

Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod Bishop Nominee Biographical Information



Name: Matthew L. Erickson

Current Position: Pastor

Congregation Membership: Calvary Lutheran Church, Post Falls, ID

Date of Ordination: August 11, 2012

List up to five (5) community, synodical, or Churchwide activities that would shape your call as bishop of this synod.

- **Non-Ordained Mission Developer:** For two years (2010-2012) I served in a termed call leading the successful redevelopment of a struggling church plant outside Denver.
- **Masters of Theology in Church History:** I Spent a year in Sweden studying the work of Bishop Bo Giertz, author of the Hammer of God, while also ministering to international students and teaching Bible classes to non-Christians.
- **Churchwide Assembly Voting Member:** I served as a voting member of the 2005 churchwide assembly.
- **Youth Minister:** For five years (2000 to 2005) I served as the full-time youth minister in Los Angeles.
- **An Engineers Mind:** My formal training as an engineer means that I look at the world, and its challenges, in a very different way.

What is the essence of the promises you made at the time of your ordination, and how would you seek to fulfill those promises in your ministry if elected Bishop? (150 words max)

I have promised to faithfully proclaim God's Truth, both gospel and law, in such a way that we are able to come to terms with the reality that God, the creator of the universe, believes that we are worth dying for. More than this, our neighbors are worth dying for.

I offer myself as a bishop who would primarily be about the business of equipping congregations to live out this very proclamation. A bishop cannot be the evangelist-in-chief, mediator-in-chief, advocate-in-chief, theologian-in-chief, and administrator-in-chief. Yet, each of these roles, and more, are essential to living out the Gospel. What a bishop can do is provide opportunities for congregations to be equipped for living out the gospel in each of these ways according to their particular callings.

As bishop or pastor my ordination calling is the same, to equip the saints for the work of ministry. (Eph. 4:12)

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Describe your spiritual life and the way you prepare for ministry each day. How do you maintain spiritual focus and integrity? (150 words max).

I try to live my life in constant consultation. I begin almost every day with prayer and reading of scripture. I continue around the breakfast table with my family as we connect with one another and with God. Most weeks, I gather with colleagues as I consider what God's Word may have for me and for Calvary Lutheran Church that week. A couple of times a month, I gather and study scripture, purely for the sake of studying scripture itself, with two friends. One is a former Lutheran pastor, who is estranged from the Church. The other is a Messianic-Jewish Rabbi.

While I have strong beliefs and convictions, I trust that, in many ways, my understandings of God, and God's relationship with humanity, are flawed. Living in "consultation" allows our Lord as many avenues as possible to reveal these flaws and bring me more fully into living "kingdom life".

What, in your opinion, is the measure of great leadership, and in what ways do you either achieve or aspire to achieve this standard? (150 words max).

Christian leadership is about inspiring the people of God to live out their gifts and their passions, together, in such a way that the Kingdom of God is made tangible in our world.

A bishop should help us see the world through Easter-colored glasses. We know the end of the story... Faith, Hope, and Love Win! Resurrection is reality, and yet too often we find ourselves striving for a "life-support" existence. Our synod has too many gifted people, too many amazing congregations, too many powerful stories for us to be settling for a future of mere survival.

Do we face real challenges? Yes. But we have Christ on our side! We should be satisfied with nothing less than the Kingdom of God in our midst. A leader inspires individuals and congregations to embrace Easter reality by living and modeling a life that believes that with God all things are possible.

What is your leadership style? (150 words max).

I know full well that I am a sinful man utterly reliant on God's grace. I know that while I have strong convictions, at least some of these must be in error. I know that while I have been uniquely and abundantly gifted for work in God's Kingdom, I am only one among many who have been gifted.

I do not hesitate to draw people boldly into new possibilities, providing clear vision. I do not hesitate to lead, always towards resurrection, but I rely strongly on the gifts, passions, struggles, and victories of the larger body. Because I know my limitations, I rely on those being led to join in discerning a vision for where the Holy Spirit is leading, and to carry out that vision. For me to lead is to listen, observe, inspire, equip, and unleash God's people towards the victory in Christ, which has already been won.