

# 2021 Dialogue Participants Bio

## ELCA

Bishop Bill Gafkjen, co-chair

Bill Gafkjen has served as bishop for the Indiana-Kentucky Synod since 2010. The eight years previous to that he served as Assistant to the Bishop with responsibilities that included candidacy for rostered ministry in the ELCA, ecumenical and interfaith relationships, synod assembly planning, and social ministry. Before joining the Indiana-Kentucky Synod staff in 2002, Bill served as pastor and campus pastor for ministries and congregations in Minnesota, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. Bishop Gafkjen has served as chair of the ELCA Conference of Bishops, chair of the Conference of Bishops Roster Committee, and chair of task forces that stewarded the ELCA's transition from three rosters of Word and Service to one roster, known as Deacons. Bishop Bill is active in the Kentucky Council of Churches and in relationships and collaborative work with ecumenical colleagues throughout Indiana and Kentucky. He serves on boards for a couple of ELCA colleges and the ELCA's Mission Investment Fund. He lives in Fishers, Indiana, with his spouse Janet. They have two adult children.

Dr. Kris Kvam

Kristen E. Kvam is Professor of Theology at Saint Paul School of Theology in Greater Kansas City and Oklahoma City, where she teaches courses in the fields of Constructive Christian Theology, Engaging World Religions, and Women, Society, and Church studies. Born and raised in Litchfield, Minnesota, Kris holds degrees from Emory University (PhD), Yale University (MDiv; STM), and St. Olaf College (BA). Christian doctrine, scriptural interpretation, and Luther studies form primary concerns of her scholarship. Co-editor of *Eve and Adam: An Anthology of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender*, Kris recently wrote commentaries on Luther's text addressed to women who knew tragedy in childbearing and on his Preface to the Psalms for *The Annotated Luther* series. Kris currently is working with Don Saliers on a theological commentary on the Psalms for the *Belief Series* by Westminster John Knox Press.

A lay member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Kris has extensive experience as an ecumenical theologian. For ten years she was a member of the Lutheran—Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, the international bilateral dialogue sponsored by the Vatican and Lutheran World Federation. She also served on the national Lutheran—Roman Catholic Dialogue USA, and chaired the ELCA's Advisory Board for the Department of Ecumenical Affairs. Her ecumenical work contributed to the volumes *The Church as Koinonia of Salvation* and *The Apostolicity of the Church*.

She has chaired the ELCA's Justice for Women Consulting Committee and served as an advisor to the ELCA's Church Council. She was sent by the ELCA to the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions in Cape Town, South Africa.

Dr. Carl S. Hughes

Carl S. Hughes is Associate Professor of Theology at Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, TX. He is a lay theologian with particular expertise in Martin Luther and Søren Kierkegaard. His other interests include theological aesthetics, sacramental theology, interfaith cooperation, and issues of social justice. He is the author of *Kierkegaard and the Staging of Desire: Rhetoric and Performance in a Theology of Eros* (Fordham University Press, 2014). He lives in San Antonio with his wife and son and is a member of Christ Lutheran Church.

Rev. Dr. Bridget L. Piggue

Bridget L. Piggue, Th.D. is a leader and educator in the field of Pastoral Theology, Care & Counseling. Her focus and passion in ministry has been to accompany spiritual leaders in the development of greater self-awareness, communication strategy and mental health. Through the disciplines of psychology, theology, spirituality and the sciences she has devoted her vocational call to educating and empowering those committed to growth, healing and transformation.

Dr. Piggue earned her Bachelors of Science in Communications from the University of Texas at Austin; her Master of Divinity in Pastoral Care & Counseling from the Interdenominational Theological Center; and her Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Care and Counseling from Emory University's Candler School of Theology. She has served as a visiting professor in both theological institutions.

Dr. Piggue is also an ACPE Certified Educator and ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. With over twenty years of tenure at Emory she serves as the Director of Spiritual Health at Emory University Hospital Midtown where she leads a staff of chaplains in spiritual care and offers team building guidance for hospital personnel on multiple levels. Dr. Piggue is currently working on a book drawn from her doctoral research and preparing for the creation of a healing institute.

Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton was reelected to serve a second six-year term as ELCA presiding bishop at the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Eaton is the ELCA's fourth presiding bishop and was first elected at the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. She earned a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School and a Bachelor of Music Education degree from the College of Wooster. Eaton was ordained in 1981 and served three different congregations in Ohio before being elected bishop of the ELCA Northeastern Ohio Synod in 2006. She was reelected synod bishop in May 2013, shortly before her election as ELCA presiding bishop. Eaton's four emphases for the ELCA are: We are church; We are Lutheran; We are church together; We are church for the sake of the world. These four emphases are fundamental to identifying who the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is.

Bishop Don Kreiss

Bishop Don Kreiss serves as bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, having been elected to this role in 2011, and re-elected in 2017. Prior, he served as pastor of Antioch Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills from 1999-2011. The bishop earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and a Master of Divinity from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He serves as chair of the Conference of Bishops' Ecumenical and Inter-

religious Relations Committee, and as the Lutheran co-chair of the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee.

Ms. Kathryn Mary Lohre

Kathryn Mary Lohre serves as Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations & Theological Discernment in the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop. From 2012-2013 she served as president of the National Council of Churches USA, the first Lutheran and youngest woman, and edited the book *For Such a Time as This: Young Adults on the Future of the Church* (2013). Prior, she served as assistant director of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University, Dr. Diana Eck's research project on religious diversity in the United States. She was a Consulting Editor for *Engaging Others, Knowing Ourselves: A Lutheran Calling in a Multi-Religious World* (2016). She is currently co-chair of the executive committee of the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign: Standing with American Muslims, Upholding American Values, a US-based, an inter-religious coalition to end anti-Muslim bigotry. She is married to Rev. Timothy Seitz, an ELCA pastor, and they have four children: John, Benjamin, Hannah, and James.

Rev. Dr. Carmelo Santos

The Rev. Dr. Carmelo Santos, Ph.D., serves as the director for theological diversity and ecumenical and inter-religious engagement. In this capacity, Carmelo works to deepen relationships with ecumenical and inter-religious partners while strengthening and diversifying the theological resources for this church's witness for justice, which includes serving as the director of the ELCA's Theological Roundtable. Carmelo earned his Ph.D. in religion and science from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. His areas of expertise include theological anthropology, pneumatology, Latinx and Latin American theology, Lutheran theology, and theological ethics.

## The Disciples of Christ

Rev. Dr. Robert Cornwall, co-chair

Rev. Dr. Cornwall is in his thirteenth year as the Pastor of Central Woodward Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Troy, Michigan. He holds a Ph.D. in Historical Theology (18th century Anglicanism) from Fuller Theological Seminary. He has a diverse ecclesial background that includes being Episcopalian, Foursquare, Christian Church/Churches of Christ, Presbyterian, Baptist, and of course Disciple. He has served as the President of the Greater Santa Barbara Clergy Association. He was the founding convener of the Lompoc Interfaith Group (Lompoc, CA) and served as the convener for the Troy-area Interfaith Group (Michigan) for five years. He helped found the Metro Coalition of Congregations and served as its President for a term. He is currently serving as a chaplain with the Troy Police Department. In addition, He is the author of numerous books and articles. He has been married to Cheryl since 1983 and his son Brett is finishing his MA in Interreligious Studies at Claremont School of Theology.

Rev. Richie Sanchez

He serves as Regional Minister and President of the Pacific Southwest Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Rev. Dr. Mark G. Toulouse

Mark Toulouse retired from the University of Toronto in 2017 after serving 9 years as Principal at Emmanuel College (a theological school associated with the United Church of Canada) and Professor of the History of Christianity at Emmanuel College and in the Department for the Study of Religion in the University of Toronto. He and his wife, Jeffica, now live in Fort Worth, Texas. Prior to his life in Toronto, he taught for more than two decades at Brite Divinity School, and served as a dean there for 11 years. He twice received (1999 and 2007), by vote of his colleagues at Brite, the Catherine Saylor Hill Award for Faculty Excellence in Teaching and Research. He is an historian who specializes in the topics of religion and culture, and religion and public life, both in the United States and in Canada, and in Disciples history and theology. While at Emmanuel College, Dr. Toulouse was responsible for inaugurating both a new Buddhist Studies Program and a Muslim Studies Program. New constituencies of Buddhist and Muslim students have joined the many Christian students who populate the classrooms of Emmanuel. Dr. Toulouse holds a Ph.D. from The University of Chicago Divinity School (where he has recently been named "Alumni of the Year" for 2018) and is the author of ten books, including such titles as *The Transformation of John Foster Dulles* (1985); *Joined in Discipleship* (1992, and 1996); *Makers of Christian Theology in America* (1997), *God in Public* (2006), *Renewing Christian Unity* (2010), and *The Altars Where We Worship* (2016). An ordained minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Toulouse regularly conducts workshops for ministers and lay people on topics pertaining to North American Christianity, religion and public life, and theological education.

Rev. Allison Bright

Rev. Allison Bright (she/her) is a lifelong-member-turned-clergy of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She received her Bachelor of Arts from Truman State before pursuing a Master of Divinity at Brite Divinity School in 2018. In 2020, Brite Divinity School selected her as a Walker Ministerial Preaching Scholar. Allison is currently commissioned in the Kansas City Region where she is sponsored as an ordination candidate by Community Christian Church (DOC). Currently, she serves as an Assistant Minister at South Hills Christian Church (DOC) in Fort Worth, TX. Outside of church and school, Allison enjoys warm tea (preferably peppermint), musical theatre (*Six: The Musical*), and dreaming of the day she can visit the places she studies (Scotland and Rome).

Rev. Teresa Hord Owens

Rev. Teresa "Terri" Hord Owens was elected as the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in July 2017. She is the first person of color and second woman to lead the denomination. A descendant of one of the oldest African-American free settlements in Indiana and a Disciple since young adulthood, Hord Owens was dean of students at the University of Chicago Divinity School and pastor of First Christian Church of Downers Grove, IL prior to her election.

Hord Owens' resume includes more than 20 years in corporate America leading diverse teams in data management in health care and other industries before she entered seminary. After ordination, she served

15 years at the University of Chicago Divinity School, shepherding a varied student body in both background and theology.

Hord Owens is widely sought after as a preacher, speaker and workshop facilitator. Her ministry and intellectual interests include a theology of reconciliation, cultural intelligence, developing inclusive and multi-cultural congregations, and the mentoring of young adults. She received her bachelor's degree in Government/Afro-American studies from Harvard University, Cambridge, MA and her Masters of Divinity from the University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, IL.

She marked three decades of marriage with Walter Owens, Jr., prior to her election. They are the proud parents of an adult son, W. Mitchell Owens, III.

Rev. Paul S. Tch 

Rev. Paul S. Tch , ordained Disciples of Christ minister, has served the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada as President of the Christian Unity and Interfaith Ministry (CUIM). In his role and ministry with the CUIM, he offers leadership as the ecumenical officer for the Disciples of Christ in North America, representing the church in local, national, and international efforts in giving expression to the unity of the church and our oneness in Christ. As the Interreligious officer for the church, he has engaged in various national and international interfaith dialogues on behalf of the church. Also, he has equipped local congregations and regional bodies of the church to embody the vision of unity for all humanity and to understand humanity and creation in different religious traditions.

As a Korean American, he has participated in various efforts to bring just peace to the Korean Peninsula for a decade. While he was serving a local congregation in Kentucky, he was elected to serve the church as the moderator-elect of the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada for two years before he was called to the current ministry.

## United Church of Christ

Rev. Mark Pettis

Rev. Mark Pettis is the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Manager for the United Church of Christ. In this role he is responsible for guiding and coordinating the ecumenical and interfaith relations of the national setting of the denomination. Prior to serving in this role, Rev. Pettis served as the Senior Minister of the Manhattan Beach Community Church (United Church of Christ). He has served in that role from August of 2013 until January 2021. Prior to his time at MBCC, Rev. Pettis served as Pastor at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Moorhead, Minnesota. He has served on the Board of Directors for the South Coast Interfaith Council (in Los Angeles County), the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition of Minnesota, and as an Intern with the Kentucky Council of Churches). Mark is a graduate of Pomona College and Lexington Theological Seminary. Having grown up in the San Diego area where his parents served as co-pastors of the (then) Lemon Grove Congregational UCC, and prior to attending seminary, Mark worked for more than a decade in the field of politics and government relations, including working for two members of the State Legislature from San Diego County and serving as the public information officer for the Grossmont Union High School District.