

Biographical Information Form

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FORM:

NOMINEE FOR BISHOP OF THE ALLEGHENY SYNOD

1. Name: The Rev Tyler J Graham, *STS*
2. Current Position: Pastor of the Living Waters Lutheran Parish (Greenville Evang Lutheran – Meyersdale, PA & St John’s Lutheran – Salisbury, PA) – July 2025 ~ Present
3. Congregation Membership: St John’s Lutheran – Salisbury, PA
4. Date and Year of Birth: March 9th, 1980
5. Date and Year of Ordination: July 11th, 2020
6. Previous Positions:
 - Pastor (Salisbury Lutheran Parish) – May 2020 ~ June 2025
 - Vicar (Christ Evang Lutheran, Elizabethtown, PA) – Jan 2019 ~ Dec 2019
 - Authorized Lay Worship Leader (Allegheny Synod) – May 2014 ~ Dec 2018
7. Education and Earned Degrees (with institutions and years, most recent first):
 - Spiritual Theology Graduate Program (Avila Institute) – March 2025 ~ Present
 - Certificate in Spiritual Formation (Avila Institute) – March 2023 ~ June 2024
 - Masters of Divinity (United Lutheran Seminary) *formerly the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg with a Certificate of studies in Town & Country Ministry – Aug 2014 ~ May 2020
 - Bachelor’s of Science in Business – Accounting (Univ of Phoenix) – Feb 2008
8. List up to five (5) current or past synod or churchwide activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Churchwide Assembly Voting Member – 2025 (Phoenix, AZ) / 2016 (New Orleans, LA)
 - Allegheny Synod Council Member
 - Dean of the Laurel Highlands Conference (Allegheny Synod)
 - Member of: Allegheny Synod Assembly Committee / Allegheny Synod Transition Team / *Go Tell It IN The Mountains Initiative* Assessment Task Force
 - Facilitator of Liturgy / Worship Leadership course of IGNITE: Lay Worship Leader program
9. List up to five (5) current or past community-related activities that would inform your service as bishop of this synod.
 - Assistant of Casselman Valley Helpers Food Pantry & Catholic Charities: Food Connect
 - Assistant of Backpack Food Ministry & Summer Youth Café (Salisbury, PA)
 - Chair of the Meyersdale Area Ministers’ Association
 - Chair of the Family Center Board (Salisbury, PA)
 - Chaplain of the Maryland State Police

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

- As the body of Christ is comprised of many members, the office of the bishop requires many gifts. While I have gifts of prayer and discernment, listening, pastoral care, hospitality, truth-telling, and administration, I recognize that I do not (nor does any individual) possess all the gifts necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the office of bishop. In this sense, the gift of bridge-building is integral as it enables and supports the work of invitation and partnership whereby the bishop is able to incorporate others with the necessary gifts to ensure that tasks are completed and goals worked towards in the most effective way. Sharing in the ministry of Christ – in any and every role of the Church – requires a sense of servanthood which entails mutual respect, empathy, a willingness to learn, and defining boundaries that support the well-being of all involved.

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

- A significant challenge is the need of the Church to remain focused and faithful to the mission / commission of Christ. Being confronted with changes to attendance / ministry engagement, financial stability, and shifts of society away from the institutionalized Church and commitment, it is all too easy to become distracted, fearful, and compromising. In response, we risk becoming insular and settling for the minimum to simply maintain rather than entering into the difficult work of reflection, repentance, and receptivity to the movement of the Holy Spirit and the will of God. To address this requires the work of prayerful engagement where space is provided for voices, joys, and grief to be shared while giving rise to questions that may be new and difficult. I also believe that this work will require a return to basics – of the faith, discipleship, and structures that support those involved while providing channels of communication that are respectful and honest, along with resources and opportunities to explore options so that the mission and commission of Christ may not just continue, but thrive in the Allegheny Synod and world through the grace and help of God.

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

- As a leader, I serve with diplomacy, empowerment, compassion, and determination. I strive to maintain an ‘open-door’ policy and value the sharing of others’ time, talent, and treasure to support the task(s) at hand and the ministry and life of the Church. I am capable of working in the details while maintaining sight of the larger vision / long-term goal. I provide for self-management (not a micro-manager) while expecting responsibility and valuing accountability. I do not shy away from tension or conflict; engaging through active listening, respect, and diligent discernment and prayer to evaluate and determine the best path towards reconciliation and healing. Every person, context, and matter is unique – requiring the ability to incorporate experience with an openness to try new things and accompany one another.