

**DATE:** 21 March 2019

**TO:** Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ministers of Word and Service, Members of the Order of St. Stephen Deacon, Congregations and Visitors

**FROM:** Nancy L. Gordon, Secretary, Delaware-Maryland Synod

**SUBJECT:** 2019 Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly

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Dear Friends in Christ Jesus:

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.” Colossians 3:16*

This will serve as your official notification of the 32nd annual Assembly of the Delaware-Maryland Synod which will be held **Thursday, May 30, through Saturday, June 1, 2019. Assembly will be held at the Delta Hotels Baltimore Hunt Valley, 245 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, Maryland 21031.** The assembly begins on May 30 at 10:30 a.m. and closes on June 1 at 12:30 p.m.

This letter provides detailed information on the assembly program, registration procedures, hotel rooms, cost and related items. Please read it carefully and proceed accordingly.

### **Assembly Theme and Keynote Speaker**

With this year’s assembly, we celebrate the theme, **“Holy Wisdom, Holy Word!”** We will begin our Assembly with an interactive session focused on the importance of regular study of scripture in the lives of disciples of Christ. We will engage in bible study and holy conversations at our tables and collectively bear witness to the power of being fed and nourished by the Word. We will hear stories of how particular passages of scripture have been meaningful in the lives of those attending our Assembly.

On Friday morning, we will be introduced to a tool to help identify each member’s primary “spiritual type.” Everyone will have an opportunity to complete a brief self-assessment during the session and learn more about how this can inform how we relate to holy scripture and one another. Our breakout time this year on Friday afternoon will offer a deep-dive on each of the four “spiritual types” identified in the inventory. Participants will have a chance to attend either the breakout session most associated with their own type or explore one that is different from their own.

Our Friday evening keynote speaker, Peter Enns, professor of biblical studies at Eastern University (St. Davids, Pennsylvania), popular blogger and podcast host of *The Bible for Normal People*. He is also the author of a new book, [How the Bible Actually Works](#), that argues that there is no one right way to read the Bible. Moving us beyond the damaging idea that “being right” is the most important measure of faith, Enns offers a freeing approach to Bible study that helps us focus on pursuing wisdom and building relationships with God and each other.

In his role as a podcast host, he regularly interviews and learns from and with a wide array of scholars, artists, theologians who work at the intersection of the ancient setting of Bible and contemporary Christian faith. He is a frequent contributor to journals and encyclopedias, and has written, edited, and contributed to nearly 20 books, including The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More than Our “Correct” Beliefs; The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It, Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament, and The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn’t Say about Human Origins.

We will conclude our Synod Assembly on Saturday morning with an opportunity for all participants to make a commitment to daily Bible study for 90 days using the Moravian Daily Texts resource. Our Synod’s discipleship team and leaders across our Synod will provide support for this through social media and daily discussion questions. Our commitment will culminate with an invitation for congregations to join us in a year-long covenant to read the Bible on a daily basis beginning on Gods Work, Our Hands Sunday (September 8, 2019).

## **Representation at Synod Assembly**

Each congregation of the Delaware-Maryland Synod will be represented by two or more lay persons, normally one male and one female, up to the first 185 reported baptized members. For each additional reported 185 baptized members, or major fraction thereof, a congregation will be entitled to one more lay representative, male or female. In addition, each congregation is entitled to send one youth/young adult voting member. **The number of voting members to which your congregation is entitled is posted on the synod website under the “Assembly” tab.**

All Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministers of Word and Service who are on the roster of this synod, all retired ministers rostered in this synod and the lay members of the Synod Council are voting members.

Under our church’s constitution and by-laws, rostered ministers of this church are **required** to attend. **Those who are unable to attend for whatever reason must send a letter to the bishop by May 15, 2019, explaining the circumstances and asking to be excused.** Those letters may be sent by US Mail or by email to Bishop Gohl, in the care of Justina Sergeant, [jsergeon@demdsynod.org](mailto:jsergeon@demdsynod.org).

The 2010 Synod Assembly passed a resolution to allow each congregation to send one additional voting member, either male or female, who is a youth or a young adult. The term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not yet reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service. On Thursday evening, May 30, there will be an opportunity for interested youth and young adults to gather to debrief the day and fellowship with one another; more details will be available as the assembly approaches.

More details will be posted on the synod website, under the “Assembly” tab, as we move closer to the Assembly. If you have any further questions regarding youth/young adults (only) at Assembly, contact Deacon Julie Stecker at [jstecker@demdsynod.org](mailto:jstecker@demdsynod.org) or 410-230-2864.

## **All materials are on the website; printed materials BY REQUEST ONLY**

All materials for the business sessions of the Synod Assembly will be posted on the synod's website, [www.demdsynod.org](http://www.demdsynod.org), as well as in Guidebook for your review prior to the assembly. **In an effort to continue to become green, again this year we will not provide printed hand-outs but will leave it up to voting members to print and bring their own copies or to access documents electronically.**

**IMPORTANT:** If you need the synod office to provide you a paper copy of materials, please contact Cindy VanVliet at [cvanvliet@demdsynod.org](mailto:cvanvliet@demdsynod.org).

Materials sent to us for inclusion in an Assembly packet will also be scanned and uploaded (by May 15, 2019) and available with all other materials.

## **Registration is open from March 21 – May 15, 2019**

Registration for the 2019 Synod Assembly opens on March 21 and closes on May 15, 2019. **The primary mode for registration will be ONLINE through the synod website.** Please note that your email address will be automatically added to our weekly E-letter distribution list so that we can keep you informed of synod events and happenings. If you do not wish to receive the E-letter, you may unsubscribe at any time. **To register:**

- Go to the Delaware-Maryland Synod website on or after **March 21, 2019:** [www.demdsynod.org](http://www.demdsynod.org)
- Click on the 2019 Synod Assembly link under the Synod Assembly tab; you will see a registration button to click.
- In order to be the best stewards of our resources, there are some new steps to the registration process this year. **You will not be able to register multiple participants on the same online form.** Therefore, we recommend that you collect all information from each participant on the printable form found on our website before beginning the registration process. The completed forms will help in determining the total payment for your group.
- Online payments are to be made by credit card or bank transfer. To pay online, go to [www.demdsynod.org](http://www.demdsynod.org), click "Give online!" Enter your total and select "Synod Assembly" from the "Give to" menu. Please put the congregation/organization or registrant's name in the memo/note section. If you are registering multiple participants, once you have completed all of your registrations, simply add the totals from the last page of the printable registration form for each participant to get your final total and submit a single payment.
- If you prefer to pay by check, **send please send a check made out to "Delaware-Maryland Synod" with your congregation/organization name or the registrant's name in the memo line to:**

**Cindy VanVliet, Associate for Community  
Delaware-Maryland Synod, ELCA  
575 South Charles Street, Suite 202  
Baltimore, MD 21201-2482**

**If you are unable to register online,** please call the synod office **before May 15, 2019** for assistance.

**If you are a volunteer** and/or your registration is paid by the synod, please contact Cindy VanVliet, after March 21, 2019, for a discount code: [cvanvliet@demdsynod.org](mailto:cvanvliet@demdsynod.org) or 410-230-2860.

## Registration fees

The 2000 Synod Assembly approved a resolution to make the Synod Assembly self-sustaining. The registration fees were set by the Synod Council at its meeting on February 2, 2019.

**AGAIN THIS YEAR:** A full breakfast on Friday and Saturday included in each registration fee.

**The Synod Council includes an incentive for early registration again this year, so register early and be charged the lowest available registration fee!**

<b>Rates in chart below apply to:</b> Minister of Word and Sacrament Minister of Word and Service Lay Voting Members Youth/Young Adult Voting Members		
<b>Early Bird Rate (includes breakfast Friday &amp; Saturday):</b> <b>\$229.00</b> Online and mail-in registration must be received by <b>4/29/19.</b> <i>No exceptions.</i>	<b>Regular Rate (includes breakfast Friday &amp; Saturday):</b> <b>\$259.00</b> Online and mail-in registration must be received by <b>5/15/19.</b> <i>No exceptions.</i>	<b>On-Site Rate (includes breakfast Friday &amp; Saturday):</b> <b>\$289.00</b> After May 15, 2019, you must wait to register on-site at Assembly. On-site registration attendees will be assigned overflow seating. <i>No exceptions</i>

<b>Rates in chart below apply to:</b> Retired Minister of Word and Sacrament Retired Minister of Word and Service Ministers of Word and Sacrament on Leave from Call Ministers of Word and Service on Leave from Call		
<b>Early Bird Rate (includes breakfast Friday &amp; Saturday):</b> <b>\$99.00</b> Online and mail-in registration must be received by <b>4/29/19.</b> <i>No exceptions.</i>	<b>Regular Rate (includes breakfast Friday &amp; Saturday):</b> <b>\$109.00</b> Online and mail-in registration must be received by <b>5/15/19.</b> <i>No exceptions.</i>	<b>On-Site Rate (includes breakfast Friday &amp; Saturday):</b> <b>\$119.00</b> After May 15, 2019, you must wait to register on-site at Assembly. On-site registration attendees will be assigned overflow seating. <i>No exceptions</i>

## Optional Evening Activities!

All Assembly business will take place during the morning and afternoon sessions. On Thursday evening, May 30, 2019, there will be a variety of evening activities offered:

### Baltimore City Ascension Day Dinner & Worship

6pm Crab Cake Dinner and 7:15pm Worship at Christ Lutheran Church (701 S Charles Street, Inner Harbor) - *Parking at Lee Street Garage at the corner of Light & Lee Streets. Bring ticket to the service to be validated for free parking*

*Prelude Recital and Post-Service Organ Tour with Dr. Daniel Aune*

People may join the choir at 6:30pm for practice and then sing during the worship service – please indicate your interest and SATB voice part on the registration form

*Cost: \$16 for Crab Cake Dinner*

### **Pub Theology**

*Food, Drink and Faith Conversations*

6:30pm at Greene Turtle (118 Shawan Road, Cockeyville)

*Participants will need to pay for their own meal and drinks*

### **Lutheran Youth Organization Refugee Simulation**

*Join us as our student leaders help us walk through the process of emigrating from another country to the United States. The simulation will take approximately one hour.*

7:30pm at Faith Lutheran Church (8 Sherwood Road, Cockeyville)

*\$10 registration fee, to benefit the Lutheran Youth Organization and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.*

### **Cinema & Conversation**

*Pastor Charlene Barnes will lead an outing to Regal Hunt Valley Stadium Cinemas to see Aladdin and then to an adjacent eatery for conversation afterwards.*

Showtime, after 7pm, TBA.

*Participants will pay the cost of movie ticket (~\$12) and refreshments*

**You must sign up for evening activities during registration. This will be the only opportunity to do so.**

**Beginning May 1, 2019, the opportunity to sign up for an evening activity will be open to those in our synod who are NOT Assembly attendees, so make sure to register early so ensure your spot (registration limited to space available per activity).**

### **Help wanted... seeking Assembly volunteers!**

Volunteers are needed to serve on committees, as Pages during business sessions, to assist with worship services at the Assembly, and to help with childcare in the Assembly Daycare Room. If you are interested in serving, contact Cindy VanVliet, Associate for Community, 410-230-2860 or [cvanvliet@demdsynod.org](mailto:cvanvliet@demdsynod.org).

### **Join Us for a Hot Breakfast Every Morning!**

Your Synod Assembly registration includes a hot breakfast buffet on Friday, May 31 and Saturday, June 1 from 7:15-8:15am. Come and network!

### **No More Box Lunches! Optional Lunch Buffets and Many Local Options!**

A Sandwich Buffet Lunch on Thursday, May 30 and a Hot Lunch Buffet Lunch on Friday, May 31 will be available for purchase. The Delta Hotel's catering service charges \$23 each for these lunches. Dinner will be on your own on Thursday, May 30 and Friday, May 31. **Meals must be ordered and paid for during registration. This will be the only opportunity to purchase them.**

Our venue's location offers lots of places to eat! Across the street from our Assembly venue and within walking distance (0.5 miles), are choices from fast food to sit down restaurants if you'd like options other than the buffet lunch choice. There is plenty of parking across the street if you are unable to walk there.

## Childcare at the Assembly

Childcare will be available, free of charge, for children **ages 2-8 years** during the **business sessions and workshops only**. Please sign up for childcare through online registration **by the May 15, 2019 deadline**. If you do not have access to online registration, contact Cindy VanVliet at 410-230-2860 or [cvanvliet@demdsynod.org](mailto:cvanvliet@demdsynod.org).

## Worship at the Assembly

There will be a daily service of Holy Communion at the 2019 Assembly, consistent with our Synod's continuing resolutions.

- Thursday, May 30, 2019, 10:30 a.m. – The Opening of the Assembly, Ascension Day *Of the Land and Seasons* Liturgy with the Creation Care Team
- Friday, May 31, 2019, 10:30 a.m. – Worship and Communion with Recognition of Congregation and Ministerial Anniversaries
- Saturday, June 1, 2019, 11:15 a.m. - Closing Worship and Communion with the Recognition of New Congregations and the Blessing of the Bishop's Sabbatical

## Worship Offerings

This year's assembly offerings will benefit *Building Puentes*, our collaborative partnership with the Metropolitan Washington, DC Synod, the Caribbean Synod and the Delaware-Maryland Synod "building bridges" of cultural understanding, and rebuilding churches and homes, in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

## Noisy Change Offering

Our Delaware-Maryland Synod Hunger Task Force will host **Noisy Change Offering** during Assembly this year. Our Hunger Task Force invites all Delaware-Maryland Synod congregations to pick the Sunday that is best for the congregation prior to the Assembly to host a **Noisy Change Sunday**.

All the proceeds from this offering will go to local, national and global ministries of the ELCA World Hunger Program. This includes Domestic Hunger Projects in our synod. All gifts collected are part of your congregation's contribution to the *ELCA Campaign*, and our synod's *Forward in Faith Campaign*. **Our Synod Hunger Task Force asks that you count the coins locally and bring no more than \$20.00 in coins to the Assembly.** A letter is appended to this mailing about the offering, please share it with those who care for Stewardship and Social Ministry in your congregation. *Come and inherit the Kingdom of God, for I was hungry and you gave me food.* (Matthew 25:34-35)

## Hotel information

Reservations at the Delta Hotels Baltimore Hunt Valley must be made **by May 1, 2019** in order to receive our group rate.

**Reservations received after May 1, 2019 will be provided on a space-available basis at prevailing rates.** Indicate any special accommodations when you call.

Hotel Contact Info	Rates – 5/30/19 - 6/1/19
<p>Delta Hotels Baltimore Hunt Valley 245 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, MD 21031</p> <p>Reservations for the Event will be made by individual attendees directly with Marriott reservations. The easiest way to make a reservation is through the link the hotel provided to us: <a href="https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1551969281312&amp;key=GRP&amp;app=resvlink">https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1551969281312&amp;key=GRP&amp;app=resvlink</a></p> <p>For guests who would like to call the number is: 1-888-236-2427 and is listed as Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The mini hotel code if needed is EVL.</p>	<p>Standard 1 King Bed \$136.00/night</p> <p>Standard 2 Queen Beds \$136.00/night</p>
<p>Each room has complimentary Wi-Fi access, in-room Starbucks coffee, free bottled water, 42” HDTV, ergonomic desk chair, floor-to-ceiling windows, original artwork, and luxurious bedding.</p>	