



**Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## **The Rev. Leila M. Ortiz**

ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP  
2016 - present



The Rev. Leila M. Ortiz has been Assistant to the Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod since August 7, 2016. Pr. Ortiz has a heart for serving God's people in ways that are truly practical, pastoral and authentic. Her interests are in leadership, vocational discernment and discipleship.

Before joining the synod staff, Pr. Ortiz's first call was as Pastor in Residence at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Herndon, Virginia. She then served as Associate Pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Her focus on the synod staff includes mobility and candidacy.

After attending Wagner College in Staten Island, New York where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, English and Gender Studies, Pr. Ortiz was granted the Master of Divinity degree focused on Latino/a studies from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Currently, she is a doctoral candidate in the area of Systematic/Contemporary Theology. The rich diversity present among Latino/as in the United States shapes her projected dissertation's premise, that lived experience translates into a complex and unique hermeneutical lens offering insight into the spirituality of those rendered irrelevant in society.

Pr. Ortiz has represented the United States among others from seven Lutheran World Federation (LWF) regions at the 2012 LWF Global Theological Consultation in Wittenberg, Germany, assessing Lutheran heritage and the Reformation in defining what it means to be Lutheran in a fast-changing world. She will again participate in the 2016 consultation in Geneva, Switzerland. She is also a member of the ELCA Theological Education Advisory Council, an advisory body established to address in a holistic way issues on theological education, leadership development, candidacy, call and rostered leaders.

"Pentecostal Latina: Engendering Selves in Storefront Congregations" is a chapter Pr. Ortiz co-wrote published in *Faith on the Avenue: Religion on a City Street* (Oxford University Press, 2014). The December 2016 edition of the journal *Dialog: A Journey of Theology* (Wiley Online Library) is anticipated to include an article by Pr. Ortiz entitled, "A Latina Luthercostal Invitation into an Ecclesial Estuary."

Although Pr. Ortiz does not sing or read music, "I grew up worshipping six days a week in the Pentecostal church and can play a mean tambourine."

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*"The church is where God creates belonging for all of God's beloved. The surprising gift is that God uses us, even us, to create these safe and sacred spaces of belonging. We do indeed serve an awesome God!"*

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