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9-17-2023

Rev. Jeff Johnson Elected Bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod

Church leader is the first openly gay man to be elected as bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod

BURLINGAME — Jeff R. Johnson, Berkeley, Calif., was elected Sept. 17 to serve a six-year term as bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The election took place during a live synod assembly.

Johnson was elected on the fifth ballot, with 226 votes. The Rev. John Keuhner, pastor of Unity Lutheran Church of South San Francisco and bridge pastor of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church of San Mateo, Calif., received 168 votes.

The bishop-elect has served as pastor of University Lutheran Chapel of Berkeley and as a member of the Spiritual Care Team at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, since 2013. Previously he served as pastor of First United Lutheran Church in San Francisco (1990-1999), as a mission developer for Lutheran Lesbian and Gay Ministries in San Francisco (1990-1995), as HIV education director for Lutheran Social Services of Northern California (1988-1989), as assistant night minister for San Francisco Night Ministry (1987-1988), and was an intern at the Lutheran Office of Public Policy and at First English Lutheran Church in Sacramento (1986-1987).

Johnson received his Bachelor of Arts in history and Bachelor of Arts in German from California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, in 1984, and his Master of Divinity from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1988. Johnson was ordained in 1990.

Johnson's installation details are yet to be determined.

Information about the Sierra Pacific Synod is available at spselca.org/.

About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 worshiping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands.," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.