

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First female Lutheran bishop in Oregon to be installed in ecumenical worship service

Special service of installation:

December 14, 11 a.m.

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral

147 NW 19th Avenue, Portland

(PORTLAND, OR) – Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar’s ministry career has been dedicated to ecumenism, social justice and radical compassion. Saturday’s worship service to install her as the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Oregon Synod will reflect that joyful commitment to multifaith community building and courageous love. Bishop Larson Caesar, [elected to a six-year term](#) by the ELCA synod assembly in May, becomes the first woman to serve as bishop of the Oregon Synod. In this role she oversees 30,000 Lutherans in 111 congregations throughout the state.



“I want us to be bold for the sake of courageous love. Courageous love reaches across boundaries and barriers to promote dignity, justice and kindness for our neighbors just as Jesus did...however different our neighbors may be,” says Larson Caesar. “One of the things I treasure most about being a Lutheran is Martin Luther’s belief in constant reformation. We are called to constantly reassess what we think we know and how we do church. To be a church in a new way in this world is hard: It means being grounded in God’s grace in our bones, it means being fearless for the sake of love and it means maintaining hope in uncertain times.”

In a ground-breaking year, Bishop Larson Caesar joins several other women who were elected this year to lead their synods in this 50th year anniversary of women’s ordination in the ELCA. The Oregon Synod was the first Lutheran synod to declare itself as a sanctuary synod (2016) and was also the first synod to become “Reconciling in Christ” (2005), welcoming individuals of all races, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, identities and marital status.

As a native of Libby, Montana, Bishop Larson Caesar grew up with a strong affinity for science, which led her to study human biology at Stanford University. After training as a chaplain at Stanford Medical Center, she went on to earn her Master’s of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School, focusing on interfaith studies and feminist theology. Her one-year internship took place in Des Moines, Iowa, followed by a



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Certificate of Advanced Theological Studies from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California.

From 1996 to 2019, Bishop Larson Caesar served as pastor of Spirit of Grace in Beaverton, perhaps the world's only community of Lutherans and Roman Catholics worshipping together. At Spirit of Grace, she helped the congregation grow, deepen their engagement with social justice work and expand their mission of love and diversity by developing and deepening relationships with Jewish, Muslim and Sikh neighbors.

Bishop Larson Caesar is married to Drew Caesar, a pastor of the Presbyterian Church – USA and a therapist in private practice. Their daughter, Sophie, is pursuing undergraduate studies at the University of Denver.

The Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Elizabeth Eaton, will preach at Bishop Larson Caesar's installation. Presiding Bishop Eaton was elected to another six-year term at the [churchwide assembly](#) in August 2019. The service will be followed by a festive reception.
