

Timothy R. Oslovich

Bishop Election
Alaska Synod Assembly
April 2024

Current Position: Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Vernon, CT (2003-present)

Congregation Membership: Trinity Lutheran Church, Vernon, CT

Date and Year of Ordination: October 4, 1997

Previous Positions:

- Adjunct Professor, Bay Path University, Longmeadow, MA (2009-2024)
- Pastor, Shishmaref Lutheran Church, Shishmaref, AK (1997-2003)
- Administrative Assistant, American Bible Society, Philadelphia, PA (1996-1997)
- Advisor, FIRST Drug and Alcohol Hotline, Cambridge, MA (1993-1994)
- Cowboy, Deep Springs Ranch, CA (Summers 1988, 1989, 1990)

Education and Earned Degrees:

- Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management, Bay Path University, 2008
- Master of Divinity, Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, 1997
- Master of Theological Studies, Harvard Divinity School, 1993
- Bachelor of Arts with Distinction, Political Science, Swarthmore College, 1991
- Deep Springs College, 1986-1989

List up to five (5) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Alaska Synod.

- Alaska Synod Council
- Seward Peninsula Lutheran Ministries Committee
- New England Synod Listening Team (conflict resolution and mediation)
- Parliamentarian (Alaska Synod and New England Synod Assemblies)
- Congregational Constitution Reviewer (New England Synod)

List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of the Alaska Synod.

- Greater Rockville Area Interfaith Clergy Council
- Chairperson, Connecticut Coalition to Save Darfur
- Core Team Member, Act for Sudan
- Board Member, Collaborative Center for Justice
- Clergy Caucus, Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance

What gifts would you bring to the office of bishop of the Alaska Synod?

The primary gift that I bring is that I receive the grace and love of God with gratitude, and the Holy Spirit empowers me to invite and encourage others to receive these gifts, too. I receive these gifts daily as I spend thirty minutes in Centering Prayer, listening to God in silence. I have engaged in this practice for eleven years, and it has helped me see that people experience God in a variety of ways: in silence, in nature, in community, in singing, in serving, and many other ways. This practice has helped me realize that experiencing God is what is crucial. I am a mystic; I believe that humans can connect deeply with God. That connection has transformed me.

Other gifts that God has given me are the ability to teach and serve as an adjunct professor for 15 years, the opportunity to be an advocate for justice, and the joy of serving God with the people of Shishmaref, AK as well as the people of Trinity in Vernon, CT.

What do you see as the principal challenge to the Alaska Synod in the next six (6) years, and how would you address it?

I have lived outside Alaska for the last 21 years, so my first task if I were elected would be to spend time listening to people in the synod to see what the principal challenge is. I also sense that the biggest challenge Alaska Synod faces is the challenge the Church in the U.S. faces: How do we continue to live inspired by God's Spirit of courage and hope rather than give in to a spirit of fear and despair? We are often told that the Church in the U.S. is dying. While it is true that our numbers have decreased, it is also true that God's people have been given incredible gifts. We have been empowered with the Holy Spirit to do God's work in the world. In order to face the fear of decline, God invites us to respond with faith, curiosity, and boldness: faith that God's work will unquestionably continue, curiosity about new ways that we can be involved in Christ's activity in the world, and boldness to follow the Spirit in new directions even though that means that we will often fail.

Describe your leadership style.

Leaders in the Church are called to serve collaboratively and approach the world with deep curiosity. In the Gospels, Jesus asked more than 300 questions and answered fewer than 10. An important part of my leadership style is to ask questions about what is going on in the church and the world and to be open to hearing the answers that come from a variety of sources. God also invites us to engage in collaborative leadership. Just as a group of disciples gathered to determine how to welcome Gentiles into the Church in Acts 15, we must seek God's wisdom and future together.

I learned a great deal about leadership during my six years with the people of Shishmaref. The elders showed me the power of deep listening, patience, and consensus-building. As a leader, it is my role to invite, encourage, and inspire God's people. As someone who has been entrusted with authority, I am called to use my influence to empower others, to work for justice, and to help resolve conflicts in healthy ways.