



# Southwestern Washington Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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God's work. Our hands.

The Rev. Keith Marshall, Bishop

As Pride Month begins, I find myself reflecting on the witness the church is called to offer in this moment. We are living in a time when many voices seek to divide, exclude, and define who belongs and who does not. The rise of Christian nationalism and efforts to move our communities backward in matters of inclusion and human dignity make it all the more important that the church be clear about the gospel we proclaim.

As bishop, I remain committed to the conviction that God's love is for all people. This conviction is the good news of Jesus Christ. Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus continually drawing near to those who had been pushed to the margins, reminding them that they are seen, known, and loved by God.

I give thanks for the LGBTQIA+ people who are part of our congregations, ministries, and communities. Their faith, gifts, leadership, and witness have enriched the church and helped reveal more fully the expansiveness of God's love. At the same time, I recognize that for many, the church has not always been a place of welcome. I repent for the church's failure and sin. My prayer is that the church continues to grow more fully into the body of Christ. God calls us to be a community where every person knows they are beloved, valued, and fully welcomed.

The church's witness is as important as ever. We are called to be a people who proclaim God's grace more loudly than the voices of fear and hate. We are called to embody a love that is wider than our divisions and deeper than our disagreements. We are called to bear witness to the truth that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

My prayer this month, and beyond, is that every person would know they are beloved by God, and that our churches would continue to be places where people encounter the welcome, mercy, and love of Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

*Keith Marshall*

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Rev. Keith Marshall  
Bishop Southwestern Washington Synod

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Date