

Pastor Kathryn A. Tiede

(She/her)

Current Position:

**Associate Vice President of Philanthropy,
Lutheran Social Service of MN**



Date and Year of Ordination: December 23, 2001

Previous Calls and Positions:

- Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (St. Paul, MN):
 - Senior Director of Church Partnership and Volunteerism: November 2017- November 2019
 - Director of Church Partnership and Volunteerism: February 2016- November 2017
 - Senior Major Gift Officer: November 2015- February 2016
- Living Waters Lutheran Church (Lino Lakes, MN): Senior Pastor: August 2007-October 2015.
- Christ Church Episcopal (Greenville, SC): Associate for Pastoral Care: May 2006-August 2007.
- St. Francis Episcopal Church/ La Iglesia Episcopal de San Francisco (Greenville, SC): Rector: November 2003-May 2006
- Servant of Christ Lutheran Church: (Champlin, MN): Pastor of Discipleship: October 2001- January 2003

Education and Earned Degrees:

- LECNA fellow, 2022-2023
- Participant, Partners for Peace (Jewish/ Christian leaders together in the Holy Land), 2010
- Hansen fellow for Excellence in Preaching, 2007-2008
- YWCA Women of Excellence award winner, Greenville, SC, 2005
- STM, Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary, 1999 (thesis: patristic interpretations of the Holy Spirit/ early pneumatology), with honors
- MDiv, Harvard Divinity School, 1996 (thesis: 17c Lutheran Pietism), with honors
- Participant, Seminarians Interacting program (for students preparing for leadership in a wide variety of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities), 1994-95 and 1995-96.
- Student: United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, 1992-1993 (studied feminist biblical interpretation and hermeneutics)
- Student: Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica (Heredia, Costa Rica), 1991: biblical studies (Dr. Pablo Richard, professor)
- Student: Seminario Biblico Latinoamericano (San Jose, Costa Rica), 1991: theology, with a focus on Protestant movements in Latin America (Dr. Jose Miguez Bonino, professor)
- Fulbright Scholar: full year research grant in Costa Rica 1990-1991, studying the growth of Protestant Pentecostalism
- BA: Macalester College, 1996-1990 (Majors: Spanish and International Studies. Minor: Sociology. Honors thesis: Anthropology), with highest honors and numerous academic honors (e.g., Phi Beta Kappa), swim team captain 2 years, Academic All-Conference honors multiple years, winner: Molly K. Steudle prize for community service, winner: Spanish fluency award for a non-native speaker

Describe your process of discerning this potential call to serve as our next bishop:

In college, I dedicated myself to a life of service to God and to others. I was unsure if this involved a call to leadership in the church. My college swim coach, my home pastor, and my college mentor all suggested that I consider pastoral ministry. While in graduate school, a Franciscan sister and a Jewish professor both nudged me in that same direction. Later, I ended up in Seminary! Upon taking ordination vows, I committed to service to God and to God's church, and to being open to God's call, wherever it might lead. Through many opportunities to learn and grown in leadership, locally and nationally and internationally, I have been prepared me for each "next step" which God has revealed to me (often through the voices of others). Now it appears that serving as Bishop could make use of my heart for the church, my learnings from many leadership opportunities, my sincere love for people, and my passion for the Gospel. I will heed the call of the church and the Holy Spirit.

What is your vision for the Minneapolis Area Synod?

The Synod will embody God's love for the world, seen in our life together, expressing our calling as ambassadors of reconciliation and grace to a world in need. We will be evangelical, ecumenical, and engaged. The Synod will provide a base of support, connection, and empowerment for vibrant local ministries throughout the region. Through the Synod, congregations large and small will collaborate to share best practices, and will find new shared staffing models. Through the Synod, leaders of the church (rostered and lay) will find resources and connections to create remarkable ministries of healing and joy in the world. The Minneapolis Area Synod will be known as one of the most creative and generative communities in the country, embracing changes and new ideas as they come. We will embody the best practices of stewardship and radical generosity, we will care for each other and the world God made, and we will welcome all of God's children into the merciful embrace of God's love.

What do you see as principal challenges and opportunities to this synod in the next six years, and how would you approach them?

The end of Christendom has come, and that is a fine thing. Now it is time for the church to catch up to what the Holy Spirit is doing in this new era. Our denominational structure was built for a church of decades past, and will see significant restructure and change in the next 6-10 years, including, perhaps, a reduction in the number of Synods nationwide, a rethinking of how we order our ecumenical and interreligious relationships, and the ways in which institutions of the church carry their missions forward in a post-Christendom world. All of this is good, and filled with opportunity!

The world still needs the Gospel, the Holy Spirit is still at work, and God's redeeming love is still the power of abundance and hope. The Synod, like every institution of the church, will need to embrace these changes and rethink its ministry and purpose; we cannot exist for the sake of upholding structures created for another day; we will need to find whole new ways forward for the sake of the Gospel. The ELCA is a denomination in numeric decline, but our core Lutheran theology and practices of faith have tremendous potential to bring the Gospel to the world; the Holy Spirit isn't done yet.

Great opportunities lie in our ecumenical and interreligious relationships, in our astonishing institutions (social service agencies, colleges and universities and seminaries, Bible camps and outdoor ministries, campus ministries, etc), in our vision for environmental stewardship, our understanding of the importance of anti-racism and full inclusion work, and in the creativity of the faithful ones seeking God's love. God's message of love is timeless, and the church is entrusted with this Gospel, which is filled with hope.

What has prepared you to be effective in creating belonging among various cultural groups?

My personal mission statement is: "creating vibrant communities for the glory of God and the good of the neighbor". Since working at camps and in youth development, and through my various calls in the church, this mission statement has guided me with joy. Through service in various geographical and cultural settings, (from Northern Ireland to Costa Rica, from the Pine Ridge to South Carolina), and in multiple interreligious and ecumenical settings, (through Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue and service in the Episcopal Church and deep friendships with persons of many faiths), I have honed a deep appreciation for the rainbow beauty of God's creation. Thus, I have developed a keen ability to listen to others, and a joy in learning. I believe that we cannot engage in true relationship without honest self-awareness, and that to encounter another involves vulnerability and curiosity. I approach each day with humility and gratitude.

Describe up to five recent or past synod, churchwide activities or community-related activities that have significantly impacted you. How do these experiences inform your vision for serving as our next bishop?

While serving on the ELCA Church Council (2009-2015), I had various responsibilities which were highly formative. One involved serving as the ELCA Church Council representative to The Episcopal Church's Executive Committee. This was life-giving and exciting and wonderful work, largely because this ecumenical partner denomination is eager to engage in collaborative imagination regarding the future work of God's church in the world. Serving as the ELCA Church Council representative to a bilateral dialogue process with the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), on the other hand, was disturbingly difficult. I also coordinated the Anti-Racism Committee and the Board Development Committee of the Council, both of which were wonderful learning experiences.

While serving in calls in The Episcopal Church in the Upper Diocese of South Carolina (2003-2007), I was honored to be first the Rector of a small bilingual parish, and later the Associate for Pastoral Care of a large downtown (traditional) parish. Through these experiences, I gained a new sense for true ecumenical collaboration, and a deep love for liturgy.

Beginning with Jewish-Christian learning in college, continuing in interreligious dialogue experiences in Divinity School, (e.g., Seminarians Interacting), and through the Partners for Peace program years later, (for Christian and Jewish leaders), I have developed a keen appreciation for the clarity and vulnerability needed in relationships with persons of other faiths.

I have just completed 8+ years on the Advisory Council for Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. This has been a time of astonishing institutional and leadership change. Some of this has been very painful. Through these transitions at the Seminary, I have witnessed deep ecumenical gifts and the ability of an ELCA institution to serve as a training ground for the leaders of historically black churches, even those with whom we are not in "full communion" agreements.

In what ways have you applied new learnings to your current context?

Lutheran Social Service of MN is a complex institution, with over 2500 employees, and is both remarkably nimble and highly responsible with the resources entrusted to it. From staffing models to budgetary considerations, from service decisions to administrative questions, LSS has not lost its "soul" as a mission-centered organization which exists not for itself but for service to the neighbor. The question always comes back to, "what is best for those we serve?"

Serving in the world of philanthropy, I have come to believe that each and every person desires to be generous and to help the world in need. While our gifts and primary passions vary, each is needed for the full expression of Christ's body. Invited to be a part of creating a beautiful world, people often respond in self-giving love! This leads to a life of deep joy and purpose.

What specific leadership skills and spiritual gifts have you used in developing lay and clergy leaders that you would bring as bishop of this synod?

Through The Episcopal Church, I gained a broader understanding of the role of deacons in the church, and rich blessings of the vocations of those called to Word and Service. I saw a rich vision around lay and rostered leaders, stipendiary and non-stipendiary, working together. I later applied this to the staff at Living Waters, creating a staffing model which fully engaged and empowered a range of people to use their gifts for ministry. This also clarified for me the role of those ordained to Word and Sacrament ministry, and the need for leaders to seek expertise around them and not to "overfunction". This whole process requires a keen sense of the health of the whole, an eye for the gifts of others, and an ego which is "in check" enough to allow others to thrive. The skills I learned in Ethnographic Interviewing in college have been essential, as has been a true respect for the dignity of others. A system which honors the gifts, skills, and vocations of all is magnificent.
