

Background Information for PASTOR PAUL OLSEN

Paul Olsen graduated from Brush High School, Brush, CO in 1972. He attended Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, graduating in 1977 with a BA in Religion. He completed his seminary training earning a Master of Divinity degree in 1981 from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and was ordained as a Lutheran pastor in 1983. He is a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Since ordination, Pastor Olsen has served as a pastor of the American Lutheran Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He began his ministry as Associate Pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Harlan, Iowa (1983-1988). His second call was to Pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church, Aurora, Colorado (1988-1994). From 1994 to 2001, he served the following congregations in the Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA as an interim pastor: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Glenwood Springs, CO; Zion Lutheran Church, Montrose, CO; Peace Lutheran Church, Sterling, CO; St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Arvada, CO; Christ the King Lutheran Church, Denver, CO; and Tree of Life Lutheran Church, Provo/Orem, Utah. In February of 2001, Pastor Olsen accepted the call as Pastor-Developer of Tree of Life Lutheran Church in Provo/Orem, under appointment from the ELCA's Division for Outreach, serving in that capacity until August of 2006. From 2006-2013, he served as pastor of Glory of God Lutheran Church in Wheat Ridge, CO. He left Glory of God Lutheran Church in 2013, and went back to intentional interim ministry, serving congregations in transition: Interim Pastor, Tabor Lutheran Church, Pueblo, CO—2014; Interim Pastor, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Gillette, WY—2014-2015; Interim Senior Pastor, Hosanna Lutheran Church, Mandeville, LA—2014-2017; Interim Pastor, Baudette Lutheran Parish, Baudette, MN—2017-2019; Interim Pastor, King of Glory Lutheran Church, Boise, ID—2019-2021; and now, Interim Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Boise, ID, beginning April of 2021.

In addition to his regular ministry as a pastor, the Rev. Olsen has served on various committees and boards of the church. From 1999 to 2006, he was a member of the Rocky Mountain Synod's Outdoor Ministry Committee, which oversaw camping ministries in the synod, and chaired that committee for several years (2001-2006). From 2003 through 2005 Pastor Olsen served on the synod's Board for Church in Society. He served on the Synod Council of the Rocky Mountain Synod, 2006-2008, and on the Board of Directors for Eben Ezer Lutheran Care Center in Brush, CO, 2008-2017. He was a delegate to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 1991, and the American Lutheran Church Convention in 1984.

Pastor Olsen was coordinator of "Theatre and Theology" (1993-2001), a program in which Denver area Lutherans attend plays at the Denver Center Theatre

Company, and participate in a discussion with the actors moderated by Pastor Olsen after the performances.

Service on other committees, boards of the church, and community organizations include: Member, Lutheran Campus Ministry at Auraria Board, Denver (1992-1994); chairperson of the Aurora CROP Walk (1990-1991); member, Okoboji-Ingham Lake Bible Camps board (1985-1988); member, Shelby County Food Pantry Advisory Board, Iowa (1986-1988); and participation in community ministerial associations in Minnesota, Louisiana, Colorado, Utah, and Iowa.

Continuing education is part of Pastor Olsen's commitment to pastoral ministry. Pastor Paul has developed a special interest in Bowen family systems theory through personal study continuing education opportunities, and ongoing participating in various systems theory study groups, completing a 3-year post-graduate program at the Center for Family Process, Bethesda, MD, and a 3-year post graduate program the Bowen Center in Georgetown, Washington, DC. Although professionally helpful in pastoral counseling of individuals and families, the focus of these studies has been understanding how organizations function as systems, and on his role as a pastor of congregations and leader of 'church family' systems.

Beyond his work as a Lutheran pastor, in past years the Rev. Olsen has worked for Church World Service—Rocky Mountain Region (1995), and the Men in Violent Relationships Project, Minneapolis, MN as a domestic abuse crisis counselor (1987-1988). In the years between seminary and his first call, he worked for Henry Birks Jewelers in Minneapolis. And during his high school, college and seminary years, he spent several summers and one full year employed as a construction worker for Reynold A. Olsen, Inc. of Brush, Colorado—his father's construction company. Other early summers were spent as a ranch hand, counselor, or wilderness trail guide at Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp in Colorado, and as assistant director at Broken Arrow Ranch Lutheran Camp near Stonewall, TX.

An important part of Pastor Olsen's life is active participation in his home communities. Indulging his interests in the arts, Pastor Olsen has sung with a number of choirs including Utah Valley's *Vox Glorioso* (2000-2001); the *Bel Canto Chorale* of Harlan, IA (1985-1986); and the *Iowa Western Community Chorale* (1984-1985). He is a past member of the Aurora Arts Council, Aurora, CO (1991). For more than 30 years, he has been a volunteer 'block captain, table captain, or steward' at the Professional Panel Blind Tasting beer judging associated with the Great American Beer Festival in Denver and the World Beer Cup competitions (various locations in the USA), administered by the Brewers Association headquartered in Boulder, CO; and, on occasion, a home brew competition beer judge.

Over the years, Pastor Olsen has been an actor on stage in various theaters in Minnesota, Iowa, and Colorado. In Utah, he appeared in several 'semi-professional' productions, as the Rev. Harry Harrington in the Provo Theater Company's production of "Shadowlands" (directed by Loraine Edwards); as

Orsino in Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" (directed by Reese Purser), and as Alonso in Shakespeare's "The Tempest" (directed by Kathy Benhardt), with the Actors' Repertoire Theatre Ensemble in Provo.

Pastor Paul maintains strong ties with his brothers and family through frequent visits, Zoom, and communication. His private life is enriched by connections made in hobby and interest groups, music and guitar. Time to garden, work on home improvement projects, golf, bicycle, swim, ski or hike is important to him. He has been an avid and award-winning home brewer/vintner, and reader. He has enjoyed traveling within the states, and to Canada (Manitoba); the British Virgin Islands; Liberia, Kenya, and Madagascar (in 1992, on the first Rocky Mountain Synod 'Companion Synod' trip) in Africa.