

Name: Kathryn Showers

Order: Lay

Congregation: St. Luke's, Atascadero

Nominated for: Board of Trustees

Please tell us why you feel called to serve and what you can contribute to this particular body.

Since 2018, I have witnessed St. Luke's parish struggling to survive with falling membership, dwindling financial resources, and absence of a shared vision for our future. Our survival has depended on our ability to work with diocesan leaders to continue operating without a priest. Training lay leaders has allowed to continue weekly worship aided by supply clergy. We have continued financial and volunteer support of our outreach ministries. However, conflict among the members now threatens to derail the search for a new priest and the continued existence of our community of faith. We are not the only parish in this diocese that is struggling. I believe that partnering with diocesan leadership is essential for parishes struggling to gather the financial and personnel resources to successfully self-govern as well as grow in faith and thrive.

Please give some brief background on your church activities.

Since moving to San Luis Obispo County in 2013 and joining St. Luke's, I have served as a member of the vestry responsible for outreach and ministry, hospitality and membership, served on altar guild, as a lay eucharistic minister and eucharistic visitor, chaired the stewardship campaign and Christmas Bazaar raising funds for SLO-4-Home and Transitional Food and Shelter for the medically fragile homeless. In 2022, I served as Senior Warden after our interim rector left for a new assignment. At the bishop's suggestion St. Luke's adopted a Vestry of the Whole Congregation model, designed to expand inclusivity and involvement of every member of the congregation in our common life. It has been a game changer.

What is the most pressing issue facing the diocese in the next 5 years and how would you work to address it if elected?

The most pressing issue facing the diocese of El Camino Real is falling membership, a trend that has impacted all Protestant denominations in the U.S. Organized religion is viewed by many as irrelevant and anachronistic in a world focused on rights and needs of the individual over those of community. Daily news broadcasts of violence, death and catastrophe have paralyzed many people, who are fearful of migrants and convinced that the scarcity of material goods and presence of those who are marginalized are a threat to their existence. I believe we have a unique opportunity as the diocese of El Camino Real to live out our gospel values to love God, love one another, recognize the dignity of every human being, welcome all with true hospitality and share our abundance with those less fortunate. By working with other religious organizations, NGOs, volunteer organizations and elected officials, we can re-initiate civil dialogue to resolve many of the issues facing our diocese: actively seeking peaceful solutions to

conflict, electing representatives with integrity, addressing global warming, stewarding our resources, promoting spiritual growth, and striving to improve the lives of those living in poverty.