

**Sharon Stalkfleet**

She/Her/Hers

As a child, I knew I loved Jesus and Jesus loved me. As I grew up we moved every three to four years attending whatever church was nearest to our home. We went to Presbyterian, Church of Christ and Disciple of Christ Churches. I quit going to church as an older teenager and a young adult

In my mid 30s, I found my way into an ELCA congregation, and even though I always had this sense of loving Jesus, I had never heard the words that I heard every week in this Lutheran Church. "God's love and grace were not based on my merit, not based on what I do. This was a paradigm shift for how I function in the world. It led me to consider seminary, to go to seminary at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and become a pastor. 33 years later, these words continue to unfold in me in deeper ways. This unconditional love of God is deeper than I could ever imagine.

My life road has been mixed with joys and sorrows. I've experienced abuse in my life that I know God never intended. I came out as a bisexual woman and was ordained extraordinarily in 2002 by 4 ELCA congregations who took the risk to ordain me against ECLA policy. My first career was a nurse. I have worked in a jail as a chaplain, in a large nursing home ministry, in hospice, in a church with direct connection to people who were homeless and now I serve as an intentional interim pastor. I am currently at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Berkeley.

I have served on the Sierra Pacific Synod Candidacy Committee since the fall of 2013. I am passionate about the message of God's grace being proclaimed today and in the future. I appreciate the opportunity to accompany seminarians on this journey even as I acknowledge the power differential between realtor and seminarian and the responsibility of the committee to