary Language other than
English



Rev. Kathy Morris
At-Large Representative



Kezia Darla
At-Large Representative,
Person of Color

Synod Council Conference Representatives



Sandra Hamilton Slane
Conference 1 Representative
Redwood Mountain
Conference



Carl Brodt
Conference 2 Representative
Bridges Conference



Rev. Kirsten Moore
Conference 3 Representative
Capitol Valley Conference



Linda Babcock
Conference 4 Representative
Sierra Nevada Foothills
Conference



John Brett
Conference 5 Representative
San Francisco Peninsula
Conference



Rev. Clark Brown
Conference 6 Representative
El Camino Real Conference



Donna Nunes
Conference 7 Representative
Mt. Diablo Conference



Luke Price
Conference 8 Representative
Sierra Central Valley
Conference



Rev. Paul Clark
Conference 9 Representative
Central San Joaquin
Conference

Conference of Deans



Rev. Ben Colahan
Dean, Redwood Mountain
Conference 1



Rev. Dave Miller
Dean, Bridges Conference 2



**Rev. Dr. Gabriele
Schroeder**
Dean, Capitol Valley
Conference 3



Rev. Charlane Lines
Dean, Sierra Nevada
Foothills Conference 4



Rev. John Kuehner
Dean, San Francisco
Peninsula Conference 5



**Rev. Cristina
Beauchemin**
Dean, El Camino Real
Conference 6



Rev. Dr. John Valentine
Dean, Mt. Diablo
Conference 7



Rev. Mark Price
Dean, Sierra Central Valley
Conference 8



Rev. Jodi Golden-Lund
Dean, Central San Joaquin
Conference 9



Rev. Cindy Beck
Dean, Interim Ministry

Assembly Planning Committee

Co-Chairs



Rev. Charlane Lines

(Faith Lutheran Church, Meadow Vista, CA)



Rev. Courtney Geibert

(Messiah Lutheran Church, Redwood City, CA)

Nora Oluoch (Christ Multicultural, San José, CA)
Luke Nicolay (Faith Lutheran Church, Chico, CA)
Rev. Julie Kelly (Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, Hanford, CA)
Rev. Gabi Schroeder (Advent Lutheran Church, Citrus Heights, CA)
Genie Tjahjadi Shermak (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Livermore, CA)
Rev. Joshua Serrano (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, San Carlos, CA)
Marisa Louie Lee (St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
Andrea Puck (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Saratoga, CA)
Tom Hoegel (Bethel Lutheran Church, Cupertino, CA)
Donna Nunes (St. James Lutheran Church, San Leandro, CA)
Makayla Holeman (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
Rev. Bea Chun (St. Francis Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
Sam LaDue (Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary Graduate, Berkeley, CA)
Rev. Clare McElaney (Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Berkeley, CA)
Jean Hope (Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, San Jose, CA)
Diane Niggli

Assembly Committees

Bishop Election Committee

- o AJ Gaston, co-chair (TEEM candidate; Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Oakland, CA)
- o The Rev. Rustin Comer, co-chair (Saint Matthew, Walnut Creek, CA)
- o John Brett (First United/Middle Circle, San Francisco, CA)
- o Kathy Frattini, secretary (Saint Matthew, Walnut Creek, CA)
- o Sue Michaelsen (Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, Rohnert Park, CA)
- o Christa Slater (Hope Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA)
- o Diane Torry (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Reno, NV)
- o The Rev. Ron Valadez (Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Auburn, CA)
- o Jeff Pennington (synod secretary, *ex officio*)
- o Simon Wong (synod vice president, *ex officio*)

Synod Assembly Credentials Committee

- o Randy Presuhn, Chair (Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, San José, CA)

Synod Assembly Elections Committee (for elections other than bishop)

- o The Rev. Evered Cohen (Lutheran Church of Our Savior, San Francisco, CA)
- o Peggy Ince (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Reno, NV)
- o The Rev. Stephanie Johnson (Trinity Lutheran Church, Alameda, CA)

Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee

- o Katie Swartz (St. James Lutheran Church, Redding, CA)
- o The Rev. John Valentine, Chair (Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Orinda, CA)

Assembly Planning Team

- o Rev. Courtney Geibert (Messiah Lutheran, Redwood City, CA)
- o Rev. Charlane Lines (Faith Lutheran Church, Meadow Vista, CA)
- o Nora Oluoch (Christ Multicultural, San José, CA)
- o Luke Nicolay (Faith Lutheran Church, Chico, CA)
- o Rev. Julie Kelly (Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, Hanford, CA)
- o Rev. Gabi Schroeder (Advent Lutheran Church, Citrus Heights, CA)
- o Genie Tjahjadi Shermak (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Livermore, CA)
- o Rev. Joshua Serrano (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, San Carlos, CA)
- o Marisa Louie Lee (St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
- o Andrea Puck (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Saratoga, CA)
- o Tom Hoegel (Bethel Lutheran Church, Cupertino, CA)
- o Donna Nunes (St. James Lutheran Church, San Leandro, CA)
- o Makayla Holeman (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
- o Rev. Bea Chun (St. Francis Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
- o Sam LaDue (Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary Graduate, Berkeley, CA)
- o Rev. Clare McElaney (Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Berkeley, CA)
- o Jean Hope (Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, San Jose, CA)
- o Diane Niggli

Synod Staff Support Committee

- o John Brett (First United/Middle Circle, San Francisco, CA)
- o Sandra Hamilton Slane (St. James Lutheran Church, Redding, CA)
- o Jack Bareilles (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Eureka, CA)
- o Debbie Cook (St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, CA)
- o The Rev. Frank Espegren (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
- o Michael Flanagan (Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, San José, CA)

Warner Trust Committee

- o Linda Babcock (Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Granite Bay, CA)
- o John Brett (First United/Middle Circle, San Francisco, CA)
- o Makayla Holeman (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)

Witness Discipling Team

- o Linda Babcock (Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Granite Bay, CA)
- o The Rev. Janet Katari, Chair (Christ Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)

Worship for Baptismal Living

- o The Rev. Kathy Morris (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Reno, NV)

Global Missions Advocacy Team (GMAT)

- o Joseph Haletky, Chair (First Lutheran Church, Palo Alto, CA)

Synod Committees

Candidacy Committee

- o The Rev. Holly McHale-Larsen (St. Paul Lutheran Church, Oakland, CA)
- o The Rev. Kirsten Moore (Calvary Lutheran Church, Rio Linda, CA)
- o Gary Cadwising (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
- o Ann Schinske (Trinity Lutheran Church, Pleasanton, CA)
- o The Rev. Susan Scott (retired)

Finance Committee

- o Eric Brudos (Grace Lutheran Church, Palo Alto, CA)
- o Scott Taylor (St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
- o The Rev. Sharon Amundson (Mariposa Lutheran Church, Mariposa, CA)
- o Simon Wong, Synod VP (Hope Lutheran Church, El Sobrante, CA)
- o The Rev. Donna Allen (New Revelation Community Church, Berkeley, CA)
- o Jannette Drew

Leadership Discipling Team

- o The Rev. Anne Carlson (retired)
- o The Rev. Sandi Olson Decker (St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Monterey, CA)
- o The Rev. Katie Holeman (St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Carmichael, CA)
- o Margaret R. McLean (St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
- o Sandra Hamilton Slane (St. James Lutheran Church, Redding, CA)
- o The Rev. Clark Brown (Trinity Lutheran Church, Pleasanton, CA)
- o The Rev. Tyler Jensen (Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Santa Rosa, CA)
- o The Rev. Tony Rhodes (St. Philip's Lutheran Church, Carmel, CA)
- o The Rev. Dan Smith (Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, Davis, CA)
- o The Rev. Dianne Wendt (Lutheran Church of the Cross, Sacramento, CA)
- o The Rev. Nate Winterhof (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Saratoga, CA)

Mt. Cross Ministries

- o The Rev. Amy Kienzle (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
- o Richard Martin (Advent Lutheran Church, Morgan Hill, CA)

Synod coordinator for the ELCA National Youth Gathering

- o Lisa Herlocher (Bethel Lutheran Church, Roseville, CA)

Business Sessions

SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD ASSEMBLY STANDING RULES OF ORDER FOR THE 2023 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

I. MEMBERSHIP AND CREDENTIALS

- A. Voting and non-voting membership shall be as stated in the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
- B. Every congregation shall send the credentials of its rostered minister(s) and duly elected lay voting members to the Registrar no later than one month prior to the assembly.
- C. Any members of a congregation (pursuant to the rules regarding number of voting members allowed per congregation) who registered as visitors while awaiting their congregation's membership in the ELCA will be automatically granted voting member status upon said congregation's recognition and reception through action of the synod assembly.
- D. All ministers of Word and Sacrament rostered in Full Communion Partner Denominations who have been approved to serve by Letter of Extended Service or Letter of Pastoral Service in a congregation or ministry of the Sierra Pacific Synod shall be granted voice and vote in this Assembly.
- E. The Credentials Committee, appointed by the Synod Council, shall be responsible for the certification of all rostered and lay members and shall maintain a record of their attendance at the Assembly, including the publishing of timely credentials reports during the course of the Assembly.

II. FLOOR SEATING

- A. All members shall record their presence upon arrival at the Assembly site and be identified throughout the Assembly by wearing the appropriate member badge. Badges are non-transferable and must be worn at all times.
- B. Seating of voting members on the convention floor shall be at designated tables. Members must be at their proper seats in order for their vote to be counted. Voting members at other tables or standing in the aisles or doorways will not be included in any count.
- C. Tables for members with voice only will be identified and are for these persons only. Other members will be seated in chairs located at either end of the meeting hall.
- D. Visitors shall be permitted to sit at main meeting hall tables with voting members, but may be asked to move from voting member tables when votes are being taken.

III. RESOLUTIONS and MEMORIALS

As the highest legislative body of the Sierra Pacific Synod, the Synod Assembly requests action by the three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (congregations, synod, or churchwide) through resolutions and memorials. Therefore, the resolution process is an integral component of the business of the Assembly.

- A. Submission of Resolutions and Memorials
 - 1. Resolutions or memorials submitted by the Synod Council or the Bishop shall be presented directly to the Assembly without change.
 - 2. Resolutions or memorials proposed or endorsed by synod congregations, authorized worshipping communities, conferences, discipling teams, task forces, affiliated organizations and institutions, or at least fifteen voting members of the Assembly shall be submitted to the Resolutions Committee for presentation to the Assembly. Synod congregations, authorized worshipping communities, conferences, discipling teams, task forces, or affiliated organizations and institutions proposing or endorsing a resolution or memorial shall provide the Resolutions Committee a copy of the body's minutes or other

indication that a majority of the body's members approves proposing or endorsing the resolution or memorial.

3. All resolutions and memorials shall be accompanied by a completed *Resource Impact Reporting Form*, indicating the potential resource impact (both financial and personnel) that implementation of the memorial or resolution will have upon the churchwide organization, the synod, and/or congregations.
4. Resolutions or memorials to be presented to the Assembly through the Resolutions Committee shall be reviewed by the Synod Council prior to the Assembly, and the Council may recommend action to the Assembly.
5. Only the Bishop and groups and organizations listed in subsections 1, 2, and 3 above may submit resolutions or memorials for presentation to the Assembly.

B. Resolutions Committee

1. There shall be a Resolutions Committee consisting of four persons, appointed by the Synod Council for staggered, non-renewable three-year terms. The Council shall designate the committee chairperson.
2. The committee shall receive, review, and prepare resolutions and memorials, in consultation with the submitters of such resolutions or memorials, for presentation to the Synod Assembly, and may edit or consolidate resolutions or memorials for clarity and procedural purposes
3. The Resolutions Committee shall report its recommendations on resolutions and memorials to the Synod Assembly. Such recommendations do not require a second.
 - a. When the Resolutions Committee recommends approval, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly.
 - b. When the Resolutions Committee recommends the adoption of a substitute or alternative resolution or memorial, the committee's recommendation shall be the main motion before the assembly. A voting member of the Assembly may move to substitute the original resolution or memorial in place of the committee's revised version of the resolution or memorial.
 - c. When the Resolutions Committee recommends referral, the committee's recommendation shall become the main motion before the assembly.
 - d. When the Resolutions Committee recommends that the assembly decline a proposed resolution or memorial, the recommendation shall be reported to the assembly. If the author or another voting member wishes to bring the declined proposed resolution or memorial to the floor, they may move the matter and it shall become the main motion before the assembly. The committee's recommendation shall then be received for information.
4. If the Resolutions Committee is of the opinion that a resolution or memorial is unconstitutional, it shall note that opinion when the resolution is presented to the Assembly.
5. The Resolutions Committee may present multiple resolutions or memorials to the Synod Assembly *en bloc* for consideration, provided notice is given to the Voting Members of the Assembly prior to the adoption of the Agenda. A voting member of the Assembly may request that an individual resolution or memorial be removed from *en bloc* consideration by notifying the Synod Secretary before the close of the first plenary session of the Assembly.

C. Timetable

1. The deadline for resolutions and memorials to be received in the Synod Office shall be sixty days before the start of the Synod Assembly each year. The purpose of this provision is to allow the Resolutions Committee time to review resolutions and memorials and to have materials distributed to voting members approximately thirty days prior to the Assembly.

2. Any resolution or memorial submitted after the deadline will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that there is a compelling reason justifying the inability to have had the resolution or memorial submitted by the deadline. Late resolutions or memorials must also go first to the Resolutions Committee; the committee will make a judgement as to whether there is sufficient compelling reason for a late submission. If so, an assembly motion to suspend the rules for the purpose of considering the resolution or memorial must first pass the assembly by a 2/3 vote before the resolution or memorial is allowed to be considered.
3. Resolutions or memorials that are the direct result of the Assembly's response to items that are listed on the Assembly agenda and resolutions or memorials that address issues of such an immediate and urgent nature that they clearly cannot be postponed until the next Assembly shall be placed on the agenda only after submission to the Resolutions Committee and a 2/3 affirmative vote of the Assembly. With the exception of resolutions of courtesy and thanks, no resolutions or memorials other than those submitted for consideration under these guidelines shall be introduced from the convention floor.

IV. DEBATE

- A. During debate on any issue, the Chair shall, insofar as possible, alternate between those speaking in favor and those speaking against the motion on the floor.
- B. All speakers, when recognized by the Chair, shall state their name and the congregation or organization which they represent or other capacity which entitles them to speak.
- C. All motions and amendments (except those of a procedural nature) to be considered by the Assembly shall be delivered to the Chair in writing at the time of presentation. Motion forms may either be completed and forwarded electronically or may be completed by hand, signed, and sent to the Chair in order to receive consideration.
- D. During debate, no person shall speak more than two minutes or more than twice on the same motion. The Chair may rule additional time for purpose of information or clarification. Floor debate on any one resolution normally shall be limited to fifteen minutes and may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.
- E. A member obtaining the attention of the Chair for the purpose of debate may not at the same time "move the previous question" or make another incidental motion.
- F. A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order.
- G. Substitute Motions -- When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected.
- H. No part of this section shall be construed to apply to messages and reports by agencies, officers of the synod, or to guest speakers to whom special time has been allotted.

V. CONSIDERATION OF THE BUDGET

- A. Any motion to amend the proposed budget shall be delivered to the Chair in writing at the time of presentation. Motion forms may either be completed and forwarded electronically or may be completed by hand, signed, and sent to the Chair in order to receive consideration. Any proposal increasing any line item expenditure in the proposed budget shall indicate from which line or lines an equal amount is to be decreased.
- B. Any proposal to appropriate funds which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council shall require a two-thirds vote for adoption, except that amendments to the proposed budget which do not change the budget total may be

approved by a simple majority of the Synod Assembly. (S10.04.)

VI. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- A. There shall be a Nominating Committee as defined in the Constitution and Bylaws.
- B. The following procedures shall apply to all nominations.
 - 1. Each candidate shall provide biographical information for the Nominations Section of the Bulletin of Reports and any subsequent documents that may be distributed to voting members during the Assembly.
 - 2. Pictures of all candidates, if provided by the candidates, shall be made available in the Nominations Section of the Bulletin of Reports and in any subsequent documents that may be distributed to voting members during the Assembly.
 - 3. Candidates shall introduce themselves during a ninety-second appearance, giving name, congregation, conference, and positions of service.
 - 4. The initial ballot for each office shall list the names of candidates in alphabetical order. Each succeeding ballot shall list the names by order of votes received, with the highest number listed first.
 - 5. No reference to incumbency, racial or ethnic background, language, or any other distinction shall be noted on the ballot.
- C. There shall be an Elections Committee, consisting of one representative of the Nominating Committee (appointed by that Committee), and three other persons appointed by the Synod Council. This Committee shall supervise all elections at the Assembly, with the exception of the election of synod bishop, which shall be conducted under the auspices of the Bishop Election Committee.
- D. All elections shall be in accordance with Chapter 9 of the constitution of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
- E. The elections for all positions in the Synod shall be by written or electronic ballot. Unless otherwise stipulated, the Nominating Committee shall nominate at least two names for each position to be filled, and further nominations may be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee.
- F. Nominations for the nine Conference representative positions on the Synod Council shall come from the nine Conferences of the Sierra Pacific Synod. The deadline for nominations to be received in the Synod Office shall be sixty days before the start of the Synod Assembly each year. Up to two persons may be nominated by each conference. No nominations from the floor will be allowed.
- G. Nominations for all other Synod Council positions, including elected officers other than bishop, may be made from the floor by written means announced by the Nominating Committee at the opening of the assembly. Such nominations shall include a statement that consent to serve if elected has been given by the nominee, as well as any other materials necessary to fulfill requirements for nomination included in these rules. Acceptance of a nomination by the Nominations Committee places a candidate in nomination; agenda time will not be provided for verbal nominations.
- H. Unless otherwise stipulated, a majority of the votes cast shall be necessary for election in all elections by the Assembly. The names of the persons receiving the highest number of votes, but not elected by a majority of the votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled.
- I. Election for Bishop
 - 1. The election for bishop shall be governed by the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Sierra Pacific Synod.
 - 2. The representative of the churchwide organization shall preside over the assembly whenever the assembly is in session and considering business related to the election of the synod bishop, or when the assembly is casting ballots in this election. Upon

conclusion of balloting or of specific business related to the election, the bishop shall resume presiding over the assembly.

3. The Assembly agenda shall include time for the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot to address the Assembly prior to the third ballot. Responses shall be limited to five minutes and the sequence of speakers shall be determined by lot.
4. When the number of candidates reaches three people (plus ties), the assembly will be split into three rooms, with three conferences in each room. Each candidate will spend 25 minutes in each room answering five moderated questions, with five minutes to respond to each question. The candidates will then move to the next room until all candidates have had the opportunity to address each room.
5. When there are two remaining candidates, each candidate will be able to address the assembly for 5 minutes each, responding to one key question.
6. The agenda may also include other opportunities for voting members to meet or hear from candidates. The specific plans for such interaction, including time allowed, format, etc., shall be approved by the Synod Council and adopted by the Assembly as part of the agenda.

VII. DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS AND DISPLAY SPACE

- A. Only materials authorized by the Synod Secretary or their designee(s) shall be distributed to voting members of the assembly during the assembly.
- B. Authorization for setting up displays and exhibits, and for placing posters, announcements, etc., at Assemblies of the Sierra Pacific Synod shall be limited to those agencies or groups which are affiliated with the Synod or the ELCA, or are direct beneficiaries of the synodical or churchwide budget. The selling of goods or services will not be allowed, except that the ELCA Publishing House will be permitted a commercial display area. All exceptions to this rule must be approved in advance by the Secretary of the Synod or their designee.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. The adjournment of the Assembly shall put to an end all business unfinished at the close of the session, unless delegates have specifically voted to place a given item on the agenda of the next regular Synod Assembly. Resolutions not yet considered by the Assembly shall be referred to the Synod Council or to the relevant committee, team, or office of the Synod. Such referral shall be for study only unless specifically referred for implementation.

IX. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

- A. The Bishop shall appoint one or more parliamentarians who shall give advice and assistance on matters of parliamentary procedure.
- B. Unless otherwise ordered, parliamentary procedure shall be in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition.

X. PROXY VOTING PROHIBITED

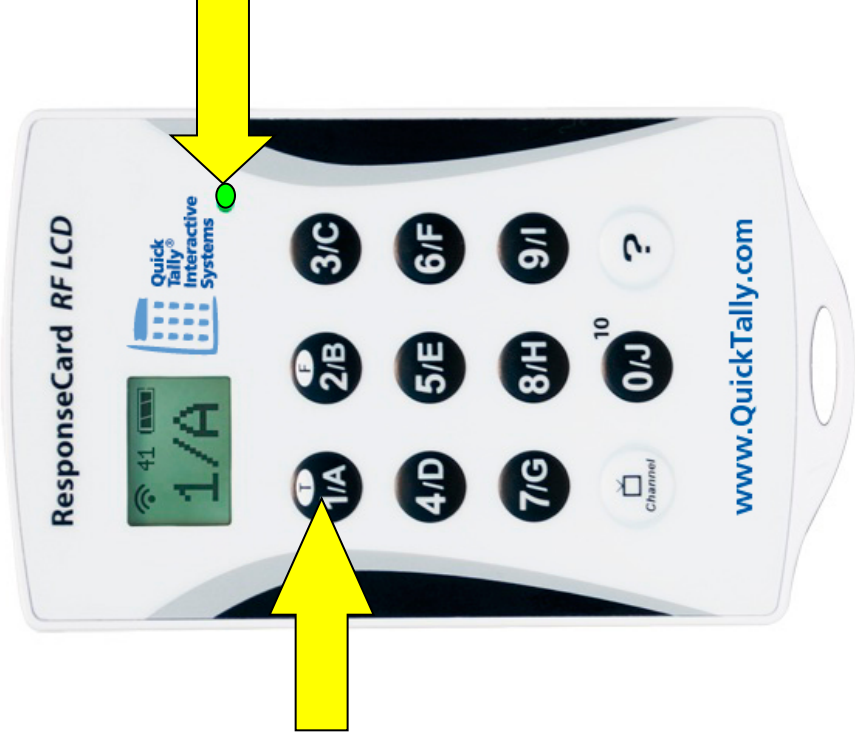
- A. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod. (*S7.31.)

XI. AMENDMENTS AND SUSPENSION

- A. These Rules of Order may be amended or suspended for a definite purpose by a two-thirds vote of the members.

Instructions for Response Cards

1. When the question and answers are displayed press the button corresponding to your answer



2. You will get a green light to indicate that the response was accepted

3. The last button you press will be recorded as your answer

Making a Motion During a Business Session

If you want to make a motion on the assembly floor you will need to fill out a paper motion form. These forms can be found at the staff table in the ballroom. Forms should be submitted to Synod Secretary at the dais prior to its consideration on the floor of the assembly.

Synod Documents

To steward the resources of this synod, we have not included the entirety of the foundational documents of the Sierra Pacific Synod. You can find these documents in their entirety in the following places:

Sierra Pacific Synod Council Minutes
<https://www.spselca.net/synoddocs>

2022 Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly Minutes
<https://www.spselca.net/synoddocs>

Sierra Pacific Synod Constitution, Bylaws, & Policies
<https://www.spselca.net/synoddocs>

ELCA Consitution, Bylaws, & Continuing Resolutions
<https://www.elca.org/Resources/Office-of-the-Secretary#Governance>

Bishop Election

Bishop's Election Process

Day 1 - Friday, September 15

Business Session 1

First vote will be an Ecclesiastical ballot (written). Following the ballot, the committee will do a disclosure check on all candidates and ask them to submit biographical information.

$\frac{3}{4}$ of legal votes cast (75%) are needed to elect.

Day 2 - Saturday, September 16

Business Session 2

Second ballot will be of all the nominees who have not withdrawn their names from the first ballot. If there are more than 10 nominees on this ballot it will be a written ballot.

$\frac{3}{4}$ of legal votes cast (75%) are needed to elect.

Business Session 3

Third ballot will be the 7 top candidates plus ties who received the greatest number of votes. Prior to voting, candidates will be given 5 minutes each to respond to one question.

$\frac{2}{3}$ of legal votes cast (66.7%) are needed to elect.

Day 2 - Saturday, September 16

When candidates are narrowed to final 3 (plus ties), conferences will be split into 3 rooms each room housing 3 synods. Each candidate will respond to 5 questions with a 5-minute time limit per question (total of 25 minutes.)

Following the Q&R, Candidates will be escorted to the next space by a committee member. Each candidate will spend 25 minutes per room.

Day 3 - Sunday, September 17

Business Session 4

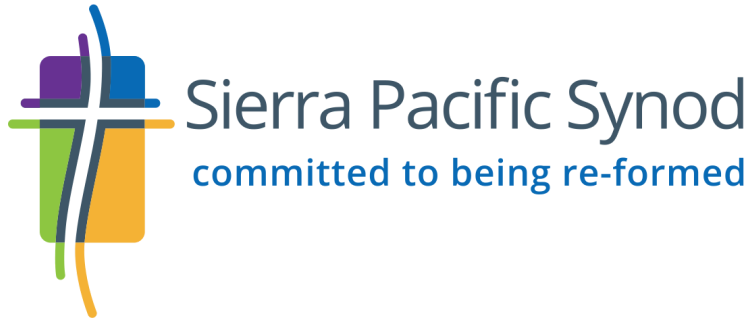
The 4th ballot will be the final 3 Candidates (plus ties).

60% of legal votes cast are needed to elect.

A 5th vote will be taken until a new Bishop is elected.

Prior to voting, each candidate will speak to one question with a 5 minute time limit.

On this ballot, a majority of legal votes cast (50% +1) is needed to elect.



As a synod we are aware of the immense amount of conflict that has affected our congregations and synod office over the last few years. This conflict coupled with the pandemic has left the state of the church with major questions, concerns, and opportunities as we head into our shared future.

Our next Bishop needs to be a leader ready to work together with clergy, congregations, synod staff, and synod council to dream and actualize solutions for the struggles and opportunities of the Church.

SYNODICAL DEMOGRAPHICS

The Sierra Pacific Synod consists of 181 organized congregations and Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities within the geographic region of Northern, Central California and Northern Nevada.

*Based on parochial reports submitted as of **December 31, 2021**, these congregations represent 31,081 baptized and 25,967 confirmed members respectively. Total weekly worship attendance in the Synod was 7,085 onsite and 5,858 online, giving an average attendance of 52 onsite and 44 online per congregation.*

Using information from the 2021 parochial reports, our congregational members are 83.79% Caucasian, 4.58 % Hispanic/Latino, 3.79 % Asian Pacific Islander, 2.57% African American/Black, 4.52 % multi-racial, 0.35% Arab/Middle Eastern, .20% African National/African Caribbean and .17% American Indian/Alaskan Native. The reporting congregations indicated that worship services are offered in Finnish(1), Hmong (1), Korean (1), Lao (1), American Sign Language (1), Spanish (6), Thai (1), and English (123).

The Sierra Pacific Synod is a sanctuary synod- publicly declaring that walking alongside immigrants and refugees is a matter important to our faith. We are also a Reconciling in Christ synod with 53 being reconciling in Christ Congregations– inviting and welcoming full participation and affirming God's love for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

VISION AND MISSION¹

We Are: Congregations called together by the insistent urging of the Holy Spirit, empowered to be followers of Jesus Christ, rooted in God's unconditional love.

We Hope: :

- to embody the love of God
- to share the good news of Jesus
- to equip one another as followers of Jesus
- to engage in God's call for peace through justice
- to challenge communities of faith
- to honor their past and adapt for their future
- to build inclusive communities

WE WILL:

Live in community worshiping, praying, serving, being fed
Honor Lutheran identity, questions and doubts, A spectrum of experiences
Proclaim in word and deed God's love, Radical hospitality, and Truth to power
Strive for peace and justice locally and globally
Recognize needs, accompany, advocate, serve and be served and commit to continually being re-formed

SYNODS TOP TEN GREATEST NEEDS (According to survey²)

1. Options for Struggling Congregations
2. Leadership Skills

¹ Established pre 2010

² Survey results On synod website at <https://www.spselca.net/2019-synod-site-profile>

3. Conflict Management Skills
4. Well-Qualified Interims
5. Vision for the Future - To Lead a Declining Church into Renewed Vitality
6. Ability to Communicate Mission
7. Spiritual Renewal
8. Support & Encouragement of Pastors/Rostered Ministers
9. Speak with Boldness & Clarity
10. Person of Prayer & Spiritual Discipline

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES³

During the next six years, the Synod is looking for improved connectivity between the Bishop's office and congregations within the synod and among congregations within the synod. This improved connectivity should include but not be limited to: options for leading a declining church to new vitality, ministry for small congregations, Call process, support and encouragement for rostered leaders, and well qualified interims.

With 60% of our clergy base within 5 years of retirement and with 92% of our congregations worshipping less than 70 in worship per Sunday, clergy and congregational development is essential.

Congregations asked for more training and resources for ministry. Specific interest was held for social issues including; poverty, immigration, anti-racism, and cultural diversity. Our recent listening sessions have made us aware of our synodical churches desire for deeper inclusion, including race, gender, youth, and families.

There is an essential challenge for us to learn how to be the Lutheran church for the 21st century. This is a new context and we need a leader who can carry us forward into areas: such as technology, communications, re-rooting within our neighborhoods, diversity, and inclusion.

Our next Bishop will need to have strong leadership, and organizational skills to create, and communicate vision and mission within our synod.

³ Challenges and Opportunities originated from previous site profiles and listening sessions.
<http://www.spselca.net/2021listeningsessions>

CALL RESPONSIBILITIES OF BISHOP

IN SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD

The call of a Bishop is a specific role. The job description is defined in the Synod Constitution (S8.10 thru S8.15) and in the Churchwide Constitution (10.81.01). While the priority of each of these responsibilities can be navigated, the responsibilities themselves are non-negotiable and are required of our next Bishop. There are pastoral leadership responsibilities as well as executive administration responsibilities. As you discern candidates for the next bishop of Sierra Pacific Synod please consider all the responsibilities and recommend Rostered Ministers who can embody these responsibilities confidently with the help of God,

1. Pastoral Leadership Responsibilities for Synod, Congregations and Rostered Ministers.

- Pastoral care for synod, congregations, and Rostered Ministers; Including but not limited to: Preach, teach and administer the sacraments in accord with the Confession of faith of this church.
- Interpret and advocate the mission and theology of the whole church.
- Foster support of and commitment to the mission of the church
- Use available synod resources to promote the church's life and witness in the areas served by this synod.
- Strengthen the unity of the Church.
- Create, implement, and administer processes for Congregational and Rostered Minister health and discipline
- Oversee Rostered Ministers, including administering the constitutionally established processes for the resolution of controversies and for the discipline of rostered ministers and congregations of this synod
- Be the chief ecumenical officer of this synod
- Cultivate communion in faith and mission with appropriate Christian judicatory leaders functioning within the territory of this synod
- Foster awareness of other churches throughout the Lutheran world communion and, where appropriate, engage in contact with leaders of those churches

2. Executive Administrative Responsibilities for synod and Rostered Ministers:

- Ordain, Attest letters of Call, and Install approved rostered ministers.
- Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and submit a report of the synod's life and work .

- Actively be a member of the Conference of Bishops (COB) and regularly consults with other synod bishops, and ex officio member of the Churchwide Assembly.
 - Bishops meet regularly outside the prescribed twice a year in person meetings in Chicago.
(It can also include:)
 - Churchwide Assemblies
 - ELCA Youth Gatherings
 - ELCA Rostered Leader Gatherings
 - Bishop Trips to Washington DC for Advocacy Days
 - Assignment to a COB committee.
 - Academy of Bishops Annual Continuing educational gathering (January)
 - Global trips sponsored by the COB or Global mission units
 - In addition, a Synodical bishop has Regional Gatherings several times a year for First Call placement, mobility, and collaborative ministry and bishop retreats

- Advise and counsel synod's related institutions and organizations.
- Direct the work of other officers, assistants and staff.
- Ensure the constitution and bylaws of synod are followed.
- Appoint and be a member of all committees.
- Prepare and maintain the synod roster of names and addresses of all rostered ministers of the Synod, including those on leave.
- Prepare and maintain a roster of synod congregations and names of the laypersons elected to represent them.
- Appoint a statistician who shall secure congregational reports.
- Serve as President and CEO of the synod, authorized to sign legal documents, also oversee the financial stability of the synod.

Others Responsibilities Required:

The Synod office is located in Oakland California. Sierra Pacific Synod is geographically dispersed.

- The work of the Bishop requires significant travel.
- To facilitate and maximize connection the bishop must use technology, virtual meetings, and social media, etc to effectively bring together a wide geographic region.

The Bishop is the hiring officer responsible to select, hire, and ensure a staff that is competent to fulfill the duties, roles, and responsibilities of the Synod office. This work is done in conjunction with the Synod Council and synod policies.

The following biographies are of the individuals that were nominated to the office of Bishop through our Conference Assemblies in the spring and summer of 2023.

The first ballot for the election of a bishop is a nominating ballot. These individuals will not appear on the ballot automatically. These individuals may also not be the only nominees for bishop in our election.

As new nominees for the election of a bishop are identified and complete their biographies we will provide them in paper form and in our digital guidebook. Paper copies of new nominee bios can be picked up at the staff table in the ballroom.



Amy Kienzle

Current Position: Associate Pastor and Director of Outreach, St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento (June 2019-Present)

Previous Positions:

Pastor, Christus Victor Lutheran Church, Dearborn Heights, MI (2007-2013);
Mission Developer, The Park Church Co-op, Greenpoint, Brooklyn, NY (2013-2019)

Congregational Membership: St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento

Date and Year of Ordination: September 1, 2007

Education and Earned Degrees:

Certificate, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion eCornell (2023); MDiv, Certificate of Biblical Studies, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago (2007); BA, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, emphasis in art history and religious studies, New York University (2003)

List up to three current or past Synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

Conference Dean, Southeast Michigan Synod (SEMIS); Facilitator of the Mission Strategy Team for the SEMIS; Teacher (The Prophets, Gospels, Discipleship, Worship) in lay ministry academies of SEMIS and MNYS

List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod: Board of Midtown Homeless Assistance Resource Team, Sacramento; Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel; Dearborn Area Interfaith Ministerial Association.

What gifts would you bring to the Office of the Bishop of this Synod?

I came to love the church as an outsider, claiming our tradition and theology as an adult after experiencing the gospel through the people of an ELCA congregation.

God formed gifts in me before my life in the church:

- Empathy for outsiders and understanding of churches' struggle to engage with them
- Artistic gifts and creativity for pulling new ideas into a cohesive vision
- Commitment to integrity and good boundaries from a family system shaped by codependence and triangulation

In 16 years of ministry in the church, I have had a breadth of experiences through which God has shaped other gifts:

- Empathy for struggling congregations and their leaders, from 6 years as pastor of a declining congregation
- Skill for tending orthodoxy as a tether to the gospel while trying non-traditional ways of doing church
- Gift for interpreting scripture that connects to the present and challenges the status quo, inspiring us to respond in new ways to our faith
- Humility to admit I do not have all the answers and commitment to grow and learn
- Administrative gifts developed as head of a medium-sized staff; as mission developer creating & implementing systems; as director of outreach programming at St. John's.

Describe your leadership style:

Scripture shapes my style of leadership. The Bible reveals the Spirit working in community, and I prefer collaboration. The Spirit has given each of us gifts

and passions to serve the gospel, and I trust those I work with to use their particular gifts rather than be micromanagers. I encourage questions and help cast vision for our collective mission. I support my staff and care about who they are outside of the office. I prefer to frame disappointment positively and lead in learning from failures or challenges. Recognizing we are all saints and sinners, I yearn to connect even with those I disagree with. Jesus' reaching to the margins shapes my desire to lift up the voices of those not often heard. Trust and mutual care among the people of God is a foundation for ministry, and I bring an even temper and sense of humor that can foster a safe and collegial environment. Even Jesus set boundaries and knew when to cross them. I have a good understanding of ELCA policy but am flexible, except when it comes to compromising our values.

Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as Bishop of this Synod:

I believe the call is internal and external. For me, God's "no's" are loud, and God's "yesses" are a persistent nudge. I trust the Holy Spirit in the community, and for some time, people have expressed seeing gifts in me for the role of bishop. I've held this as a nudging, waiting for a time to explore further. When a colleague I trusted asked me to consider being open to this call, I felt I needed to listen and engage in intentional discernment.

First, I talked with my partner about his openness to being in California for six years. I sought counsel from friends, colleagues, and bishops, asking about the gifts they see, the joys and challenges of the job, and what other questions I should ask myself and God about what will be very difficult work. After each of these conversations, I prayed and reflected.

I continue my preparation by tending to emotional and spiritual health with my therapist, coach, and spiritual director, and I plan to go on a retreat with a friend before the assembly to pray and listen for God's guidance.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six years, and how would you address it?

Our Synod needs spiritual renewal after recent conflict, in addition to the anxiety congregations and leaders feel after the pandemic. We need to study scripture together as a reminder of what unites us. This is the foundation for reconciliation and deepening trust among us, so we can learn to encourage and hold each other accountable to our shared gospel mission.

I will engage in daily prayer for the people of our Synod and invite staff to join me. I will offer more opportunities for people of the Synod to join in prayer and bible study in-person and virtually. I will invite clergy to do regular text study on Zoom. I will visit conferences to listen to the joys of ministry as well as the fears and needs of our congregations and their leaders for the sake of mutual care and upbuilding.

My hope is for synod leadership to be partners in ministry to our people. I will work with deans to strengthen their role, especially to listen and offer pastoral care in their conferences. I also want us to have fun together as we move the mission forward, as a reminder that there is joy in our baptismal calling, even amid struggles.

What are your top three priorities for this Synod?

The 1st priority is to liberate people from fear and encourage the gifts of discipleship already present among the people of our Synod. Part of the bishop's role is to inspire and encourage us in our mission, helping us discern God's purpose for us, even as we feel uneasy about how to be the church in the 21st century.

The 2nd priority supports the first -- trust-building across the Synod through a commitment of the bishop's office to visit and listen to clergy and laity in conferences. We can learn to share burdens and celebrate joys while assessing the greatest needs of congregations and their leaders as they struggle on the edge of viability. It will help the bishop to have a clear picture of the Synod's strengths and challenges, so we can make decisions about how to share and steward our collective resources.

The 3rd priority is to make sure necessary policies are in place, with transparency and understanding about how they will be implemented and what accountability looks like.

Cindy Beck

*Current Position: Interim
Pastor at Napa Valley
Lutheran*

Previous Positions: Interim
Pastor at Bethel Lutheran
and more **Congregational**

Membership: St. John's
Lutheran, Sacramento

Date and Year of

Ordination: May 24, 1992

Education and Earned

Degrees: M.Div LSTC 1991,
ELCA Academy Family
Systems



List up to three current or past Synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

1. Consultation with Congregations
2. Dean of Capital Valley Conference
3. Active in Conference/Synod activities

List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

Community organizing and Winter Shelter participation.

What gifts would you bring to the Office of the Bishop of this Synod?

1. An awareness of the diverse approaches to life and faith across the members and congregations of the Synod.
2. An awareness that there are many others that have greater gifts than I to serve as Bishop of this Synod and that I would make mistakes but would acknowledge them.
3. An awareness that it will be incredibly difficult to lead the Synod through changes in how we operate together.

Describe your leadership style:

- Terrible administration skills
- Big picture visionary, needs help with details
- Relationship focus

Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as Bishop of this Synod:

- Colleagues I respect have asked me to be open to serving as Bishop
- Prayer
- Colleagues I respect have told me I wouldn't like the work required as Bishop.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six years, and how would you address it?

- Helping congregations feel like important members of the one body of Christ we are as SPS.
- Address: Be as present as possible in modeling appreciation and awareness of individual congregations; work to bring congregations together to develop broader relationships across the Synod; continue to lift up our unity in Christ, regardless of political, gender, cultural, and racial differences.

What are your top three priorities for this Synod?

1. Try to help members within the "geographical synod" recognize that they, individually and collectively, are the ACTIVITY and BEING of the "living synod." The geographical Synod is nothing without the congregations and their members.
2. Deepen congregational relationships with one another and the Office of the Bishop.
3. Lift up the focus that all we do arises out of our response to what God has done for us in Christ. We have no reason to gather, if not to share and celebrate our faith.



Clark M. Brown

Current Position: Interim Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Pleasanton

Previous Positions: Pastor of St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Monterey

Congregational Membership: Trinity Lutheran Church, Pleasanton

Date and Year of Ordination: July 9, 2000

Education and Earned Degrees: M.Div., Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary; B.A. Biochemistry, University of California Berkeley

List up to three current or past Synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

I have worked on many Synod events and committees and have been fortunate to serve as a voting member of the churchwide assembly. From these, what informs me most for serving as bishop has been the opportunity to serve on the synod council since 2017. That service has covered the tenure of three bishops and times of relative stability in the Synod and, of course, years of great turmoil. What I have seen and learned over these years is the centrality of integrity, competence, and transparency for the bishop and staff. Decisions must be well-informed, fair, and not based on personal preference. Furthermore, we cannot grow as a synod in diversity, spiritual depth, or in size (and these go hand in hand) without taking good care of the routine business of the Synod.

In the years before, I was on the synod council, and since then, I have been entrusted with the planning of many synod events: the Professional Leaders' Conference, several possibilities for enriching worship, Synod Assembly planning, chairing the Bishop Election Committee, and, most recently, the Rostered Ministers' Retreat. I have learned over the years how to effectively work with diverse people and get things done for the good of the Synod.

This experience of working in the Synod, as well as in the congregations I served, has helped me to grow as a leader and administrator. But from early in my career and service in the Synod, the focus has been on how we fulfill the mission Jesus gave us, the church. We have long struggled with a decline in our congregations, and the pandemic has hastened that reality. Many of our congregations are facing closure, and many more struggle to connect with the communities where they are planted. My experience of planning events and working with synodical teams helps me imagine ways that we, as a synod, can develop resources and tools for congregations and their leaders. Even in the face of strong headwinds, we want to keep coming back to how we can be faithful.

List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod: Participation in ecumenical and interfaith partnerships has shown me the power of building relationships to make positive change in the community. Shortly after becoming a pastor in Monterey, I became involved with, and then a leader in, the Monterey Peninsula Ministerial Association, an interfaith organization for clergy and other religious leaders. Besides broadening our understanding and appreciation of various religions and traditions, the MPMA addressed community issues that individual congregations could not. This included lodging and assistance programs for unhoused people as well as an interfaith chaplaincy program at the community hospital.

I also developed strong relationships with our ecumenical partners by co-founding a weekly text study group. In that group, we learned from each other as we shared the distinctiveness of our various denominations. Some

of us also joined together for worship, especially sharing Holy Week services among our congregations.

Besides these church-related activities, I have grown as a preacher and as a person by being an actor in community theatre and regional opera. As church leaders, we need to remain connected to our communities through these sorts of activities. In the theatre, I met a great diversity of people who care deeply for the world but have a hard time seeing a positive impact from the church or religion in general. Understanding that perspective can help us better connect our message and mission to our world.

What gifts would you bring to the Office of the Bishop of this Synod?

I am an intuitive problem solver with the ability to think strategically, and I am committed to finding avenues for growth and health in our church. Partly from my training as a biologist, I have a high tolerance for ambiguity and an ability to understand complex systems, like people. And so I am able to hear diverse perspectives and use them to reach novel solutions. I am also, as my spouse likes to remind, persistent and resilient to a fault.

I strive to be a clear communicator with a high degree of self-awareness, as well as being attuned to the needs of others. My goal is to listen fully to people and to remain calm and open in times of conflict. This is grounded in an ethic of love and respect for all people.

But when I think of gifts, I also think of Sue Wolfe Devol, who was my pastor in high school. She was the first woman ordained a Lutheran pastor in Orange County, CA, and she had to wait two years for that call. From her, I credit my foundational commitment to women in ministry and, by extension, to all people who have been excluded and diminished from the church and from ordained ministry. My reading of the gospel is that if we do not include and welcome all, we do not understand the mission of Jesus at all. Though I can accept ambiguity and the unknowing of walking where God leads, I am unambiguous about grace. God's grace is for all.

Pastor Sue also encouraged me to be a summer camp counselor at the Lutheran camp in Southern California, El Camino Pines. The first week of each Summer was focused on training, and most of that training was not on Bible study but on safety. The saying was, "You can't proclaim the gospel to a dead camper." The same is true for our Synod. Administration and management comprise most of the bishop's work. I believe I have the necessary temperament and skills to lead our Synod towards health, so together we can proclaim the Good News: God's grace is for all.

Describe your leadership style:

I prefer a democratic leadership style, in which as many people as possible can contribute to developing a vision and discern together how to best achieve our goals. I know that I do not have all the answers, but that God gives wisdom to all, and the best wisdom is that which is shared. As Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

With the synod staff, I would encourage all staff to offer their ideas and perspectives and to help shape the direction of the office of the bishop. With the synod council, I would empower members with information and encourage them to offer guidance and discern paths toward healing and growth. With the entire Synod, I would strive to build trust through greater transparency and by providing clear channels for communicating needs and concerns so they can be addressed quickly. We need to reduce the sense of isolation from each other.

For selecting synod staff, if I were to become bishop, I would work with the synod council in the process of calling any new staff, making sure that the process was open and job descriptions were clear. The overall goal would be to build a diverse team with complementary gifts that can meet our Synod's needs. I would expect a dynamic, faithful, and collaborative team that will work towards a more connected and trusting synod.

While I value being creative and innovative, I want to lead change by being inclusive of many voices and humble in respect to tradition. We do not need

change for change's sake, just as much as we don't need to hold onto tradition for the sake of tradition. But if we want to live and proclaim the unbounded grace of Christ, we must change.

I believe we have many gifts in our congregations that can support our common mission in the Synod. Unfortunately, we don't know they exist. Instead of behaving like a team, we often play like this is an individual sport. We sometimes even act as if we are adversaries. Though we face difficult times as the church, we have opportunities. One such opportunity is to learn from each other and be open to change. I would emphasize this mutual sharing as a bishop.

Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as Bishop of this Synod:

When I was asked to consider having my name raised for bishop, I agreed out of a sense of call and love for the Sierra Pacific Synod and the wider church. As I have reflected on this potential call, I have felt a good deal of trepidation, knowing well that the present state of our Synod will make the work difficult. It is truly daunting to consider. There has also been excitement as I have reflected on the potential for healing among us.

I continue to look to God in prayer: in the silence before I begin my workday, when I am out running or biking, and in the quiet of painting a wall at my house. I have also engaged trusted colleagues and my spiritual director, who have encouraged me but also asked questions. This has been helpful to me in assessing my skills and temperament, as well as my motives. And I will continue to check in with them as this process goes forward.

It has also been helpful to pray with scripture, especially passages like the mission discourse of Matthew 10 and Jesus' call to Peter to join him on the water in Matthew 14. I was particularly moved, however, while praying using "lectio divina" at our Synod's Rostered Minister Retreat. The reading was from John 8, and the woman brought before Jesus was accused of adultery. Jesus said, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her," and one by one, her accusers left. I heard this next phrase as if the

Spirit were speaking to me: "Jesus alone was left." The internal voices of self-doubt, shame, and fear had left while Jesus remained with me, forgiving, encouraging, and sending me forward into life and service.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six years, and how would you address it?

The principal challenge to our Synod is the longstanding decline of our congregations, accelerated by the pandemic. Pastors and congregations are discouraged and feel very uncertain about their future. The declining participation at every level of the church has also led to a weakening of the bonds between us, the growth of distrust, and an inability to deal constructively with problems and conflicts.

Many of our congregations are facing difficult decisions: holy closure, collaborative ministry, and reduced staff hours. I would like the Synod to more proactively provide resources and training events to help address this decline. The Synod can better resource congregations that are looking at collaborative ministry for the sake of mission, as well as congregations considering closure, also with the mission of Jesus in mind. The Synod can offer approaches for congregations to reconnect with their community and tools for leading the change that will be necessary for our churches to thrive.

But this cannot just be about the work of the synod bishop and staff. I believe we need to encourage our pastors, deacons, and congregational leaders to build relationships with each other. Again, those connections have long been in decline, but with the pandemic, many of us have forgotten how to be around other people. We need to be together. To rebuild relationships and our Synod, we need to come together in person a lot more. As bishop, I would encourage all of our leaders to commit to that face-to-face time. We need to learn from each other and work with each other. Reversing the decline in participation in our churches needs to begin with us.

What are your top three priorities for this Synod?

After years of conflict and dysfunction in the Synod, our first focus must be on building competent, efficient, and transparent management of the Synod

office. It is the foundation on which we can begin to address congregational decline, conflict, distrust, and everything else. We need to rebuild confidence that the routine business of the Synod is being handled. Transparency in hiring and other decision-making, along with effective communication, is simply critical. We must make sure call processes are handled efficiently and that people in the candidacy and first-call processes receive the support they need. To that end, I would strive to build a staff that is competent, diverse, and responsive to the needs of the entire Synod.

Second, we live and are called to proclaim the gospel in a rapidly changing world. The Synod must put as much energy as possible into equipping rostered ministers and lay people to connect with the world as it is becoming and not as it used to be. Many things are needed, but I believe it all begins with talking with people in our communities and rediscovering our mission to love and serve. Only when we understand the needs of our communities clearly will we know how our congregations' gifts can address those needs. Furthermore, when we see those needs, compassion will drive the internal change that our churches need to do. God does not want us to die, but God will not let us remain stagnant; new people will change us.

Third, most of our congregations are planted in ethnically diverse contexts. In my present context, the migration of people from South Asia over the last twenty years has dramatically changed the demographics of the community. There is an obvious call for our churches to connect with these ethnic communities. Part of the equipping that the Synod could offer would be anti-racism and cultural competency training for congregations to prepare us. Welcoming recent migrants and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds will be vital to the mission of many or most of our congregations, and it should be a goal for our Synod to offer resources to enable that outreach. Again, I believe much of that training should be aimed at congregations and not just rostered ministers because it is the congregations that will undertake this work and these significant changes for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

These three priorities are not separate from the need to build trust across the Synod. It is only by the rebuilding of relationships and trust that we will be able to address any of the significant challenges we face.

Rev. Dr. Dawn Roginski

Current Position: Director of Evangelical Mission

Previous Positions: Interim Pastor, St. Andrew's Lutheran, San Mateo, Pastor of merged congregation, United in Grace, Vallejo, 2-point call, St. Paul's and Holy Trinity, Vallejo, Specialized call-Coalition of Welcoming Congregations, Berkeley, Pastor of Parish programs, St. Francis, San Francisco, Ten years in mental health including as Program Director



Congregational Membership: Messiah Lutheran, Redwood City

Date and Year of Ordination: May 13, 2007

Education and Earned Degrees: BA, Psychology MA, Counseling Psychology MDiv, Luther Seminary DMin, Pacific School of Religion

List up to three current or past Synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

I currently serve as the DEM of the Synod. I was chair of the witness disciple team for many years and also worked with other teams. I served on the synod council as an at-large member before taking the position of DEM.

List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

I have been a part of faith-based community organizing in San Francisco, East Bay, and Vallejo. I have participated in many community groups in Vallejo and was well-known as an activist pastor in Vallejo. I have worked in interfaith groups in San Francisco, East Bay, and Vallejo.

What gifts would you bring to the Office of the Bishop of this Synod? God has gifted me with the innate ability to listen to God through scripture and prayer, as well as to comprehensively listen to people. I not only listen with my ears but also read the body language and emotions of others. I diligently maintain a calming presence that translates into safe spaces for change. This safe, calming space fosters and continues to build healing change addressing racism, homophobia, and sexism. I am self-aware, with a strong desire for continuous growth and learning,

leading to a more developed cultural competency. I have the ability to generate ideas and implement them while also empowering others to join me in the effort. Lastly, I am gaining a deeper understanding of how the Synod functions due to my position of DEM and working closely with the bishop and others in the office of the bishop.

Describe your leadership style:

My leadership style, in supervisory roles has been and continues to be collaborative. This means I first seek to ensure the entire team understands their role(s) and train or retrain those new to the team and/or when more clarity is needed. In my daily course of work, I empower and encourage the team to fulfill their duties. While encouraging creativity and autonomy, I also check in regularly to ensure the whole team is working towards common goals.

Communication is an essential and chief part of my leadership style. That being said, the most significant characteristic of my leadership is to continuously create space that allows every individual to be the unique creation of God that they are.

Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as Bishop of this Synod:

I have been a pastor for many years in different settings and now believe that God is calling me to consider serving the Synod in another role. Therefore, as others have confirmed this by encouraging me to allow my name to go forward, including a former bishop (Bp. Mark), I am discerning this new path. These trustworthy people looked at my struggle for expansiveness, inclusion, equity, and my cooperative leadership and told me I had gifts useful for a bishop for this particular time in the life of the Synod. I took their words to heart. I then took those words to prayer, especially contemplative prayer, so I could create the space for God to speak to my heart. I did close readings of all the materials sent and the synod constitution to gain a better understanding of the call. I also took time to journal and pray around this process of completing the forms. I will continue this process of listening to others, listening to God, and listening to my own heart.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six years, and how would you address it?

The biggest challenge for the next few years is healing as well as learning to trust each other again. The principal way for the bishop, staff, and synod council to address this challenge is by collectively engaging in a regular practice of prayer, which will equip us to do more listening than talking. The listening would need to occur in a variety of settings; conferences, large groups, both geographical and non-geographical, small groups, individual conversations, and opportunities for people to share stories anonymously. In addition, a listening team of mental health professionals and pastoral counselors would listen as well and would assist the office of the bishop and council to interpret what was said. These listenings would then guide us in discerning a way forward and developing a solid strategic plan.

What are your top three priorities for this Synod?

1. Conduct a deep investigation into the structure of the Synod. Fully staff the office of the bishop and synod teams. Conduct training and develop competencies based on redeveloped job descriptions. Communicate often to all bishop staff and synod teams.
2. Develop models of shared leadership and other tools to help small congregations in their ministry. Ensure training for leaders in these congregations, using available resources and developing new resources where needed. Provide technical, emotional, logistical, and other types of support to congregations as they engage in this work.
3. Utilize available training resources to assist congregational leadership with best practices for leading a congregation as well as congregation vitality (redevelopment). Develop new and progressive training resources for congregations to deepen their cultural competence and ability to reach out to their neighbors.



Jeff R. Johnson

Current Position: Pastor, University Lutheran Chapel of Berkeley

Previous Positions: Spiritual Care Team, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, (2013 onward); Pastor, First United Lutheran, SF (1990-1999) Mission Developer, Lutheran Lesbian and Gay Ministries, SF (1990 - 1995); HIV Education Director, Lutheran Social Services of N. California, SF (1988-1989); Assistant Night Minister, San Francisco Night Ministry (1987 - 1988); Intern, Lutheran Office of Public Policy & First English Lutheran, Sacramento (1986-87)

Congregational Membership: University Lutheran Chapel of Berkeley

Date and Year of Ordination: January 20, 1990, St. Paulus Lutheran Church, San Francisco

Education and Earned Degrees: 1988 - Master of Divinity, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA 1984 - Bachelor of Arts, German; 1984 - Bachelor of Arts, History California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, CA Honors: Summa cum laude, 1984 Honors Colloquium of Scholars Speaker, Departmental Assistant - History, President's Scholarship, Dean's Honor List

List up to three current or past Synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

I believe in organizational systems that are transparent, sustainable, fair, efficient, and responsive. My commitment to a ministry that is innovative, collaborative, and regional has been informed by many years of service:

On a national and synodical level: two terms as SF Conference Dean; two terms on the Synod Council and Synod executive committee; a term on the Board for National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. (grant-making endowment); and a term on the LUMIN Campus Ministry Board.

On a regional level: organizing with Lutheran Volunteer Corps; the formation of a network of new young adult volunteer houses in Oakland/Berkeley.

On a movement level: my leadership within the "Goodsoil" movement for the full participation of LGBT people within the church, and as a primary organizer of the non-violent civil disobedience demonstrations at churchwide events (1990-Chicago, 2001-Indianapolis, 2005-Orlando); as a founder of Lutheran Lesbian & Gay Ministries and president of the Extraordinary Candidacy Project; as a regional director within Lutherans Concerned North America (Reconciling Works); and as a board member with Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries.

List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod: A decade of service on the PLTS Spiritual Care team underscores my commitment to the formation, mentoring, and care of leaders for our church.

My commitment to international solidarity is reflected in my participation on multiple delegations to occupied Palestine (2012, Bright Stars of Bethlehem) and El Salvador, a sabbatical to study Spanish (2010, Cetzalcoatl, Cuernavaca, Mexico), and my continuing membership on the Board of Directors of SHARE El Salvador (2010 to present).

My deep commitment to interfaith collaboration and civic leadership around advocacy, justice, equity, and inclusion can be seen through my involvement with Religious Witness with Homeless People (San Francisco, 1990s),

Telegraph Area Association's Addiction/Recovery Task Force (2005); the Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy (Oakland, 2005-2015); the Mayor's Sanctuary Task Force (Berkeley, 2018-pandemic); and the East Bay Interfaith Immigration Coalition (Berkeley, 2008-pandemic).

What gifts would you bring to the Office of the Bishop of this Synod?

In the proclamation of the gospel, the practice of spiritual care, and the structural/administrative work of the church, I lead with joy, optimism, energy, and enthusiasm. I am resilient, resolute, respectful, and trustworthy.

Years ago, when I was ordained, the ELCA was mired with policies that officially discriminated against LGBT rostered leaders and our supporting parishes. I have experienced the soul-crushing, career-destroying, ministry-thwarting power that leaders expertly wield. And against all odds, I have seen so many cultivate courage, bravery, innovation, and fidelity.

I have worked hard to upend the ELCA's enmeshment with injustice, to create parallel structures to sustain and credential leaders, and to bring our denominational policies in line with the gospel we proclaim.

Throughout, I have baptized, confirmed, and married; curated liturgy, preached and organized community; balanced budgets and created endowments; served on councils, boards, and committees; cultivated vocations; nurtured service; and forged solidarity. I have picketed and protested, invoked sanctuary, built resistance to supremacy, and confronted structural sin.

Describe your leadership style:

Flexible, honest, bold, and collaborative are words that colleagues might use to describe my style of leadership.

I serve best in a position of leadership among teams with other leaders where new ideas are cultivated, robust and difficult conversations are cherished, and relationships are respected.

I am an innovator and delegator and believe in shared responsibility and accountability. As we seek new experiments in our regions, conferences, and neighborhoods, we need stability, flexibility, and sustainability at the center of our synodical structure. I can help to restore this.

Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as Bishop of this Synod:

I am humbled by the nominations I have received and, after prayer and consultation, have decided to allow my name to move ahead as part of our collective discernment.

Thank you to all who have spoken with me. I have heard you confess anger, fear, and frustration over the enormity of the challenge facing us. I have heard you identify the changes you seek. And I have heard your hopes and your dreams for our collective work in the world. Your courage inspires me. Your willingness to embrace one another through difficulty sustains me. Please reach out to me in advance of the upcoming assembly (pastor@ulcberkeley.org) as we keep discerning together.

I am grateful for your commitment to the ongoing mending and rebuilding we need to do. My intention is to serve for a single term to continue our common work, repair relationships, and restore confidence.

The Holden Prayer sustained me during the pandemic. May it guide our discernment: "O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown, giving faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that God's hand is leading us and God's love supporting us."

What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six years, and how would you address it?

In March, Thomas Friedman wrote: "Everything, everywhere is going to change all at once." (NYT, 3/21/23). His topic was the advent of artificial intelligence but might just as well have been any number of overwhelming,

era-defining problems we face: the climate emergency and the collapse of planetary sustaining systems; the rise globally of antidemocratic authoritarian governments; desperation; mass migration; our enmeshment with the systemic evils of racism, misogyny, nationalism, heterosexism, etc.

Resiliency is our principal challenge if we are to weather the dramatic changes happening all around us. But we are not as ready as we need to be. For the problems ahead of us, our visions and programs can be too timid, our small congregations too tenuous, and our relationships too fragile. Our organizing around candidacy, mobility, and interim transitions can be too slow, overly bureaucratic, and anachronistic, sacrificing vital momentum and energy.

Now is the moment for initiatives that build resilience, strengthen connection and collaboration, and create a sustainable community. "Everything, everywhere, is going to change all at once."

What are your top three priorities for this Synod?

Resiliency requires sustainable resource management, stronger regional work, and deeper connections with neighborhood partners.

First, we need to connect our ministries deeply (through faith-based community organizing) to the interests of civic, ecumenical, and interfaith partners around us on the issues that matter in our neighborhoods.

Second, we need stronger conference connections going beyond programmatic collaboration. As independent parishes, we are vulnerable and need to build stronger ties with each other: interdependent decision-making; collaborative pastoral teams; shared priorities, space and administrative support; joint call processes; etc.

Third, for more than a decade, we have spent more money than we have generated, raiding reserves and selling property to fund our deficits, subsidizing structural inefficiencies, and reducing funding for mission and churchwide. We are weaker because of this. We are accountable for today's spending to those who will come later. Sustainable budgeting, effective property management, and effective reserve stewardship offer the renewable resources we need for our mission, increased benevolence, and our operating plan.



John B. Valentine

Current Position: Sr. Pastor and Head-of-Staff at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Orinda, CA (since 2003)

Previous Positions:

Senior Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Victorville, CA (1994-2003)

Associate Pastor at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Paradise Valley, AZ (1988-1994)

Interim Pastor at Alzona Lutheran Church/La Iglesia Luterana Alzona (1989)

Congregational Membership: Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Orinda, CA

Date and Year of Ordination: September 26, 1988

Education and Earned Degrees:

University of California (Berkeley) -- A.B. (History) 1992

Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary (St. Paul) -- M.Div. 1987

Luther Seminary (St. Paul) -- D.Min. (Homiletics) 2009

List up to three current or past Synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

Conference Dean -- I've served four terms as a Conference Dean in the Pacifica and Sierra Pacific Synods -- including my current service as the Dean of the Mt. Diablo Conference.

Resolutions Committee Member -- I've served multiple terms on the Resolutions Committee of the Sierra Pacific Synod, including appointment as Chair on eight separate occasions.

Finance Committee Member -- I've served multiple terms on the Finance Committee of the Sierra Pacific Synod, concluding most recently in 2021.

List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

Since 2007, I've served as Licensee and Executive Director of the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center (a non-profit subsidiary of Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church providing daycare services to persons who have dementia, developing a program that makes a tangible difference in the lives of hurting families.)

From 2010 to 2014, I served as Chair of the Town of Moraga's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. We were tasked with listening to the community, identifying unsafe traffic conditions for drivers, bikers, and pedestrians, and recommending improvements.

From 1995 to 2003, I served as a coach in the High Desert Youth Soccer League -- teaching, equipping, and encouraging kids of diverse ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

What gifts would you bring to the Office of the Bishop of this Synod?

A PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL EMBODIED IN JESUS, as well as the biblical witness to that Gospel and for its articulation in the theological movement known as "Lutheranism."

A PASTORAL HEART, rooted in the awareness that ministry is grounded in relationships with, rather than power over. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCY with finances, organizational processes, and staff management. (I currently serve as Head of Staff of a congregation with 34 employees and also act as Licensee of two state-licensed programs.) THE ABILITY TO FACILITATE MEANINGFUL INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE, because countless good ideas are just 'good ideas' until we figure out how to actually make them happen.

LIVED EXPERIENCE WITH MERGERS As one who has served for two decades in a merged congregation, I know first-hand both the pitfalls and promises of congregational mergers.

THE ABILITY TO PREACH AND LEAD WORSHIP IN BOTH SPANISH AND ENGLISH Albeit many years ago, the paired congregations wherein I interned were both Spanish-language-primary sites.

A SOBER AWARENESS THAT SERVING AS A BISHOP IS HARD WORK The expectations attached to the Office of Bishop within our church conspire to ensure that a bishop's work is never done. But I'm blessed with a spirit of diligence (or maybe stubbornness?) for facing just such a challenge.

Describe your leadership style:

It is often said to aspiring pastors and preachers that the work of ministry is to "afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted." I suspect such could well be said of leaders more generally. In the face of crisis, true leaders need to embody a spirit of calm and reason, patience and hope. In the face of organizational bewilderment and confusion, a spirit of focus and direction. In the face of stagnancy, a spirit of challenge and opportunity. In the face of uncertainty, a spirit of change. No one leadership 'style' is appropriate to every situation. Rather, real leaders must assess a given situation and ask, 'What is needed here and now?' and then act on that assessment. That being said, people who have worked with me say that -- as a leader -- I am flexible, collegial, and caring, that I aspire to consensus, and that I will not ask others what I would not expect of myself.

Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as Bishop of this Synod:

I am open to serving as Bishop simply because I have been asked by folks whom I respect from throughout our Synod to be open to such a possibility. Were one to ask me if I feel particularly 'called' to the position of Bishop within our Synod, I would hesitate to say 'yes' -- for I have long believed that while the Spirit may well stir within us to each of us to create an internal sense of 'calling,' it is the external call (the formal 'calling' of the Church as the gathered people of God) that confirms and indeed ratifies the Spirit's work. Nonetheless, as I listened to members of our conference assembly this spring, their perception of the manifold needs of our Synod at this particular moment in its history, combined with their observations of gifts that they believe I might bring to the table, have evoked within me words which Mordecai first spoke to Esther at a challenging moment in Israel's history:

"Who knows? Perhaps you have come to (your position) for just such a time as this." (Esther 4:14)

What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six years, and how would you address it?

The real challenge faced by the Sierra Pacific Synod is that we must tackle two substantive challenges, neither of which can wait!

The first challenge involves resetting a synodical culture that has been less than ideal for at least the past two decades. During my two decades within the Sierra Pacific Synod, our unstated primary goal has been 'keeping the peace' at all costs. We've avoided making hard decisions at every juncture, as witnessed by our adopting a 'mission statement' with some 17(!) identified targets and our annual approval of unbalanced budgets because we don't want to say 'no' to anyone. Our Synod cannot and will not be functional (and move toward a degree of institutional healthiness) until such time as we honor honest disagreement over dishonest 'agreement.' And to reset our corporate culture, we need a bishop and a Synod Council that will dare to lead.

The second challenge has to do with equipping congregations to face the challenges of our region's changing religious landscape. Most of our congregations face aging membership rolls, shrinking budgets, and increasing facility-maintenance costs. Equipping congregations to live into God's calling in the face of those realities is a daunting challenge -- for it will require some to chart new courses, others to partner or merge, and still others to recognize that their congregation's lifespan is coming to a close. And to face this challenge, we must learn to work together, trust one another, and support one another as we can -- and this, too, will require effective leadership.

Addressing either one of these alone would be a major hurdle. Addressing them simultaneously will TRULY be a challenge!

What are your top three priorities for this Synod?

RESETTING OUR INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE: As noted above, the Sierra Pacific Synod has -- for years -- been an anxious entity. Our corporate anxiety has manifested itself in a whole lot of reactive behaviors, e.g., blaming, withdrawing, and avoiding. In order for the Synod to become both a responsible and responsive system, we need a 'hard reset' of our corporate culture, starting with the Synod Council and the Synod in Assembly. Priority Number One would be equipping the Synod Council to become a healthy and effective governance board, one which is able to live into its calling to oversee the ministry of the Synod, its Bishop, and its staff.

EQUIPPING CONGREGATIONS TO LIVE INTO THEIR GODLY FUTURE: As noted above, congregational ministry in the 21st century is challenging. Our society is more 'wired' than ever, more divided than ever, and more 'post-Christian' than ever, and we're unsure what ministry ought to look like in the face of those changed realities. Because the ELCA is structured as a union of congregations, it is congregations that are the primary manifestation of our ministry together. Thus Priority Number Two would be equipping congregations to live into God's calling in their context and in the face of 21st-century realities.

SUPPORTING ROSTERED MINISTERS: Supporting rostered leaders (and supporting those seeking to join that roster) is essential to our work and life together. But it has too often been neglected due to other identified 'priorities.' Isn't it time we get back to basics and ensure that our pastors and deacons are well-supported, well-equipped, and well-encouraged in their labors as servant-leaders?



John Matthew Kuehner

Current Position: Pastor, Unity Lutheran of South San Francisco and Bridge Pastor at St. Andrew's Lutheran of San Mateo

Previous Positions:

Franklin Templeton Investments VP, Research, Information Consulting (2006 – 2009)

VP, Research and Product Strategy (2002 – 2006)

Director, Marketing Research and Product Development (2000 – 2002)

Manager, Product Research (1996 – 2000)

Senior Analyst, Product Research (1993 – 1996)

Customer Service Representative, Shareholder Services (1992 – 1993)

Congregational Membership: Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church dba Unity Lutheran Church

Date and Year of Ordination: June 9, 2013

Education and Earned Degrees: Master of Divinity, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (2009 – 2013)

BA, Business Economics, University of California Santa Barbara (1988 – 1992)

List up to three current or past Synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

Dean of San Francisco Peninsula (2016 – 2019, 2022 to present)

Sierra Pacific Synod Finance Committee (2014 – 2022)

Sierra Pacific Synod Council Lay Representative (2007 – 2010) and Council Chair Pro Tem (2009 – 2010)

List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

Relief Chaplain at Stanford Hospital & Clinics (2010 – 2020)

Free Monthly Lunch and Food Pantry at Unity (2013 to present)

What gifts would you bring to the Office of the Bishop of this Synod?

The greatest gift I feel I could bring to the office is the ability to work with and through conflict based on my past corporate and pastoral opportunities.

Prior to becoming a pastor, I worked for a financial institution to gain expertise in analytics, research, product development, client service, budgeting, and marketing. This skill set would complement what is required of the bishop's role. Additionally, I have years of experience managing large teams in multiple locations, as well as creating and presenting strategic proposals.

As a pastor, I had the unique opportunity to journey with three congregations in South San Francisco, San Bruno, and Millbrae to become Unity Lutheran Church, which provided a wonderful opportunity on how to work together through challenges and, yes, conflict. The ability to share concerns and provide intentional space for discussions led the congregations through personal and spiritual struggles of creating a single church. For ten years, I worked as a sole, on-call overnight chaplain for both Stanford and Lucile Packard Hospitals. These moments provided invaluable exposure to triage incoming spiritual care needs and crisis management in a fast-paced environment.

Describe your leadership style:

I believe my leadership style is a participative/democratic style.

If our Synod is defined by our relationships with one another, leading with a goal of collaboration and input is critical to building trust and care with one another. Although this leadership style requires more time, it can lead to

authentic momentum and energy in our efforts to discern together what God might be calling us to do.

I also feel it's important to have organizational "checks and balances." Why? It allows for a greater exchange of ideas among groups and for every individual in the Synod to know they are not alone. As siblings in Christ, we are all accountable to and supported by one another.

A leader should always be ready to receive constructive feedback from others. In fact, if we allow time in our conversations and meetings to ask for feedback, it doesn't have to be seen as a negative experience. We all, including myself, need to remember we are beautiful "works in progress," and that mindset may help us to be more receptive to feedback.

Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as Bishop of this Synod:

My recent discernment has centered around the question of whether I have the right gifts, skills, and composure to serve our Synod in the role of bishop. For the first time, I am formally submitting my paperwork for our Synod to consider. As other nominees may be experiencing, it has been many feelings of back and forth. Like each congregation in our Synod, the gifts, potential opportunities, and fascinating challenges of Unity and St Andrew's continue to inspire and energize me. The gifts, opportunities, and challenges are also present and meaningful for our Synod, too, yet certainly at a significant, compounding magnitude.

With that, every effort for all of us, but equally for our next bishop, is to take time to gain greater awareness of oneself and greater awareness of others. I do feel that the Spirit is calling for me to explore serving as bishop with our Synod and for our Synod to consider if I or other colleagues have the gifts needed to serve for this time and place.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six years, and how would you address it?

I feel the biggest challenge is how we truly embrace relationships that model collaboration and support for one another - if we don't do this well, then it begs the question, "Why have a synod?". Does that sound drastic? Perhaps. However, if we find it hard to answer that question, it leads to less engagement and greater detachment from a synod that is based on mutually supportive relationships, to begin with.

One might address this by creating a structure and process that truly encourages and praises collaboration between congregations, as well as more "hands-on" support from the office of the bishop and synod council, not to be confused with oversight or control. How might conferences build pilot programs, synodical resources accompany and support congregations around ministry ideas, and the Synod develop alternative income sources? True collaboration and support are recognized when people begin to answer the previous question of "Why have a synod?" by saying, "I need my synod."

What are your top three priorities for this Synod?

1. Meet conflicts with a non-anxious approach. Provide opportunities to "Name the Unnamable." Always encourage "the other side of an argument." Interact with one another with degrees of accountability in our communication (Alternative Positive Perspective, Gentle Guide, Genuine Appeal, Serious Sit Down).

2. Allow for more organizational "checks and balances" in our Synod. These mechanisms can actually help groups and individuals know they are not alone and aid our desire for mutual understanding, collaboration, and support for one another. This could include ongoing leadership, feedback, and critique from ADLA, ADML, conference of deans, EDLARJ, ELM, RW, and other organizations to guide the bishop, staff, and synod council.

3. Transparent financial stewardship and budgets. Our priorities are where the money goes. Let's make it clear and accessible. We are also asking people to consider stewardship to the Synod; how might we, in turn, model good stewardship with transparent information and shepherding those gifts?



Katy Grindberg

*Current Position: Director of Contextual Education and Lecturer,
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary*

Previous Positions: Assistant to the Bishop, Sierra Pacific Synod (2011-2020);

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

Assistant Athletic Trainer & Instructor, University of Kansas (1994-2002)

Congregational Membership: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Oakland, CA

Date and Year of Ordination: February 23, 2008

Education and Earned Degrees: MA, Liturgical Studies, GTU, Berkeley, CA 2009;

MDiv, PLTS, Berkeley, CA 2006;

MSe Exercise Science, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 2000;

BS Athletic Training, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND, 1991

List up to three current or past Synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

1. I served as an Assistant to the Bishop in the Sierra Pacific for nearly nine years. My knowledge of the congregations and ministries of the Synod would help me as I learn the more recent goings on of the ministries, conferences, and cooperative ministries. The relationships that I have with lay leaders,

deacons, pastors & non-profit leaders in and outside the Synod provide a strong framework for knowledge, perspective, advice, and collegiality.

2. I currently serve on the faculty of an ELCA seminary. The past three years have provided new experiences and insights into “church” and what current and future leaders are hoping for for the ELCA and individual congregations and ministries. As Director of Contextual Education, I work with students, pastors, deacons, and non-profit leaders across the county, as I steward an increasing network of relationships.

3. I have served on the worship staff for three ELCA Churchwide Assemblies. I have worked with colleagues from the churchwide offices and around the ELCA to plan and execute daily worship during the Assemblies. Experiencing the dedication of the voting members as they seek to do go work on behalf of all of us has been humbling.

List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

1. Leadership Council of Genesis – an affiliate organization of the Gamaliel community organizing network working in the Bay Area, with one year of service as co-chair.

2. Sunrise Christian Food Ministry, Citrus Heights, CA – an ecumenical food ministry. Located at Advent Lutheran Church, my engagement ranged from direct contact with those being served to pastoral care and support of the volunteers.

3. American Red Cross – for many years, I was a CPR and First Aid course instructor in both Kansas and California. Engaging with folks who were interested in becoming equipped to be of service to others was a joy!

What gifts would you bring to the Office of the Bishop of this Synod?

I love God and enjoy being with the people that God loves. I am curious, easy to be around, and I care deeply about other people. I am passionate about every person’s belovedness, and that commits me to words and actions of justice.

I am organized and pastoral, and I have the capacity for understanding and navigating larger systems and structures while paying attention to

interpersonal relationships and dynamics. I have institutional knowledge of the Synod and a deep web of existing relationships in and outside the Synod.

I have experience and competency working in areas of diversity, equity & inclusion. I am committed to engaging in this work with humility and curiosity. I work actively with others involved in anti-racism and learn from and with them. I seek out opportunities for continued growth, including a monthly ecumenical accountability group.

I have a rich prayer life, which at its heart, for me, is about resting in God's delight.

Describe your leadership style:

Habits that I embody as a leader are consistency, honesty, good humor, and trustworthiness. People can depend on me to be present, supportive, and responsive. I am flexible and adaptable to changing conditions and ideas.

I tend to hold a 'big-picture' orientation to projects and leadership. While holding the vision, I also am able to be attentive to the tasks and people needed to bring those tasks to fulfillment. When working with capable people, I empower them to tend to their parts of the work and deal with my portions while remaining collaborative, consultative, and supportive of others.

I hold high expectations for myself, and I enjoy working with others and do better work as part of a team. There is joy in this work we get to do together on behalf of the gospel, so I also embody fun and playfulness.

Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as Bishop of this Synod:

Being aware of the privilege and joy of serving as Bishop, but even more the toll serving as Bishop takes on a person, I have approached this season of discernment with care. I have asked a lot of questions – of myself, God, trusted colleagues, friends, and family (deep thanks to everyone who has

listened, prayed, and offered their counsel). I have listened to people who have asked me to consider making myself available for this call – asking them questions about what gifts they see in me and how those gifts relate to their perceptions of the needs of the Sierra Pacific Synod at this time.

I remain in ongoing prayerful discernment seeking the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. I have been meeting monthly with a spiritual director for many years, and this process continues to be part of our conversations. I return again and again in prayer to this question and keep receiving an answer that I am being called to be available.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six years, and how would you address it?

Discerning and living into what it means to be the church in this time - together and in our own contexts.

One key to addressing it will be collaboration – the synod staff, synod council, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries all connecting with each other in discernment that leads to decisions and movement in Spirit-led directions.

We need conversations centered around mission & vision, finances, & creative sustainability. We need to have conversations about our relevance to ourselves and our communities and our role in climate change and creation care. We must wrestle together with our inheritance of White body supremacy culture and the roles we play in it – both individually and institutionally.

I hope that these conversations will lead to being re-ignited for the mission of God. And that, with God's help, we can create new pathways and systems to be a more just synod and live lives rooted in God's call to mercy, justice, and love in our own corners of the vineyard.

What are your top three priorities for this Synod?

1. Developing meaningful relationships with rostered ministers and lay leaders of the Synod, as well as partners in ministry, including ecumenical & inter-religious relationships.

2. Addressing staffing challenges. I will work with congregations, synod staff & others to creatively imagine models of leadership appropriate to contexts and resources. Acknowledging the challenges of costs of living and congregational capacity, I commit to recruiting the best possible candidates to serve the ministries of the Sierra Pacific Synod.

3. Together, creatively and collaboratively reimagining ministry in this time, in our contexts. This will take all of us. No one person as Bishop can make this happen without the active participation of others in and across the Synod. We need the energy and willingness to show up with and for each other to pray, dream, and try together. We need a spirit of experimentation and the resilience to learn from failure & regroup and try again.



Lori Keyser-Boswell

Current Position: Co-Pastor - Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Yreka

Previous Positions: Co-Pastor - Maddock Lutheran Parish, Maddock, ND

Congregational Membership: Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Yreka

Date and Year of Ordination: September 1991

Education and Earned Degrees: BA, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA, 1983 MDiv, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA 1989

List up to three current or past Synod or churchwide experiences that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

Northern Mountain Valley Conference Dean

List up to three current or past community activities that would inform your service as Bishop of this Synod:

1. Board Member, Siskiyou Domestic Violence & Crisis Center 1999-present
2. Member of initial meetings creating Beacon of Hope Mission (to shelter those experiencing homelessness)
3. Co-chair of Grange Ecumenical Hot Meals and coordinator of the annual community Thanksgiving dinner

What gifts would you bring to the Office of the Bishop of this Synod?

My strongest gifts are empathy and listening. The Spirit uses this gift to strengthen my discernment - hearing and identifying deeper meanings behind people's pain, joy, and needs. Multiple life experiences of loss and apparent failures have honed my gift of imagination; I use this gift in collaboration with others as we experiment with and implement previously untried strategies.

My passion for those abused and isolated by the world and sometimes the Church encourages me to be humble makes me a voice for justice while still listening to the heart of those who disagree. My sojourn as a tri-vocational pastor can make me a safe place for rostered leaders and congregations who do not fit the image that is often associated with success. I would hope this would enable all to look for new ways of being Christ's Body in their setting.

Describe your leadership style:

One might describe my leadership as a blend of cheerleader and mother. I encourage others as they use their gifts to complete tasks our team has with an ear to how team members are faring emotionally. I do not own the successes of the team I lead, nor do I own any ideas I bring to the team. I prefer planning and visioning to use a "Yes, and" model: each participant building on previous ideas even if the final product looks very different from the initial inspiration. I prefer a consensus model for decision-making, even as I recognize that not all team decisions will be unanimous. When I must confront a team member, I do so in private mindful of their personal communication style. Whether I am facilitating meetings, speaking individually with team members, or serving as the public face of an organization, I do so mindful of trauma-informed best practices.

Describe your discernment process in being open to serving as Bishop of this Synod:

This process has caused me a great deal of soul-searching. When I was first suggested, my initial response was that I was unworthy; I am, after all, a part-time pastor of a tiny congregation exploring what it means to struggle financially while still sensing a mission.

I did not say "No" because I firmly believe that the Holy Spirit moves in unexpected ways. As I requested others pray for the process, I continually heard words of affirmation and encouragement. When my doubts would keep rising, I found myself reminded of advice spoken by my Teaching Parish pastor, Donna Duensing, as I doubted my ability to serve due to my then-young age. She had me look to Jeremiah 1.6-8, especially 7 and 8 ...but YHWH said, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' Now go wherever I send you. And say whatever I command you. Do not fear anyone, for I am with you to protect you. It is YHWH who speaks," With those words echoing in my mind and the goading of the Holy Spirit, I am moving forward.

What do you see as the principal challenge to this Synod in the next six years, and how would you address it?

Our Sierra Pacific Synod has experienced so much trauma in recent years this has exacerbated historical trauma in the lives of members, leaders, and congregations. The CoVid pandemic turned our world inside out. Our 2022 Assembly, including the months preceding it and the decisions afterward, has emotionally and spiritually wounded us. Natural, climate-related disasters have struck nearly every community to which we are sent. Our individual and communal wounds are actually an opportunity to grow in our relationship with our Savior. First and second-generation Christians came to Jesus with wounds and traumas; in him, they found healing and, from the experience of being loved, were moved to go out and offer healing and love to those they met. Our next bishop needs to build on the good work of Bishop Burkat in bringing healing. Yes, membership is low, and finances are a constant concern; these need addressing, but it must begin with healing our trauma. Whether bishop or not, I commit to this.

What are your top three priorities for this Synod?

Our first priority is healing; I wrote of that above and will let those words suffice with the addition of finding tools to offer care and support healing amongst our rostered leaders.

As the ELCA, we need to prioritize commitment to spiritual renewal. It is said, "The Church of the Reformation must always be reforming." Our Sierra

Pacific Synod can be at the forefront of this. Utilizing resources from the ELCA or identifying local creators, let us encourage the faith practices of scripture study, prayer, and service.

A third priority for our synod is to be prophets of God's unconditional grace and desire for justice. As leaders, the staff and synod council can model this. Again, we can share resources, even talking points, to equip our membership to counteract the hatred, prejudice, and emotional abuse that is spoken of within Christendom. I recognize I am not identifying structure or finances as priorities. Recently I heard Bishop Curry encourage a gathering to not worry about parochial statistics or facts and figures. Instead, he posited that if we focus on loving God, loving neighbor, and loving self, we will work our way out of this current misery. I choose love.

Synod Council Elections

Synod Council Positions

for Election at this Assembly

S10.01. The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, and at least one youth and at least one young adult, shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.

1. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America from this synod, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.
2. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be three years.

S10.01.C16 *The Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee shall nominate at least one person as Youth member to be elected by the Synod Assembly for a two-year term. Additional nominations may come from the Nominating Committee, conference gatherings, or floor of the Synod Assembly. Each conference gathering may nominate one person; and nominations shall take into consideration the need to ensure diversity and representational principles in elected leadership. In accordance with †S6.04.02., the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service.*

S10.01.D16. The three members-at-large shall be elected from nominations made by the Nominating Committee, by conference gatherings, or from the floor of the Synod Assembly. Each conference gathering may nominate one person; and nominations shall take into consideration the need to ensure diversity and representational principles in elected leadership. Members-at-large shall be elected for three-year terms, arranged in three classes so that one at-large position is elected each year. The election of the at-large Council member at each Assembly shall take place after the elections for any other Council positions are completed.

To nominate someone for one of these Synod Council positions, complete a Nomination Form and give it to the Election Committee. Nomination Forms can be found at the staff table in the ballroom.

Synod Council Nomination Form

Name: Makayla Holeman

Congregation, City, and State:

St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA

Synod Council position of interest:

Youth Member (2-year term)

I have read the Synod Council member position description and the Sierra Pacific Synod Council Covenant: Yes



Why I wish to serve:

I wish to run for another term of the youth position because over my time serving my last term as youth representative I have learned how to communicate better, see from other's perspective, learned so much more about our synod and the churches, and most importantly how to be a better leader in my community. It also highlighted for me something that we say a lot in our synod that the youth are both the present and future of the church. Serving in the youth position has allowed me to see how powerful our youth of the synod can be. I would like to continue to serve as the youth representative because it has taught me to appreciate my own voice and the power that the youth hold in changing the church for the better.

Name of 2023 Synod Assembly Voting Member who nominated you:

Rev. Kristen Moore

Please share some of your experiences and gifts that you will bring to the position:

Some experiences and gifts that I will bring to the position is that I listen to other people's points of views and take them into consideration before I do things. I also strive for transparency between myself and my peers at school when we do work. I currently also serve as the president of the Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee so the youth committee and synod council would have a direct connection with each other.

Demographics: Female, Youth (Under The Age of 18)

Synod Council Nomination Form

Name: Traci Angel

Congregation, City, and State: St. Paul's Lutheran Family,
Carson City, NV

Synod Council position of interest: Synod Council: At-Large
Member (3-year term)



I have read the Synod Council member position description and the Sierra Pacific Synod Council Covenant: Yes

Why I wish to serve:

I would like to volunteer to serve on this council; my decision to run was not taken lightly. In first Corinthians Paul is still dealing with the Jews and Gentiles debate. He sums it up nicely when he writes, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved." I do my very best to live everyday to the glory of God. That motivation, compounded with the importance of being a part of and involved with my community that my parents instilled has convinced me to take a bigger role in the service of others. I've been involved in many facts of our church, but believe that I can bring a needed perspective to this position.

Name of 2023 Synod Assembly Voting Member who nominated you:
Conference 4

Please share some of your experiences and gifts that you will bring to the position:

I was born and raised in our church and now my kids are growing up in the church. I am fortunate to work with our youth in our congregation and lucky for me I found my joy in working with them. This has been an enlightening experience for nearly two decades now. I am a domestic and sexual violence advocate which means see ugly and hurt every day and it is my faith that gives me hope and light. I have served on church council, call committees, state wide committees over the years. I know that if I am voted as a member I will be an advocate for all. I am also aware I will be coming in after some hardship. The philosopher Marcus Aurelius said, "It is the responsibility of leadership to work intelligently with what is given, and not waste time fantasizing about a world of flawless people and perfect choices." I understand that we don't have flawless people that have made perfect choices, but want to support my church and my Synod to the best of my ability. Our church is over the mountains in a land in our Synod where at times has seemed like the forgotten. I will take this into consideration and work to be assured all areas in our Synod have a voice. As I say all the time all our communities and churches are special and unique much as our Synod!

Demographics: Female

Synod Council Nomination Form

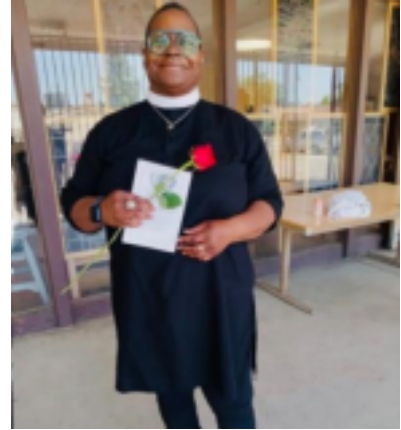
Name: Dr. Sigrid Horton (Elliott)

Congregation, City, and State:

Messiah Lutheran Church, Redwood City, CA

Synod Council position of interest:

Synod Council: At-Large Member (3-year term)



I have read the Synod Council member position description and the Sierra Pacific Synod Council Covenant: Yes

Why I wish To Serve: I know that representation matters and want people who look like me to know that darkness is holy and they are fully holy and blessed by God. I wish to use my voice to lead this synod into increased cultural competency towards all BIPOC people. My name was lifted up by another person in this synod and I have discerned a call to follow through with the trust placed in me.

Name of 2023 Synod Assembly Voting Member Who Nominated You: Pastor Julie Kelly

Please share some of your experiences and gifts that you will bring to the position: I am a proud, Black, queer, female seminarian called by God to continually choose and “get into good trouble” in the Lutheran church. I am very aware what it is like to be the only Black person in groups of people and have learned how to use my voice. I do not pretend to speak for all BIPOC people but I have an understanding and personal knowledge of what we experience everyday, just moving within a society that still has important work to do around issues of race.

Synod Council Nomination Form

Name: Rashelle Rew

Congregation, City, and State: Shepherd of the Hills
Lutheran Church, Berkeley, CA

Synod Council position of interest:

Synod Council: At-Large Member (3-year term)



I have read the Synod Council member position description and the Sierra Pacific Synod Council Covenant: Yes

Why I wish to serve:

I wish to serve on synod council as an at-large member to help shape and represent the needs of this synod. I would like the opportunity to help provide guidance to our newly elected synod bishop by supporting in their adjustment to the role, long range planning, and setting goals and priorities. In this role, I also hope to create a sense of belonging for our synod as a whole and represent the needs of the congregants. As a young adult on council I wish to bring the sincere understanding of our youth, fully connect with their needs/wishes, use my older mentors for support and guidance along my path, find the best way to communicate with our youth and update and provide valuable knowledge that keeps youth connected to our synod. I would be honored to bring forth the synod as it continues to development and be successful.

Name of 2023 Synod Assembly Voting Member who nominated you:

Pastor Clare McElaney

Please share some of your experiences and gifts that you will bring to the position:

I hope to share my experiences in multiple ways. During my time at California Lutheran University, I served as treasure and vice president of our campus ELCA ministry organization called Lord of Life. Within this role I over saw our organizations budget requirements attending student government meetings to receive funds for our services and events, led worship services alongside campus pastors, designed goals as well as collaborated with our finical advisor in campus ministry. I attended two synod assemblies as a voting member where I helped to support my congregation to better under what is needed at campus ministry sites. I was also a Sunday School teacher during my time in college and connected with youth ministry and the needs children have within our church. As of today, I am a fourth-year public school teacher still working to connect and support our youth at all ages.

Demographics: Female, Lay, Young Adult (18-30)

Synod Council Nomination Form

Name: Bertha Castro



Congregation, City, and State: St Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, CA

Synod Council position of interest: Synod Council: At-Large Member (3-year term)

I have read the Synod Council member position description and the Sierra Pacific Synod Council Covenant: Yes

Why I wish to serve:

My name is Bertha Castro, I was born and raised in Mexico. I came to the USA at the age of 17. I am a wife, a mother of 4 children and a grandmother of 3. I worked for 25 years for Lodi Unified School District as a Community Liasion. Currently I serve on the Board of Directors of Lodi Breakthrough for Social Justice, and also in the Lodi Library Equity and Inclusion Advisory Board of Directors.

I came to the Lutheran church 5 years ago and I have seen how the Lutheran church strives to help underprivileged families, regardless of culture, language, color, gender and age with respect and love as Christ taught us.

I hope that the years I have of serving the underprivileged community serve to be elected as part of the Council of the Synode Sierra Pacifica Synod. I believe that I can be of great help if elected as a council member.

Name of 2023 Synod Assembly Voting Member who nominated you:

Pastor Mark Price, Lodi CA

Please share some of your experiences and gifts that you will bring to the position:

Since my early years in elementary school, I have always been motivated to serve our community, specifically, people who believe they have no voice because they think or feel that they are different from others due to their financial or social status.

My former job, my personality and being in different organizations in our community have given me the opportunity to encourage, educate and empower those same people.

I always try to empower people by letting them know that we are all children of God and are loved by him unconditionally. My goal has always been and will continue to be to work so that no human being suffers rejection in our community. We must work together for all to feel and know that we can do great work together in a community with faith, hope and love.

Demographics: Female, Person of Color, Primary Language other than English

Resolutions

Resolution 2023-01

Regarding Sierra Pacific Synod Compensation Guidelines

WHEREAS in 2011 the Sierra Pacific Synod in assembly adopted a process for determination of appropriate compensation for its Rostered Ministers; and

WHEREAS the process presumes that the Sierra Pacific Synod in assembly will annually modify the "baseline compensation" as appropriate to reflect current economic realities; and

WHEREAS for the period July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 the appropriate "baseline compensation" figure for full-time Rostered Ministers of the Sierra Pacific Synod was set at a level of \$63,484; and

WHEREAS the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, California and Nevada Consumer Price Index for the year 2022 acknowledged a cost-of-living increase of 5.29%; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod's 2023-2024 Compensation Guidelines set appropriate baseline compensation for full-time Rostered Ministers at a level of \$66,842.00; and be it further

RESOLVED that Sierra Pacific Synod's 2023-2024 Pulpit Supply Guidelines remain at:

One Service \$300,

One Service and Adult Class \$375,

Two Services \$375,

Two Services and Adult Class \$425;

and be it further

RESOLVED that Sierra Pacific Synod's 2023-2024 Pulpit Supply Guidelines stipulate that the travel mileage reimbursement rate be set at the current IRS standard mileage reimbursement rate at time of service; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod in assembly encourages all congregations to calculate compensation for their rostered ministers based on the compensation guidelines of the Sierra Pacific Synod.

Offered by the Leadership Discipling Team

Vetted by the Resolutions Committee on July 27, 2023

Resource-Impact Note: The Resolutions Committee does not anticipate that adoption of this resolution would substantially impact staff or property resources at either a congregational or synodical level. It would have significant fiscal impact on both congregational and synodical budgets, as compensation packages for all Sierra Pacific Synod Rostered Ministers would be expected to rise by roughly 5.3% during the period July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024.

Resolution 2023-02

Regarding Geographically-Constrained Positions on the Synod Council

WHEREAS the Sierra Pacific Synod anticipates that each of its geographically-constrained Synod Council members will serve as a liaison between the Synod Council and the conference from which they were elected; and

WHEREAS the Sierra Pacific Synod Constitution provision S10.06. states that "[i]f a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which she or he was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant"; and

WHEREAS the Sierra Pacific Synod Constitution +S10.01. and Continuing Resolution S10.01.A16. establish requirements which must be satisfied in order for a person to be elected to the Synod Council, including specifically that "[e]ach nominee to represent a Conference shall be a voting member of a congregation in that Conference"; and

WHEREAS the Sierra Pacific Synod bylaw S10.01.03. provides that members of the Synod Council appointed by the Council itself also "shall meet the qualifications for the position they are filling"; and

WHEREAS the last sentence of Continuing Resolution S10.01.B16., reading "[a] member elected as a representative of a Conference who subsequently moves out may continue to hold office until the end of that term, provided they continue to meet all other qualifications for office" stands in conflict with constitutional provision S10.06., bylaw S10.01.03., and the requirements for office established in S10.01.A16. when taken together; and

WHEREAS Sierra Pacific Synod Constitution +S18.31. allows the Synod Assembly to amend Continuing Resolutions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly amend Continuing Resolution S10.01.B16. by replacing the last sentence with "If a member elected or appointed as a representative of a Conference ceases to be a voting member of a congregation in that conference, the office shall at once become vacant. The vacancy shall be filled in accordance with S10.01.03 in conversation with the dean of said conference."

Offered by the El Camino Real Conference

Vetted by the Resolutions Committee on July 27, 2023

For reference, the amended Continuing Resolution S10.01.B16 would – in part – read thus:
Each Conference shall select two persons as nominees presented to the Synod Assembly; no additional nominations shall be permitted. The Assembly shall elect one of the two nominees of each Conference to serve on the Synod Council. ~~A member elected as a representative of a Conference who subsequently moves out may continue to hold office until the end of that term, provided they continue to meet all other qualifications for office.~~ If a member elected or appointed as a representative of a Conference ceases to be a voting member of a congregation in that conference, the office shall at once become vacant. The vacancy shall be filled in accordance with S10.01.03 in conversation with the Dean of said Conference.

Resource-Impact Note: The Resolutions Committee does not anticipate that adoption of this resolution would substantially impact financial, staff, or property resources at a congregational or synodical level. Were a Synod Council seat to be vacated under the provisions of this Resolution, one or more members of the Synod Council and the identified Conference Dean would experience a short-term demand of time and attention until a new Synod Council member is identified and installed.

Resolution 2023-03

Facilitating Healthcare Options for Rostered Ministers

WHEREAS healthcare premiums for Sierra Pacific Synod rostered ministers as offered through Portico Benefit Services (the benefits ministry of the ELCA) have increased substantially over the past decade; and

WHEREAS, increasingly, Sierra Pacific Synod congregations are looking to extend less-than-full-time calls to rostered ministers due to financial constraints; and

WHEREAS numerous Sierra Pacific Synod congregations struggle to call and/or retain rostered ministers due in part to recommended participation in the benefits plan offered by Portico Benefit Services; be it therefore

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod in Assembly memorialize the Churchwide Assembly to create a new Task Force to explore alternative healthcare offerings for ELCA congregations and their rostered ministers, with particular attentiveness to those serving in less-than-full-time calls, potentially taking into account more affordable plans that may be available in each state and working with our ecumenical partners to create larger plan-participant pools.

Offered by St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Santa Cruz CA

Vetted by the Resolutions Committee on August 2, 2023

Resource-Impact Note: The Resolutions Committee anticipates that adoption of this resolution (and its subsequent memorial) would generate significant study-related costs for both the churchwide expression of the ELCA and Portico Benefit Services. While the authorial intent of the resolution (and its subsequent memorial) is that its adoption might ultimately reveal avenues for significant financial savings to congregations, such a result cannot be presumed.

Financial Information

2022 – 2023 Financial Audit

We were unable to include the 2022-2023 Financial Audit in this paper guidebook. To see the full audit report go to <https://www.spselca.net/synoddocs> or look in our digital guidebook.

Proposed 2024-2025 Sierra Pacific Synod Budget

Revenue	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	\$ Variance	% Variance
1 Mission Support from Congregations	1,500,000	1,765,000	265,000	17.67%
2 Mission Support Holy Closures	-	497,189		
3 CW Campus Ministry Grant	50,000	50,890	890	1.78%
4 CW New Start/Restart Grant	60,000	28,476	(31,524)	-52.54%
5 CW Strategic/Vitality Grants	12,700	10,000	(2,700)	-21.26%
6 CW Shared Staff Expenses	-	129,425	129,425	
7 Synod Assembly Revenue	160,000	125,950	(34,050)	-21.28%
8 Professional Leadership Conference	30,000	20,000	(10,000)	
9 Candidacy & First Call Theological Education	24,000	17,500	(6,500)	-27.08%
10 Other Events - Revenue	-	-		
11 Other Revenue	6,000	6,000		
12 Interest and Dividends	600	1,984	1,384	230.70%
Total Revenue:	1,843,300	2,652,414	809,114	43.89%
Interfund Transfer				
13 Annual Transfer per Synod Constitution Policy 15-001 9/26/15 SC15.9.66.	225,000	316,648	91,648	40.73%
Total Interfund Transfer	225,000	316,648	91,648	40.73%
TOTAL REVENUE AND TRANSFER	2,068,300	2,969,062	900,762	43.55%

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	\$ Variance	% Variance
Ministry Partners/Benevolence				
14	600,000	706,000	106,000	17.67%
15	45,000	45,000		
16	5,000	5,000		
17	20,000	20,000		
18	10,000	10,000		
19	4,000	4,000		
20	8,000	8,000		
21	20,000	20,000		
22	10,000	10,000		
23	8,000	8,000		
24	1,000	1,000		
	731,000	837,000	106,000	14.50%
Total Ministry Partners:				
Synod Mission and Ministry				
25	200,000	180,602	(19,398)	-9.70%
26	120,640	101,780	(18,860)	-15.63%
27		46,155		
28	40,000			
29	22,000	3,000	(19,000)	-86.36%
30		10,000		
31				
32		10,000		
33	5,000	5,000		
34	9,000	5,380	(3,620)	-40.22%

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	\$ Variance	% Variance
35 Synod Council	12,000	10,000	(2,000)	-16.67%
36 Committees	5,000	7,000	2,000	40.00%
37 Conference of Deans	1,500	7,100	5,600	373.33%
38 Ecumenical Affairs/Partnerships Committee	2,500	2,000	(500)	-20.00%
39 SPSYC Meetings and Retreats	4,000	10,000	6,000	150.00%
40 Discipling Teams	1,500	1,000	(500)	
41 Witness Committee		1,000	1,000	
42 Justice & Advocacy Discipling Team		2,000	2,000	
43 Leadership Discipling Team	8,000	10,000	2,000	25.00%
44 Stewardship Committee	3,500	3,500		
45 Racial / Ethnic Ministry Strategies Committee	4,000	4,000		
46 SPSYC Retreat Scholarships		5,000		
Total Synod Mission and Ministry	438,640	424,517	(14,123)	-3.22%
Synod Assembly and Conferences				
47 Synod Assembly Expense	150,000	125,950	(24,050)	-16.03%
48 Professional Leadership Conference	20,000	30,000	10,000	50.00%
49 Black Clergy Retirement Reparations	-	4,000	4,000	
50 Retired Roster Retreat		3,000	3,000	
Total Synod Assembly and Conferences:	170,000	162,950	(7,050)	-4.15%

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	\$ Variance	% Variance
Staffing Expenses				
51 Bishop's Salary and Housing	112,000	130,000	18,000	16.07%
52 Executive Staff Salary and Housing	210,000	376,036	166,036	79.06%
53 ELCA Shared Staff (DEM)	110,000	101,532	(8,468)	-7.70%
54 Support Staff Salaries	275,000	267,500	(7,500)	-2.73%
55 Independent Contractors	15,000	39,600	24,600	164.00%
56 SE Tax Allowances - Clergy	30,000	30,884	884	2.95%
57 Payroll Taxes and Fees	25,000	26,044	1,044	4.17%
58 Worker's Comp. Insurance	3,800	24,438	20,638	543.10%
59 Portico Benefit Services	150,000	214,200	64,200	42.80%
60 Medical Reimbursement	12,000	18,000	6,000	50.00%
61 Continuing Education	6,000	3,000	(3,000)	-50.00%
62 Staff Travel and Expenses	75,000	86,335	11,335	15.11%
Total Staffing	1,023,800	1,317,568	293,768	28.69%

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	\$ Variance	% Variance
Administration Expense				
63 Office Supplies	5,000	10,301	5,301	106.02%
64 Liability Insurance	8,500	20,000	11,500	135.29%
65 Audit & Legal	32,000	48,000	16,000	50.00%
66 Training & Consulting Services	5,000	5,000	-	
67 Licensing Fees & Memberships	500	926	426	85.19%
68 Region 2 Center for Ministry	8,000	7,500	(500)	-6.25%
69 Postage & Delivery	3,500	2,500	(1,000)	-28.57%
70 Equipment Leases and Purchases	20,000	7,500	(12,500)	-62.50%
71 Maintenance & Repairs	1,000	1,000	-	
72 Rents and Utilities	50,000	64,800	14,800	29.60%
73 Electronic Communication	45,000	51,000	6,000	13.33%
74 Miscellaneous Expenses	5,000	8,500	3,500	70.00%
Total Administration	183,500	227,027	43,527	23.72%
75 Bishop Transition	0	36,000	36,000	
TOTAL EXPENSES:	2,546,940	2,969,062	422,122	16.57%
NET INCOME/(REVENUE-EXPENSES):	(478,640)	0		

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Mission Support - Funds given to the Synod by Congregations for Mission Support. Of this, 40% is sent on to ELCA Churchwide.					
ELCA Designated Giving - Funds given to ELCA programs, such as Lutheran Disaster Relief, World Hunger, Lutheran World Relief, Missionaries, Sister Synods, etc.					
SPS Designated Giving - Funds given to Sierra Pacific Synod programs/agencies such as Mt. Cross, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, California Lutheran University, Campus Ministries, Lutheran Social Services, etc.					
Conference 1 - Redwood Mountain					
Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Santa Rosa	\$ 30,150.21	\$ 1,410.00	\$ 1,251.25	\$ 32,811.46
Calvary Lutheran Church	Eureka	\$ 900.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 900.00
Christ Lutheran Church	Fortuna	\$ 2,750.04	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,750.04
Cross & Crown Lutheran Church	Rohnert Park	\$ 9,351.79	\$ 550.00	\$ -	\$ 9,901.79
Elim Lutheran Church	Petaluma	\$ 28,181.52	\$ 4,248.06	\$ 1,667.74	\$ 34,097.32
Faith Lutheran Church	Santa Rosa	\$ 5,484.57	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,484.57
Faith Lutheran Church	Chico	\$ 21,300.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	\$ 23,300.00
First Lutheran Church	Orland	\$ 4,200.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,200.00
Gailee Lutheran Church	Kelseyville	\$ 6,701.28	\$ 35.00	\$ -	\$ 6,736.28
Grace Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	McKinleyville	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grace Lutheran Church	Ukiah	\$ 3,917.56	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,917.56
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	Weaverville	\$ 1,275.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,275.00
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Eureka	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ 5,300.00

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Lutheran Church of Arcata	Arcata	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Mt. Zion Lutheran Church	Yreka	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church	Ferndale	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Paradise Lutheran Church	Paradise	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Shepherd by the Sea Episcopal Lutheran Mission	Gualala	\$ 900.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 900.00
St. James Lutheran Church	Redding	\$ 15,600.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 16,600.00
Thanksgiving Lutheran Church	Santa Rosa	\$ 2,757.97	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ 2,857.97
Trinity Lutheran Church	Fort Bragg	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Conference 2 - Bridges					
All Saints Lutheran Church	Novato	\$ 16,438.10	\$ 3,217.29	\$ 2,695.93	\$ 22,351.32
Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Oakland	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 2,500.00
Christ Lutheran Church	El Cerrito	\$ 11,158.20	\$ 390.00	\$ -	\$ 11,548.20
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Novato	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grace Lao Lutheran Mission	Richmond	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Hope Lutheran Church	El Sobrante	\$ 1,400.56	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,400.56
Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church	Alameda	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Lutheran Church of the Cross	Berkeley	\$ 878.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 878.00

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Marin Lutheran Church	Corte Madera	\$ 24,050.00	\$ 5,275.36	\$ 300.00	\$ 29,625.36
Miracles of Faith Lutheran Church	Oakland	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Napa Valley Lutheran Church	Napa	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 580.00	\$ 230.00	\$ 6,310.00
New Revelation Community Church	Oakland/Vallejo	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Resurrection Lutheran Church	Oakland	\$ 2,550.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,550.00
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	Tiburon	\$ 1,200.00	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 3,200.00
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	Berkeley	\$ 3,800.00	\$ 1,125.00	\$ -	\$ 4,925.00
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Oakland	\$ 20,458.13	\$ 4,360.00	\$ 870.00	\$ 25,688.13
Trinity Lutheran Church	Alameda	\$ 12,750.01	\$ 4,040.00	\$ -	\$ 16,790.01
Trinity Lutheran Church	Oakland	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 6,250.00
United in Grace Lutheran Church	Vallejo	\$ 6,600.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,600.00
United Lutheran Church	Oakland	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
University Lutheran Church	Berkeley	\$ 23,680.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 23,680.00

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Conference 3 - Capitol Valley					
Advent Lutheran Church	Citrus Heights	\$ 14,261.35	\$ 3,503.33	\$ -	\$ 17,764.68
Afghani, Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry	Sacramento	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
American Lutheran Church	Woodland	\$ 1,944.70	\$ 15.00	\$ -	\$ 1,959.70
Atonement Lutheran Church	Sacramento	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Bethel Lutheran Church	Roseville	\$ 8,692.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ 10,192.00
Bethel Lutheran Church	Sacramento	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Calvary Lutheran Church	Rio Linda	\$ 4,400.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,400.00
Christ the King Lutheran Church	Orangevale	\$ -	\$ 6,549.66	\$ -	\$ 6,549.66
Community Lutheran Church	West Sacramento	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Davis Lutheran Church	Davis	\$ 10,174.59	\$ 6,921.00	\$ 4,999.94	\$ 22,095.53
Gethsemane Lutheran Church	Carmichael	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grace American Lutheran Church	Rancho Cordova	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer	Sacramento	\$ 7,042.54	\$ 1,025.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 8,147.54
Lutheran Church of the Ascension	Citrus Heights	\$ 23,838.75	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 30,438.75
Lutheran Church of the Cross	Sacramento	\$ 5,365.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,365.00
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd	Sacramento	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 15,750.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 32,750.00
Lutheran Church of the Incarnation	Davis	\$ 7,772.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,772.70

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Lutheran Church of the Master	Sacramento	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	Vacaville	\$ 12,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,000.00
St. John Lutheran Church	Sacramento	\$ 116,134.96	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 116,134.96
St. Luke's Lutheran Church	Sacramento	\$ 1,561.75	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,561.75
St. Mark's Lutheran Church	Fairfield	\$ 15,666.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15,666.00
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Sacramento	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00
Conference 4 - Sierra Nevada Foothills					
Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Auburn	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Christ the King Lutheran Church	Tahoe City	\$ 7,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,000.00
Faith Lutheran Church	Reno	\$ 2,165.96	\$ 1,096.63	\$ -	\$ 3,262.59
Faith Lutheran Church	Elko	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ 1,300.00
Faith Lutheran Church	Meadow Vista	\$ 18,984.82	\$ 25.00	\$ 2,089.97	\$ 21,099.79
Faith Lutheran Church	Marysville	\$ 1,640.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,640.00
Gift of Grace Lutheran Fellowship	Fernley	\$ 2,108.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,108.70
Grace Lutheran Church	Lincoln	\$ 7,159.30	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,159.30
Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Reno	\$ 1,875.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,875.00
Hope Lutheran Church of the Sierras	So. Lake Tahoe	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Lord of Mercy Lutheran Church	Sparks	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd	Reno	\$ 40,997.31	\$ 5,865.00	\$ 456.50	\$ 47,318.81
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection	Granite Bay	\$ 26,785.00	\$ 6,717.85	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 38,502.85
Our Savior Lutheran Church	Quincy	\$ 2,400.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,400.00
Peace Lutheran Church	Grass Valley	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,070.00	\$ 165.00	\$ 5,235.00
St. Paul's Lutheran Family	Carson City	\$ 10,542.14	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,542.14
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church	El Dorado Hills	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 385.00	\$ -	\$ 5,885.00
Truckee Lutheran Presbyterian Church	Truckee	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00
Conference 5 - San Francisco Peninsula					
Christ Church Lutheran	San Francisco	\$ 7,300.00	\$ -	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 9,800.00
Coastside Lutheran Church	Half Moon Bay	\$ 14,643.00	\$ 680.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 16,723.00
First Lutheran Church	Palo Alto	\$ 19,353.45	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 19,353.45
First United Lutheran Church	San Francisco	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Grace Lutheran Church	Palo Alto	\$ 82,776.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 82,776.00

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Her Church (Ebenezer Lutheran Church)	San Francisco	\$ 5,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,500.00
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	San Carlos	\$ 10,627.70	\$ 8,297.47	\$ 3,232.22	\$ 22,157.39
Hope Lutheran Church	San Mateo	\$ 7,800.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,800.00
Los Altos Lutheran Church	Los Altos	\$ 2,694.05	\$ 1,400.91	\$ 1,077.61	\$ 5,172.57
Lutheran Church of Our Savior	San Francisco	\$ 19,500.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 20,900.00
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd	Burlingame	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 2,560.00	\$ 2,530.00	\$ 9,590.00
Messiah Lutheran Church	Redwood City	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church	San Mateo	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00
St. Francis Lutheran Church	San Francisco	\$ 12,605.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,605.00
St. Mark's Lutheran Church	San Francisco	\$ 26,625.83	\$ 3,066.54	\$ -	\$ 29,692.37
St. Mary & St. Martha Lutheran Church	San Francisco	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 3,100.00
St. Matthew Lutheran Church	San Francisco	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,000.00
St. Paulus Lutheran Church	San Francisco	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Unity Lutheran Church	So. San Francisco	\$ 22,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,000.00
University Lutheran Church	Palo Alto	\$ 6,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Los Altos	\$ 13,580.61	\$ 3,600.00	\$ -	\$ 17,180.61

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Conference 6 - El Camino Real					
Advent Lutheran Church	Morgan Hill	\$ 18,427.99	\$ 500.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 18,957.99
Bethel Lutheran Church	Cupertino	\$ 27,475.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 27,475.00
Christ Lutheran Church	Aptos	\$ 3,473.12	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,473.12
Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	San Jose	\$ 29,337.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 29,337.00
Epiphany Lutheran & Episcopal Church	Marina	\$ 1,400.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,400.00
Faith Lutheran Church	Los Gatos	\$ 202.18	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 202.18
Grace Lutheran Church	San Jose	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grace Lutheran Church	King City	\$ 1,785.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 2,785.00
Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church	San Jose	\$ 2,379.56	\$ 824.00	\$ -	\$ 3,203.56
Hope Lutheran Church	Santa Clara	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 870.00	\$ 2,875.00	\$ 11,245.00
Iglesia Luterana El Buen Pastor	Salinas	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Immanuel Lutheran Church	San Jose	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Immanuel Lutheran Church	Saratoga	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd	Salinas	\$ 15,007.10	\$ 4,101.57	\$ 5,702.71	\$ 24,811.38
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd	Gilroy	\$ 11,100.00	\$ 645.00	\$ -	\$ 11,745.00
Lutheran Community Church	Watsonville	\$ 3,540.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,540.00
New Creation Lutheran Church	San Jose	\$ 3,016.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,016.00

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Our Savior Lutheran Church	Santa Clara	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	Saratoga	\$ 27,825.00	\$ 1,730.34	\$ 380.00	\$ 29,935.34
St. Luke Lutheran Church	Sunnyvale	\$ 8,250.00	\$ 3,845.00	\$ -	\$ 12,095.00
St. Philips Lutheran Church	Carmel	\$ 6,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00
St. Stephen Lutheran Church	Santa Cruz	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 6,065.00	\$ 530.00	\$ 7,595.00
St. Timothy Lutheran Church	Monterey	\$ 3,653.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,653.70
Conference 7 - Mt. Diablo					
Christ the King Lutheran Church	Fremont	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 2,765.21	\$ -	\$ 4,865.21
Epiphany Lutheran Church	San Leandro	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Faith Lutheran Church	Castro Valley	\$ 10,435.92	\$ 1,118.00	\$ -	\$ 11,553.92
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Concord	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Good Shepherd South Asian Ministry (SAWC)	Fremont	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Holy Cross Lutheran Church	Livermore	\$ 3,925.80	\$ 885.83	\$ -	\$ 4,811.63
Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church	Newark	\$ 6,705.04	\$ 105.86	\$ 1,434.20	\$ 8,245.10
Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church	Orinda	\$ 5,424.82	\$ 1,089.69	\$ 3,373.20	\$ 9,887.71
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	Fremont	\$ -	\$ 70.00	\$ -	\$ 70.00
Hope Lutheran Church of Rossmoor	Walnut Creek	\$ 5,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,500.00

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Korean Community Church of Lamorinda	Orinda	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Messiah Lutheran Church	Hayward	\$ 6,999.84	\$ 725.00	\$ -	\$ 7,724.84
Oromo Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church	San Lorenzo	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Our Savior's Lutheran Church	Lafayette	\$ 16,822.12	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,822.12
Peace Lutheran Church	Danville	\$ 600.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 600.00
Resurrection Lutheran Church	Dublin	\$ 7,165.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,165.00
St. James Lutheran Church	San Leandro	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00
St. John Lutheran Church	Antioch	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
St. Luke's Lutheran Church	Walnut Creek	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
St. Mark's Lutheran Church	Pleasant Hill	\$ 4,550.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,550.00
St. Matthew Lutheran Church	Walnut Creek	\$ 10,008.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,008.00
Trinity Lutheran Church	Pleasanton	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 2,003.00	\$ -	\$ 13,003.00
Conference 8 - Sierra Central Valley					
Emanuel Lutheran Church	Modesto	\$ -	\$ 875.00	\$ -	\$ 875.00
Faith Lutheran Church	Murphys	\$ 3,015.66	\$ 1,005.22	\$ -	\$ 4,020.88
Faith Lutheran Church of Amador County	Pioneer	\$ 3,108.20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,108.20
Light of Christ Lutheran Church	Turlock	\$ 930.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 930.00

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Mariposa Lutheran Church	Mariposa	\$ 8,300.27	\$ 415.05	\$ -	\$ 8,715.32
Mount Calvary Lutheran Church	Mi-Wuk Village	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,080.00	\$ -	\$ 3,080.00
Mountain Lutheran Church	Groveland	\$ 2,694.40	\$ 750.00	\$ 810.00	\$ 4,254.40
Mountain Ranch Lutheran Mission	Mountain Ranch	\$ 1,950.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,950.00
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church	Livingston	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Saron Lutheran Church	Escalon	\$ 4,887.30	\$ 3,660.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 9,347.30
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church	Merced	\$ 5,400.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,400.00
St. Paul Lutheran Church	Lodi	\$ 1,212.27	\$ 543.00	\$ -	\$ 1,755.27
Zion Lutheran Church	Stockton	\$ 4,800.00			\$ 4,800.00
Conference 9 - Central San Joaquin					
Bethany Lutheran Church	Kerman	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Bethel Lutheran Church	Fresno	\$ 2,416.65	\$ 986.00	\$ -	\$ 3,402.65
Christ Lahu Ministry	Visalia	\$ 5,138.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,138.50
Christ Lutheran Church	Reedley	\$ 822.50	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,022.50
Christ Lutheran Church	Visalia	\$ 29,498.38	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 29,498.38
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Fresno	\$ 2,144.92	\$ 52.00	\$ -	\$ 2,196.92
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church	Fresno	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Congregational Giving
February 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023

Congregation	City	Mission Support	ELCA Designated Giving	SPS Designated Giving	Total
Hope Lutheran Church	Fresno	\$ 28,181.12	\$ 981.00	\$ 8,081.40	\$ 37,243.52
Iglesia Evangelica Nueva Vida en Cristo	Fresno	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Our Saviour Lutheran Church	Fresno	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Pella Lutheran Church	Selma	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Trinity Lutheran Church	Fresno	\$ 50,709.37	\$ 3,205.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 54,024.37
Trinity Lutheran Church	Porterville	\$ 10,688.25	\$ 2,374.50	\$ -	\$ 13,062.75

Workshops

Workshops

1. CLERGY SUPPORT GROUPS

Clergy support groups provide encouragement, pastoral care, and accountability to our church leaders. Jesus gathered the disciples in small groups and sent them out together. Several clergy support groups thrive in our Synod, finding resilient strength from God in each other's company. Pastor Paul Theiss and others will share their stories at this interactive workshop. Clergy can find out how to join a group or start one. Laypeople who care about their pastors and deacons or who find themselves in pastoral leadership are also welcome.

Presenters: Rev. Paul Theiss, retired

Location: Sandpebble E

2. CAN UNCONSCIOUS BIAS SAVE THE CHURCH?

An exploration of the effects of unconscious bias in our lives and especially in church settings, with a particular emphasis on how it affects first calls, as our candidate pool becomes ever more diverse. This very well could be the most important topic our church faces as we move into a future that few could have predicted 50 years ago.

Presenter: Rev. Ron Valadez, Bethlehem, Auburn

Location: Sandpebble D

3. SENIORS IN TRANSITION/SUPPORTING AGING SENIORS

Health Ministries of Sonoma County developed and copyrighted the Seniors in Transition Program in 2012 and the Supporting Aging Seniors program in 2018. The objective would be to provide information on the two programs and how to implement them in your congregation or community. More than 40 programs have been presented in Sonoma County with online webinars through ALOA (Adult Lutherans Organized for Action), making the programs available throughout the USA.

Presenters: Chrislyn Carson, Lois Peacock

Location: Sandpebble C

4. SMOOTH SAILING: BECOMING A RESILIENT LEADER IN TURBULENT TIMES

Resilience is not perfection, but the ability to move forward in imperfect realities. Whether it's leading the church, dealing with difficult situations, or navigating the inevitable bumps and setbacks of life, it is possible not just to survive, but thrive. Discover how to cultivate your God-given strengths and develop healthy practices to give you the stamina, confidence, and inner peace you need to be a resilient leader.

Presenter: Rev. Jeff Thiemann, Portico Benefits

Location: Sandpebble B

5. WE'RE RIC (RECONCILING IN CHRIST), NOW WHAT?

Thank goodness we have a God who promises to make us a new creation every day. Now is a great time for Reconciling in Christ (RIC) partners are revisiting what it means to be RIC and setting new milestones of welcome. Together we will learn what it means to be an RIC Synod, congregation, or ministry. We will also review RIC Public Commitments and work to create an action map with next steps for your community.

Presenters: Aubrey Thonvold and Liz Colver, ReconcilingWorks

Location: Harbor A

6. HOW TO USE RELATIONSHIPS AND A PARKING LOT TO HELP THE UNHOUSED

The workshop will provide an overview of a safe parking program for unhoused car owners, as well as its role in supporting the unhoused within the local community. We will introduce the concept of a rotating safe parking program as a best-of-breed approach to sharing a safe parking program amongst like-minded faith groups/organizations in your city. Key steps and cornerstones will also be provided.

Presenter: Karen Hauschildt, Ulrike Hoehler, Norman Puck, Prince of Peace, Saratoga

Location: Sandpebble A

7. WHAT I WISH I HAD KNOWN: THE MECHANICS OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Is your go bag packed? Whether your answer is "Of course!" or "I've been meaning to do that..." or "What's a go bag?," we all now live in a world in which a disaster that affects our communities is not a matter of "if" but "when." What can your congregation do to respond when a fire, mudslide, or earthquake occurs? How can you start preparing now to most effectively serve before, during, and after a disaster? Join us as we share some learnings and best practices.

Presenter: Katie Swartz, St. James, Redding

Location: Harbor B

8. HOW THE TIME BETWEEN PASTORS CAN BE A TIME OF GROWTH

The transitional time between called pastors is not downtime in congregations. Trained Interim Pastors work with congregations grow in understanding their gifts, possibilities, and opportunities to engage with their community. With this knowledge, congregations can better find a pastor that matches their passion for ministry. Excitement is contagious!

Presenter: Rev. Cindy Beck, Dean of Interim Pastors

Location: Cypress C

9. HONORING DIFFERENCES: BEHAVIORAL COVENANTS FOR CHURCH COUNCILS

Every church leadership group faces challenges, and unhealthy processes and behaviors lead to harm to the church and its people. How do we call on our "better angels" in our life together? How do those in leadership navigate challenges with grace and care for one another, honoring the differences in the process while coming to agreements and actions all can support? Based on the book by Gil Rendle, this workshop describes behavioral covenants and gives tools to those seeking to explore them in their own congregational leadership.

Presenter: Rev. Anita Warner, Samantha Van Buren, Advent, Morgan Hill

Location: Regency B

10. LISTENING AS A CATALYST OF CHANGE

In this workshop, Pastor Ben Sandin will share his experience of leading congregational listening campaigns within the church and in the surrounding community. He will share what he has learned and how it has shaped the ministry and mission of the congregation.

Presenter: Rev. Ben Sandin, Bethel, Cupertino

Location: Cypress B

11. GETTING CONNECTED TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

This workshop, especially appropriate for congregations worshipping 50 or less, will share Neighborhood Connection Tools that you can use with your congregation when you return from Synod Assembly. We'll start with techniques for understanding your neighborhood demographics and ways to go deeper in your neighborhood. Then we'll preview the more in-depth ways to build relationships and ministry in your neighborhood. At the end, you'll share ideas with other congregations about neighborhood programs that work - and don't work! The workshop is conducted by members of the Synod's Witness Discipling Team, using ideas from the ACTS for Vitality Toolkit.

Presenters: Pr. Janet Katari, Christ Lutheran, San Francisco, Linda Babcock, Dave Birdsall, Rev. Eduardo Trejo, Rev. Dawn Roginski

Location: Cypress A

12. CELEBRATE SMALL CHURCHES!

Small churches often feel like they are doing something wrong. Come and explore the many things that small churches are doing right! We will share some ideas for strengthening our small congregations and empowering one another for ministry in a changing world.

Presenter: Rev. Charlane Lines, Faith, Mountain Vista

Location: Regency C

13. MT. CROSS MINISTRIES

The mission of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries is “to strengthen the body of Christ through building relationships with others and with God.” During the 2023 Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly, Mt. Cross staff hopes to do just that, seeking to provide assembly attendees with “profound experiences in God's creation” on the hotel lawn, away from the business of the church.

Presenters: Mt. Cross Ministries Executive Director
Andrew Templeman

Location: Hyatt Lawn

Reports

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age’”
(Matthew 28:18-20).

Dear siblings in Christ,

We know the gospel changes lives and that God’s power and grace are real and at work today. Together we are called to bear God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world. What if we could make God known to more people? To the child who’s never heard of Jesus? To young adults who are trying to make sense of the world? To older adults who often feel lonely and isolated?

Our purpose – “to activate each of us so that more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love” – is an expression of our calling and our longing for others to know the love of God in Christ Jesus. We live out our purpose through worship and service, in our congregations and communities, through our individual vocations and our collective work as church together.

Many of you have wondered why we set a goal to reach one million new, young and diverse people. We believe that each of us is made in the image of God, redeemed by Jesus on the cross, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Our focus on young and diverse people is not exclusive but an acknowledgment that younger and more diverse people are disproportionately missing from our pews and gatherings. We are challenging one another to reach out across differences of all sorts to meet our neighbors.

Setting a goal to engage with one million is a way for us to know whether the work we are doing is, in fact, reaching new people. It encourages us to work together to be a church that cares about the world around us and is effective and faithful in responding to God’s call.

Join us on this future-focused journey to widen our welcome and break down the barriers that keep people from engaging with the church. Together, we can help people experience the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

In Christ,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Report of the Bishop

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us (Romans 5:3-5).

This is a long report, because it's been a long year for the saints of the Sierra Pacific Synod, even a long three or four years. As you may observe, I have sectioned this report of the bishop by seasons, in order for those who know only in part some of the ways we have struggled, lamented, prayed, and grown in faith, hope, and courage, during this very difficult year, would have a better understanding of how far we've come by the grace and guidance of Jesus Christ to heal His church. I pray that all who read this report and attend the 2023 Synod Assembly will gain increased understanding of the steps we walked this year to bring a measure of peace and hope for the future mission and ministry of the Sierra Pacific Synod.

SUMMER | June, July, August 2022

On the evening of June 9, 2022, I received a surprise phone call from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton asking me to consider coming out of retirement to serve as interim bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod following the resignation of former Bishop Megan Rohrer. I asked for four days to consider, pray, discern, and seek advice from trusted friends and colleagues. The following week, Vice President Gail Kiyomura and I had a lengthy Zoom conversation to discuss difficult issues. After my meeting with Vice President Gail, and assurance of support from bishop colleagues, other ELCA leaders, and the blessing of my family and friends, a date for an interview with the staff and synod council was arranged. I also asked for a four-day discernment on the territory of the Sierra Pacific Synod. My intention was to meet with as many people as possible to begin listening to lay and rostered leaders. I met with the synod's officers, council, and staff, and attended small and large gatherings in the Bay, Sacramento and Nevada areas, which were arranged by the deans.

I arrived with bags packed on July 8 and on Monday, July 11, I met with the synod staff in retreat at San Damiano center in Danville, CA. Within a week I had secured a shared Airbnb in San Leandro, rented a car, and began to live, learn and lead on the territory of the Sierra Pacific Synod. By Labor Day, the synod rented me a one-bedroom apartment in Dublin, CA.

Here is where I must reflect on how I decided to prioritize my duties and engagements since the task was so overwhelming and the territory so enormous.

After my appointment was confirmed by the synod council on June 25, I posed two questions to the synod council and staff to help encourage the staff and council to articulate their hopes and dreams for this synod and the ways they are willing to contribute to healing, reconciliation, and collaborative mission as we move forward.

Below are the two questions I posed and the summary of responses I received.

What are the first couple things we need to work on, or do together to help leaders in this synod feel safe and respected?

- Communication was a big theme: transparent and honest communication, intentional and deep listening, story-telling that centers congregations rather than the Bishop and synod staff, and creating a safe process for individuals with grievances or worries to have open communication with Bishop/council/staff.
- Support for synod staff was named several times, hiring temporary staff members to help offset the workload.
- Trust & Relationship-Building - goes hand in hand with the listening, but more specifically meeting with folks who spoke out publicly at Assembly, counseling people whose actions are making others feel unsafe, build covenants among council in sharing information/grievances/concerns, and connecting with all parts of the synod.
- In-Person Collaboration - These leaders were folks yearning for more connection and collaboration across our synod, particularly in-person. This includes conference meetings in-person, raising up other leaders throughout our synod, and sharing opportunities across the board.

*What do you need as encouragement to keep serving faithfully as the synod is healing?
How can you support and encourage others?*

- Continue the camaraderie and humor that was previously established amongst the synod council.
- Knowledge of the top priorities of the Office of the Bishop to give reassurance and information to council members, helps ensure they are keeping their conferences updated.
- Recognition of the insider nature of this synod and the harm it brings others.
- Need to exit the constant crisis mode, show respect and build transparency with others, and perpetrators/those who harmed others give an apology without excuses.
- Prayer! Spend time praying together, praying for others, and sharing Christ's love.
- Devote time to helping synod staff visit churches within a given conference, utilize my administrative skills, and take a more active role in building committees and teams.
- Listen and pray together.

As I hope you will note throughout this report, I and other leaders of this synod began to implement these high and hopeful aspirations with protocols, policies, procedures and protections for the leaders, congregations, and partners of our synod.

Visit to Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina

On July 17, my very first Sunday since my appointment as Interim Bishop, upon the invitation of the Asociación de Ministerios Latinos de la ELCA (ELCA Association of Latino Ministries) and the community of Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina, I worshipped with this Lutheran community, preached and presided at communion, shared a Mexican meal with the people, and afterwards gathered with them for a long and deeply painful conversation in which everyone had a chance to share their stories of pain and suffering before I responded.

On behalf of the Sierra Pacific Synod, as your interim bishop, I began the essential but difficult work of apology and sincere regret for how this community was treated. I believe it was essential for me to go first, and as soon as possible, to provide the pastoral care, deep listening and sincere regret for the seven months when no one visited them after the removal of their pastor on the Feast Day that ended so traumatically for several generations of worshippers, most new to the ELCA. This was my first step of apology and repentance, hopefully leading toward reconciliation and healing for us all in the Body of Christ.

I truly hope we can together find a way through this with courage, humility, repentance for things done and things undone, with a heart for the mind of Christ to lead us by God's grace.

Churchwide Assembly, Columbus, Ohio - August 6-13, 2022

The 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly convened in Columbus, Ohio. Bishops and synod vice presidents met two days earlier and the actual assembly was held Aug 8-12, gathered under the theme *Embody the Word*. Voting members participated in plenaries and worship while acting on key legislative business, and hearing reports on the work of the church. Imran Siddiqui was elected to a six-year term as ELCA vice president. Bishop Elizabeth Eaton led the assembly in a public apology to Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina. The Assembly also received a presentation of the "Declaration of the ELCA to the America Indian and Alaska Native People" adopted by the ELCA church council last September. Voting members acted on memorials related to the restructure of the governance of the church, called for reconsideration of the social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust," and encouraged deeper engagement with Indigenous people through the Land Back Movement.

On the last day of the Churchwide Synod Assembly I tested positive for COVID. Since I was in Cincinnati and could not fly home to Philadelphia, Bishop Bill Gohl of the Delaware/Maryland Synod put me in the back of his van and drove me all the way home with masks on and windows open, and then continued on to Baltimore. Several others in our synod delegation contracted COVID, as did Bishop Eaton. I was sick for a week before I thankfully recovered and returned to the Sierra Pacific Synod.

Sierra Pacific Synod 2022 Churchwide Assembly voting members

The Rev. Dr. Donna Allen, New Revelation Church, Oakland, CA

Dorothy Arata, Napa Valley Lutheran Church, Napa, CA

Ed Babcock, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Granite Bay, CA

The Rev. Dr. Linda Boston, Lutheran Church of the Master, Sacramento, CA

Jim Carlson, New Creation Lutheran Church, San Jose, CA

Lucy Lindgren, St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA

Jeffrey Morris, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Reno, NV
Christa Slater, Hope Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA
Katie Swartz, St. James Lutheran Church, Redding, CA
The Rev. Ron Valadez, Bethel Lutheran Church, Auburn, CA
Synod Vice President Simon Wong, Hope Lutheran Church, El Sobrante, CA
Interim Bishop Claire Burkat, Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion, Philadelphia, PA

Fall | September, October, November 2022

When Vice President Simon Wong and I had our first conversation outside the Millbrae office, we dreamt about what we could do together as vice president and interim bishop to bring the saints of the Sierra Pacific Synod together to begin the healing, trusting and reconciling process to move forward with hope, health and Christ's mission in the Sierra Pacific Synod. We both became excited about the possibility of a visitation schedule to all nine conferences in the fall of 2022. In three months, as scheduled by the deans, we engaged all nine conferences for worship, conversation, socializing, and discussion of how each conference can continue to bless our synod with a vibrant and loving Lutheran witness to our neighbors in every community, but also to reconcile each other to the mission and ministry of our Lord.

Fall Conference Gatherings

Saturday, September 24, St John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento - Capital Valley Conference 3

Sunday, September 25, St Matthew's Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek - Mt Diablo Conference 7

Friday, September 30, Saturday September 31 and Sunday October 1, Cross & Crown, Christ Fortuna, St James Redding, Paradise Lutheran, Paradise - Redwood Conference 1

Saturday, October 8, St Andrew's San Mateo - San Francisco Peninsula Conference 5

Sunday, October 9 Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary - Bridges Conference 2

Saturday, October 29 to Sunday October 30, Peace Lutheran Grass Valley - Sierra Nevadas Conference 4

Saturday, November 5 Emanuel Modesto - Central Valley Conference 8

Sunday, November 6, Good Shepherd Fresno - San Joaquin Conference 9

Saturday, November 12, Advent, Morgan Hill - El Camino Real Conference 6

Deployment of Deans

It was clear that we needed to build capacity for the seeking, calling, welcoming, sending, and pastoral care of our rostered leaders and all the congregations of these nine conferences. Because of the obvious and significant need for additional staff hours across our synod during this interim time, I recommended the temporary engagement of our nine Conference Deans as part-time

deployed staff of the Sierra Pacific Synod. It is hoped that this move will facilitate better pastoral care of our rostered leaders throughout the synod and will ensure that congregations in transition receive significantly more support than is currently available. This was envisioned to be an eighteen-month-long stop-gap solution to our current staffing void, with the understanding that it MAY provide a new model for synodical ministry among us as we transition into a new bishop's administration in 2023/24.

[Description of the Responsibilities of the Sierra Pacific Synod conference deans can be found here.](#)

Appointing Investigation Team

I appointed an investigation team to review the facts, processes, and dynamics that led up to the stressful and divisive crisis in the Sierra Pacific Synod, culminating in a traumatizing 2022 synod assembly, and they started their work in early October. Four people agreed to serve in this voluntary capacity, two from the Sierra Pacific Synod and two from the Southwest California synod. The scope of the investigation was to consider not just what happened leading up to the 2022 synod assembly, but also the few years preceding Bishop Mark Holmerud's delayed retirement, the election of the bishop in 2021, and the impact of a three-year pandemic. My hope is that this process of fact-finding, listening, discernment and recommendations will guide not only the Sierra Pacific Synod, but every synod of the ELCA. My intention and prayer was that this investigation would help move us forward as we learn best church-wide practices and processes for governance and life together as a multicultural, multi-contextual, multi-generational, multi-racial, multi-gender, multi-economic, and many more diverse ways unnamed, as the body of Christ and the Christian Lutheran witness in the Pacific Northwest.

WINTER | December 2022 and January, February 2023

Since I began my work as interim bishop, and as time allowed, I worked closely with the Churchwide mission office, the Latiné Association of the ELCA, and the council and pastor of Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina, now a 501 (c) (3) independent church. This status was necessitated by their removal as a SAWC from the Sierra Pacific Synod and ELCA with no plan for funding, continuing ministry, or replacement of a pastor, not even supply pastors, after the removal of their pastor from the roster of the ELCA by the former bishop. Following my announcement of the Investigation Team, and my first visit to meet with the saints of ILSMP, I met three times during the fall and winter with the pastor and council, along with Churchwide missional leaders, to help support their continued ministry as the Investigation Team looked into the dynamics and processes (or lack of processes) that led the removal of the pastor, and the neglect of the people for seven months. During that time, presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and I met with the council and key leaders of ILSMP at the home of a member. Together as two bishops of the ELCA, we listened to their stories and laments, but also hopes and dreams for the future.

On December 12, 2023, I worshipped with the people and pastor of Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina for the second time as they commemorated the Feast Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

This service was significant in many respects, most notably, the attendance of guests from parts of the Sierra Pacific Synod and ELCA leaders from various synods and Churchwide mission units. Four bishops, three who were Latiné, and two of the presidents of our ELCA ethnic ministries, the Latiné Asociación and the African Descent Lutheran Association, joined the worshipping assembly to commemorate the feast day but also to repair as best as possible the memory and heartbreak of the previous year. More than 110 people attended worship, which was followed by a festive Mexican dinner.

In December, I went on retreat with the four other bishops of Region 2 to Spirit of the Desert in Arizona, and three ELCA bishops from my former region came to visit me in California to bring joy, support and much-needed love to me at a time when I was especially homesick.

The winter months offered time to connect once again with Conference of Bishops and to meet bishops from across the ELCA who were elected since I “retired” in 2018. I also attended the Bishops Academy in Minneapolis for five days.

Right after Christmas, the newly-appointed Bishop Election Team began their excellent and extensive work to prepare for this 2023 Synod Assembly, delayed by three months in order to give appropriate time to ORGANIZE all the many components of an election. Every single month, the election team communicated to the synod through social media, emails and the synod website announcements of their progress. Simultaneously, the Assembly Planning Team also began their work to plan this assembly and to work with the election team to ensure that all the many parts of a bishop election and a synod assembly come together smoothly and efficiently. Many thanks to the co-chairs of the Bishop Election Team, Pastor Rustin Comer and AJ Gaston, and the co-chairs of the Assembly Planning Team, Pastor Charlane Lines and Pastor Courtney Geibert.

In January, the synod council held their second in-person council meeting as an overnight in Oakland. It was a very critical retreat as the realization of all the work needed to repair the infrastructure of this synod became clear to everyone. The Council visited the synod office in Oakland, still under renovation, for the first time.

By February, the Investigation Team was finishing up their work, and began writing their report. It took longer than I expected, which was frustrating especially for the people of ILSMP, but looking back, I believe the hundreds of hours of interviews, Zoom and in-person meetings they needed to do a thorough and faithful work was God’s Kairos time and not my Chronos wishful-thinking time.

In February, I attended the Conference of Bishops meeting in Chicago, and Lutheran Advocacy Day in Nevada, sponsored by the office of Lutheran Engagement and Advocacy in Nevada.

SPRING | March, April, May 2023

On March 18, the synod council, along with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and Roberto Lara, president of the ELCA Latiné Association, met in person at the Lutheran Church of the

Incarnation in Davis to listen to the recommendations of the Investigation Team. It was a very difficult day for everyone present, taking seven hours to listen, discuss, ask questions and then for the synod council to begin forming responses to the team's recommendations for the Sierra Pacific Synod. Members of the Investigation Team, Bishop Eaton and I spent another four hours sharing the report and discussing next steps with Pastor Nelson Rabell Gonzalez and his family in another location.

I'd like to extend my deep gratitude to Regina Banks, JD, the Rev. Maria Paiva, the Rev. Elizabeth Ekdale, and the Rev. Abel Arroyo Traverso for answering my call to deliberate, discern, and discuss the painful and unprecedented situation this synod has experienced over the past three years. I personally witnessed their courageous engagement, faithful listening, and hundreds of hours of exploration over six months to prepare the recommendations listed below. I recognize that some of the recommendations made by the Investigation Team will likely require changes to the constitutions and by-laws of both ELCA Churchwide and the Sierra Pacific Synod in order to implement the action steps recommended by the team.

I hope all who read their recommendations do so thoughtfully, prayerfully, and with love and respect for our Church. As all three expressions listed below are challenged to examine policies and procedures concerning our rostered leaders and our communities of faith. I trust this is the beginning of a graceful and hope-filled season in our synod.

[For the report of the investigation team click here.](#)

[For the recommendations of the investigation team click here](#)

During the end of March and the beginning of April, I led 5 Chrism Services across the territory of the Sierra Pacific Synod: March 21, Good Shepherd, Reno, NV; March 23, Ascension, Citrus Heights, CA; March 23, Trinity, Fresno, CA; March 29, St Mark's, San Francisco, CA; March 30, Holy Trinity, Fremont, CA

When I returned to Philadelphia, I worshipped at the United Lutheran Seminary Chapel for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Chrism Service hosted by my synodical bishop, Bishop Patricia Davenport. It was balm for my soul to commune and reaffirm my ordination vows with the saints and staff of the SEPA synod and ULS.

Sadly, during Holy Week my son and I traveled to a Raleigh, North Carolina hospital to sit vigil and bless my former husband as he transitioned from life to eternal life on Maundy Thursday. He died 20 minutes after we left his room. Thankfully the next week I was home in Philadelphia when I got word that my dear friend of 45 years was also in hospice. I was able by God's grace to also sit vigil and bless her to perpetual light and love with her Lord. She died after I returned to California. My former husband's memorial service was the next month when I returned to Philadelphia for Memorial Day weekend, and my friend's memorial service was in July when I returned again to Philadelphia.

In April, the synod council approved and adopted a process that I have used all the while I have served as interim bishop, and as I was bishop to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, to investigate a complaint against a rostered leader.

It was clear to me when I arrived, and became clear to the Investigation Team, that even though the Sierra Pacific Synod had three reports and recommendations written over three calendar years, there was no official process adopted to be used by a synodical bishop to investigate complaints in a fair and equally-applied policy.

You can read 23-001 Policy Procedure for the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA for Discipline of a Rostered Minister when a Complaint is Reported Adopted by the Synod Council April 15, 2023 (SC23.04.54) here:

https://www.spselca.net/_files/ugd/0615b5_d868ad2db5d1406e878f041892d524ba.pdf

On May 17, I traveled to participate in Lutheran Day at the Capitol in Sacramento, California, hosted by the Lutheran Office of Public Policy. About 100 Lutherans from three synods worshiped, learned and met with California legislators to express our priorities for the various bills coming before the lawmakers.

In May, the synod council wrote a public apology to Pastor Nelson Rabell Gonzales and his family. You can read the apology in English here:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/9d110f6a001/ea7f6c84-d703-4d5a-b057-14caed435184.pdf>

And in Spanish here: <https://files.constantcontact.com/9d110f6a001/66be7c63-52b4-4551-be5d-d395b779419c.pdf>

In May, the third set of gatherings of our nine Conferences began, this time to begin the discernment process for electing a new bishop at the 2023 assembly.

Many thanks for the excellent work and leadership on the Bishop's Election Committee. Co-Chairs Pastor Rustin Comer and AJ Gaston, along with committee member Christa Slater, facilitated discussion of the job description of an ELCA bishop, responsibilities of the synod council, conferences and congregations and desired characteristics of the next bishop. At these conference meetings, names were lifted as possible pre-nominees for Bishop and for synod council candidates for elections at the upcoming synod assembly.

In June, a fully-functioning finance committee started meeting regularly in preparation for the synod audit and budget for this Synod Assembly under the direction of Treasurer Sharon Amundson and Director of Finance Carolyn Hanrahan. They will be in the Zoom budget hearing on Tuesday, September 12, 6:30-7:30 pm, and at Synod Assembly, to address financial issues. Members of the committee are Treasurer Sharon Amundson, Director of Finance Carolyn Hanrahan, Scott Taylor, Pastor Donna Allen, Jannette Drew and Eric Brudos.

June was a difficult month. I was approved by the Churchwide Office of the Secretary to expedite the return to the roster process for the Rev Nelson Rabell Gonzales through a process to be handled by the Candidacy Committee of the Sierra Pacific Synod. As authorized in the Candidacy Manual, a panel was appointed, meetings were held, procedures followed, and interviews completed. Pastor Nelson Rabell Gonzales was approved by the Candidacy Committee of the Sierra Pacific Synod for return to the roster of the ELCA. You can read the committee's statement [here](#) or on our synod blog.

However, since Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina during the time they were also off the ELCA roster had filed as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so they could operate in the state of California as a church, the community must also be received back into the ELCA by two votes, one by the synod council that was approved at the July meeting and now another vote by the Synod Assembly on September 15th. Following this official reception by vote of the Assembly, the Rev. Nelson Rabell Gonzalez can be called by ILSMP to be their pastor as any other congregation in the synod calls their pastor.

At the June council meeting, as Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod, I denied Megan Rohrer's On Leave from Call request that had been sent to the Office of the Bishop before I began my work. In considering the Rev. Dr. Rohrer's request for On Leave from Call status dated June 7, 2022, I did not act hastily, but instead waited a year while I gathered evidence and information, listened to hundreds of people, lay and rostered, and carefully considered the culmination of six months of work by the Investigation Team, all of which informed my decision.

Let us continue to pray for the Rev. Dr. Megan Rohrer, his family and many loved ones, as the Spirit of our Living God brings wisdom, grace, and holy discernment for his future endeavors.

Summer | July, August 2023

July was a travel month for me. From July 7-9, I attended the Western States Youth Gathering sponsored by ELCA Regions 1-4 at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, CA.

From July 16-22, I attended the ELCA Rostered Ministers gathering in Phoenix, AZ, as did many pastors from the Sierra Pacific Synod.

On July 23, a delegation from the synod council, the chairs of the candidacy committee, the witness and discipling team, our director of evangelical mission, and other supporters of the ILSMP community attended worship in their temporary church facility in Stockton, shared a Mexican meal, and then, just as I did a year earlier, listened with respect and deep sorrow to the suffering and expectations of the people who, like the name of their congregation, have been displaced pilgrims for almost two years. Members of synod council are writing a letter of apology to the people of Santa María Peregrina, but knew it was best to visit the people in person first and to accompany them if possible, as synod leaders desiring reconciliation.

I share with you in this report the seven ordinations I officiated at this year, and one that was led by Bishop Eric Gronberg of the Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana Synod.

Deacon Lewis Eggleston 08/10/2022, called as Director of Communications ELM - Bp Burkat

Deacon jj Godwin 08/13/2022, Called as Executive Asst. to the SPS Bishop - Bp Gronberg

Pastor Janet Katari 10/8/2022 Called as pastor Christ, San Francisco - Bp Burkat

Pastor Paul Larson 01/22/2023 Called as pastor LC of the Good Shepherd, Salinas - Bp Burkat

Pastor Kristopher Rhude 02/04/2023 Called as pastor to Christ the Good Shepherd San Jose - Bp Burkat

Pastor Charbel Zgheib 05/06/2023, Salam Arabic New Start Mission, Sacramento - Bp Burkat

Pastor Clare McElaney 05/07/2023, Shepherd of the Hills, Berkeley - Bp Burkat

I am pleased to report that the synod council, as is recommended in our synod constitution, appointed Scott Taylor as our next synod Treasurer. Scott currently serves on our finance committee. He is a member of St Mark's, San Francisco, active on many non-profit boards, and a partner in a large accounting firm. Read his biography here on our synod website:

<https://www.spselca.net/finance>

In Appreciation

In and among our worship, learning, discussions, and elections, you will be receiving reports from your elected officers, our Vice President, Simon Wong, our Secretary, Jeff Pennington, and our Treasurer, Pastor Sharon Amundson, and from our Churchwide representative Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, who is also an officer of the ELCA, and thankfully chairing the bishop election at this assembly.

Please take the time to thank our synod staff, synod council and volunteers in advance and at the assembly for the hard work and attention to making everyone feel welcome at our 2023 Synod Assembly.

Synod Council

My appreciation for the support and guidance I have received in leading this synod are extended to the **Synod Council**, and to the **Executive Committee**: Mr. Simon Wong (Vice President), Mr. Jeff Pennington (Secretary), Pastor Sharon Amundson (Treasurer), **Mr. Carl Brodt, Pastor Clark Brown, and Ms. Christine Sinnott**. These leaders and other volunteers bless our work and make it possible for us to share ministry broadly, deeply, and faithfully. Please thank them during the Assembly for their volunteer service to our Lord and this synod. May Christ continue to bless them and our newly-elected leaders with enthusiasm and energy for continued witness to His Church.

The remaining Synod Council members can be found elsewhere in your guidebook.

Conference Deans

The work of the deans is critical to the effective functioning of our synod, particularly as we are working with fewer synod staff than in previous years. In addition to monthly meetings to discuss congregational transitions, mobility for rostered leaders, and current issues facing leaders and congregations, their service to our synod is an invaluable asset to staffing our missional priorities.

Deans and staff who served in 2022 and 2023 since last year's assembly can be found elsewhere in your guidebook.

Synod Staff

The synod staff deserves our prayers, appreciation and gratitude for serving this Church in a most difficult year with perseverance, patience, hope for healthy change, and commitment to God's mission on our territory. Please join me in thanking the staff for their tireless efforts and love for Jesus Christ, His Church and the people of God in the ministry we share together.

The Rev. Manda Truchinski - Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership & Strategic Operations

The Rev. Ron Valadez - Interim Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy and First Call (Part Time)

Deacon jj Godwin - Director of Operations

The Rev. Dr. Dawn Roginski - Director of Evangelical Mission (DEM)

Melanie Gordon - Administrative Assistant

Mandi Slagle - Synod Communications (Part Time)

Carolyn Hanrahan - Director of Finance

Debbie Cook - Finance Assistant Contractor (Part Time)

Lance Kelly - Synod Statistician (Volunteer)

Laura Benson – Contracted HR consultant

Phil Allen – Contracted Synod Attorney

Blessings and farewell to the synod staff who served in 2021 and 2022 and left the synod staff to use their gifts and skills elsewhere: Pastor Tita Valeriano (DEM), The Rev. Hazel Salazar Davidson (Assistant to the Bishop for Authentic Diversity), Diana Barrios (Director of Finance), and Catherine Slabaugh (Director of Communications). A grateful synod “Thank You” for your service.

YOU...the people of God

As I conclude this report with gratitude for the Synod Staff, Committee of Deans, Synod Council, officers, and executive committee of the synod, I want to add my profound thanks and appreciation for the thousands of faithful Christians – pastors, deacons, and lay leaders – who lead our synod in various ministries. Those who attend worship services, volunteer as council members, in altar guilds, as musicians and choir members, as Sunday school teachers, in youth ministries, property, stewardship, evangelism, Christian formation committees, outreach ministries, future planning teams, and the countless other ways and places people show their love for Christ, His Church, and their neighbors.

Without these saints, there would be no congregations. And without these congregations sharing their resources, expertise and people with the larger church, there would be no synod. And without synods, congregations, and people supporting our Churchwide organization there would be no churchwide ELCA. And the work and gifts shared by the ELCA supports the formation of rostered leaders, advocacy, Lutheran seminaries, schools and universities, interfaith and ecumenical partnerships, global Lutheran companion synods, and the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation. Without the grace, love and power of God the Creator, Christ our Redeemer, and the Spirit our Advocate and Helper, there would be no *One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church!*

Reflections – Preparing for (Re)Retirement

As I prepare to take my leave as interim bishop of this synod, I am overwhelmed by the enormous privilege to serve Christ, His Church and mission, and the people of God during this time among you, even in the most challenging days.

Before I arrived, I prayed for a partner to share the work and with whom I could trust as not a bishop, but a baptized child of God, away from home, knowing that the call from Jesus to serve is often difficult and not easily managed. I want you to know that our Lord answered my prayer by sending me Simon Wong – from the very first day we met, throughout the Churchwide Assembly last summer, the journey of 2,500 miles to visit every conference last fall, and sometimes intense meetings with the synod council every single month. His tireless work, (which actually needs to slow down in this next term of bishop), and his love for Jesus, his family, his church and this synod are a testament to God’s grace. When I was down, he encouraged me up, and vice versa. Starting last summer, we often asked each other what to pray for this day or this week. Then at the end of the day or week we both shared with each other how we encountered the Spirit of the living God guiding and strengthening us to keep going. I thank you and love you, my brother in Christ, Simon.

I have tried throughout this call to “*rekindle the gift within me through the laying on of hands, relying on the power of God, ⁹who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace*” (Second Timothy).

Every single day, whether it was joyful, painful, frightful or hopeful, I was aware of the power of the Holy Spirit working through my intentions, and through us as a synod, more than I could ever have imagined. I know I will not fully grasp what has happened in this sojourn until I have significant time to rest and reflect. So as I take my leave from this office as interim bishop I thank, and bless you all for the amazing ways, means, and reasons you support this Lutheran witness we call the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

*Let the Hope that is already within us, live and thrive, because we know
God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that
has been given to us.*

I’m looking forward to being with you at the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly September 15, 16 and 17 in Burlingame California to elect, support and encourage our new bishop and the saints of our Sierra Pacific Synod.

With and in Christ,

+ 

The Reverend Claire S. Burkat, Bishop

Vice President's Report

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Each of us has brought all of who we are to this Assembly. We come from different backgrounds, we speak many languages, we face personal, and public challenges as we move through our days and weeks. We struggle with similar and also different issues, we all have worries and also hopes and dreams...., and yet we are here today at this synod assembly together, praying and discerning together, celebrating joys through our faith and in our congregations, and sharing problems facing us and our synod.

A little bit about my life since August 1, 2022, when I became your vice president of the synod. My full-time job is a senior project manager for one of the biggest architecture-engineering firm in the world. Started last year I went back to my office in San Francisco at least one to two days a week, with the remaining time working from home.

My office home setup is this: Left is my laptop that I do synod work with. Right is my work laptop. The center one is a shared screen where I switch back and forth. The past 13 months have not been easy, to be very honest with you. I want to thank my wife Winnie and my kids Simeon and Hannah for allowing and supporting me to serve. I also want to thank my home congregation - Hope Lutheran Church in El Sobrante - for your support, prayers, and for stepping up when I was not able to provide support at church.

Early August 2022 I went to the ELCA churchwide assembly together with our Sierra Pacific Synod voting members. It was a great and touching experiences.

Starting a year ago as our first priority, Bishop Claire and I visited you through nine conference gatherings. I want to thank the Deans for planning these events and for everyone that made it possible, for our worship, meal and discussion together.

To those who attended the conference gatherings, perhaps you would remember Bishop and I shared the story of how (coincidentally) we bought the same coffee cup at Target that says "Let the Adventure begin."

It has truly been an Adventure for me. I have been learning and dealing with things that I never imagined I would have to do. I have been through a lot this year. I often found myself wondering why I agreed to serve, I even cried a few times in discouragement, (my wife and my pastor can attest), and yet, on so many more days, I could actually see the Spirit working through the leaders of our synod, and I can honestly say the days of God's grace and mercy outnumbered the days of despair.

Today, I want to share with you another piece of pottery that I purchased last December before we began planning for this assembly.

Imagine my surprise when the Assembly Planning team chose as the theme for our 2023 Assembly: *Broken Yet Whole*.

In my speech, I will show you a plate with cracks mended by gold. This is called Kintsugi. It's a Japanese technique of repairing broken pottery. But it's also an art form, because the broken pieces are set back together not with crazy Glue but with lacquer mixed with powdered gold.

Kintsugi is also a philosophy, or in the Christian sense, a theology. The breakage represents the most vulnerable parts of our lives. The repair is not hidden. Instead, it is highlighted, rather than disguised. The repaired pottery is stronger than it was before, it is more resilient, and it is more valuable. Gold is infused in the deepest wounds.

During my great adventure with Bishop Claire, travelling in the synod car for more than 2500 miles, we listened to the people. We listened to you.

This is what we heard: Most of us have had serious setbacks for the past few years. The pandemic has taken a toll on all of us. We were not able to see each other in person. Some of us have loved ones who died. Funerals were not held or only on zoom. We heard personal cries and frustration. Our people faced uncertainty, loneliness, anxiety and depression. Some lost their jobs, faced unemployment and economic distress.

And our Sierra Pacific Synod has also had serious setbacks that has taken a toll as a community – Relationship in the body of Christ were broken, Mistrust and Divisions were destructive, Fear, Anger, and Hate were contagious. The suffering many of us experienced was heart breaking. We were very vulnerable. Our trust with each other was broken, just like this pottery in front of us.

And yet, as St. Paul has reminded us many times, (2 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 8-9)

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;”

Look at the Kintsugi here – (2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 7) “But we have this (Kintsugi) treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power (of healing and reconciliation) belongs to God and does not come from us.”

Bishop Claire and I have been working very closely together, actively look for Holy Spirit’s guidance every day. Our day always started with sharing our fears and concerns, of what will come to us, what we have to face. By the end of the day, we would talk about how it went, and often we found that Holy Spirit had been guiding us through the challenge, turning fears into blessings.

So, despite the setbacks we have had, I do believe we are moving forward in faith, hope, grace, and love, to be shared with the community in the world and also with each other.

I am asking all of you to join me in participating in the following – 3Rs:

Renew

This is what we need to do first. I ask everyone to pray for the Renewal of our Spirits in whatever form you need (each one of us and congregation) – We have one thing in common – Our Faith

Ephesians chapter 2 verse 14: “For Christ is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups (all of us) into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” Let’s invite the spirit of God help us break down the walls that divided us. Create in all of us a clean heart, Oh God, and renew a right spirit within us. Just as our worship hymn says, “Create in me a clean heart, O God.”

Reconnect

I am hoping that, going forward, we will find new and renewed ways to connect with each other with our colleagues, communities, conferences and congregations. What will be the outcome if we spend the next two years connecting? We will learn who we are, how can we support each other, and – Do ministry together.

As your vice president, I will continue to visit two congregations each month. Our conference Deans have already been supporting this effort. I am also asking Synod council members to visit churches and connect with Deans and congregations. Working with our next bishop, we will roll out a plan to engage better with everyone.

Through technology, I would like to find ways to create a platform where congregations can easily update their leadership information, so that we can better connect and communicate with each other. I want to thank our former synod vice president, Gail Kiyomura, for starting the quarterly zoom gathering with congregation lay leaders. Though I was not able to do that last year, I would like to continue this effort.

I am suggesting three times a year the synod council will have their meeting in-person hosted within a conference area. Your conference will have the opportunity to host it once every three years.

Now, I am giving all of you an assignment – I am asking each of you, to go and get to know at least two people that you have never met before within our synod. Learn their names, exchange contact information if you feel comfortable. Ask them where they worship. Pray for them and their congregation, learn what their congregation is doing. What's their mission. Share yours too. I also encourage everyone to continue the connection and if possible, before the next synod assembly, go worship with your new friends at least once.

Rebuild

The work “Rebuild” is not just about restoration or repair. We have an opportunity to use what we have learned and desired to build on the foundation – A house where love can dwell, a house of hopes and dreams and visions, a house where all are welcome. Remember - We are one in Christ Jesus. We are to build each other up.

We will continue to rebuild the office of the bishop. I do not mean a building, but the infrastructure – We need the necessary foundation for the office of the bishop in order to provide support to one another. Thanks to the synod staff support committee and input from our staff, we have set up a better organizational structure moving forward. This infrastructure will give our next bishop better support and encouragement. I want to remind everyone what Bishop Claire has shared with us – We are not voting/calling for a Bishop. We are voting/calling for a Pastor to be our bishop. We are to raise up our bishop, through love and support, but also private conversation for disagreement, counsel and advice.

We will also need to rebuild our relationship with our ecumenical partners, to whom we were not able to pay much attention for the past few years.

I also want to help rebuild the trust between synod council and conferences and congregations. In the past year I heard that we have become disconnected. We have heard your comments.

I want you to know that this synod council has been meeting every month and working in between meeting for a whole year, and I want to thank them. This has not been an easy year.

I also want to thank our synod staff. They have been through a lot, yet they continue to support our synod, and all of us.

This year we are raising up a bishop; next year there will be more than half of the synod council seats open for election. It is important to make sure that all of us understand what a synod council should be. I will work together with the synod leadership to provide opportunity for all of us in order to understand better the function of the council, encourage prayer and discernment for the council election in 2024.

At the end of my report, I want to share the last two lines of a popular Cantonese song lyric. The song title – “Rain or Shine, we are together”

珍惜今朝，盼望以後；

We should Cherish the present, and look forward to the future,

同渡困苦與厄困。

together we shall overcome the hardship and thrive.

Galatians 3:26-28

for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Amen

Simon Wong,

Vice President Sierra Pacific Synod

2023 Report of the Secretary Actions of the Synod Council June 2022 – August 2023

The Sierra Pacific Synod Council met on June 2, 2022 (in-person at the Nugget Casino Resort), June 4, 2022 (in-person at the Nugget Casino Resort), June 6, 2022 (online), June 25, 2022 (in-person at the synod office in Millbrae, CA), August 1, 2022 (online), September 10, 2022 (in-person at Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center, Citrus Heights, CA), October 15, 2022 (online), November 19, 2022 (online), December 19, 2022 (online), January 20-21, 2023 (in-person at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Oakland, CA), February 18, 2023 (online), March 18, 2023 (in-person at Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, Davis, CA), April 15, 2023 (online), May 20, 2023 (online), June 17, 2023 (online), July 15, 2023 (online), and August 19, 2023 (online). Minutes of the Synod Council meetings are posted on the synod's website at <https://www.spselca.net/synoddocs>. ←

Following the resignation of Bishop Megan Rohrer in early June 2022, the Synod Council, at its meeting on June 25, 2022, appointed The Rev. Claire Burkat as interim bishop, to serve until the election of a new bishop. Current Synod Council members include:

- Interim Bishop, Claire S. Burkat (contract expires October 31, 2023)
- Vice President Simon Wong[#] (term expires 2026)
- Secretary Jeff Pennington[#] (term expires 2025)
- Treasurer Rev. Sharon Amundson[#] (term expires 2023)
- Sandra Hamilton Slane (Conference 1 – Redwood Mountain; term expires 2024)
- Carl Brodt[#] (Conference 2 – Bridges; term expires 2024)
- Rev. Kirsten Moore* (Conference 3 – Capitol Valley; term expires 2024)
- Linda Babcock (Conference 4 – Sierra Nevada Foothill; term expires 2024)
- John Brett* (Conference 5 – San Francisco Peninsula; term expires 2024)
- Rev. Clark Brown[#] (Conference 6 – El Camino Real; term expires 2024)
- Donna Nunes (Conference 7 – Mt. Diablo; term expires 2024)
- Luke Price (Conference 8 – Sierra Central Valley; term expires 2024)
- Rev. Paul Clark (Conference 9 – Central San Joaquin Valley; term expires 2024)
- Makayla Holeman (Youth; term expires 2023)
- Autumn Scherf (Young Adult; term expires 2024)
- Kezia Darla (At-Large, Person of Color; term expires 2025)
- Rev. Eduardo Trejo Soto* (At-Large, Person whose primary language is other than English; term expires 2025)
- Rev. Kathy Morris (At-Large; term expires 2023)
- Christine Sinnott*[#] (At-Large; term expires 2024)
- vacant (At-Large; term expires 2025)

**appointed during this reporting period to fill a vacancy*

#indicates member of the Executive Committee

At its meeting on August 19, 2023, the Synod Council appointed Scott Taylor to a four-year term as Synod Treasurer, to assume office following the 2023 Synod Assembly.

Roster Actions:

During the year, the Synod Council acted on the following roster issues:

- Approved On Leave from Call (new/renewed):
 - The Rev. Chad Adamik
 - The Rev. John Bost
 - Deacon Lewis Eggleston
 - The Rev. Elizabeth Ekdale
 - The Rev. Trudy Franzen
 - The Rev. Brian Hiordahl
 - The Rev. Brandon Peck
 - The Rev. Rev. Katelyn Rakotoarivelo
 - The Rev. Hazel Salazar-Davidson
 - The Rev. Kelly Sandin
 - The Rev. Gregory Schaefer
- Called to Special Ministry (new/renewed):
 - The Rev. Dr. Diane Bowers as interim pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Livermore, CA
 - The Rev. Filemón Díaz to serve as canon to the Dean of the Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real
 - Deacon jj Godwin to the position of Executive Assistant to the Bishop
 - The Rev. Ruth Hanusa to serve as canon at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Reno, NV
 - The Rev. Julie Kelly to serve as Pastor in Charge at the Episcopal Church of the Saviour, Hanford, CA
 - The Rev. Jim McCammon as assistant priest to St. Paul Episcopal Church in Healdsburg, CA
 - The Rev. Andreas Pielhoop to interim ministry
 - The Rev. Dr. Dawn Roginski as Interim Director for Evangelical Mission of the Sierra Pacific Synod
 - The Rev. Ray Waespi to interim ministry
 - The Rev. Charbel Zgheib as Mission Developer of Afghan, Arab, and Middle Eastern Community, Sacramento, CA
- Moved to Disability Roster
 - The Rev. Craig Minich
- Moved to Retired Roster
 - The Rev. Barbara Caine
 - The Rev. Paul Chung
 - The Rev. Steve Churchill
 - The Rev. Nick Droge
 - The Rev. Lori Eickmann
 - The Rev. Brian Malison
 - The Rev. Bob McKee
 - The Rev. Michael Meyer
 - The Rev. Jerayne Gray Reneberg
 - The Rev. Jill Ross
 - The Rev. Sharon Stalkfleet
 - The Rev. John Sullivan, Jr.
- Requested consideration by the Roster Committee of the Conference of Bishops of an extension of on-leave-from-call status for The Rev. Logan Vang

Other actions:

Pursuant to †S13.01.c. of the Synod Constitution, at its meeting on July 15, 2023, the Synod Council voted unanimously to recognize and receive Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina of Stockton, CA as a congregation of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Synod Council will move that the 2023 Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly likewise vote to recognize and receive Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina of Stockton, CA as a congregation of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Synod Council approved three SAWC (synod authorized worshipping community) explorations:

- East Oakland SAWC Exploration
- Greater Hanford Radical Welcome Ministry SAWC Exploration
- Reno Young Adult Ministry SAWC Exploration

As part of its duties outlined in Synod Constitution S10.03.l., the Synod Council approved Constitutional and Bylaws changes for the following congregations:

- Christ Lutheran Church, El Cerrito, CA
- Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, San José, CA
- Hope Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA
- Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Dublin, CA
- Messiah Lutheran Church, Redwood City, CA
- St. James Lutheran Church, San Leandro, CA
- St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek, CA
- Thanksgiving Lutheran Church, Santa Rosa, CA

The Synod Council reviewed and approved Letters of Invitation to Extended Service (for non-ELCA pastors serving ELCA congregations) for the following:

- The Rev. Rebecca Blair (Episcopal Church), Zion Lutheran Church, Stockton, CA
- The Rev. Coryl Lassen (Episcopal Church), University Lutheran Church, Palo Alto, CA
- The Rev. Michael Patterson (Episcopal Church), St. Paul's Lutheran Family, Carson City, NV

At the request of the congregation council of the Lutheran Church of the Master, Sacramento, CA, the synod assumed administration of the congregation pursuant to Synod Constitution S13.25. The Synod Council subsequently appointed The Rev. Jason Bense (Gethsemane Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church of our Redeemer, Sacramento, CA), The Rev. Kirsten Moore (Calvary Lutheran Church, Rio Linda, CA), and The Rev. Karen Stetins (St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Fairfield, CA) as synodical administration trustees of the congregation.

Similarly, at the request of the congregation council of Faith Lutheran Church, Marysville, CA, the synod assumed administration of the congregation. The Synod Council appointed the Rev. Christian Schweter (Peace Lutheran Church, Grass Valley, CA), the Rev. Carolyn Brodt (Bethel Lutheran Church, Roseville, CA), and Tony Freitas (Faith Lutheran Church, Meadow Vista, CA) as synodical administration trustees of the congregation.

The Synod Council passed the following continuing resolutions to the Sierra Pacific Synod Constitution:

S7.21.A23. *Congregations may determine the number of lay voting members to the Synod Assembly using one of the following formulae:*

Formula A) Each congregation shall elect two lay voting members to the synod assembly. One additional voting member shall be elected by congregations having between 351 and 525 baptized members. Two additional voting members shall be elected by congregations having between 526 and 700 baptized members. Three additional voting members shall be elected by congregations having between 701 and 875 baptized members. Four additional voting members shall be elected by congregations having more than 875 baptized members. The number of baptized members shall be determined by the most recent parochial report on file with the synod office.

or

Formula B) Each congregation shall elect two lay voting members for every rostered minister serving the congregation under a letter of call or extended service. If there is no rostered minister serving the congregation, the congregation shall elect two lay voting members.

Congregations are encouraged to include persons of color, persons whose primary language is other than English, youth (confirmed to age 17), and young adults (age 18 to 30) among their lay voting members to the synod assembly. (see †S6.04. and †S6.04.01.)

Regardless of the formula used, for congregations sending an even number of lay voting members, no more than half of the congregation's lay voting members should be of the same gender. For congregations sending one additional lay voting member (3 total), no more than two members should be of the same gender. For congregations sending three additional lay voting members (5 total), no more than three members should be of the same gender. (see †S6.04. and S6.04.A16.)

S7.21.B23. *A. Congregations may send one additional lay voting member who is a person of color or person whose primary language is other than English.*

B. Congregations may send one additional lay voting member who is a youth or young adult. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service. If a congregation is sending a youth as part of the Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee (see S7.21.04.), the congregation may send a young adult.

C. For any additional lay voting members, congregations should take gender balance into consideration.


S7.22.A23. *Rostered ministers on the roster of this synod who are granted disability status or on-leave-from-call are permitted but not required to serve as voting members of the synod assembly.*

The Synod Council made the following appointments to Synod committees, discipling teams, and boards:

- Bishop Election Committee
 - John Brett (First United/Middle Circle, San Francisco, CA)
 - The Rev. Rustin Comer, co-chair (Saint Matthew, Walnut Creek, CA)
 - Kathy Frattini, secretary (Saint Matthew, Walnut Creek, CA)
 - AJ Gaston, co-chair (TEEM candidate; Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Oakland, CA)
 - Sue Michaelson (Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, Rohnert Park, CA)
 - Christa Slater (Hope Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA)
 - Diane Torry (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Reno, NV)
 - The Rev. Ron Valadez (Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Auburn, CA)
 - Jeff Pennington (synod secretary, *ex officio*)
 - Simon Wong (synod vice president, *ex officio*)
- Candidacy Committee (three-year term)
 - The Rev. Holly McHale-Larsen (St. Paul Lutheran Church, Oakland, CA)
 - The Rev. Kirsten Moore (Calvary Lutheran Church, Rio Linda, CA)
 - Gary Cadwising (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
 - Ann Schinske (Trinity Lutheran Church, Pleasanton, CA)
 - The Rev. Susan Scott (retired)
- Finance Committee
 - Eric Brudos (Grace Lutheran Church, Palo Alto, CA)
 - Scott Taylor (St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
- Leadership Discipling Team
 - The Rev. Anne Carlson (retired)
 - The Rev. Sandi Olson Decker (St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Monterey, CA)
 - The Rev. Katie Holeman (St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Carmichael, CA)
 - Margaret R. McLean (St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
 - Sandra Hamilton Slane (St. James Lutheran Church, Redding, CA)
 - The Rev. Clark Brown (Trinity Lutheran Church, Pleasanton, CA)
 - The Rev. Tyler Jensen (Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Santa Rosa, CA)
 - The Rev. Tony Rhodes (St. Philip's Lutheran Church, Carmel, CA)
 - The Rev. Dan Smith (Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, Davis, CA)
 - The Rev. Dianne Wendt (Lutheran Church of the Cross, Sacramento, CA)
 - The Rev. Nate Winterhof (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Saratoga, CA)
- Mt. Cross Ministries
 - The Rev. Amy Kienzle (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
 - Richard Martin (Advent Lutheran Church, Morgan Hill, CA)
- Nominating Committee (three-year term)
 - Christa Slater (Hope Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA)
 - The Rev. Jodi Golden-Lund (Trinity Lutheran Church, Porterville, CA)
 - The Rev. Stephanie Johnson (Trinity Lutheran Church, Alameda, CA)
 - The Rev. Evered Cohen (Lutheran Church of Our Savior, San Francisco, CA)
 - The Rev. Kirsten Moore (Calvary Lutheran Church, Rio Linda, CA)
- Synod Assembly Credentials Committee
 - Randy Presuhn, Chair (Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, San José, CA)
- Synod Assembly Elections Committee (for elections other than bishop)
 - The Rev. Evered Cohen (Lutheran Church of Our Savior, San Francisco, CA)

- Peggy Ince (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Reno, NV)
- The Rev. Stephanie Johnson (Trinity Lutheran Church, Alameda, CA)
- Synod Assembly Planning Committee
 - The Rev. Charlane Lines (Faith Lutheran Church, Meadow Vista, CA)
 - Deacon Karen Idler (Faith Lutheran Church, Meadow Vista, CA)
 - Nora Oluoch (Christ Multicultural, San José, CA)
 - Luke Nicolay (Faith Lutheran Church, Chico, CA)
 - The Rev. Courtney Geibert (Messiah Lutheran Church, Redwood City, CA)
 - The Rev. Julie Kelly (Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, Hanford, CA)
 - The Rev. Gabi Schroeder (Advent Lutheran Church, Citrus Heights, CA)
 - Genie Tjahjadi Shermak (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Livermore, CA)
 - The Rev. Joshua Serrano (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, San Carlos, CA)
 - Marisa Louie Lee (St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
 - Andrea Puck (Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Saratoga, CA)
 - The Rev. Paul Larson (Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Salinas, CA)
 - Donna Nunes (St. James Lutheran Church, San Leandro, CA)
 - Makayla Holeman (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
- Synod Assembly Resolutions Committee
 - Katie Swartz (St. James Lutheran Church, Redding, CA)
 - The Rev. John Valentine, Chair (Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Orinda, CA)
- Synod coordinator for the ELCA National Youth Gathering
 - Lisa Herlocher (Bethel Lutheran Church, Roseville, CA)
- Synod Staff Support Committee
 - John Brett (First United/Middle Circle, San Francisco, CA)
 - Sandra Hamilton Slane (St. James Lutheran Church, Redding, CA)
 - Jack Bareilles (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Eureka, CA)
 - Debbie Cook (St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi, CA)
 - The Rev. Frank Espegren (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
 - Michael Flanagan (Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, San José, CA)
- Warner Trust Committee
 - Linda Babcock (Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Granite Bay, CA)
 - John Brett (First United/Middle Circle, San Francisco, CA)
 - Makayla Holeman (St. John's Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA)
- Witness Discipling Team
 - Linda Babcock (Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Granite Bay, CA)
 - The Rev. Janet Katari, Chair (Christ Lutheran Church, San Francisco, CA)
- Worship for Baptismal Living
 - The Rev. Kathy Morris (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Reno, NV)

In Christ,



Jeffrey A Pennington
Synod Secretary

Conference of Deans Report

In the fall of 2022, Interim Bishop Claire Burkat and the Synod Council worked to re-envision the role of the Deans within our Synod. This was done to provide Bishop Burkat with more localized involvement in synod processes and to broaden the pool of facilitators of congregational call processes (alleviating a portion of the over-weighty responsibilities being borne by Assistant to the Bishop Manda Truchinski).

Since that time, the Council of Deans has met twice monthly. The first meeting includes time with the bishop and staff in discussing broader synodical needs and dealing with mobility. The second meeting is focused on working with the Assistant to the Bishop on the call process by seeking candidate profiles to pair with congregational profiles. In the past year that we have been facilitating the call process we have interviewed and discerned with more than 80 Rostered Ministers. In this year, 9 congregations have called pastors in the Sierra Pacific Synod.

The Deans also now serve as the first level of response to congregations and pastors experiencing conflict or crisis, providing pastoral care and guidance. The Deans are expected to facilitate communication between the Office of the Bishop and their respective conferences, as well as representing the Office of the Bishop and congregations of the SPS by installing pastors in their new calls. Additionally, they connect regularly with the clergy in their conferences, with an eye on facilitating fellowship, mutual and prayerful support, and information dissemination. Deans may also work with congregations by providing various resources (education, stewardship, youth, etc.)

The current roster of the Council of Deans includes:

The Rev. Ben Colahan	Redwood Conference / Conference 1
The Rev. Dave Miller	Bridges Conference / Conference 2
The Rev. Dr. Gabriele Schroeder	Capitol Valley Conference / Conference 3
The Rev. Charlane Lines	Sierra Nevada Foothills Conference / Conference 4
The Rev. John Kuehner	San Francisco Peninsula Conference / Conference 5
The Rev. Cristina Beauchemin	El Camino Real Conference / Conference 6
The Rev. Dr. John Valentine	Mt. Diablo Conference / Conference 7
The Rev. Mark Price	Sierra Central Valley Conference / Conference 8
The Rev. Jodi Golden-Lund	Central San Joaquin Conference/ Conference 9
The Rev. Cindy Beck	Dean of Interims

Staff Support Committee Report

Members of the Committee

Sandra Hamilton Slane (Chair)

John Brett (Synod Council member)

Pastor Frank Espegren

Jack Bareilles

Michael Flanagin

Policy 91 - 003 Synod Staff Support Committee

Purposes

1. To provide support to synod staff members and their yearly goals.
2. To assist the bishop and Synod Council in their roles of support and supervision of staff.
3. To make recommendations to the bishop and Synod Council in matters of personnel policies, compensation and benefits, continuing education and sabbatical policies and resources.
4. To help individual staff members reflect on issues of personal and professional development, continuing education needs, etc.

The Synod Staff Support Committee is an official committee designated by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Sierra Pacific Synod. The membership of the committee was comprised Synod Council members and individuals recommended by synod staff.

The committee met six times since April, 2023 to establish the parameters of its role and to become acquainted with the status of personnel issues within the organization. Several meetings were attended by Human Resources Consultant Laura Benson, and occasionally by Bishop Claire Burkat and Synod VP Simon Wong.

Recommendations were made to the Synod Council related to telework arrangements for employees, revision of Policy 96-001 to define which staff are employed in a co-terminus arrangement with the bishop, to extend the contract with Bishop Claire Burkat, and to propose a staffing structure that will optimize operational efficiency of the synod as an organization.

Future projects include recommending personnel policies, revising of position descriptions, monitoring the process of hiring, and consulting with the bishop and synod council regarding employment-related issues.

Leadership Discipling Team

Professional Leaders Conference

Rostered ministers of the Sierra Pacific Synod usually gather in the fall for continuing education and time connecting with colleagues. In 2023 a portion of the Leadership Discipling Team: The Rev. Clark Brown, The Rev. Tony Rhodes, The Rev. Dan Smith, The Rev. Nate Winterhof, and The Rev. Dianne Wendt as chair, planned an event in late spring. This was planned due to the change in scheduling for the 2023 Synod Assembly and Bishop election.

About 60 pastors, deacons, and Bishop Claire Burkat gathered May 30 to June 1 for the Rostered Ministers' Retreat: Let the Healing Begin, at Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center in Citrus Heights, a beautiful 25-acre oasis in a suburb of Sacramento.

Andrea Arey from Portico started us off with a revised Wholeness Wheel, looking at wellness from all aspects of our lives. After dinner, we worshipped, led by Pr. Clark Brown and Pr. Dan Smith. Professor Leonard McMahon from Pacific School of Religion led sessions on Design Thinking Process giving us new ideas for planning in the future with our congregations. Rev. Dale Webb engaged the participants in different contemplative exercises, giving us opportunities to re-center and ground ourselves in our faith.

With the understanding that self-care is important, one afternoon offered options to create a charcuterie board with Pr. Dianne Wendt, fiber arts with Pr. Julie Kelly, Animal Communication with Pr. Julie Webb, Soul Collage with Pr. Katy Grindberg, as well as other opportunities to connect with colleagues or rest. Pastors and deacons in First Call Theological Education met with Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Ron Valadez. We ended the event in worship, a healing service with communion, with Rev. Dale Webb preaching.

A huge thank you to our ministry partners of Lutheran Social Service of Northern California (Jerry Metzger), Sierra Pacific Synod Women of the ELCA (Sue Hertless), and the Mission Endowment Fund (Joel Wudel). Thanks to them, we enjoyed great snacks and beverages throughout the event. Thanks also go to all the congregations that supported their pastors and leaders in the gift of time and money. We were fed by food and fun, laughter and learning, connecting and creativity, rest and recreation.

Leadership Discipling Team

Boundaries Training for Rostered Ministers

In response to [the Recommendations from the Investigation Team](#)¹, [Synod Council has tasked the Leadership Discipling Team](#) “to review, update, and conduct boundary training for all rostered leaders, interns, staff, synod council members, and congregational lay leadership by no later than December 31, 2023, and annually thereafter.”²

Your Leadership Discipling Team is taking this task seriously and it sees in its mandate an opportunity to strengthen and enhance all the ministries of this synod even while we grow in our collegiality and collaboration.

Rest assured, your time and expenses are on our minds as the team seeks out ways to offer useful and meaningful boundaries training opportunities that will help you in your specific ministry context. We believe strongly in the work of the church and the good it can do, especially when leadership is trained and prepared to lead in ways mindful of the variety of dynamics we all face when our people live out the faith together.

Therefore, while we work to create policy around a regular pattern of Boundaries Training basics, we are also seeking out additional resources to engage other boundaries-related issues that just can't be covered in a basics class. Topics like social media usage and sharing, intercultural dynamics, financial dynamics, gender identity dynamics and others are all fruitful places to grow in our leadership capacities, and your Leadership Discipling Team is working to create a system to help you engage topics like this in convenient, cost-effective, and regular ways.

It is our intention to partner with a vendor who can provide boundary training for Sierra Pacific Synod. We hope to provide one online and one in-person event in 2024 that is free of charge to clergy and congregations. This vendor would also provide alternative dates for online training that rostered ministers could access at their own time and expense. We will not have boundary trainings in 2023 as the LDT continues to draft a policy with clear expectations for our synod to be adopted at our June 2024 assembly.

¹ *Recommendations from the Sierra Pacific Synod Investigation Team*, item #5

² *The Report of the Investigation Team to the Sierra Pacific Synod Council*, Item #3

Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee Report

The Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee is a group of high school youth who have come together in our faith to take a more active role in our larger synod. We represent youth from across all of the syond and help guide the church in a way that will help future generations as well as us now. SPSYC is an amazing opportunity to grow in leadership roles and our faith. We have retreats for kids in elementary school through high school that help them realize who they want to be in their church community. On my middle school retreat I decided I wanted to be a part of SPSYC and when I hit high school I joined and now I'm standing here in front of you telling you why we are here and what it is we do because youth are an important piece of the church. The three of us standing up here today, Makayla, Emma, and myself are so proud of everything we have done and look forward to everything we will do in the next year. And all those that come after them.

The Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee has done a lot in the past year. Last October, we had a planning retreat which we used to plan our retreats for the year. This helped develop our leadership skills as well as bring us closer together as a team. In November, we hosted a joint Elementary and Middle School retreat with the theme God's Love: Inside Out. Sam Garcia was our speaker. He taught us about God's love, and how it shows us how to love each other and ourselves, despite emotions making it hard sometimes. We also had Bible Study rotations, where we combined Bible verses with activities like acting out the story and bible journaling to teach about the different ways we can show each other God's love.

We had planned to have our high school retreat in February, but due to the storms at Mt. Cross, we moved it to April. This retreat was super valuable both for the campers as well as for us SPSYC members. Our guest speaker, Regina Banks, from the Lutheran Office of Public Policy, taught us all about the power that youth have and the importance of advocacy. We even wrote letters to some of our government representatives!

At this retreat, we also elected new members to serve on SPSYC.

Over the summer, we reached out to more youth, and added even more members.

Thank you so much for allowing us to host these retreats, and we can't wait to see what this year brings!

The Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee is excited to announce the retreat dates for this upcoming retreat year. We have a combined elementary and middle school retreat, 3rd-8th grades. This retreat is November 10-13, some of the activities during this retreat will be with the entire group while others are separated by age groups. The other retreat is our High school retreat, 9th-12th grades. This retreat will be

March 1-3rd. During the high school retreat we will be holding elections for high school youth who want to be on SPSYC. If you have youth who are interested in applying for SPSYC but are unable to attend the retreat please have them fill out the application once it opens. Our current plan is to release the theme for these retreats on October 14th. Thank you so much for your support of this committee and we look forward to the retreats we have planned.

The current members of the Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee are:

Soren Hillesland	First Lutheran, Palo Alto, CA
Annika Kulawik	Grace Lutheran, Palo Alto, CA
Bella Manley	St. John's Lutheran, Sacramento, CA
Jack Carlson	Advent Lutheran, Morgan Hill, CA
Maggie Oehmke	St. John's Lutheran, Sacramento, CA
Charlotte Lungren	Grace Lutheran, Palo Alto, CA
Chloe Pop	St. John's Lutheran, Sacramento, CA
Emma Steger	Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran, San Jose, CA
Mia Hill	St. John's Lutheran, Sacramento, CA
Makayla Holeman	St. John's Lutheran, Sacramento, CA
Rebecca Derrick	Grace Lutheran, Palo Alto, CA
Edward Morris	Hope Lutheran, Fresno, CA
Ty Danforth-Cutler	Grace Lutheran, Palo Alto, CA
Ohana Miura	Bethel Lutheran, Cupertino, CA
Abbi Marselle	Prince of Peace Lutheran, Saratoga, CA

The adult advisors to the Sierra Pacific Synod Youth Committee are:

Lisa Herlocker	Bethel Lutheran, Roseville, CA
Elizabeth Hood	Grace Lutheran, Palo Alto, CA
Drew Ajer	Prince of Peace, Saratoga, CA
The Rev. Paul Larson	Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Salinas, CA
The Rev. John Bost	on leave from call
Maggie Vergara	Bethel Lutheran, Roseville, CA

**2023 Annual Report
from the
SPS Candidacy Committee to the SPS Assembly**

In the past year, the Candidacy Committee has worked with 23 candidates. Currently there are two Word and Service candidates and 16 Word and Sacrament candidates. Four of the Word and Sacrament candidates are in the TEEM program. Three are currently doing their internship. Four have been approved and are working with the synod awaiting a first call. The candidates study at four different seminaries.

In the past year we rejoiced with the ordinations of four candidates:

The Rev. Janet Katari – Christ Church Lutheran, San Francisco, CA

The Rev. Paul Larsen – Good Shepherd Lutheran, Salinas, CA

The Rev. Charbel Zgheib – Afghan and Arabic Ministry, Sacramento, CA

The Rev. Veronica Gould – Zion Lutheran, Loveland, CO

Changes in Committee Membership and Staff

We are grateful to Reverend Manda Truchinski, Assistant to the Bishop, SPS Synod for her years of service as a committee member and then serving as the staff person for the work of the candidacy committee. While she remains as an Assistant to the Bishop, she left the candidacy committee before our April Meeting.

We are appreciative of the assignment of Reverend Ron Valadez to be staff for the work of the candidacy committee. Ron has been a member of the committee since 2015.

We welcomed 3 new members: Mr. Gary Cadwising, Reverend Holly McHale-Larsen and Reverend Kristen Moore, Synod Council Representative

The committee continues to seek new members; lay people, clergy on Word and Service or Word and Sacrament rosters.

Significant Events in the year 2022-2023

November of 2022 the candidacy committee met with all seminarians except those who were out of state on internships. Bishop Claire Burkhat shared words of wisdom. It was an opportunity for fellowship, time to discuss and ask questions and to meet with a number of candidates about their specific process. We are grateful for the people of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Walnut Creek for hosting the event and Pastor Rustin Comer.

The committee stayed in contact with candidates, answered their questions, talked with people interested in rostered ministry, and worked with our primary partners:

congregations, seminaries, synod and churchwide staff. Individual candidates were followed by a designated relator from the committee and their process outlined individual candidate plans. Initial interviews were done, entrance, endorsement and approval decisions were made.

Late spring and early summer 2023, the candidacy committee was directed by churchwide leaders to undertake the work to **approve** Pastor Nelson Rabell for reinstatement pending a call. We were asked to do this as there was no appeals process for a Pastor Rabell who was removed from the roster and was subsequently deemed unjustly removed by the Investigation Team. This was not our usual process. We brought forth a positive approval for reinstatement after much discussion and work and support of each other. We are invested in working for an appeals process in the Sierra Pacific Synod and the ELCA as we seek synodical and churchwide partners.

The rest of this report shares our commitment to anti-racism, anti-bias and the dismantling of White Supremacy.

For a number of years, the candidacy committee has sought to be racially diverse in membership. Currently the committee has 4 members who are people of color, 5 white members and 2 staff members who are people of color. Prior to 2021, in conversation about racial equity, people of color on the committee expressed that they were **not hopeful** that anything would change. They have heard it all before. Seminarians themselves who were people of color stated they had a lot of expectation at their seminary to be the ones to speak out about being latine or black rather than being allowed to be focused on being a seminarian. We had reports of seminarians of color having difficulty in their internship sites. Again, with the pressure on them to speak about their color and their work try to make the system work.

In 2020, with the killing of George Floyd and numbers of black people of color being killed by police in our country, the concerns about anti-racism, white supremacy and bias were heightened. At that time members of the Racial Ethnic Ministry Discipling Team approached the candidacy committee for conversation. We met in November of 2020 receiving their recommendations and in January 2021 we reviewed the conversation making a commitment to work towards being anti-racist, anti-white supremacy and anti-bias.

We became more intentional. Reverend Dr. Donna Allen met with us in March of 2021. White people on the committee were required to read *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelou and complete Eddie Moore's *21 Day Racial Equity Building Challenge* - <https://www.eddiemoorej.com/21daychallenge>

A Reflective Paradigm was presented:

Unmask the oppressive agenda set into place by white supremacy and racism

Debunk the lies and half-truths

Disentangle values and beliefs by being aware of our own values and beliefs. and encourage yourself to change.

Emancipatory Praxis is liberating action. What new actions we can take now and in future.

Posting Faith Statements on SPS Website: A Step Towards Equalizing Power. We were challenged to work to lower the power disparity between the candidates and the committee. One of the actions is that committee members began sharing their own faith statements on the synod website allowing candidates to know that we are willing to present our faith statements as just as they are asked to do.

Following the meeting with Rev. Dr. Allen, we began work on our own Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement by spending time looking at our values and beliefs. This work is part of a continued process of the committee.

In February 2022, we met via zoom with Asst. to the Bishop Chicago Metro Synod, Reverend Sunitha Mortha with her presentation on Implicit Bias. At that meeting we adopted the practice of naming our biases prior to every decision we make about a candidate.

**Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Revised April 2023**

SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD ELCA – CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

The Candidacy Committee of the Sierra Pacific Synod offers this living document to inspire and hold accountable our current and future work, particularly in regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is the result of a long discernment that included: consultation with various specialists in the field, much prayer, discussion, vulnerability, pain from our past, and hope for our future. Please keep us, our work, and especially our future leaders in your prayers.

WE ARE CALLED TO

Ground our work in our Christianity and our Lutheran identity.

Be the priesthood of all believers.

Recognize that everyone has a call to ministry and we want to walk with people in their discernment of their gifts and their place in the church.

Honor the uniqueness of God's call to each person and their varied paths or types of service.

Pay particular attention to candidates who are people of color, LGBTQIAA+, people with disabilities, or women, that they have support they need as they go through the process. Engage in difficult conversations in a healthy way that values the teaching of Matthew 18 and results in reconciliation.

Practice diversity and truth.

Honor cultures and varied expressions in relational ways.

WE LAMENT

The historical and systemic racism/white supremacy of our church and our nation through self-identification.

We carry racism and bias, consciously and unconsciously, and that we speak and act without thinking.

We don't honor the differences among us and we have a narrow way of seeing each other and our respective gifts.

We each have limitations and we fail at times to recognize our need for God and each other.

In encounters, when we fail to love each other, our humanity is lost by not seeing each other.

The role of gatekeeper has been abused.

Candidates do not feel they can be honest with us throughout the process.

IN OUR WORK AS A COMMITTEE, WE EXPECT TO DO THE FOLLOWING AND CONTINUALLY CHECK IN WITH EACH OTHER:

Encourage candidates to find role models to support them in the process.

Create diverse panels and be a committee that reflects the intended diversity of our synod.

Provide an environment in panel discussions and all conversations with candidates that are open and transparent to encourage candidates to speak their own truth from their hearts.

Express our expectations to congregations, our synod and bishop, seminaries, and candidates.

Model being a gatekeeper in positive, safe ways.

Practice difficult conversations in ways that are respectful and culturally sensitive.

Continuously review our process for setting up panels for all interactions with candidates, for the diversity of the committee and for ongoing quality improvement.

Commit ourselves to this living document to being open and accountable.

We will review this document at least annually at spring meetings.

In closing, we look forward to the continued work of the candidacy committee and God's work through the church. We look forward to continuing our commitment towards dismantling White supremacy and becoming an anti- racist committee. We uplift the diversity of candidates whom God is calling to rostered ministry in the ELCA.

Committee Members

Reverend Tomas Bayou

Professor Adam Braun

Mr. Gary Cadwising

Mr. Ed Marsh

Reverend Holly McHale-Larsen

Ms. Ann Schinske

Reverend Susan Scott

Reverend Bill Wong

Reverend Maria Paiva, Region 2 Candidacy and Leadership Manager

Reverend Sharon Stalkfleet, Committee Chair

Reverend Ron Valadez, Assistant to the Bishop, SPS Synod

Witness Discipling Team Report

The Witness Discipling Team (WDT) and Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) work together in collaboration with the Synod Council and ELCA churchwide. We walk alongside new start ministries, strategic ministries, and existing congregations seeking to become more vital. The WDT and DEM support them through visitation of ministry sites, training for leaders, regular reviews of communities receiving funding, and funding (see below). The mission of the Sierra Pacific Synod becomes visible in these congregations and ministries. They are the present and the future of our synod, lived out in BIPOC communities, low-income communities, immigrant communities, and LGBTQIA+ communities.

In all other synods, the vast majority of funding for this work comes from ELCA churchwide, with smaller amounts from the synod and mission partners. A synod provides a certain amount of benevolence to the ELCA and the ELCA provides for new start funding. The Sierra Pacific Synod does not meet the stated threshold of benevolence, so the Sierra Pacific Synod provides 60% of the funding and ELCA churchwide provides 40%. Any reduction in funding from the Synod will directly impact one of the ministries below.

The largest area of focus is on Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities (SAWCs). All of these began as new starts, receiving funding and working towards becoming established congregations. Some no longer receive funding and have decided not to seek to become an established congregation. All of them contribute to their surrounding communities in many ways as well as to their conferences and the whole Synod.

Current long term SAWCs no longer receiving funding:

1. Gift of Grace Lutheran Fellowship (Fernley).
2. Shepherd by the Sea Episcopal/Lutheran Mission (Gualala)
3. Mountain Ranch Lutheran Mission (Mountain Ranch)
4. Grace Lao (Richmond)
5. Good Shepherd South Asian Ministry (Fremont)

SAWCs who currently receive funding:

6. Christ Community Multicultural Ministry – San Jose – **New Start** mid-2019, Rev. Jared Oluoch
7. Fuente de Gracia (Latine Ministry) – Sanger – **New Start** November 2020 Alex Gonzalez, Developer, Certified Minister, PCUSA, Presbytery of San Joaquin
8. Afghan and Arab and Middle Eastern (AME) Ministry – Sacramento – **New Start** August 2021. Rev. Charbel Zgheib
9. New Revelation Community – Richmond – **New Start** September 2021. Rev. Dr. Donna Allen
10. Mision Latino Luterana (MLL – Greater Stockton Latinx Ministry) – **New Start** March 2021 –

This community left the ELCA to form an independent Lutheran. They are now named Mission Luterana Santa Maria Peregrina and in the process of rejoining our synod as a

congregation. Their funding will continue due an agreement made with them, the synod and ELCA churchwide.

In addition to SAWC's, we also support Strategic Ministries, which are congregation-based outreach to new communities around them. Each of these ministries receives funding.

Strategic ministries (receiving funding):

1. Miracles of Faith (Oakland)
2. Our Saviour's Mission Esperanza ministry (Fresno)
3. Christ's Lahu Ministry (Visalia)

An important aspect of our ministry goes to finding and developing new opportunities through SAWC Explorations. These happen when a church closes, or when someone has an idea about a new ministry. They are a short-term, in-depth look at a community and the possibility of starting a new faith community there.

Explorations in 2023(received funding in 2023 and are now complete):

1. St. John's Oakland
2. Reno Young Adult Ministry

Possibilities for the near future growing out of explorations:

1. Strategic ministry for St. Paulus (San Francisco, CA)
2. New start for young adults in Reno, NV
3. Multicultural new start in NW Fresno, CA

The Witness Discipling Team continues to develop and support congregations through programs of leadership development, congregational training, and organizational development:

1. ACTS for Vitality is a Transformational Ministry invitation and initiative of our Synod for existing congregations. There is a separate team under the witness team developing resources and recruiting congregations for cohorts. For more information see [ACTS for Vitality | Sierra Pacific Syond \(spselca.net\)](https://www.spselca.net).
2. Asian Lay Evangelist Program (ALEP) is a Holy Innovation Grant Recipient that can only be done in collaboration with other partners. Three synods collaborated with Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and the ELCA Asian Ministry Desk. The program started in March 2021. The first cohort completed their coursework and are now working on their practicum.
3. Anchor Churches. An Anchor Church is one congregation willing to partner with one, two or several congregations (which may include one or more new starts) or other ministries. They learn, collaborate and resource one another to move together into the future. We hope to recruit congregations into this program in the near future.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dr. Dawn Roginski, Director of Evangelical Mission
Rev. Janet Katari, Chair, Witness Disciple Team

Global Missions Advocacy Team (GMAT) Report

One of the functions of the Bishop is as Chief Ecumenical Officer, overseeing our relationships with other Christian denominations, non-Christian faith groups, and our Lutheran ministry partners around the world. The ELCA is a part of the Lutheran World Federations, and we, as a Synod, are partnered internationally with three companion Lutheran churches: in El Salvador, Rwanda and Taiwan. We also sponsor missionaries and Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM's) in various parts of the world. We also have a very active group of people in refugee resettlement and asylum support.

During David Mullen's tenure as our Bishop, GMAT was organized in order to assist and support the Bishop in keeping track of all these relationships and commitments. I have happily served on the Team since its inception and am now the convenor of our two or three meetings a year.

Since the pandemic began in 2020, many of our activities ground to a halt. Our deployed missionaries and YAGM's returned home and exchange visits between companion Synods were suspended. The relationships have continued, and we are attempting to enliven them again. We have continued to have occasional meetings, albeit by Zoom. Of course, this past year we have had an interim Bishop who has had to spend most of her time in helping us to recover from the rather abrupt end of Bishop Meghan's tenure, so GMAT's work has taken a bit of a back seat to our Synod reorganization.

This past year we had one major event: last fall's Encuentro in El Salvador, which had been delayed a year due to the pandemic. We sent three of us to El Salvador for the occasion. The Salvadoran Lutheran Church has had its own organizational issues due to Bishop Medardo Gomez's advancing illnesses. They were hoping to elect and install a new bishop by the Encuentro but ran into the problem that they had no process established for electing a Bishop! Bishop Gomez was appointed by the Missouri Synod before the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod declared its independence from them and has continued in the call ever since. They are still developing an election process. Fortunately, Bishop Gomez, though his health is declining, has been ably assisted, especially by his wife Pastora Abelina, and by Pastor Christian Chavarria Ayala who has been to our synod numerous times, including our last Synod Assembly, and who chaired the Encuentro meetings.

We continue our relationships with Taiwan and Rwanda, although meetings back and forth have not yet resumed, and Rwanda has faced its own organizational problems. Our Rwanda-connected congregations have concentrated on support of the Lutheran School there. With the election of our new Bishop, we hope to resume closer relationships with both those Synods.

Asylum continues to be a very active issue that many of our members are involved with on several fronts, sponsoring refugees from several countries and advocating for them in the

immigration court in San Francisco. This past year, congregations have continued to provide support to the people of the Ukraine as the war continues into a second year with no easy end in sight.

With the election of a new Bishop, we hope to re-enliven our ministry with our mission partners around the world and look forward to working with our new Bishop, whoever he or she may be.

Cordially,

Joseph Haletky
Chair, Global Missions Advocacy Team

Roster Report

Candidates of Sierra Pacific Synod newly ordained

The Rev. Janet Katari	Christ Church Lutheran, San Francisco, CA
The Rev. Paul Larson	Good Shepherd Lutheran, Salinas, CA
The Rev. Charbel Zgheib	Salam Arabic Ministries, Sacramento, CA
The Rev. Veronica Gould	Zion Lutheran, Loveland, CA

Clergy who joined the roster of Sierra Pacific Synod

The Rev. Clare McElaney	Shepherd of the Hills, Berkeley, CA
The Rev. James McCammon	St. Paul's Episcopal, Healdsburg, CA
The Rev. Jj Godwin	Sierra Pacific Synod staff
The Rev. Josh Martyn	Immanuel Lutheran, Los Altos, CA
The Rev. Kelly Sandin	Los Altos Lutheran, Los Altos, CA
The Rev. Kristofer Rhude	Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran, San Jose, CA
The Rev. Al Cassel	Retired
The Rev. Martha Butzier	Retired, Hope Lutheran, Santa Clara, CA
The Rev. Louise Britts	Retired, American Lutheran, Woodland, CA
The Rev. Rebecca Swee	Retired

Clergy who retired

The Rev. Gregory Brown
The Rev. Barbara Caine
The Rev. Frances LeBas
The Rev. Jeffrey Irwin
The Rev. Jill Ross
The Rev. John "Jack" Damien
The Rev. John Freesman
The Rev. John Sullivan
The Rev. Linda Boston
The Rev. Lori Eickmann
The Rev. Michael Meyer
The Rev. Nicholas Droge
The Rev. Robert McKee
The Rev. Sharon Stalkfleet
The Rev. Susan Birkelo

*Clergy who died**

The Rev. Lawrence Mathre
The Rev. Lauren "Bud" Egdahl
The Rev. Lloyd Hanson
The Rev. Walter Pieper
The Rev. Jim DeLange
The Rev. Leon Holm
The Rev. Walter Stuhr
The Rev. Laurel Alexander
The Rev. Raymond Olsen
The Rev. Cora Scheel
The Rev. Larry Nelson
The Rev. Roger Lee
The Rev. Paul Krueger
The Rev. Harry Carlson
The Rev. Jan Womer
The Rev. Joseph Barndt

*For more information, see the Necrology

Necrology

The Rev. Joseph Barndt

The Rev. Jan Womer

The Rev. Harry Carlson

The Rev. Paul Krueger

The Rev. Roger Lee

The Rev. Larry Nelson

The Rev. Cora Scheel

The Rev. Raymond Olsen

The Rev. Laurel Alexander

The Rev. Walter Stuhr

The Rev. Leon Holm

The Rev. Jim DeLange

The Rev. Walter Pieper

The Rev. Lloyd Hanson

The Rev. Lauren "Bud" Egdahl

The Rev. Lawrence Mathre

ANNIVERSARIES

Congregational Anniversaries

100 Years	Calvary Lutheran Church	Rio Linda, CA 95673
75 Years	Marin Lutheran Church	Corte Madera, CA 94925
75 Years	Christ Lutheran Church	El Cerrito, CA 94530
75 Years	St Paul Lutheran Church	Lodi, CA 95240
50 Years	Advent Lutheran Church	Morgan Hill, CA 95038

Rostered Leaders' Anniversaries

5 Years		35 Years	
Anja-Leena Laitakari-Pyykko	12/9/2018	John B Valentine	9/25/1988
Samee Singkeovilay	4/29/2018	Paul S Chung	1/1/1988
Scott B. Jones	8/18/2018	Timothy M Huff	2/14/1988
Sharon L Amundson	1/14/2018	Kaye I Kuhlmann	12/1/1988
Suzanne D O'Dea	1/21/2018	Susan D Wessner	8/27/1988
10 Years		40 Years	
John M Kuehner	6/9/2013	David J Hamilton	1/9/1983
Pamela S. Schaefer Dawson	8/24/2013	Edmundo Hassenteufel	6/19/1983
Rebekah E Davis	2/24/2013	Mark E Dunbar	12/28/1983
Ronald N Valadez	7/14/2013	Maurice M Ngakane	10/16/1983
15 Years		45 Years	
Bruce R Hannem	8/23/2008	Dale A Sollom-Brotherton	1/1/1978
Michael J Zurek	11/22/2008	David K Bonde	1/1/1978
Nicholas M Droge	3/30/2008	Endel "Cork" Kallas	7/22/1978
Ralph Supper III	7/20/2008	F Noreen Meginness	7/9/1978
20 Years		Lyle J Beckman	6/4/1978
Christopher B Warner-Carey	1/14/2003	Ross D Merkel	6/6/1978
Kristin J Gallimore	4/6/2003	Thomas A Beck	7/21/1978
Lynette M Crase	12/6/2003	William H Feeser Jr	6/18/1978
25 Years		50 Years	
Alicia Vargas	7/26/1998	Harvey E Blomberg	9/12/1973
Karen L Woida	5/24/1998	Robert L Phillippi	3/25/1973
Sandra D Dager	9/20/1998	55 Years	
Teresita C Valeriano	7/5/1998	Hoy San Loke	8/18/1968
30 Years		Jorn O E Muller	6/12/1968
Robert M McKee	2/21/1993	Kenneth L Mikulasek	9/10/1968
Daniel E Senter	9/5/1993	Paul G Carlson	6/11/1968
Ned O'Donnell Jr.	6/27/1993	Paul W Thomton	6/9/1968
35 Years		60 Years	
Allen L Cassel	6/18/1988	Jimmy W. Munson	6/28/1963
Bernhard Fricke	7/10/1988	70 Years	
Elizabeth E Ekdale	3/5/1988	George R Demant	6/21/1953
Jeffrey K Irwin	7/17/1988		

Conferences & Congregations

Sierra Pacific Synod Conferences

Our geographically widespread Synod is divided into smaller Conferences who are geographically closer to one another. Below you will find a list of the congregations in each Conference.

Conference 1: Redwood Mountain - Dean Rev. Ben Colahan - conference1@spselca.org

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Santa Rosa
Calvary Lutheran Church, Eureka
Christ Lutheran Church, Fortuna
Cross & Crown Lutheran Church, Rohnert Park
Elim Lutheran Church, Petaluma
Faith Lutheran Church, Santa Rosa
Faith Lutheran Church, Chico
First Lutheran Church, Orland
Galilee Lutheran Church, Kelseyville
Grace Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, McKinleyville
Grace Lutheran Church, Ukiah
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Weaverville
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Eureka
Lutheran Church of Arcata, Arcata
Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Yreka
Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Ferndale
Paradise Lutheran Church, Paradise
Shepherd By The Sea Episcopal/Lutheran Mission, Gualala
St. James Lutheran Church, Redding
Thanksgiving Lutheran Church, Santa Rosa
Trinity Lutheran Church, Fort Bragg

Conference 2: Bridges - Dean Rev. Dave Miller - conference2@spselca.org

All Saints Lutheran Church, Novato
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Oakland
Christ Lutheran Church, El Cerrito
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Novato
Grace Lao Lutheran Mission, Richmond
Hope Lutheran Church, El Sobrante
Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Alameda
Lutheran Church of the Cross, Berkeley
Marin Lutheran Church, Corte Madera
Miracles of Faith Lutheran Church, Oakland
Napa Valley Lutheran Church, Napa
New Revelation Community Church, Oakland/Vallejo
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Oakland
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Berkeley
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Tiburon
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Oakland

Trinity Lutheran Church, Alameda
Trinity Lutheran Church, Oakland
United in Grace Lutheran Church, Vallejo
United Lutheran Church, Oakland
University Lutheran Chapel, Berkeley
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley - Mission Partner

Conference 3: Capitol Valley - Dean Rev. Dr. Gabriele Schroeder

- *conference3@spselca.org*

Advent Lutheran Church, Citrus Heights
Afghani, Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry, Sacramento
American Lutheran Church, Woodland
Atonement Lutheran Church, Sacramento
Bethel Lutheran Church, Sacramento
Bethel Lutheran Church, Roseville
Calvary Lutheran Church, Rio Linda
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Orangevale
Community Lutheran Church, West Sacramento
Davis Lutheran Church, Davis
Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Carmichael
Grace American Lutheran Church, Ranch Cordova
Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Sacramento
Lutheran Church of the Ascension, Citrus Heights
Lutheran Church of the Cross, Sacramento
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Sacramento
Lutheran Church of the Incarnation, Davis
Lutheran Church of the Master, Sacramento
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Vacaville
St. John Lutheran Church, Sacramento
St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Sacramento, Sacramento
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Fairfield
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sacramento
The Belfry Campus Ministry, Davis - Mission Partner
Lutheran Office of Public Policy, Sacramento - Mission Partner

Conference 4: Sierra Nevada Foothills - Dean Rev. Charlane Lines

- *conference4@spselca.org*

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Auburn
Christ the King Lutheran Church, Tahoe City
Faith Lutheran Church, Elko, NV
Faith Lutheran Church, Marysville
Faith Lutheran Church, Reno, NV
Faith Lutheran Church, Meadow Vista
Gift of Grace Lutheran Fellowship, Fernley, NV
Grace Lutheran Church, Lincoln
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Reno, NV

Hope Lutheran Church of the Sierra, South Lake Tahoe
Lord of Mercy Lutheran Church, Sparks, NV
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Reno, NV
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Granite Bay
Our Savior Lutheran Church, Quincy
Peace Lutheran Church, Grass Valley
St. Paul's Lutheran Family, Carson City, NV
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, El Dorado Hills
Truckee Lutheran Presbyterian Church, Truckee
Lutheran Engagement & Advocacy in Nevada (LEAN), Reno - Mission Partner

Conference 5: San Francisco Peninsula - Dean Rev. John Kuehner
- *conference5@spselca.org*

Christ Church Lutheran, San Francisco
Coastside Lutheran Church, Half Moon Bay
First Lutheran Church, Palo Alto
First United Lutheran Church, San Francisco
Grace Lutheran Church, Palo Alto
HerChurch, San Francisco
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, San Carlos
Hope Lutheran Church, San Mateo
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Los Altos
Los Altos Lutheran Church, Los Altos
Lutheran Church of Our Savior, San Francisco
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Burlingame
Messiah Lutheran Church, Redwood City
St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, San Mateo
St. Francis Lutheran Church, San Francisco
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco
St. Mary & St. Martha Lutheran Church, San Francisco
St. Matthew Lutheran Church, San Francisco
St. Paulus Lutheran Church, San Francisco
Unity Lutheran Church, South San Francisco & Millbrae
University Lutheran Church, Palo Alto
Farming Hope, San Francisco - Mission Partner
Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry at Stanford, Palo Alto - Mission Partner
San Francisco Night Ministry, San Francisco - Mission Partner

Conference 6: El Camino Real - Dean Rev. Cristina Beauchemin - *conference6@spselca.org*

Advent Lutheran Church, Morgan Hill
Bethel Lutheran Church, Cupertino
Christ Lutheran Church, Aptos
Christ Multicultural Community Ministry, San Jose
Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, San Jose
Epiphany Lutheran & Episcopal Church, Marina
Faith Lutheran Church, Los Gatos

Grace Lutheran Church, San Jose
Grace Lutheran Church, King City
Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church, San Jose
Hope Lutheran Church, Santa Clara
Iglesia Luterana El Buen Pastor, Salinas
Immanuel Lutheran Church, San Jose
Immanuel Lutheran Church, Saratoga
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Gilroy
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Salinas
Lutheran Community Church, Watsonville
New Creation Lutheran Church, San Jose
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Saratoga
St. Luke Lutheran Church, Sunnyvale
St. Philips Lutheran Church, Carmel
St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Santa Cruz
St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Monterey
Mt. Cross Ministries, Ben Lomond - Mission Partner

Conference 7: Mt. Diablo - Dean Rev. Dr. John Valentine - conference7@spselca.org

Christ the King Lutheran Church, Fremont
Epiphany Lutheran Church, San Leandro
Faith Lutheran Church, Castro Valley
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Concord
Good Shepherd South Asian Ministry, Fremont
Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Livermore
Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church, Newark
Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Orinda
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Fremont
Hope Lutheran Church of Rossmoor, Walnut Creek
Korean Community Church of Lamorinda, Orinda
Messiah Lutheran Church, Hayward
Oromo Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, San Lorenzo
Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Lafayette
Peace Lutheran Church, Danville
Resurrection Lutheran Church, Dublin
St. James Lutheran Church, San Leandro
St. John Lutheran Church, Antioch
St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Pleasant Hill
St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek
Trinity Lutheran Church, Pleasanton
Lutheran Social Services of Northern California, Concord - Mission Partner

Conference 8: Sierra Central Valley - Dean Rev. Mark Price - conference8@spselca.org

Emanuel Lutheran Church, Modesto
Faith Lutheran Church, Murphys

Faith Lutheran Church of Amador County, Pioneer
Light of Christ Lutheran Church, Turlock
Mariposa Lutheran Church, Mariposa
Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Mi-Wuk Village
Mountain Lutheran Mission, Groveland
Mountain Ranch Lutheran Mission, Mountain Ranch
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Livingston
Saron Lutheran Church, Escalon
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Merced
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lodi
Zion Lutheran Church, Stockton

Conference 9: Central San Joaquin - Dean Rev. Jodi Golden-Lund

- *conference9@spselca.org*

Bethany Lutheran Church, Kerman
Bethel Lutheran Church, Fresno
Christ Lutheran Church, Reedley
Christ Lutheran Church & Christ Lahu Ministry, Visalia
Fuente de Gracia, Sanger
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fresno
Hope Lutheran Church, Fresno
Iglesia Evangelica Nueva Vida en Cristo, Fresno
Our Saviour Lutheran Church & Mision Esperanza, Fresno
Pella Lutheran Church, Selma
Trinity Lutheran Church, Porterville
Trinity Lutheran Church, Fresno
Lutheran Campus Ministry of Fresno - Mission Partner
Lutheran Hunger Network - Mission Partner

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Bulldog Pantry**
Lutheran Campus Ministry/Food Pantry for
Students
<http://www.lcmoffresno.org>
<https://thebulldogpantry.org>



**Lutheran Social Services of Northern
California**
Lutheran Social Services
<https://www.lssnorcal.org>



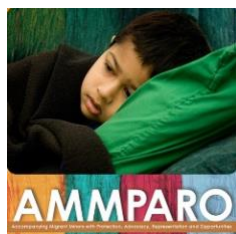
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Real Estate Services for Churches
<https://www.dcgstrategies.com/about-dcg-missions-values/dcg-team/>



**CSU Monterey Bay Campus Ministry
Campus Ministry**
<https://csumb.edu/hws/campus-chaplaincy-spiritual-support/>



The Belfry
Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry
to U.C. Davis and Sacramento City College
<https://www.thebelfry.org>



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<https://www.mif.elca.org>



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