

<b>Name</b>
Ginny S Aebischer
<b>Current Position:</b>
SC Synod Assistant to the Bishop
<b>Date of Ordination</b>
09/17/1989
<b>Congregation Membership:</b>
Ebenezer Lutheran Church
<b>City:</b>
Columbia
<b>Email:</b>
<a href="mailto:ginny@scsynod.com">ginny@scsynod.com</a>
<b>Previous Positions:</b>
SC Synod Assistant to the Bishop (2008-Present) Pastor, Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church, West Columbia (2001-2008) Pastor, The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Charleston (1989 – 2001)
<b>Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and year, most recent first):</b>
Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC (M.Div. 1989) Upsala College, East Orange, New Jersey (B.A. 1983)
<b>List up to 5 current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graduate of the ELCA Systems Academy (4-year study in Bowen Family Systems and Congregational Conflict Resolution work) 2016-2020</li> <li>2. SC Synod Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership Support through Candidacy, Call Process, Invitation to Service, First Call, Campus Ministry and Leadership for Faithful Innovations areas &amp; recently created Interim Ministry Task Force.</li> <li>3. SC Synod Bishop's Representative with Global Companion Synod Consultations and Ministries (Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, South Western Diocese &amp; Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia)</li> <li>4. SC Synod Assembly Planner &amp; Manager</li> <li>5. Elected Member of the Board of Trustees for Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (2 Terms) &amp; Lutheridge +Lutherock Ministries (2 Terms)</li> </ol>
<b>List up to 5 current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hurricane Hugo Coordinator for Lutheran Disaster Response Volunteers &amp; Clean-up for Tri-county Area</li> <li>2. GraceWorks, Initial Designing Team &amp; Fervent supporter of Youth &amp; Family ministries, including Creating &amp; Leading both of my congregations in developing Drama Camp, and other Summer Camp weeks for children and youth in the congregations and in the communities surrounding the churches.</li> <li>3. Reading Matters Tutor at Hyatt Park Elementary School in Eau Claire Community &amp; Participant in #SC for Ed 2019 March for education reform.</li> <li>4. Interracial Community Book Study Group, "The Trouble I've Seen" &amp; Participant with Inclusiveness Network Training and Events throughout my years of ministry.</li> <li>5. 2020 Mission Developer Training Event &amp; Border Experience Participant</li> </ol>
<b>What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum):</b>

1.Passionate conviction! Jesus is the power to transform our lives. His love & grace overflows from the Cross making it possible for us to be vessels of God's grace to our neighbors.

2.Sincere love for the people of the SC Synod. A heart for Pastoral Care, not only for the members of our congregations, but especially for the Pastors & Deacons who lead us.

3.Extensive Experience in Synod Leadership, Call Process, Candidacy, Campus Ministry, Global Ministry, Finance, Management, Pastoral Care, Assembly Planning.

4.Curiosity, Creativity, Flexibility, Adaptability, Resilience. Team player, Empowers others, Strong work ethic.

5.Vision of the church where the roots of our faith traditions are respected and an openness to the way the Holy Spirit will move us into the future is encouraged. My vision is one where all are welcomed and respected.

6.Gifts for building relationships across church and culture through sincerity, deep listening and meeting people where they are.

**What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next 6 years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum):**

1. Fostering respect of differences and deep listening to one another with open ears and an open heart which reflects a life of discipleship in Christ which recognizes each person as a beloved child of God. Building on the work of Inclusiveness and Justice for all God's children. Shining the light of Christ out into the world every day.

2. Equipping & supporting Congregations and Leaders for collaboration and mission to help people engage in the life of the church today and grow disciples in all ages who can move into the future with a sense of joy in Jesus.

3. Creatively adapting to grow what we have learned about the use of technology during the pandemic as a tool for outreach.

4. Assisting leaders to remain centered, calm and connected in leading through the next crisis, whatever that may be.

**Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum):**

I see myself as a Servant Leader guided by the presence of the Holy Spirit. I am Curious, Creative, Courageous, Imaginative, Adaptable, deeply committed and sometimes too focused. I believe in listening for guidance from the Holy Spirit and including a variety of voices at the table.

I pay attention to process and seek to empower those around me. It is important to me to listen to and understand the perspective of others. I trust and support the teams I work beside to bring their best gifts to the table. I do not micro manage. I seek to lead by example, not asking anyone to work on anything that I won't work on myself.

I prefer to plan carefully, yet I have found that there must be room for innovation. I am always open to learning and I believe we can grow from our mistakes. I am not afraid of trying new ideas for the benefit of the church.

<b>Name</b>
Ralph Gullord Hill
<b>Current Position:</b>
Senior Pastor
<b>Date of Ordination</b>
05/26/1990
<b>Congregation Membership:</b>
Mt. Horeb Lutheran
<b>City:</b>
Chapin
<b>Email:</b>
<a href="mailto:pastorhill@mthoreb.net">pastorhill@mthoreb.net</a>
<b>Previous Positions:</b>
1990-1994: Pastor: St. John's Lutheran – Lexington, SC 1994-2002: Assoc. Pastor: Grace Lutheran – Hendersonville, NC 2002-2020: Senior Pastor: Mt. Horeb Lutheran – Chapin, SC
<b>Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and year, most recent first):</b>
Summerville High School: 1980 University of SC - BS Biology: 1985 Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary - MDiv: 1990
<b>List up to 5 current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:</b>
2017-2020: Leadership for Faithful Innovation (Synod LC and Pastoral Contact person). 2012-2018: NovusWay Planning and Review Committee. 2014-2019: Tanzania Advisory Task Force, Congregational Partnership. Trip to TZ. 2012-2015: Chair, SC Synod Implementation Team (Leadership Summit, Synod restructure around Three Tables, Organizational Chart, Leadership Podcast/Tablecast). 2011-2013: SC Synod Council. Served on Ministry Team for Outreach.
<b>List up to 5 current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:</b>
1-Member of Lexington-Richland District 5 Ministerial Advisory Board. 2-Mentor to a 2nd grader at a local elementary school. 3-Member of Lex-Rich School District Five Comprehensive Health Education Board Advisory Committee. 4-Member of Chapin Ministerial Association. 5-Support and participation in a snack-pack school program as well as our summer community farmers market.
<b>What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum):</b>
<p>After thirty years of parish ministry, the gifts I bring include: listening, perseverance, administration, stewardship, conflict management, love for the church and its mission to serve, teaching, and conversation. I continue to be energized when ministry involves the relationship between hearing and doing God's Word. Congregational ministry becomes vitalized when intentional time is given for to worship, prayer, and the study of God's Word - followed by, intentional effort to gather in spiritual relationships, to serve where there is need, and to give generously of time, talent, and treasure.</p> <p>I believe we are truly called to live out our covenant relationship with God through our baptism into Christ so that we can be salt and light to the world in our jobs, relationships, and every aspect of our lives. Mission is</p>

realized in people being served while using God-given gifts and talents for the good of the world. A healthy life is one that finds balance between work and rest.

**What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next 6 years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum):**

In light of the pandemic, we will need to continue to innovate in ministry. We live in a time of uncertainty, yet we follow in faith a God whose presence is certain. I see the principle challenge as two-fold. The challenge of doing justice and mercy in our communities and the world is vital. The challenge of working together as a spirit-led body of Christ is just as important. This requires a Spirit-led connected effort of our synodical resources, the most significant of which is people.

In my current congregation, we have worked diligently to embrace a missional model based on John 15's image of vine and branch. The rhythm of faith is centered on a "pendulum swing": 1-abide in Christ, and 2-be fruitful. We abide through worship and study of God's Word. We bear fruit through witness and service. In the process we nurture the body of Christ, and we care for one another through fellowship and sharing of time, talent, and treasure.

**Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum):**

According to a "PeopleMap" personality inventory, I am a "people person" and a "task person". I have a conversational style and am energized when talking and interacting with people. I also appreciate being intentional and using goals with measurable steps to accomplish realized goals. I am concerned and empathetic to the views of others. I am comfortable in presenting a proposal or leading a group discussion. I appreciate feedback. My Myers-Briggs personality type is "ENFJ." I am a good listener and am interested to see what motivates people, especially how they have experienced God's presence. Diversity of people and resources when used together are a strength and a blessing from God.

<b>Name</b>
Jacqueline Utley
<b>Current Position:</b>
Rostered Leader (Pastor)
<b>Date of Ordination</b>
06/02/2013
<b>Congregation Membership:</b>
Ascension Lutheran Church
<b>City:</b>
Columbia
<b>Email:</b>
<a href="mailto:jackie.utley@gmail.com">jackie.utley@gmail.com</a>
<b>Previous Positions:</b>
Served as Licensed Evangelist Missionary and Head Church Mother, two prominent positions for women in the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) faith tradition, from 2006 through 2011. Ordained for ministry in chaplaincy by the COGIC, February 18, 2011.
<b>Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and year, most recent first):</b>
2009 Master of Divinity Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC
2004 B.A. in Sociology Summa Cum Laude Coker College, Hartsville, SC
1975 Lake View High School graduate Lake View, SC
<b>List up to 5 current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Served a term on SC Synod Assembly Nominating Committee</li> <li>2. Currently serving a term on SC Synod Candidacy Committee (Term ends 2022)</li> <li>3. Since 2011, a member of SC Synod Inclusiveness Network (INET), formerly Commission on Inclusiveness. Currently serving as Chair since 2016.</li> <li>4. Attended 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as a voting member. Presided at Holy Communion Worship service during the assembly.</li> <li>5. Attended an End Racism Rally in Washington, DC on April 4, 2018, a trip proposed by the SC Synod in addition to ELCA Churchwide participation.</li> </ol>
<b>List up to 5 current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Member of Eau Claire/N. Columbia Rotary Club – Served as President, 2017 – 2018.</li> <li>2. At-Large Board Member of South Carolina Christian Action Council (SCCAC)</li> <li>3. Member of Interfaith Partners of SC (IPSC)</li> <li>4. Member of SC Women of Many Faiths (WOMF)</li> <li>5. Executive Board member of the Midland Organized Response for Equity and Justice (MORE Justice)</li> </ol>
<b>What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum):</b>

Having served in the office of pastor for only 7 years and of only one congregation, with this minimal experience, I would bring the gift of my authentic self, as I take pride in possessing a sincere heart for God and for God's people. In being my authentic self, I would bring the gifts of sincerity and humility, whereas I am not one who lord authority over others. I am not one to promote myself with any hidden agendas. I would bring the gift of an energetic passion for learning and growing in inclusiveness with the people of this Synod, both rostered and lay members. I would bring the gift of a "pastor's heart," a "hearing heart" walking with others. Lastly, I would bring the gift of a strong proclamation of the Word of God, in addition to a life of faithfulness.

**What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next 6 years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum):**

Currently, it goes without saying, this pandemic virus is a major challenge to our in-person gathering as a community for the sake of fellowship, embracing one another, and exhortation. In the coming years, what looks to be a principal challenge for this synod is a growing lack of interest in church attendance by several young and middle-aged adults, in addition to their children's practices and games on Sunday mornings. This has led and is leading to diminishing memberships in many long-lived and beloved congregations, largely consisting of aging seniors. We know that lesser members lead to lesser finances of any church, which in time, leads to the closing of a church. Therefore, during this time, the vitality of numerous churches is at stake.

While I am absolutely not sure, how I would address this problem, I know that with much prayer and fasting, through God's wisdom, grace, and the support of others among the staff and the Synod Council, we can come up with motivating ideas.

**Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum):**

I consider my leadership style to be that of a servant-leader. I am called to serve with those whom I am called to lead. As previously mentioned, I am not one who tends to lord authority over anyone. We are better together doing the work of ministry. I am a team-player, not one having a "me-myself-and I" complex, such as "I am the head honcho in charge, and we play by my rules only." I tend to grow and function better after receiving critique. I am one who leads by example regarding faith practices an discipline, dedication, and commitment.

**Name**

David Wesley Coffman

**Current Position:**

Chaplain, Agape Hospice

**Date of Ordination**

11/10/2001

**Congregation Membership:**

Pilgrim Lutheran Church

**City:**

Lexington

**Email:**

[dcoff2010@gmail.com](mailto:dcoff2010@gmail.com)

**Previous Positions:**

Chaplain, Agape Hospice, Agape Hospice House and Community, 2017- present  
Stated Interim Supply Pastor (for Holy Closure) Resurrection, Columbia, 2016-2018  
Director of Operations, Agape Hospice, Columbia, SC 2016-2017  
Lead Volunteer and Lead Bereavement Coordinator, Agape Hospice, SC, 2013-2016  
Volunteer and Bereavement Coordinator, Agape Hospice, Aiken, SC, 2013  
Chaplain, Palmetto Richland/Baptist Hospital, Columbia, SC 2011-2012,  
Pastor, St. John's Lutheran, Preschool and Biggerstaff Retreat Center, Walhalla, 2001-2011,  
Stated Interim Supply Pastor, Mt Hebron Lutheran, Leesville, SC, Summer 2001,  
Intern, First Lutheran Church, Parkersburg, WV 1999-2000,

**Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and year, most recent first):**

Support Services Apprenticeship, Agape Hospice, 2020  
Leadership 301 Apprenticeship, Agape Hospice, 2015  
Clinical Pastoral Education Residency – 4 units, 2011-2012  
Master of Divinity, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, 2001  
Bachelor of Arts, Newberry College, 1997

**List up to 5 current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:**

Chair of Board of Trustees, South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Centers, 2002 – 2009, 2016- present  
SC Lutheran Church Youth Retreat Presenter, Counselor and Cabinet Advisor, 2018- present  
First Call Theological Committee 2018- present  
Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries and Proclaim, 2011 - present  
Churchwide Assembly Voting Member, Lay – 1997, Ordained – 2006

**List up to 5 current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:**

Dementia Educator, Agape Hospice, 2013 – present  
DISC Personality Educator, Agape Hospice, 2015 – present  
Grief and Loss Educator, Agape Hospice, 2018  
Leadership 301 Apprenticeship Coordinator, Agape Hospice – 2015-2019  
Openings; A Supportive Network of LGBTQ+ People & Allies

**What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum):**

I bring the following gifts with me to the office of bishop - listening ear, deep faith in Jesus, hope for the Church, administration and organization, preaching and teaching, understanding and compassion, and passion for youth ministry and faith development. I am becoming anti-racist and a life-long learner of the kingdom of God.

**What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next 6 years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum):**

Our principle challenge over the next six years is releasing the control that fear has on our lives. I have seen this community calm my own fears so that I might develop my God-given gifts to serve our messy, broken but beautiful community. Who could we be if we were able to utilize the gifts of all people in the community in which our churches minister? I believe we strengthen our discipleship of Jesus when we bring hope to this hurting and broken world. We are Jesus' disciples who welcome the stranger, offer grace to neighbor, gift mercy for the hurt, listen to the angry, and feed the hungry. I believe our faith has power over any fear. Together, the South Carolina Synod continues offering the gift of God's abundant grace to any who have never heard it and to those of us who need reminding: we can be a voice of calm in the midst of life's storms and step outside ourselves to allow the Holy Spirit to blow in faith-filled ways. That is the church I hope to continue seeing us live into.

**Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum):**

As a leader, I tend to be thoughtful, cautious and collaborative. I want to listen as I strive for clear communication, expect faithfulness through defined expectations and be goal oriented and provide attainable objectives. I love teaching and encouraging people in faithful service to the community around us.



**Name**

Wade Thomas Roof III

**Current Position:**

Senior Pastor Mt Tabor and Faith Lutheran

**Date of Ordination**

10/28/2009

**Congregation Membership:**

1267

**City:**

West Columbia, SC

**Email:**

[pastor.wade@hotmail.com](mailto:pastor.wade@hotmail.com)

**Previous Positions:**

Senior Pastor of Mt Tabor Lutheran Church in West Columbia, SC 2014-Present  
Senior Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in West Columbia, SC 2017-Present  
Pastor of Resurrection and St. Matthew's Lutheran Churches in Cameron, SC 2009-2013

**Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and year, most recent first):**

Gardner Webb University Doctorate of Divinity: Church Leadership In Progress  
The Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Masters of Divinity 2009  
Newberry College Bachelors of Science, Psychology; Minor, Religion 2003

**List up to 5 current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:**

Synod Council Member  
ELCA Large Congregation Senior Pastor Leadership Training  
Congregational Vitality Training and Mission Development Conference (2 Years)  
Church Partnering/merger/Yoking partnership between Mt Tabor and 4 other local congregations  
Partner in Race Reconciliation ministry/Hispanic Ministry/Indigenous Peoples Ministry in SC Synod

**List up to 5 current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:**

The Good Samaritan Free Medical Clinic - Chairperson of the Board of Directors  
The Cayce/West Columbia Chamber of Commerce - Board of Directors  
Gray Collegiate Academy School Board Member  
Heathwood Hall Episcopal High School Varsity Baseball Coach and little league Baseball Coach  
Led relief efforts in West Columbia, Cayce, and Lexington during the 2015 flood

**What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum):**

God has blessed me with the gift of vision - the gift of seeing the bigger picture and focusing on that which is critical to our mission. Along with vision, comes the challenge and gift of administration, which allows me to bring others together around a common mission. Through my gifts of teaching and stewardship, I have learned to help others understand the value of giving and generosity. Through the Spirit, I am able to relate and connect to people of diverse backgrounds. All of these are connected by the ultimate gift of faith and fear in the Lord that results in true servant leadership. Energy and passion are other gifts I will use to revitalize our synod and lead her into what God has planned next.

**What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next 6 years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum):**

I think the biggest challenge and threat to the synod and to the church is diminishing spirituality within the body of Christ. Racism, gender inequality, prejudice against the LGBTQIA+ community, xenophobia, violence, and other divisive ideologies and behaviors are symptoms of a life that isn't lived in tune with God's Spirit, and all stem from our unwillingness and lack of ability to see the image of God in each other. When our lives of faith discern the Holy Spirit in practical, yet powerful ways, there is no room for such thinking or such living. All of these are matters of the heart, and when matters of the heart are addressed and faith of people is fostered, those behaviors are eradicated. To address this diminishing spirituality, we must provide support and training to all rostered leaders, no matter the size of their congregations. We must connect the resources available to those engaging this ministry, giving them the tools further deepen the faith of each member.

**Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum):**

My leadership style is defined by Ephesians 4:12, "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ." I have been and will continue to lead to equip, empower, and support our congregations, lay leaders, and rostered leaders to carry out God's mission and ministry to all God's people in SC, the ELCA, our partnership Synods, and into every corner of the world. My leadership style is a ministry of presence and service. I am someone who sees and discerns the bigger picture and vision, but not just to dream with others, but to know how to connect and gather resources to bring these visions and dreams to reality. I lead by being present and ready to work alongside others to further the kingdom of God.

**Name**

Patti Sue Burton-Pye

**Current Position:**

pastor

**Date of Ordination**

06/22/2008

**Congregation Membership:**

Providence Lutheran Church

**City:**

Lexington

**Email:**

[psbppe@yahoo.com](mailto:psbppe@yahoo.com)

**Previous Positions:**

I have served the following committees as a member and as chairperson where noted by an asterisk.

American Missions Committee/Planting & Sustaining Congregations Network/Congregational Vitality Network;\*  
Audit Committee;\*  
Commission on Communications;  
Consultation Committee;  
Operation Inasmuch Task Force;\*  
Poverty Task Force;  
Restructure Task Force;  
Synod Council;  
Synod Assembly Chaplain;  
Synod Assembly Board of Elections;  
Synod Assembly 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women Committee\*

**Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and year, most recent first):**

Masters of Divinity, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC, 2007  
Bachelor of Arts, Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, GA, 1980  
Sequoyah High School, Doraville, GA 1977

**List up to 5 current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:**

Synod Council  
Congregational Vitality Network  
Boundary Training (Synod, Region, and Churchwide)  
Rethinking Church Workshop  
ELCA Mission Development Training

**List up to 5 current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:**

MORE Justice (Midlands Organized Response for Equity and Justice) member;  
LaVie Pregnancy Care Center Board of Directors;  
Mission Lexington volunteer and Board of Directors;  
SC Christian Action Council Board of Directors;  
Harvest Hope Backpack Ministry for Lexington One School District volunteer and co-coordinator

**What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum):**

The gifts I would bring to the office of bishop include:

Leadership: visionary; prayerful; organized in thought and application; decisive; problem solver; open minded; good listener; fair—take in all viewpoints; able rally people and hold them accountable; not reactive, but can give quick response; able to see the big picture and think about how the gifts of others are used best; ability to apply business skills to aid in ministry

Personal: creative; compassionate; respectful; hospitable; generous; prayerful; trustworthy; honest; adaptive

Spiritual: faithful—in mission and ministry; prayerful; discerning; ecumenical relationship building; studious; trusting in God's will and plan

**What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next 6 years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum):**

I believe the principal challenge we face in the next 6 years is "doing church" effectively. Never before has our synod dealt with so many issues at one time – the Covid-19 virus, the national shut-down, record unemployment, community unrest, aging and declining membership, and connecting people to faith in their daily lives. These truths will likely see continued decline in gathered worship, a reduction in giving, and concern over how to effectively “be and do church.” Congregations are experiencing difficulty connecting effectively with membership – in large part due to a lack of innovative technology, creativity, and making faith relevant. The synod must be available with advice, resources and direction.

I would work with rostered leaders and congregations; develop effective resource databases; extend resource teams to assist with technology and ministry needs; and encourage a return to the practices of spiritual discipline.

**Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum):**

I would describe my leadership style as visionary -- inviting others to "follow me" -- prayerfully trusting that my way is to follow Christ and God's will. It is always my intention to solicit input from my team and then map the way and set expectations, while engaging and energizing followers along the way. Whenever there is uncertainty it is critical to help people see where we are going and what will happen when we get there. I do not believe in just issuing orders but allowing people choice and latitude on how to achieve common goals.

I believe that successful leadership engages a diverse team with varied gifts, ideologies, gender and race. It is critical to get opinions that are different my own and engage in active listening to be most effective. I am willing to be decisive, take risks and risk failure in order to move forward with innovative and creative solutions to issues and problems facing our leaders and Synod.

**Name**

Eric Eugene Fink

**Current Position:**

Pastor - Living Springs, Columbia

**Date of Ordination**

06/04/1994

**Congregation Membership:**

Living Springs

**City:**

Columbia, SC

**Email:**

[pastoreric@livingspringscolumbia.org](mailto:pastoreric@livingspringscolumbia.org)

**Previous Positions:**

Grace Lutheran Church, Prosperity, SC – Pastor, 1994-2013.  
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, North Easton, MA – Vicar, 1993-94.  
Wake Forest University – Mathematics Faculty, 1986-87, 88-90.  
Western Carolina/NC School of Science & Math – Summer Ventures Faculty, 1988-90.  
Lutheridge – Summer Senior Staff, 1985, 86, 87, 90, 94.

**Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and year, most recent first):**

M.Div., First Honor – Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, 1994.  
M.S. Mathematics – University of Virginia, 1986.  
B.S. First Honor – Davidson College, 1984.

**List up to 5 current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:**

- 1- ELCA Youth Gathering: Synod Day Coordinator (2015, 2018, 2022)
- 2-Luther Seminary Leadership for Faithful Innovation, SC Synod Cohort, 2018-present
- 3-Boards: Lutheran Family Services (now LSC), PALM Lutheran Campus Ministry, SCLMM, LTSS (Student Body Pres.)
- 4-Congregation Mission Partnerships with Cristo Rey, Christ Mission, Journey Performing Arts
- 5-Conference Dean terms, including 2008 Bishop's Election Task Force

**List up to 5 current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.:**

- 1-MORE Justice (Midlands Interfaith Justice Organization) – Executive Board
- 2-NE Columbia: Racial Reconciliation Cluster, R2 Schools Ministerial Alliance
- 3-Community Youth Partnership– Palmetto Place, R2 Social Work, LSC
- 4-SC First Steps for School Readiness – County Board (2000's)
- 5-School-Time Bible Education – Mid-Carolina MS, coordinator (thru 2013)

**What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of this synod? (1,000 characters maximum):**

- Passion for visioning, with skills for organization, administration, planning.
- Deep commitment to ministries of justice, inclusion, racial reconciliation.
- Openness for holy experimenting and exploring new ventures with our God who is always doing new things. Openness to God's will.
- Caring, non-judgmental heart and a patient, pondering spirit that seeks understanding.
- A life formed within the Lutheran church, resulting in a deep passion for the "grace-oriented, Word &

Sacrament, Law-and-Gospel, saint-and-sinner, priesthood of all believers" theology are called to articulate to the world

- Deep gratitude for a life of ministry nurtured by the ELCA & its leaders, congregations, people - with 26 years in SC Synod that have fostered familiarity with our agencies, ministries, history, newer mission congregations, and spectrum of historic congregations.

**What do you see as the principal challenge to this synod in the next 6 years, and how would you address it? (1,000 characters maximum):**

To fully embrace God's transforming work in the world at this Kairos moment, allowing the Spirit to free us from fear & efforts to preserve "our" structures for the sake of survival or nostalgia - so we may be an innovative church of kingdom-focused disciples who will...

- daily live the way of Jesus;
- celebrate the full diversity of humanity created in God's image;
- join the God of love to hear creation's groans & the cries of those marginalized by the world;
- gratefully respond to God's abundant, all-reconciling grace by committing ourselves to what the Lord requires of us - to do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God!

As bishop's staff, rostered leaders & God's baptized people, we can address this together via Discipling-Kingdom visioning at all levels; via deepening prayer, dwelling in the Word & shared sacramental life; via revised means of measuring ministry; via a 3-fold structure built on Mt 23:23 - ministries of justice, healing/mercy, and faithfulness.

**Describe your leadership style. (1,000 characters maximum):**

Among many leadership paradigms, I believe I operate as a combination of these two descriptions:

- Transformational Leadership Style (offers new approaches to problems, points others to the vision of the church's mission, and promotes ownership and involvement in that vision).
- Servant Leadership Style (places emphasis on serving others and the church's mission).

When it comes to staff & teams, I seek to be prayerfully open to the person whom God is revealing, then finalizing task/job descriptions to incorporate that person's gifts, and supporting/entrusting the individual to live out the call God is giving them. My leadership style is not be one of inspiration by big, dynamic personality – but is more shaped by deep, careful reflection.