

# 2019

# Bulletin of Reports

## Part 2



*Photo courtesy of Loretta Ishida (Ascension, Towson)*

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## **Bulletin of Reports**

The Bulletin of Reports is being electronically presented in two parts: Part 1 contains all those documents that voting members will need to have in front of them as they conduct the assembly's business, such as the agenda, resolutions and memorials, nominations, the proposed budget, etc. In an effort to go green and be good stewards of the gifts God has given us, the Bulletin of Reports is available on the synod's website, [www.demdsynod.org](http://www.demdsynod.org), as of May 1, 2019. Part 2 of the Bulletin of Reports contains important information that the assembly needs for background information and to hold the officers, Synod Council and related ministries accountable. It is not information, however, that the assembly will act upon. If you plan to access information electronically, please know that high speed internet access is available in the assembly hall. We are working hard to make sure to have reliable Wi-Fi access throughout our meeting space. However, we have run into problems in the past and cannot guarantee service.

## Office of the Bishop

### Executive Assistant to the Bishop/DEM, The Rev. Dr. Amsalu T. Geleta

In the paraphrased word of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians (1:3), I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. It has been a joy to partner with you in ministry. Thank you for opening your willing hearts, your buildings, your services, and your missional imaginations as we gathered around Word and sacraments, for congregational vitality and partnership conversations.

With your generous support through the annual budget, Forward in Faith Campaign money and direct partnership, you have supported new, strategic ministries in transition. Your support also comes back to those and similar ministries in our synod through ELCA Congregational Vitality grants. Because we are church together:

#### *1. What was sown germinated*

Last year the Assembly heard that we embarked on five Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community (SWAC) Explorations. The seeds that were sown germinated in the last 12 months. *Mountain of God* is growing with more than a hundred in weekly attendance. *Beloved Community* began weekly worship services. *Rise Up (Dreams and Visions)* moved from exploring possibilities to gathering a worshiping community monthly with a plan to grow to biweekly and then to weekly services. We have paused *Crisfield SAWC* exploration to access the possibilities and potential partnership. *Mara Evangelical SAWC* exploration is also paused by mutual agreement as the community discerns how to relate to the ELCA. They are exploring whether to relate to the ELCA collectively as a denomination of eight other congregations in USA, or as individual congregations with synods where they are located.

In the past year our joint new start with the Episcopal Diocese, Church on the Square, added Sunday worship services and tripled its attendance. The Slate Project continues to impact an online community while they gather weekly for Breaking Bread on Mondays.

Currently we are working on area potential and neediness assessment to start a new SAWC in Delaware. Please pray for the mission site, for the right mission developer, and to identify resources necessary to plant a new ministry.

#### *2. We have embarked on Holy Innovation*

In the past year partnership between congregations and denominations were initiated, nurtured and strengthened. From G-4 Congregations in Delmarva, to congregations in Allegany, to Baltimore partnerships, conversations were initiated.

These three cohorts of 12 congregations are actively working together to explore what God has in store for them in their collective mission territory. For eight congregations, these missional conversations have evolved to joint “Congregational Sustainability Training.” In collaboration with ELCA Community Development, they will journey together for a year getting training and discerning the possibilities for maximizing ministry potentials.

Conversations are happening between congregations to discern the best use of their resources. Some are discussing shared leadership, others are exploring shared ministries, while some are discerning consolidation. In addition, we are exploring with Metro DC Synod how we can yoke two congregations from both synods in order to reach the common mission corridor.

Our Discipleship Team granted five congregation catalyst grants to inspire creative ways of making disciples in our synod.

### *3. Ecumenical Collaborations were nurtured*

Our Congregational Vitality work with the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland was strong. Not only do our bishops set the example, but also together with Canon for Ordinary, the Rev. Scott Slater, we met regularly to support our joint church start—Church on the Square. The Slate Project, one of our Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities, meets at the Episcopal Cathedral of the Incarnation and is served by a Presbyterian pastor. Leaders from the three denominations gather periodically to support the ongoing ministries.

Not only New Starts, but also existing congregations are discussing ways in which they collaborate and share ministries and leaders. St. Stephen Lutheran (Arbutus) and the Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles became one congregation, following the example of a federated Lutherpalian Congregation – the Church of the Nativity and Holy Comforter. Similar conversations are happening between Lutheran congregations and Episcopal parishes in three different locations.

### *4. Strategic Ministries works were supported*

You made it possible for Synodical Strategic Ministries (formerly known as redevelopment congregations) to be supported. Your mission support made it possible for the ELCA to support ministries primarily among ethnic communities, among communities experiencing poverty, and ministries that need a short-term boost for revitalization. Your generosity supported the ministries of Peoples’ Community Church, All Saints, Lord of Life, Living Grace, St. Dysmas, Salem South Baltimore, and New Light to fulfill their great commission.

## *5. Potential leaders are being raised*

We thank God for gifted people you have been raising up to be leaders of this church. As synod staff liaison for the Candidacy Committee, I have supported 34 candidates (including six approved and waiting for a call), 24 potential candidates inquiring or preparing to enter the candidacy process, and the work of the Candidacy Committee such as TRPs (Theological Review Panel), entrance, endorsement, and approval panels and meetings. Special thanks to Leslie Hobbs, Pastor Dave Asendorf, the Rev. Dr. Paul Baglyos and the Candidacy Committee for their attentiveness too.

As a bishop's staff liaison to the Order of St. Stephen, Deacon (synodical lay ministry) I witnessed and supported the amazing work of the order in recruiting, training, Candidacy, academic, and administrative work of the order.

## *6. Operation*

In addition to writing grants and securing funds for New and Strategic Ministries, it has been an incredible privilege to oversee the daily operation of the synod office. Special thanks to incredible and dedicated synod staff. The leadership and support of the Vice President John Auger and the council, Vision Team leaders and Committees are testaments to our being church together. I thank God for Bishop Gohl whom I am privileged to work with, learn from and be inspired by his love for the Lord, his commitment to God's church, and his leadership wisdom.

### **Assistant to the Bishop - Western Cluster, The Rev. Robin Simpson-Litton**

Morning blessing from Bread for the Day 2018, "Thank you gracious God for the gift of this new day. Awaken me to your abiding presence; open my eyes to your creation; open my ears to your promises; open my heart to the needs of others. Fill me with your Spirit and guide me this day in works of kindness, justice and mercy. I ask this in the name of Jesus, the light and life of the world. AMEN

Every day I discover new and unique ways God has gifted the congregations, the ministries and the people of our synod in the western cluster. Conversations around shared ministry have continued to flourish as the Holy Spirit calls us into new and exciting opportunities. As of this writing, (April 1), I am in ongoing conversations with nearly a quarter of the congregations in the west exploring how they can share pastoral leadership while keeping their identities and ministries in their long-standing communities of faith.

There are 5 new calls in the western cluster: St. Paul's Jefferson called The Rev. Rick Schoenly, Evangelical Woodsboro called The Rev. Shawn Delawder, Christ LaVale called The Rev. Daniel Swanson and The Rev. Rick Shives was called to St. Peter's Clear Spring. The Rev. Peter Naschke formalized his call to the congregations of Mt. Joy-Harney Parishes. At the time of this writing, there are 4 congregations actively

interviewing candidates, 5 congregations working with seminarians; 13 congregations completing their profiles, and 6 congregations actively working on shared ministry with about 10 other congregations in some form of discussion. I placed 12 interims/vice pastors in congregations.

There are 2 significantly larger conversations happening in the west. Cumberland area churches are working with me and the Rev. Amsalu Geleta, who has been able to secure resources from churchwide. In the northeastern part of the Westminster conference, a group of about 5 congregations are also starting a broader dialog as they look to the future.

In the spring, I completed my ministry at Holy Spirit after 10 years as their pastor. I contracted over the summer to give pastoral assistance to the people of Our Shepherd in Severna Park while their pastor, Earl Janssen was on sabbatical. It was a blessed gift! I continue to pray each day with open eyes, ears and heart as I strive to faithfully do the work in which I have been so blessed to have been called. Thank you for all the support, encouragement and prayers you have given to me. May we all see the love of Christ in one another, hear the message of grace and mercy proclaimed, and open our hearts to a God who fills us with unending love!

**Assistant to the Bishop - Central Cluster, The Rev. Dr. Eric T. Campbell**

**“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High!” (Psalm 92:1)**

Truly, in acknowledgement of my many imperfections, I thank God for my life and my “rib,” Sheron, and for the amazing journey I have had with the ELCA and with one of our predecessor bodies, the LCA, for the past 36 years; 30 of which have been as an ordained pastor. Considering, too, from whence I have come: **ONLY GOD!** So, yes:

**“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High!”**

As an Assistant to our Bishop, William J. Gohl Jr., my primary areas of responsibilities, are: The Central Cluster (Baltimore City and Baltimore Northeast Conferences) and as Coordinator of the African Descent Strategy for our synod; also, I serve as developer of Peoples’ Community Lutheran Church (the first African immigrant congregation of the synod). My plate is full, and without the Lord, the collegial and supportive relationship I share with the bishop and the entire staff, I am not overwhelmed by my work load, rather excited by what the future holds for our synod. Brief synopsis of responsible areas:

### **Assistant to the Bishop**

My role is to work with congregations experiencing a pastoral vacancy and/or with some internal conflict or concerns about their future viability. A number of our inner-city congregations are facing serious challenges economically and spiritually. Under the guidance of our DEM, the Rev. Dr. Amsalu Geleta, conversations are currently underway with these congregations to explore their future in an environment of dwindling resources. Although there have been successes in filling some pastoral vacancies, as a model for other congregations in the Call process, I want to lift up the Call Committee and Council of Faith Lutheran Church, Cockeysville. It was a genuine pleasure to work with them in their eventual calling of Pastor Micah Krey as their pastor. In trying to fill other vacancies admittedly I am disappointed we have yet to call a pastor for either St. John's, Pimlico, or St. Philip's, Baltimore, although both congregations are considering advancing a primary candidate. I remain proactive in the public arena advocating around social justice issues through CLAIM, our Racial Justice Team, the City Conference, community networks, etc.

### **Coordinator of the African Descent Strategy**

As Coordinator I work through and with a team of representatives from CLAIM, ADLA, RJT, and the City Conference. We, work together to sponsor such activities as the bus tour to witness the historic installation of Bishop Patricia Davenport, we host quarterly Conversations with the Bishop, we continue to highlight the 38 Theses, we supported the efforts of the Association of Liberians Lutherans in the Americas (ALLIA) to build a university in Liberia and the efforts of Project Lite to teach Liberian children to read, etc. In addition to these activities we continue to make ourselves available to meet with congregations to sensitize them on some of the specific indigenous needs and concerns of People of Color. Presently, with a grant of \$4,000 from our synod's Connectedness Team, the Strategy Team along with other partners are planning a major gathering, titled **The Blood that Unites: A Celebration of our Oneness!** (Referencing: The Blood that unites US as people of African descent and the **Blood** of Jesus that unites us ALL) The date is set: **Friday (evening) September 13, 2019 and Saturday, September 14, 2019.** Our time together will end with a multicultural **FEAST!** Mark on your calendar, TODAY! More information is forthcoming!!!

### **Developer of Peoples' Community Lutheran Church** (the first African immigrant congregation of our synod)

In my 35 years as a Lay Associate and pastor for 30 years, including a six-year tenure as churchwide Executive staff, I have never experienced a congregation more challenging AND yet captivating in its growth potential for a bright future. Peoples' is more stable than it has been in several years and with the level of its spiritual and relational



maturation it can grow. It will take however additional resources (when resources are drying up) and creative ministry initiatives. Peoples' building is also an asset. As Peoples' only African American pastor I feel honored to serve them! They have opened their hearts to my rib, Sheron, and I, and they insisted that Sheron be elevated to the position of First Lady and Deaconess. Now I know what it means with the Word declares: **"God doesn't put more on us than we can bear."** I am well!!!!

### **Assistant to the Bishop - Eastern Cluster, The Rev. Bettye Wolinski**

For new Christians in the in the early church, the days of the transition between the old life and the new life in Christ through baptism occurred in a very methodical manner. New Christians spent time fasting and studying the Bible, and would eventually be baptized into new life at the Easter Vigil.

This is how mobility work in our Synod has looked this past year, especially in the Eastern Cluster where we have seen new life develop from old life, new ways from old ways, hope from hopelessness. The focus of my report is to illuminate for our Synod just what "new life looks like" through the process of mobility.

- Deacon Mike Hiner was consecrated on April 7th at St. Paul's in Cordova heralding a new time for ecumenical ministry for young adults in the greater Easton area.
- Grace in Easton, St. Paul, Cordova along with the Presbyterian Church of Easton are investigating ecumenical partnership which began with the shared writing of 40 Days of Prayer Lent 2019 Our Faith Community Praying Together. Beginning in July of 2018 both St. Paul and Grace came under the care of interim pastors for their time of renewal.
- Unity in Wilmington is in their time of renewal with 2 interim full-time pastors, Rev Clarence Pettit and Rev Melissa Lemons for the next year.
- Tree of Life, Odessa DE – interim pastor Rev Greg Johnson, part time has signed on again as of Feb. 2-19 for another year of part time service focusing on development and outreach in the Odessa, Middleton, Townsend areas of Delaware,
- Faith, Salisbury – has extended the interim position though next winter 2019 for 10 hours a week to the Rev Gary Steigler.
- St. Peter Ocean City, MD - Term call for Pastor Frank Harpster, full time established May of 2018, continues with emphasis on revised financial management of the church.
- Living Water, Stevensville, MD – supply Pastor Robert Day is completing almost 3 years of service interim pastor. The church has begun its call process for a full-time pastor. Their mobility process began in earnest in January of 2019.

- Jerusalem in Whiteford, MD – remains under the pastoral care of a supply pastor Rev Hugo Schroeder at their request given their current ability to compensate a called pastor.
- Lord of Life, Edgewood, MD - has completed its service to the community as the church of Christ
- Salem, Jarrettsville, MD – has called a new pastor, the Rev Betty Lou Deuchler, full time as of January 2019. Her installation was celebrated with great joy on March 24th, 2019
- St. John in Linthicum, MD – under the care of Pastor Ed Whetstone, part time as Bridge interim during the call process which began in earnest in January 2019. This call team has diligently worked together through prayer and discernment while completing their call process. An interesting note, they utilized the 40 Days of Prayer Lent 2019 Our Faith Community Praying Together as support in their call process
- St. Martin in Annapolis, MD – interim care by Rev Bill Gilroy during the absence of Rev Dave Oravec who is serving in Africa for one year
- Grace of God, Long Neck, DE – interim care by Pastor Bettie Wolinski, Assistant to the Bishop as part time pastor under term call for 12 months beginning May 6th, 2019 for a 12 month period,
- Hope in New Castle DE – is being served in an interim capacity for 11 months by Pastor Barbara Melosh, Eastern Cluster Dean. Pastor Daniel Swanson has been called to serve St. John in Cumberland, MD as the full time pastor.
- Bethel, North East will be celebrating the retirement of Pastor Mark Crispell in August of 2019. They will begin to discern their next steps in interim care this summer.

Out of 32 churches currently serving our Lord and communities in the Eastern Cluster, 14 are in interim or supply care with most of them moving forward towards the call process. The focus of the Assistant to the Bishop located regionally has been to facilitate the prayerful overseeing, processing and maintenance of the call process of each church in transition, each church entering into a new time in the life of their communities of faith. It has been a true joy and delight to walk along side of the churches in transition during the past year.

Finally, on the southern eastern shore 4 churches have been meeting once a month for one year to assess the means by which community vitality can be enhanced through partnerships. These congregations call themselves “G 4” for “Grouping of Four” and include Faith in Salisbury, St. Peter’s in Ocean City, Community Lutheran and Grace of God in Long Neck, DE.

**Assistant to the Bishop for Communications, Youth + Family Ministry,  
Deacon Julie Stecker**

“Look! I’m doing a new thing; now it sprouts up; don’t you recognize it?” -Isaiah 43:19a

This has been a year of God doing new things through both Communications and Youth + Family Ministry!

Communications

Last year, just after Synod Assembly, we launched an updated website that better reflects our synod’s vision and makes it easier to find the resources that support you in your work. In the past few months, we began working with Tithe.ly to offer an easier way for you to give online, as well as pay for event registrations with a credit card. While it is a great practical improvement to have made, we are also excited about the ways this makes generosity more accessible to everyone in our synod.

We have also just opened our Communications grant application process for congregations and organizations. The Communications Fund is available to congregations in the Delaware-Maryland Synod to assist in the development of informative and accessible ways of sharing the Gospel within a congregation and community. Applicants are invited to submit a request for up to \$1,000, with special consideration given to micro-grants (under \$500). We hope that these grants will help congregations and organizations kickstart exciting ministries and projects that help share the good news of what God is doing in their communities. Applications are due August 1.

There are several other Communications initiatives we are working on that we are excited to share with you at the Assembly!

Youth + Family Ministry

Last summer, more than 500 youth and adults from our synod traveled to Houston to experience the ELCA Youth Gathering. In addition to youth participants and their adult leaders, our synod was one of the highest contributors in terms of volunteers and Gathering staff members. We spent a week learning about how God’s love, grace, hope, and call change everything. We are looking forward to the next Gathering, to be held in Minneapolis in 2021!

Our Lutheran Youth Organization continued to grow this year, with 71 high school students from 26 congregations committed to this leadership development program. In addition to crafting and leading FreeRide, RoadTrip, Transformers, and the High School

Leadership Event, they served as leaders in their own congregations and in our wider synod as members of Synod Council, the Connectedness Team, and Reference & Counsel. The members of the LYO are gifted leaders who are passionate about their faith, the church, and making God known in their communities. They are led by our fearless and exceptional adult mentors: Lauren Caronna (First, Ellicott City), Karl Muhlbach (United Lutheran Seminary), Jim Brasefield (St. Paul, Jefferson), Becky Vickers (Epiphany/Church on the Square, Baltimore), Zach Taylor (St. Paul's, Lutherville), Colleen Carpenter Gonias (Practice Discipleship), Amy Sowers (Zion, Middletown), Pastor Christine Parker (Epiphany, Baltimore), Pastor Jason Chesnut (ANKOSfilms), Tony Magturo (St. Luke, Derwood), Peter Carpenter-Gonias (Practice Discipleship), Pastor Mark Parker (Breath of God, Baltimore), and Pastor Patrick Ballard (Christ, Inner Harbor).

We also hosted our inaugural events for elementary-age students! In partnership with Mar-Lu-Ridge, we offered an Advent Family Event in December and Retreat 345 on the first weekend in May. At the retreat, the first of its kind from Youth + Family Ministry, 11 bright and excited children came to the Ridge Inn for an overnight event that included Bible study, crafts, science, games, and making new friends. We also offered a track for adults who attended, giving space for conversation about shared joys and challenges, as well as ample free time while their children were engaged in activity. I would like to thank the members of the LYO who committed extra time to planning and leading these events this year, especially Ciara Scafide, Matthew Fairchild, Anna Leshner, Alyssa Cobb, Mia Connolly, Marquise Butler, and Kate Kinter. I am also particularly grateful for Pastor Chris Schaefer (Divinity, Towson), who served as the adult mentor for this emerging team, and who has an incredible ability to inspire faith formation in children. We are officially seeking members for the LYO Elementary Team, which will be led by Pastor Chris and our newest mentor, Meghan Wyant (Evangelical, Frederick). If you know a high school student who has gifts for working with children in grades 3-5, please encourage them to apply for the LYO and to select the Elementary Team as their top choice. I can't wait to see how this new ministry among young disciples grows in the coming year!

**Associate for Generosity, Karen Johnson Kretschmann**

"As interrelated communities of faith called to Christ centered living, we celebrate God's grace by abundantly sharing our blessings and gifts locally and globally."

I write to you today in gratitude, hope and anticipation for our future. Over the year, I have witnessed you responding to God's call to be generous and faithful, to share the

word of God and to care for those in need in your congregation, neighborhood, and our greater church.

I want to specifically thank you for your gifts of Mission Support in 2018. Through your generosity we live out the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ in so many ways.

We had another incredible year with our high school youth in the Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO). We mentored almost 70 youth leaders who were seeking to discover their God-given gifts and sharpen their skills for service in our synod, their own congregation, and surrounding community. If you were at our 2018 Assembly, you know they lead Saturday worship gloriously!

Mar-Lu-Ridge continues to serve over 600 youth and leaders through special youth events, summer camp, retreats. We are proud that 2019 is Mar-Lu-Ridge's 60th anniversary providing opportunities for folks to experience God in nature.

Our Bishop and incredible staff continued to partner with our many congregations, some in transition, and others seeking vitality, to discern and call new leadership, to equip and empower our rostered and lay leaders, to create shared ministry models, plus seek out and share best practices in stewardship, leadership, evangelism, mission development, and so much more.

We supported our five thriving Campus Ministry sites across our synod assuring a faith connection for young adults in our church. Through student lead ministry, campus bible studies with meals, service learning and mission trips across the larger church, students at Towson, UMBC, Morgan State, University of Delaware and College Park find an accepting place to grow and experience Christ.

It has been exciting to launch our five more new mission starts, including ethnic specific ministries touching new communities from Asia and Africa plus the work being done in our conferences to bring congregations together in missional conversations to discern partnership ministry.

We sustained strong guidance and exploration throughout our synod around issues of race, hunger, care for creation, incarceration, health, inclusion and community empowerment.

Fifty percent of our mission support allows us to partner with our ELCA ministries including seminaries, global mission, social statement issues, disaster relief, world hunger, new mission starts, congregational vitality, stewardship conference scholarships, essential church policies, ecumenical partnerships, to name a few. Receiving your 2019 Mission Support commitments warms my heart as every commitment makes a difference in planning the work we do together.

Our Synod Generosity Team is such a joy to work with. Over the last year, we have continued to plan and experiment. We see our purpose to advise and assist in building relationships and resources to enrich congregational giving and vitality through

intentional communication, programming, and positive examples. The team is seeking ways to ensure consistency in Synod messaging and communication that cultivates a culture of abundance, generosity and good stewardship within our congregations and members. Our plan has nine ambitious strategic initiatives focused on; 1. Connect with congregations to build connections, provide thanks and improve communication; 2. Gather and share successful stewardship practices from throughout our synod and church; 3. Promote our customized Call to Offering devotion and create others; 4. Create multi-media generosity workshops; 5. Offer an annual gathering for councils, treasurers, and stewardship leaders; 6. Develop a synod Generosity Resource Mentor team; 7. Promote inter-generational avenues for growing generosity; 8. Develop an interactive synod generosity webpage; 9. Accompany, equip and support our congregations in living out generosity in giving, pledging and mission support; 10. Assist Creation Care Team. Please pray for us in this work we have set forth to accomplish with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, let me share a few specifics what I've been doing with my time. Since starting this position, I have had generosity conversations with over 40 congregations including facilitating leadership retreats, attending stewardship team meetings, preaching for services, providing synod greeting at worship, meeting with Pastors and Stewardship Chairs or Council Presidents, facilitating generosity workshops. I continue to monitor mission support and write letters and tell stories to thank and share best practices. This year we were funded through SOLI to partner with LEAD and the Texas Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod to develop a variety of stewardship modules both face-to-face and online to empower First Call Pastors, LEAD congregations and Strategic Stewardship Leaders across our congregations; the online resources will be available by May 2019. Monthly I work closely working with Financial Secretary, Synod Treasurer and staff to monitor giving trends, pledge variance and research alternate giving methods as well as this year was an exciting culmination to our Forward in Faith campaign which kept me busy thanking you all! I am also active on our ELCA Mission Support and Stewardship Table. This year we were able with support from the ELCA to have 8 synod leaders attend two national stewardship conferences. One of the most significant activities this year was to participate in our Synod's Ministry Funding Task Force. This team was dynamo and with our synod council's endorsement, we are excited to move forward with our five recommendations, and the 50+ activities, that will make for success. In closing, for anyone who has met with me about stewardship, you have heard me proclaim the importance of understanding our purpose in God's mission and telling our faith stories. You know how excited I get encouraging folks to create a Narrative Financial Plan. We need to proclaim our stories, talk about how our financial giving is spiritual, and know that when we use our time, talents, and money to serve others, we are disciples of Christ.

If I have not yet met you, please stop by the Generosity Team table so we can meet, connect, share ways God is working through us all. Thank you for offering me this opportunity to partner with you, honoring my talents, challenging me to seek new learning, and walking along with me in this journey with Jesus Christ!

## **Audit**

Gary Kulik, Chair of the Finance Committee

2018 was not a good year for the Synod's finances. A substantial loss in the 4th Quarter for the Synod's investment funds as the stock market dropped coupled with overspending in the annual budget and a shortfall in income led to a significant deficit (annual budget and auditor's report will be attached).

\$150,000 had to be borrowed from the Synod's investment funds to cover shortfalls. This was the first time such a decision was necessary. The Synod is likely to sell one or more closed churches in 2019. The Synod's investment fund will have "first call" on income from such sale, or sales.

The good news. Investment losses were wholly recovered by the middle of February. (a summary of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter returns will be attached when available after 31 March 2019). A repeat of the budgetary problems of 2018 is less likely. The Finance Committee did not have accurate and timely budget information until the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018. The Committee now sees accurate and timely monthly statements that will allow the committee to advise Synod staff to curtail spending if income continues to lag.

The Synod is committed to sustainable budgets. Acting on that obligation, the FY2020 budget, approved by the Synod Council, will be submitted to the Synod Assembly this May. That budget contains a \$100,000 reduction in staff salaries and benefits, as well as other reductions, and a no-growth income line from the Synod's congregations.

Following on the success of the Forward in Faith campaign, the Synod has put in place a fundraising plan that will target individual donors with the intention of receiving multi-year commitments totaling \$150,000 in the first year. A fund-raising professional will be hired no later than 2020 at a budget of \$100,000. A net gain of \$50,000 is thus projected for the 2020 budget. We are guardedly optimistic that this new fundraising will strengthen the Synod and its God-given mission.



**Delaware – Maryland Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc.**

**Report on Examination of Financial Statements – Modified Cash Basis  
For the Fiscal Years Ended January 31, 2019 and 2018**

**KLOSTERMAN & ASSOCIATES**  
**Certified Public Accountants**

To the Synod Council  
Delaware – Maryland Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc.  
Baltimore, Maryland

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Delaware – Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc. (a nonprofit organization), which comprise the statement of assets, liabilities, and net assets – modified cash basis as of January 31, 2019 and 2018, and the related statements of support, revenue, expenses and changes in net asset balances – modified cash basis, statement of functional expenses – modified cash basis, and cash flows – modified cash basis for the fiscal years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

**Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with the modified cash basis of accounting as described in Note 1; this includes determining that the modified cash basis of accounting is an acceptable basis for the preparation of the financial statements in the circumstances. Management is also responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

**Auditor's Responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

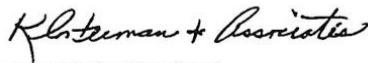
We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

**Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the assets, liabilities and net assets – modified cash basis of the Delaware – Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc. as of January 31, 2019 and 2018, and its statement of support, revenue, expenses and changes in net asset balances – modified cash basis, statement of functional expenses – modified cash basis, and its statement of cash flows – modified cash basis for the fiscal years then ended, in accordance with the modified cash basis of accounting as described in note 1.

**Basis of Accounting**

We draw attention to Note 1 of the financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial statements are prepared on the modified cash basis of accounting, which is a basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.



Severna Park, Maryland  
March 28, 2019

DELAWARE - MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS -  
MODIFIED CASH BASIS  
January 31, 2019 and 2018

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 2)	\$ 113,704	\$ 383,611
Total current assets	<u>113,704</u>	<u>383,611</u>
Long-term investments, at market value		
Schwab Managed Account (Note 10)	2,199,034	2,553,813
Mission Investment Fund	<u>152,096</u>	<u>150,526</u>
Total long-term investments (Note 1)	<u>2,351,130</u>	<u>2,704,339</u>
Property and equipment at cost, less accumulated depreciation (Notes 1 & 3)	<u>56,566</u>	<u>70,253</u>
Other assets		
Other assets	32,347	14,985
Mission Fund Loans	<u>12,508</u>	<u>43,543</u>
Total other assets	<u>44,855</u>	<u>58,528</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 2,566,255</u>	<u>\$ 3,216,731</u>
COMMITMENTS (Note 8)		
<b><u>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</u></b>		
<b><u>NET ASSETS</u></b>		
Unrestricted assets	\$ 2,509,386	\$ 3,142,203
Temporarily restricted assets	<u>56,869</u>	<u>74,528</u>
Total net assets	<u>2,566,255</u>	<u>3,216,731</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 2,566,255</u>	<u>\$ 3,216,731</u>

See accompanying notes.

**DELAWARE - MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
STATEMENT OF SUPPORT, REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND  
CHANGES IN NET ASSET BALANCES - MODIFIED CASH BASIS  
For the Fiscal Years Ended January 31, 2019 and 2018**

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted revenues and gains		
Contributions - proportionate share	\$ 1,841,404	\$ 1,859,871
Contributions - other	6,408	12,911
Contributions - grants & subsidies	4,900	19,500
Contributions - designated giving	42,991	307,679
Contributions - designated funds	199,186	90,329
Special fundraising receipts	191,347	561,202
Event receipts	105,877	103,502
Youth event receipts	147,651	65,964
Investment income	60,121	56,209
Realized gain on investments	20,441	47,623
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	<u>(160,210)</u>	<u>200,456</u>
Total unrestricted revenues and gains	2,460,116	3,325,246
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>1,973</u>	<u>9,450</u>
Total unrestricted revenues, gains/other support	2,462,089	3,334,696
Expenses	<u>(3,094,906)</u>	<u>(3,033,395)</u>
Increase in unrestricted assets	<u>(632,817)</u>	<u>301,301</u>
<b>TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED ASSETS</b>		
Contributions - pass-thru receipts	146,561	187,087
Contributions - restricted use receipts	3,245	9,561
Investment income	(648)	810
Net assets released from restrictions		
Pass through payments	(146,561)	(187,087)
Restrictions satisfied by payments	(18,283)	(11,050)
Released from restriction	<u>(1,973)</u>	<u>(9,450)</u>
Decrease in temporary restricted net assets	<u>(17,659)</u>	<u>(10,129)</u>
Increase (decrease) in total net assets	(650,476)	291,172
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>3,216,731</u>	<u>2,925,559</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 2,566,255</u>	<u>\$ 3,216,731</u>

See accompanying notes.

DELAWARE - MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS - MODIFIED CASH BASIS  
For the Fiscal Years Ended January 31, 2019 and 2018

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATIONS</b>		
Contributions - proportionate share	\$ 1,841,404	\$ 1,859,871
Contributions - other	6,408	12,794
Contributions - grants & subsidies	4,900	19,500
Contributions - designated giving	42,991	307,679
Contributions - designated funds	199,186	90,329
Special fundraising receipts	191,347	561,202
Event receipts	105,877	103,502
Youth Event receipts	147,651	65,964
Restricted use receipts	149,806	196,648
Partnership with ELCA	(920,702)	(929,934)
Discipleship	(283,094)	(62,680)
Connectedness	(176,436)	(146,645)
Communications	(8,849)	(24,932)
Leadership	(105,435)	(89,551)
Youth Events expense	(151,238)	(86,559)
Designated Fund disbursements	(225,834)	(72,420)
Designated Giving disbursements	(42,991)	(320,992)
Fundraising disbursements	(44,743)	(238,849)
Event expenses	(111,041)	(96,051)
Staff expenses	(610,071)	(609,333)
Synod operations	(395,739)	(326,071)
Restricted use payments	(164,844)	(198,137)
Net cash from operations	<u>(551,447)</u>	<u>15,335</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Mission fund loans made	-	(7,000)
Mission fund loans repaid	25,035	53,827
Investment return	106,505	103,585
Investments purchased	-	(326,556)
Investments sold	150,000	301,037
Purchase of fixed assets	-	-
Net cash from investing	<u>281,540</u>	<u>124,893</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash	(269,907)	140,228
Cash balance - beginning of year	<u>383,611</u>	<u>243,383</u>
Cash balance - end of year	<u>\$ 113,704</u>	<u>\$ 383,611</u>

See accompanying notes.



DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES - MODIFIED CASH BASIS  
For the Years Ended January 31, 2019 and 2018

Division	1/31/2019			1/31/2018		
	Program Services	Mgmt & General	Total	Program Services	Mgmt & General	Total
Partnership with ELCA	\$ 920,702	\$ -	\$ 920,702	\$ 929,934	\$ -	\$ 929,934
Discipleship	289,094	-	289,094	62,680	-	62,680
Connectedness	176,436	-	176,436	146,645	-	146,645
Communications	8,849	-	8,849	24,932	-	24,932
Leadership	105,435	-	105,435	89,551	-	89,551
Youth Events Expense	151,238	-	151,238	86,559	-	86,559
Designated Fund Disbursements	225,834	-	225,834	108,820	-	108,820
Designated Giving Disbursements	42,991	-	42,991	320,992	-	320,992
Fundraising Disbursements	44,743	-	44,743	238,849	-	238,849
Event Expenses	111,041	-	111,041	96,051	-	96,051
Staff Expenses	-	610,071	610,071	-	609,333	609,333
Synod Operations	-	394,785	394,785	-	305,362	305,362
Depreciation Expense	-	13,687	13,687	-	13,687	13,687
Total	\$ 2,076,363	\$ 1,018,543	\$ 3,094,906	\$ 2,105,013	\$ 928,382	\$ 3,033,395

Note:  
Certain amounts for 2018 have been changed to conform with 2019 classifications

See accompanying notes.  
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**DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2019 and 2018**

**NOTE 1 - NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**Nature of Activities**

The Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc. ("Synod") is one of 65 Synods within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ("ELCA"). Each Synod serves the ELCA congregations within a specified geographic area assigned by the constitution of the ELCA. The congregations within each Synod are the principal financial supporters of their respective Synods, and through the Synods, to the ELCA organization. The congregations served by the Synod are in the states of Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania.

**Financial Statement Presentation**

The Organization has adopted the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 117, "Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Organizations." Under SFAS No. 117, the Organization is required to report information regarding its financial position and activities according to three classes of net assets: unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets.

**Cash Basis of Accounting**

The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the modified cash basis of accounting, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than generally accepted accounting principles. Under that basis, certain revenues and the related assets are recognized when received rather than when earned and certain expenses are recognized when paid rather than when the obligations are incurred. Consequently, the Synod has not recognized pledges receivable from donors or member churches or accounts payable to vendors, and their related effects on the change in net assets in the accompanying financial statements. The modified cash basis falls under the Special Purpose Framework standards of the Financial Accounting Standards Board.

**Property and Equipment**

It is the Organization's policy to capitalize property and equipment over \$1,000. Lesser amounts are expensed. Purchased property and equipment is capitalized at cost. Vehicles and equipment are being depreciated over estimated useful lives of three to ten years using the straight-line method. Donations of property and equipment are recorded as contributions at their estimated fair value. Such donations are reported as unrestricted contributions unless the donor has restricted the donated asset to a specific purpose.



**DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2019 and 2018**

**NOTE 1 - NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**Cash and Cash Equivalents**

For the purposes of the statements of cash flows, the Organization considers all highly liquid investments available for current use with an initial maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

**Donated Services**

The Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc. is the beneficiary of the services of many volunteers, without which the Synod would not be able to carry on its many functions and services. No amounts have been recognized in the statement of activities because the criteria for recognition under SFAS No. 116, "Accounting for Contributions Received and Contributions Made" have not been satisfied. While no value is specifically assigned to any of these services, the loss of volunteers could have a material negative financial impact on the Synod. All of the officers (except The Bishop), all Synod Council members, and all Division and Commission chairs are volunteers.

**Contributions**

The Organization has adopted SFAS No. 116, "Accounting for Contributions Received and Contributions Made." Contributions received are recorded as unrestricted, temporarily restricted, or permanently restricted support depending on the existence or nature of any donor restrictions.

**Income Taxes**

The Organization is a not-for-profit organization that is exempt from income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**Investments**

The organization has adopted SFAS No. 124, Accounting for Certain Investments Held by Not-for-Profit Organizations. Under SFAS No. 124, investments in marketable securities with readily determinable fair values and all investments in debt securities are reported at their fair values in the statement of financial position. Unrealized gains and losses are included in the change in net assets. Investment income and gains restricted by a donor are reported as increases in unrestricted net assets if the restrictions are met (either by passage of time or by use) in the reporting period in which the income and gains are recognized.

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2019 and 2018

**NOTE 1 - NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**Support and Revenue**

All contributions are considered to be available for unrestricted use unless specifically restricted by the donor. Amounts received that are designated for future periods or restricted by the donor for specific purposes, are reported as temporarily restricted or permanently restricted support that increases those net assets.

Contributions of donated non-cash assets are recorded at their fair values in the period received. Contributions of donated services that create or enhance non-financial assets or that require specialized skills, are provided by individuals possessing those skills, and would typically need to be purchased if not provided by donation, are recorded at their fair values in the period received.

**Use of Estimates**

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

**NOTE 2 – CASH**

The Synod had deposits for the year ended January 31, 2018 at one financial institution that exceeded federally insured limits by approximately \$133,611. The year ended January 31, 2019 was within the insured limits. The Synod has not experienced any losses in such accounts and believes it is not exposed to any significant credit risks on cash.

**NOTE 3 – PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT**

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Vehicles	\$ 24,668	\$ 24,668
Leasehold improvements	74,684	74,684
Furniture & equipment	37,744	37,744
Computer equipment	<u>35,419</u>	<u>35,419</u>
Total	172,515	172,515
Accumulated depreciation	<u>115,949</u>	<u>102,262</u>
	\$ <u>56,566</u>	\$ <u>70,253</u>
Depreciation expense	\$ <u>13,687</u>	\$ <u>13,687</u>

**DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2019 and 2018**

**Note 4 – DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS - CONGREGATIONS**

Under the rules of the denomination, all property is owned by the individual congregations. In the event that a congregation closes the denomination or certain other events were to occur, control of the property and the satisfaction of related debts would become the responsibility of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc. or one of its regional (Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA, Inc) governing bodies.

In May 2017, the Synod received a check from Second English Lutheran Church in the amount of \$650,000 from the distribution of its assets. The funds are considered to be available for unrestricted use and have been recorded in the accompanying financial statements as unrestricted contributions. The contribution will be used by the Synod to fund programs and support its congregations in accordance with its mission.

**NOTE 5 – PENSION PLAN**

Many employees of the Synod are participants in the ELCA Pension Plan, a qualified Defined Contribution Plan under ERISA definitions. For the years ended January 31, 2019 and 2018, the Synod contributed \$62,548 and \$44,645 respectively to the pension plan on behalf of its employees.

**NOTE 6 – SHARING OF SUPPORT**

In accordance with an affiliation agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc. for the fiscal years ended January 31, 2019 and 2018, 50% of total unrestricted support received from the ELCA congregations is shared with National as determined by the Synod Assembly. Such amounts are used as directed by the Church-Wide Assembly for church-wide and international programs of research, education and community services and for supporting, management and general, and stewardship expenses.

**NOTE 7 – EVALUATION OF SUBSEQUENT EVENTS**

The Organization has evaluated subsequent events through March 28, 2019, the date which the financial statements were available to be issued.

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2019 and 2018

**NOTE 8 – COMMITMENTS**

Operating Leases

Office Lease

Effective May 2017, the Synod entered into a five-year lease for office space in Baltimore, MD known as Harbor Court, 575 South Charles Street at a monthly rental of \$5,177 per month. The lease contains renewal options and requires the organization to pay additional expenses over base period amounts. Effective May 2017, the storage space lease was renewed through April 2022 at a rate of \$285 per month. Occupancy expense for the year 2019 and 2018 was \$61,409 and \$68,184 respectively. The following is a schedule by year of future minimum rental payments:

<u>January 31,</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
2019	\$ ---	\$ 69,005
2020	71,075	71,075
2021	73,207	73,207
2022	<u>75,403</u>	<u>75,403</u>
	\$ <u>219,685</u>	\$ <u>288,690</u>

Equipment Leases

The organization leases office equipment under operating leases expiring in various years through 2020. Minimum future rental payments under non-cancelable leases having remaining terms in excess of one year as of January 31, 2019 and 2018 for each of the next five years are as follows:

<u>January 31,</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
2019	\$ ---	\$ 2,659
2020	<u>1,995</u>	<u>1,995</u>
	\$ <u>1,995</u>	\$ <u>4,654</u>

**NOTE 9 – RECLASSIFICATION**

For comparison purposes, the fiscal year 2018 amounts have been reclassified to conform with the fiscal year 2019 financial reporting format.

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2019 and 2018

**NOTE 10 - INVESTMENTS**

Long-term investments are reported at fair value on a recurring basis determined by reference to quoted market prices and other relevant information generated by market transactions. The Synod's investments are managed using a balanced allocation consisting of cash and cash equivalents, fixed income investments, and equities. A portion of the Synod's investments have been invested in the Mission Investment Fund. Fair values and unrealized appreciation (depreciation) at January 31, 2019 and 2018 are summarized as follows:

	January 31, 2019			January 31, 2018		
	Cost	Fair Value	Unrealized Apprec (Deprec)	Cost	Fair Value	Unrealized Apprec (Deprec)
Unrestricted Assets	\$ 1,890,070	\$ 2,326,441	\$ 436,371	\$ 2,081,777	\$ 2,678,870	\$ 597,093
Temp. Restricted Assets	<u>2,647</u>	<u>24,689</u>	<u>22,042</u>	<u>2,647</u>	<u>25,469</u>	<u>22,822</u>
	<u>\$ 1,892,717</u>	<u>\$ 2,351,130</u>	<u>\$ 458,413</u>	<u>\$ 2,084,424</u>	<u>\$ 2,704,339</u>	<u>\$ 619,915</u>



## **Vision Teams**

### **Communications Team**

Leanne Elliott, Team Leader

This past year, our focus has been on determining how we can use the communication tools available to us to tell the story of the great ministry happening here in Delaware-Maryland. Since our blog is now integrated into our website, we are leveraging that tool more frequently, not only sharing posts from Bishop Gohl each week, but also partnering with the Connectedness Team to lift up the ways ministries in our synod are working together, as well as documenting our Building Puentes initiative with the Metro DC and Caribbean Synods. In the coming year, we plan to increase the number of voices and types of stories that are featured on our blog. If you have a story that you think should be shared, we would love to hear about it! You can submit these stories on the Communications page of our website, through the “Stories in DEManD” form near the bottom.

We are excited to invite congregations and ministries to participate in our Communications grant process. Applicants can submit a request for up to \$1,000, but we will be giving special consideration given to grants that request less than \$500 for their project. The goal of these grants is to provide seed money for a congregation or organization to jump-start a project that will help them share about their excellent ministry. The application form can be accessed by visiting the Communications page of our website.

Over the past year, we have been working to clarify the work of the Communications Team, and we have worked hard to assemble a strong group of team members who have a variety of gifts and skills for this ministry. We look forward to launching several new initiatives in the coming year to increase the ways our synod communicates!

### **Connectedness Team**

Linda Chinnia, Team Leader

The Connectedness Team’s plan of action for 2018 was to:

1. Build awareness of what currently existed in terms of connectedness, collaboration and cooperation between congregations, programs and ministries within the Synod.
2. Sharing the existing ministries and programs within the Synod.

The team implemented its plan by:

1. Administering a survey of congregations, ministries and programs to determine current levels of connectedness and the resources needed to become more connected. This survey was done in cooperation with the Leadership, Discipleship and Communication teams.
2. Distributing the list of ministries to programs in various settings.

Team: Sandra Carlson Alexis, Jim Brasefield, Christopher Litton, Cynthia Slater, Claudia Harrington, Nancy Louia, Lorraine Dryden, Laura Heller, Mydea Karpeh, Nancy Gordon, Geneva Wallace, Kate Kinter, Karen Kretschmann, Suzannah Porter

### **Discipleship Team**

Ron Fairchild, Team Leader

For the past year, our Synod's Discipleship Vision Team has been working to empower and support congregations in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our communities. Our major activities and accomplishments since our last Synod Assembly include the following:

- We invested in five new ministry starts - Mountain of God Evangelical International Church, Dreams & Visions, Beloved Community Multicultural Congregation, Mara Evangelical Lutheran Church, and a ministry exploration in Crisfield, MD.
- We launched a new Discipleship Catalyst grants program that provided start-up funding for new initiatives at the following congregations:
  - Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Wilmington (\$2,500)
  - Unity Church, Wilmington (\$2,775)
  - Joy Reigns, Edgewater (\$2,500)
  - St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Wilmington (\$1,700)
  - Grace Lutheran Church, Westminster (\$3,500)
- We helped develop this year's theme for our Synod Assembly, "Holy Wisdom, Holy Word!" and planned various discipleship-related activities during our time together and after this year's event.

We have three primary objectives for 2019:

1. Learning:

- Write at least six short stories documenting lessons learned from catalyst grants, new ministry starts, LEAD, and other efforts to strengthen discipleship by Dec 2019.
- Contribute four quarterly blog posts and create three videos by Dec 2019 to highlight what we are learning for distribution at next year's Synod Assembly and online.
- Document and share examples of cooperative ministry arrangements that are happening across our Synod by Oct 2019.

## 2. Growth

- Inspire participants in Synod Assembly 2019 to read the Bible for the 90 days following our Assembly and to help prepare their congregations to make a year-long commitment to regular Bible study starting on God's Work, Our Hands Sunday.
- Continue to support new discipleship efforts by increasing the number of congregations receiving catalyst grants of up to \$10,000 from 5 to at least 15. Launch two grant cycles in 2019 – one in January and another in July.
- Continue to nurture and support the growth of a total of at least eight new ministry starts in our Synod by Dec 2019.
- Expand the total number of congregations participating in LEAD from 24 to 28 by Dec 2019.

## 3. Sustainability

- Develop strategies for identifying and equipping more LEAD coaches within our Synod. Make key decisions by August 2019 about the strategy for ensuring that LEAD becomes self-sustaining in the future.
- Develop a comprehensive plan for how to sustain key discipleship investments (i.e. new ministry starts, catalyst grants) currently supported by FIF funding by October 2019. Share recommendations with Synod Council in time to help inform the next budget development cycle.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the work of the Discipleship Team this year including the following team members: Colleen Carpenter-Gonia, The Rev. Dr. Amsalu Geleta, The Rev. Dr. Ed Kay, The Rev. Kristi King, and Cindy VanVliet. Please continue to pray for our team as we discern and act on how God is calling us to support discipleship across our Synod.



## **Leadership Team**

The Rev. Michael K. Louia, Team Leader

**Development of Leadership Development Process(es) and Tools:** Using our synod's leadership development framework and adaptive leadership principles that provide tools for addressing adaptive challenges our synod leaders face, our team continued this year listening to needs, addressing concerns, and providing opportunities for congregational leaders to practice adaptive leadership skills when addressing context-specific challenges.

**Financial Support of Seminary Candidates:** Our Delaware-Maryland Synod Scholarship is available through United Lutheran Seminary and has awarded scholarships based on applications received.

**Healthy Leaders:** Deacon Paula Thistle continues to shepherd this initiative for our synod and is in contact with rostered leaders across our synod. Supported by the realignment of duties for conference deans our team envisions this work to transition this year.

**Interim Pastor Network:** Until his relocation outside of our synod, the Rev. George Tuttle provided support and leadership to our Interim Pastor Network. This ministry is in transition this year as we re-assess how best to support interim ministers across our synod.

**Practice Discipleship:** Our Practice Discipleship ministry experienced a ground-swell of activity as it continues its growth across our synod. Four events were planned for the 2018 – 2019 timeframe. We look forward to how God continues to call young adults into ministry and how we collectively respond to God's calling.

**Bishop Leadership Retreat and Follow-up Cohort Groups:** Our Bishop Leadership Retreat in October 2018 focused on adaptive leadership principles and practices. The retreat was facilitated by Louise Johnson, President of Wartburg Seminary and Ernie Hinojosa, Senior Pastor at Rejoice Lutheran Church in Texas. Follow-up cohort groups allowed those interested leaders to learn more about adaptive leadership and practice using newly acquired adaptive skills. Plans for additional cohort learning groups are planned for 2019.

**Coaches:** To support many efforts across our synod, we have begun a new development process for coaches. Once training is completed, these coaches will be available to support various synod-wide ministries.

**Catalyst Grants:** Using funds available through Forward in Faith, catalyst grants will be available to congregations to help financially support congregational leadership development efforts.

**Leadership Development Director Transition:** For several years the Rev. Stuart Luce has been serving as our synod's leadership development director. Pastor Luce completed his ministry in that role in December 2018. We give thanks to God for his many contributions over the years.

Many thanks to those who have participated in the work of our Leadership Team: Deacon Paula Thistle; Robin Schaefer, OSSD; Colleen Carpenter-Gonia; The Rev. Stuart Luce; John Auger; The Rev. Patrick Downs; The Rev. Pat Payne; Cindy VanVliet; Candy Maxwell; and Pam Estes.

## **Conferences**

### **Allegheny and Washington County Conferences**

The Rev. Linda Alessandri, Dean

"I lift my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?  
My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth." (Psalm 121: 1-2)

Greetings from the beautiful mountains, rich farm lands and small towns of the Allegheny and Washington County conferences. Folks who live near the Rockies, like to tell us our mountains are mere hills. Not to us. More importantly, they remind us of our masterful Creator and loving Lord from whom comes our strength and help.

Clergy of the Allegheny and Washington County conferences met twice in the past year, using Hancock as our rendezvous point. At each meeting we enjoyed the presence of Bishop Bill Gohl. The Washington County Rostered Ministers also met the first Thursday of each month, September - May, rotating locations and worship leadership. In their monthly meetings, there has been focus on the local Opioid epidemic and where churches and clergy might be helpful to those battling addiction and their families. Interest has been expressed in sponsoring another Rural Ministry Conference. There is a weekly pericope study for rostered ministers on the other Thursdays of the month (11 am) followed by an opportunity to share lunch and offer mutual support.

The five churches of the Allegheny County continue to do meaningful ministry even amid transitions of pastoral leadership. St. John's (Cumberland) celebrated the installation of Pastor Vicki Hamel as the church continues its many efforts in the battle against hunger. St. Luke's (Cumberland) said farewell to Pastor David Wright and thank Pastor Rick Shives for his on-going help with visitation and scheduling Sunday pulpit supply. Christ Lutheran (LaVale) said good-bye to their much-appreciated, interim Pastor Tormod Svensson as they soon receive Pastor Daniel Swanson as their new pastor. St Paul (Frostburg) and St. Paul (Cumberland) are being served by interim pastors from our Episcopal partnership.

The eighteen congregations of Washington County are actively doing God's work, seven of them in three different Parish or Cooperative configurations. Mt. Zion, Rohrerstown) celebrated its 175th anniversary. In the week of Nov. 4 - 10, congregations joined together to provide the meals and evening staff for the REACH cold weather shelter in Hagerstown. While recovering from arson damage, St. Paul's (Funkstown) did not miss a beat --- all program and worship carried on and restorations will soon be completed.

St. Mark's (Hagerstown) have undertaken major renovations to make their building more accessible and to have a kitchen able to better serve the community

In one year Trinity Lutheran (Hagerstown) has celebrated the ordination of a daughter of the church (Sarah Schoefield Wright), the installation of its interim pastor (Rev. David Eisenhuth) and the setting apart of two deacons (Peggy Harding and Inge Dudda). Pastor Rick Shives was installed at St. Peter's (Clear Spring.) Pastor Hoda Zavandro is serving as interim at St. John's (Hagerstown) and soon-to-be seminary graduate, Kayla Edmonds, is the vicar at the Conococheague Parish (St. Paul and Mt Tabor in Clear Spring). Christ Lutheran was sad to lose their interim, Rev. Kibreab Gudeta, but continues to seek God's path for their mission.

It was with great sadness that we mourned the death of Pastor Chris Ramsey after being struck by a car. Pastor Ramsey had returned to Hagerstown after retirement. He resumed his membership at Trinity Lutheran (Hagerstown) and served in a variety of capacities. He served as interim-pastor at the Beaver Creek-Keedysville Parish. The members of the congregations he served and his colleagues deeply appreciated his wisdom, wit, compassion, tenacity and faithfulness. He is greatly missed and we proclaim "Christ is Risen. Alleluia!"

### **Anne Arundel and Baltimore West Conferences**

The Rev. Kati Kluckman-Ault, Dean

#### **Anne Arundel Conference Report**

The Anne Arundel Conference met regularly with a short hiatus for the summer months. The location of the conference meetings were shared among the congregations who make up the AA Conference. Joint conference meetings with Baltimore West took place December 2018.

A connectivity grant was received and the councils of several congregations of the AA Conference held a joint council retreat on March 30, led by Deacon Louise Williams. This retreat focused on spiritual practice and addressing adaptive challenges in the life of the church.

Rev. Nikki Parrish became Pastor Emeritus at Joy Reigns

Rev. Shawn Brandon was extended a regular call at Gloria Dei!

Rev. Russell Fink died March 2019

Rev. George Tuttle completed his interim work at St. John Linthicum with the Rev. G. Edward Whetstone following.

Rev. Dave Oravec deployed and serving..... Rev. Bill Gilroy is serving as interim at St. Martin's, Annapolis.

#### Baltimore West Conference Report

The Baltimore West Conference met regularly through the past year. The location of the conference meetings were shared among the congregations who make up the BW Conference. A joint conference meetings with Anne Arundel Conference took place in December 2018.

The Rev. Gigi Sjiera-Grant retired from First LC in Ellicott City

The Rev. Chad Kline completed his service at Abiding Savior, Columbia to take a call to Wisconsin

The Rev. Timothy Feaser completed his service at Trinity LC in Reisterstown to take a call to Virginia.

#### **Baltimore City Conference**

The Rev. Christine Parker, Dean

The Baltimore City Conference has continued to transform as we have welcomed and supported two new mission starts. Dreams & Visions, our mission start in the Lauraville-Hamilton neighborhoods led by Pastor Emily Scott, has done extraordinary work in serving the whole community, especially marginalized peoples - "Together, we're creating an imaginative spiritual community of restoration, where we find the courage to be our full selves." Mountain of God, led by Pastor Jean Paul Makano, have called together a diverse community, encouraged by their host congregation Christ Lutheran Church at the Inner Harbor. They have found inspiration in Exodus: God said to Moses, "I Am Who I Am. So say to the Israelites, 'I Am has sent me to you.'" They have a vibrant ministry, and use song and dance to praise God joyfully. These ministries have not only been a blessing to the direct communities they serve, but have given our whole conference a sense of purpose and hope in what God is doing in Baltimore City in the years and decades to come. We have also continued to work in partnership with CLAIM, Coalition of Lutherans Advancing In Mission, to more intentionally share ministry, best practices, and energy.

#### **Baltimore North and East and Harford Conferences**

The Rev. Lisa Arrington, Dean

We meet as a conference the first Thursday of every month at St. John's Lutheran Parkville (usually 10 am). There is a lot of teamwork in planning to engage in the goals of our Synod Vision:

- Connectedness
- Leadership
- Discipleship
- Communication

From September to May we planned for speakers, workshops and engaging topics related to our synod vision:

Connectedness: All Play/ John Auger VP synod council

Leadership: Stuart Luce

Discipleship: Training Lay Preachers & Adult Discipleship - Nancy Kraft

Communications: The latest tools for Communications: Julie Stecker, Asst to Bishop

Discipleship: ELCA recommendations for reaching Young Adults –Laura Sinche

Connectedness: Welcome Caleb Wilde author of Confessions of a Funeral Director. Free & open to all.

Communications: David Hansen live webinar 10:30 am "What to Put on Your Website and Why."

Discipleship: Apprenticeship Model for youth -Jeremy Morelock

Leadership: Tom Corcoran, Associate to the Pastor @ Church of the Nativity and co-author of Rebuilt + updates from Bishop Gohl and VP John Auger.

Updates and communication are shared by various members of our group by Facebook page and email. We relied on free will donations (\$20-40 per roster leader) to cover the cost of 3 professional speakers this year. This also helped events be advertised as free and open to the public (congregations). Two of our conferences were held in the evening to encourage members of our congregation to attend. Author Caleb Wilde drew 40 people. We hope our May grand finale event has even more!

We rejoice to share in the installations of new pastors to our territory over the past year:

Pastor Sarah Wright, St. John's Sweet Air

Pastor Chris Schaefer, Divinity Lutheran Towson

Pastor Betty Lou Deuchler, Salem Lutheran Jarrettsville

We also weep with the closing service held at Lord of Life, Edgewood and the courageous leadership of Vicar John Deason, Rev. Bob Harvey Synodical Administration

We look forward to building the team and being church together with you.

### **Delmarva North and Delmarva South Conferences**

The Rev. Barbara Melosh, Dean

Delmarva North. Our colleague group continues to meet weekly for mutual support, shared ministry, and study of the lectionary texts for the coming Sunday.

Pastors and members participated in leadership training led by Candy Maxwell, who guided a searching and thoughtful day-long workshop on adaptive leadership.

Pr. Scott Maxwell inspired and organized an ecumenical Bible study that gathered many people from across New Castle county. Our colleagues and others supported this effort by teaching the weekly studies at multiple locations.

Pr. Jason Churchill was instrumental in reviving the Christian Council, an ecumenical organization of roster leaders and officers (primarily Lutheran, Methodist, and Episcopalian)

Pr. Linda Gunderson organized a successful grant application for Youth Ministry, awarded \$40,000 for ministries in the congregations of the conference.

On Palm/Passion Sunday several colleagues and members participated in (and helped to organize) a walk for racial justice through downtown Wilmington, jointly planned with Trinity Episcopal.

This conference now comprises nine congregations, with the merging of Spirit of Life and Zion. The new congregation, Unity, is served by Pr. Clarence Pettit and Pr. Melissa Lemons.

Pr. Daniel Swanson at Hope New Castle has received and accepted a new call, so that congregation will be in transition. Pr. Greg Johnson is serving an extended interim ministry at Tree of Life, Odessa.

Pr. John Nelson (St. Philip) is serving as our conference secretary, following Pr. Scott Maxwell (St. Mark)

Delmarva South. We are currently meeting every other month, to accommodate our more dispersed locations and the transitions in the conference. Five of our eight congregations are in transition. We have been happy to welcome colleagues who are serving as part-time interims and grateful that they have been active participants in our gatherings. In our meetings we share devotions, prayer, updates on our ministries and news from our synod—and lunch afterwards with convivial fellowship.

Pr. Mark Molter (Community) is serving as our conference secretary, following Pr. Karen Larson (called to another synod).

### **Frederick Conference**

The Rev. Kathy Vitalis Hoffman, Dean

The Frederick Conference Rostered Ministers met monthly on the second Tuesday of the month at 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. On behalf of the conference I thank the staff and congregational leaders of Good Shepherd who provided a central location for our regular meetings. Members of the conference took turns leading worship each month. The Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Robin Simpson Litton often attended to give updates on new partnerships developing for shared ministry. Pastor Naomi Hartman serves as our secretary.

Here is a brief summary of our meetings:

August: In August we discussed priorities for the coming program year.

September: Conference members presented specific program ideas for the year.

October: We did not meet as a conference due to the Bishop's Leadership Conference.

November: Bishop Bill Gohl and Vice-President John Auger presented led discussion regarding our synod.

December: Rev. Dr. Mark Oldenburg, Professor and Dean of the Chapel Emeritus of United Lutheran Seminary taught about the discipline of Lectio Divina and also led in reflection on an Advent Text.

January: Favorite books and resources were shared.

February: Cancelled due to weather.

March: Shannon Aleshire, Executive Director of the Frederick County Mental Health Association presented information and provided resources.

April: Tessie Pfeifer, Coordinator of the Across Ages program and Elizabeth Chung, Executive Director of the Asian American Center of Frederick met with our conference.

May: Kathy Schey, Director of the Frederick County Division of Senior Services will meet with the conference.

### **Westminster Conference**

The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Dubsky, Dean

Greetings from your brothers and sisters in Christ in the Westminster Conference,



Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer

The Westminster Conference rostered leaders meet monthly on the second Thursday for worship, fellowship and conversation about issues facing our congregations. We alternate between meeting at the Bell Cedars Retreat Center at Carroll Lutheran Village and various host congregations. In May, there is a pre-assembly meeting for clergy and lay synod assembly voting members.

Our congregations have a number of varied and exciting ministries which seek to share the Gospel in Word and Deed. We continue our support of the shared ministries of Carroll Lutheran Village and Carroll Lutheran School. A highlight of each year are the Spring and Fall Westminster Conference Men's Dinner where 125+ men gather to sing hymns, prayer, hear from a speaker and share a fellowship meal.

Pastor Peter Naschke has been called to the Mt Joy-St. Paul Parish.

Three significant events related to Carroll Lutheran Village have impacted the Westminster Conference: 1. Pastor Stacy Brady has blessed in her work as director of Church Relations, 2. Chaplain Jimmie Schwartz was in a car accident in January and has been dealing with severe injuries...the Conference holds him in prayer, 3. After two decades of service, CLV CEO Geary Milliken is retiring this summer.

This summer, the Westminster Conference will hold a joint deployed Mobile-Mar-Lu-Ridge week of VBS/Camp at Carroll Lutheran School.

This June, Pastor Michael Adams will celebrate 50 years of ordained ministry.

A word of gratitude for the faithfulness of our Current Secretary Pastor Charlie Marshall.

In the midst of the joys and struggles of life in Carroll County, the Conference congregations strive to provide a faithful witness, Making Christ Known.

Peace of the Lord be with you!



## **Agencies, Institutions, Organizations and Synod Ministries**

### **Baltimore Lutheran Campus Ministry (BLCM)**

The Rev. Laura Sinche

At Towson University (The Table: a Lutheran Episcopal ministry):

- Students from our ministry filled the pew reserved for family as Pastor Laura baptized one of our students and she became our sister in Christ.
- Tuesday dinners welcomed about 15 students a week where we've focused on topics such as the commands of Jesus, the book of Ephesians, and a Lenten study on peace.
- We experimented with being the Church at worship through "Breakfast on the Beach"- an informal worship remembering the story of Jesus feeding his disciples after the resurrection and through Hiking Church- an opportunity to bring the prayers, the meal and the Word along with us as we connect to God in the beauty of nature.
- We continue 2 weekly Bible studies- one for "beginners" in the faith and one for students wanting a deeper study.
- Get to know our campus community weekly through #QuestionThursday
- FoodShare, the food pantry for staff and students that our ministry helps lead, had more than 300 visits in 2018 and moved onto campus in the Health and Counseling Center, allowing us to better serve our guests.

At Morgan State we:

- We continued what we do best- serving weekly at Helping Up Mission and Baltimore Station, a recovery community, Baltimore Outreach Services (a shelter housed at Christ Lutheran, Inner Harbor), Esther's Place senior living community, and Tench-Tilghman Elementary School.
- Gathered at All Saints for our weekly Thursday Bible studies and weekly Wednesday gatherings to talk about faith and mental illness.
- Welcomed strong women of faith from local congregations to testify to God's movement in their lives at our monthly dinners.
- Welcomed representatives from Young Adults in Global Mission and Lutheran camps to give students an opportunity to be involved in the life of the wider church after graduation.

At University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), a Lutheran-Episcopal Campus Ministry, we:

- Gathered for weekly dinner and discussion around topics like: non-violent communication, women and the resurrection and the book of Revelation
- Prayed Evening Prayer on Tuesday nights, welcoming 3-6 students weekly
- Continue to be key partners in Retriever Essentials, a program to support food insecure students.

Together we:

- Took a Spring Break trip to Detroit, MI in 2018 to learn about the challenges and joys of that city and to serve among our brothers and sisters
- Took a winter break trip to Philadelphia to gather with and learn from those experiencing homelessness
- Gathered with other Synod campus ministries for a fall retreat in Ocean City
- Will welcome a seminary intern to join us for the year, starting in Aug. 2019

### **Lutheran Social Services of Maryland/Carroll Lutheran Village/The Lutheran Village at MILLER'S GRANT**

Lisa Albin, Director of Church and Public Relations

Transformation – the underlying theme in 2018 for Carroll Lutheran Village and The Lutheran Village at Miller's Grant. A corporate restructuring process that began in 2016 culminated with the Carroll Lutheran Village Corporation voting unanimously in June to form Lutheran Social Ministries of Maryland (LSMMD). The new corporation serves as parent to Carroll Lutheran Village and Miller's Grant. This pivotal development strengthens both senior living communities and sets the stage for future growth.

As part of the due diligence in working through the restructuring process, it was clear that a stronger relationship between the Villages and the church was desired. With a grant from Lutheran Home and Hospital Foundation, Pastor Stacey Brady, Chaplain at Miller's Grant, also assumed the newly created position of Director of Church Relations for LSMMD. Her role is to strengthen existing relationships and establish new ones with congregations within Carroll and Howard Counties and beyond to help the social ministry organization enhance its impact in the greater church community.

Spirituality is an important part of life at both senior living communities. Both were approved in 2018 as Stephen Ministry organizations. The first classes of Stephen Ministers were recruited and began the 50-hours of rigorous training. Carroll Lutheran Village commissioned five Stephen Ministers in February 2019 and Miller's Grant commissioned eleven Stephen Ministers in April of 2019.

Significant leadership changes occurred at the community level, and a change at the corporate level is pending. Michelle Rosenheim was chosen as the new Executive Director of The Lutheran Village at Miller's Grant, bringing with her two decades of senior living management experience. John B. Henry was promoted to Executive Director of Carroll Lutheran Village from his successful role as Administrator of the Health Care Center and Diven House. John has nearly 30-years of senior living management experience. Both are licensed Nursing Home Administrators. In late

2018, President/CEO Geary Milliken announced his retirement in June of 2019 after 25 years of leadership that began with Carroll Lutheran Village and grew with the development of Miller's Grant and LSMMD. The Board of Trustees for LSMMD has launched a national search to recruit a new President/CEO to move the entire organization into the future.

Leadership at both communities recognizes the desire by many to remain at home vs. transitioning to higher levels of care. To support this aspiration, both Carroll Lutheran Village and Miller's Grant entered into a preferred provider agreement with Right at Home to provide in-home care and assistance to residents. The arrangement provides a convenient interface for scheduling and billing and provides oversight measures to monitor quality of care.

For more information on Carroll Lutheran Village visit [www.clvillage.org](http://www.clvillage.org). For more information on The Lutheran Village at MILLER'S GRANT visit [www.millersgrant.org](http://www.millersgrant.org).

### **CLAIM (Coalition of Lutherans Advancing in Mission)**

Elaine Wagenfuehr, CLAIM Coordinator

In 2018, CLAIM welcomed two new covenanted congregations, Zion Church of Baltimore City and St. John's Evangelical in Parkville. Current congregations include: All Saints, Amazing Grace, Augsburg, Breath of God, Christ-Inner Harbor, Church of the Nativity and Holy Comforter, Epiphany, Faith, First English, Peoples' Community, Prince of Peace, St. Andrew, St. John-Parkville, St. John-Pimlico, St. Luke's Church on the Avenue, St. Luke's-Parkville, St. Mark's, St. Peter-Fullerton, St. Philip, St. Stephen-Arbutus and Zion.

We have watched as participation at events in each other's congregations has increased. What a joy to attend functions and find people fellowshiping together and supporting each other in our fundraising efforts.

Attendance at CLAIM Fundraising programs continues to rise as well as donations. While it is rewarding to see the reception of these events, we still need to work harder and explore new ideas to raise the amount of funds raised annually.

One of our most successful programs, Church Leaders Forum, brings together lay leaders from many congregations. During this time, clergy and leaders from various fields lead participants in learning ways to improve our committees, share common strengths and weaknesses, and explore new opportunities together. Through

evaluations, people who attended these forums have asked for this opportunity to gather together at least annually.

Partnerships with other organizations provide new opportunities for all of us to grow together. These relationships helped many of our churches “grow” in our Care for Creation with grants to plant trees, and gardens. We are also able to link our churches and organizations with various grant opportunities to support their growth and program development.

Our partnerships with ADLA, the Creation Care Team, Interfaith Power and Light, Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake, and Lutheran Campus Ministries provide us with opportunities to learn, participate in important initiatives and avail ourselves of energy-saving programs. Lay Leaders continue to represent CLAIM at the table for many of these initiatives.

Working with other organizations provides us the ability to purchase at lower rates or with specialized assistance. Office Depot continues to provide a 15% discount on purchases by CLAIM congregations. We continue to find ways to work with other programs providing assistance to those in need and will keep you updated through our News & Events publications. CLAIM is working to form a Grant Committee to provide our congregations information on available grants and assist in developing applications.

CLAIM strives to support social ministry programs throughout Baltimore. In 2019, we are asking EVERY church in the Baltimore area to join in an outreach program to support the World Hunger Task Force. Our goal is to raise \$6,250 to package 25,000 meals to distribute in food pantries throughout the region. We have received a matching grant for \$3,125 leaving us \$3,125 to raise for this project by mid-August 2019.

On God’s Work, Our Hands Sunday (September 8, 2019) we are looking for 100 people to join us at St. John’s-Parkville to package the meal packets and take them back to their churches for distribution to food pantries and soup kitchens in the Baltimore area.

This past year, there were more opportunities for us to worship together (usually for special holidays) within our own ELCA community and with other denominations. Our hope in 2019 is to bring more congregations together in worship, fellowship and prayer.

## **Creation Care Ministry**

Deacon Laura Heller

In response to increasing environmental concerns, the Creation Care Ministry is working diligently to bring awareness to faith communities within our Synod regarding how we can be better stewards of God's glorious creation. Our ministry started 2019 by having a planning retreat at Mar-Lu-Ridge. Our focus this year will be implementing a "New Hope for Creation" program to educate congregations on how to be more ecologically responsible in the areas of renewable energy and energy conservation, water stewardship, waste reduction and recycling, reforestation, and advocacy for just public policy. We will partner with interested congregations to "greenstorm" about initiatives they are interested in. Members of the congregation and other faith communities will identify ecologically friendly practices they currently follow and then identify and prioritize new practices they are interested in adopting. The congregation will then develop and sign a covenant to commit to fulfill their goals. Congregations will also identify green leaders who will shepherd the creation care efforts.

Peoples' Community Lutheran Church was selected for the 2019 Gretchen Greensheep award for their work to redesign their parking lot to remediate the runoff from storm water. They were awarded an Outreach and Restoration Grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust for this work. The Gretchen Greensheep award is given to recognize congregations and other faith communities for projects that are focused on the care of creation.

We continued to advocate for legislation in the 2019 Maryland Legislative Session this spring including Clean Energy Jobs and a Styrofoam Ban. The Creation Care Ministry supported these bills by attending rallies and meeting with legislators in Annapolis. We also met with faith leaders within the Synod to encourage support from congregations.

With our initial grant of \$16,520 from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT), the Creation Care Ministry planted 336 trees in 26 different congregations and faith communities in 2017 for the Reformation 500 Tree project. Our application to continue this work was approved by CBT and we were awarded \$18,900 in January 2018 to be used through July 2019. To date we have planted more than 600 trees and also held outreach workshops to provide education on the importance of caring for creation and specifics regarding the role trees play in combating climate change and providing habitats needed for wildlife.

We thank Bishop Gohl and the Synod Council for their continuing support of our ministry.

## **Delaware Lutheran Office for Public Policy**

The Rev. Gordon Simmons, Officer

The DE Lutheran Office for Public Policy began in 1986 and was served by four officers until 2012 when it was discontinued for lack of funds. The Office is open again! The work began in January, 2019, and in these first months I have tried to lay a foundation for new ventures in Public Policy in Delaware. There have been two major thrusts: 1) One-on-ones with Delaware's State Senators and Representatives. There are a total of 62 Legislators; as of this writing I have completed 42 of these meetings and fully expect to be able to complete the task by the end of the session in June. 2) Visiting with the congregations in the state, usually preaching and leading a forum on legislative issues on a Sunday morning. As of this writing, I have completed 9 of these visits plus the Campus Ministry at the University of Delaware, and I have scheduled three other visits so I should be able to complete presentations to 12 of the 13 congregations.

I am writing monthly articles which are appearing in most of our congregation's newsletters.

I have been aided by a Policy Council composed of the Bishop, myself, and 6 laypersons from our congregations. Before the end of this legislative session, we expect to zero in on some issues which we will focus on for Advocacy in 2020. Most of all, we want our congregations to look upon Advocacy in the State as an important part of their ministry, and we want to provide research and resources to enable such participation.

Our first "Lutheran Day at the Capitol" will be held on Saturday, June 8, at St. Andrew's in Dover. Amy Reumann, Director of Advocacy for the ELCA, will speak, as well as two of our Legislators.

Since I am serving as a volunteer, the expenses to the Synod have been minimal, mostly to reimburse me for my travel expenses. The support of the ELCA Advocacy Office and the network of at least sixteen other state officers has also been a great asset in renewing this work.

## **Definitely Abled Advocacy and Resource Team**

The Rev. Sandra Carlson Alexis, chair

The Definitely Abled Advocacy and Resource Team (DAART) is a ministry of the DE-MD Synod that encourages congregations to be aware of those with mental, physical, and cognitive challenges in their worship community. Our goal is to share resources and raise awareness through the DE-MD Synod web-page (<http://www.demdsynod.org/definitely-abled-advocacy-and-resource-team.html>) and by encouraging congregations to have a PossABILITY Sunday at their church.



This past year we have worked more with the ELCA Disability Ministry team and are hoping to share our worship resources with the national church. If you would like to share a litany, prayer, sermon, exegesis, or reflection you have written that addresses the differently abled, please email it to Pastor Sandy Carlson Alexis. Look for us in the display table area at synod assembly as well. In addition we also invite you to join our Facebook Page, “DAART Disabilities Forum of the DE-MD Synod” Please contact Pastor Sandy at PastorSandyCAlexis@gmail.com for more information.

### **Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries & Diakon Child, Family & Community Ministries**

Mark T. Pile, MSHA, MSW, President/CEO

2018 was a special year for the Diakon family of organizations—it was our 150th anniversary! And we spent much of the year rededicating Diakon for another century-and-a-half of caring for our neighbors in need.

To celebrate this milestone of uninterrupted service, we created various materials including a history booklet and video and held numerous activities and programs including several within the synod:

- Staff-appreciation events at all locations in February.
- Rededication and celebratory events at all senior living communities, as well as key community-based program sites; these included Diakon Senior Living – Hagerstown and Frostburg Heights in Allegany County.
- Recognition activities and items for residents, clients and supporters.
- A public event in October featuring nationally recognized humorist Jeanne Robertson; held at a theater in York, the event sold out.

We express deep appreciation for and celebrate our partnership with the Delaware-Maryland Synod and its congregations for their role in helping to make possible our 150-year-old mission. Through Many Hands, guided by One Heart, Diakon serves people in need of all ages, especially those with limited financial resources. In 2018, Diakon provided \$19.43 million in benevolent care, including more than \$2.2 million within the synod.

Diakon Senior Living – Hagerstown/The Ravenwood & Robinwood Campuses served more than 1,000 residents and family members last year and countless others through a range of community-benefit programming. Licensed as a single Continuing Care Retirement Community, Diakon Senior Living – Hagerstown offers senior living

accommodations and assisted living on both campuses (the Robinwood location also provides specialized assisted living for those with Alzheimer's disease or similar memory-related illnesses), and nursing and rehabilitative care on the Ravenwood campus. That campus also houses Diakon Adult Day Services at Ravenwood, which served 79 clients last year.

Frostburg Heights, a rental-assistance senior housing community in Allegany County, served some 132 people last year. The senior housing complex also continued its beneficial relationship with Diakon Youth Services' Flight Program, which serves at-risk youths who have "aged out" of traditional county-based services.

We thank God for the gifts of staff, volunteers, congregations, donors, and board members who, together, enabled us to directly serve thousands of people last year, including nearly 1,300 in the Delaware-Maryland Synod.

### **Hunger Task Force**

The Rev. Fred Melton, Chair

The ELCA World Hunger proclaims a mission and theme of being a Church – that is "courageously working toward a just world, where all are fed." Our task force embraces this theme as we all work together.

Over the years, the Task Force has lifted up the global work of the ELCA World Hunger Program, which supports global and domestic ministries, with relief and development projects for and with the poor and hungry. A mainstay of our partnership with the ELCA has been to encourage financial contributions to the ELCA World Hunger Program. In 2018 the ELCA raised more than \$ 23 million to support 636 projects in 56 countries and in 43 US states.

In 2018, our synod provided \$300,276.00 as partners with the ELCA. Praise God and THANK YOU to the many churches that supported this ministry. More than 50% of our synod churches were involved with this ELCA global justice work.

As mentioned, The ELCA World Hunger Program serves God's people globally and locally. In 2018 three synod ministries received funding for local projects, including The Emanuel Dining Room (Wilmington, De), Manna House (Baltimore) and the Interfaith Food Pantry (Cumberland, Md). In 2019, Amazing Grace Lutheran Church in Baltimore was an ELCA recipient for its food ministries in its neighborhood.

The Task Force also encourages and supports congregations that are participating in local food ministries, pantries, local gardens and soup kitchens. 96% of all of our ELCA churches participate in some hunger ministry. This IS the ministry of Jesus Christ, as we see him in the lives of those who are hungry, poor, and hurting.

In 2017, when 2nd English Lutheran Church closed, it provided a legacy gift of \$100,000 for food ministries. Our Bishop directed \$50,000 to the ELCA World Hunger Program and \$50,000 for synodical ministries, coordinated by the HTF. These funds, plus \$2,500 from our synod's Forward in Faith program, enabled us to partner with churches in two manners: (1) Mass Meal Assemblies, providing food for local pantries. One project at Camp Mar-Lu-Ridge "made disciples" of youth," as they assembled 10,000 meals. In the last two years, 11 churches have partnered with the HTF to assemble 188,000 meals. (2) Mini-Grants. Nine churches and Lutheran Community Services in DE. received a total of \$ 22,800.00 for food ministries in their own communities, implementing projects that ranged from backpack ministries, church garden expansions, a kitchen upgrade, food pantry support, a senior's food program, etc.

Each year at our Synod Assembly the Task Force gives away two awards: First - Tim, The Terrorizing Hunger Terrapin –to the church that raises the most funds in the prior year in support of the ELCA World Hunger Program. In 2018 – that award was given to Christ LC in Baltimore, which raised \$ 18,202. Second, the HTF gives the Holly award, The Hunger Fighting Blue Hen, to a church or ministry that does a creative, new or dynamic ministry. In 2018 – this was given to Camp Mar-Lu-Ridge, for their work with youth during its summer confirmation camp.

Finally, The Task Force joyfully invites churches to participate in our annual "Noisy Change Offerings," that have supported both the ELCA and local food programs.

THANK YOU to many who serve on this Task Force, the MANY churches that work to reduce hunger, and to Almighty God who gives us this ministry. Let us work together for a world . . . where "All are fed". Amen.

## **Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Delaware**

Mindy Holland, Chaplain

It is a gift and privilege to serve as the chaplain for Lutheran Campus Ministry at UD! Our students and alumni regularly inspire me with their wonderful questions and curiosity, their desire to grow in faith and knowledge of God, their engagement in service and study, and their deep care for one another, for UD, and for the world. Last spring, we said farewell and Godspeed to four outstanding seniors—Jared, Jeremy, John, and Sarah—who had shared beautiful gifts of leadership, wisdom, photography, spiritual depth, and genuine care with our wider group. Their exit interviews offered timely and rich ideas and insights into ways in which to strengthen and to deepen our ministry going forward.

Some highlights of 2018 included a student retreat at Hack's Point, Maryland; our Spring Celebration at the chapel; and our festive, ecumenical Advent Party. Students

gather weekly for dinners, worship, thoughtful discussions, and Bible study; during spring term 2018, we finished our journey through the Gospel of John, and this year we are studying Luke's Gospel. LCM members are active in service, volunteering with FISH (our monthly food program, in cooperation with Lutheran Community Services and St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Newark); helping with the Empty Bowl dinner at St. Stephen's Lutheran, Wilmington, in the fall; and caroling at a local retirement home at Christmastime. The six student Executive Board members and two Peer Ministers are an excellent team of leaders who cooperate together to plan events, to manage the group's finances, to care for and to encourage one another, and to make a difference through their service and leadership on campus and in the wider world. It is an honor to work with them.

Our LCM fall fundraiser for FISH was hosted this past November by St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Newark. We had great attendance at the event, even needing to add an extra table! Our speakers offered moving testimonials, and a joyous time was shared by all. Together we raised over \$11,000 in support of this ministry that benefits Newark area families facing food insecurity.

I am deeply thankful for the non-student team members who contribute so generously for the sake of LCM at UD, especially our tremendous Ministry Coordinator, JoAnne Gross, who manages publicity, finances, property concerns and tenants, and an abundance of event details, among other tasks. She is a full partner and true blessing to this ministry! Our Directing Committee (governing board) and FISH Committee members provide much-needed leadership, time, insight, and direction; without such willing volunteers, LCM and FISH could not thrive. Members of local congregations provide delicious home-cooked meals for Tuesday suppers, participate in Saturday property work days, offer wonderful financial support, and keep our students in their prayers. We are daily grateful to the many generous donors who believe in this ministry and who show their support financially. Sincere and true thanks to all who contribute to LCM and to FISH, whether through service, prayer, time, or financial gifts! We make a great team.

Finally, we are indebted to Bishop Bill Gohl and to the Delaware-Maryland Synod for continued advocacy, support, and generous grants. Thank you for your commitment to keeping campus ministry visible as a key partner in raising up capable and dedicated church leaders and lay people with deep hearts for Christ, for outreach, and for service to the wider world.

We invite your continued support and prayers for this ministry and for daily blessing upon our students, staff, and volunteers. May Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Delaware and its participants daily reflect the love and grace of Christ and give glory to God!

## **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service**

The Rev. Sharon Baglyos

For almost 80 years, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has been a champion for migrants and refugees from around the world. As we look at our immigrant roots, we are reminded daily to renew our passionate commitment to welcoming newcomers, especially those who are most in need. Through partnership with community based legal and social services, LIRS has supported over 500,000 migrants and refugees as they rebuild their lives in America.

2018 brought its own challenges as migrant and refugee admission numbers were decreased, and the administration introduced the “zero-tolerance” policy at the Southwest border that resulted in the family separation crisis. LIRS responded to the family separation crisis by designing and implementing a new service model in Phoenix and Las Cruces that assisted the US government with family reunification. The model included:

- a safe place to sleep for the night,
- food (a hot meal),
- clothing and other immediate needs (first aid, etc.),
- basic case management and needs assessment, and
- coordination of travel to a final destination.

LIRS provides opportunities for individuals, groups, and congregations to engage with refugees and migrants through several initiatives and programs:

- Circle of Welcome: Support newcomers with the integration process once they are resettled in the United States and stand with newcomers as advocates, friends and community members.
- Refugee Sunday: Every congregation in the ELCA is invited to lift up the gifts that migrants and refugees bring to our communities. A variety of resources for preaching, Bible study, prayers, devotions, advocacy and community gatherings is available at <https://www.lirs.org/refugee-sunday/>
- Hope for the Holidays: Congregations, groups, and individuals are encouraged to write/make cards to those held in detention centers during the holiday season.

- Detention Visitation: Join a visitation ministry through LIRS or our partners on the ground around the country.

#### Congregational Engagement & Outreach:

In 2018, the Outreach Unit at LIRS engaged with eighteen ELCA Synod Assemblies, eleven LC-MS District Conventions, one LWML District Convention, and the tri-annual LCMS National Hispanic Convention. Through these engagements, the LIRS Outreach unit strengthened our relationship with Lutheran allies while developing new relationships with partners, advocates, and volunteers. The LIRS Outreach Team offered an interactive learning station on the experience of Rohingya refugees being resettled in the U.S. in collaboration with AMMPARO and Lutheran Disaster Relief at the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas.

#### Migrant and Refugee Leadership Academy

LIRS has been intentional in supporting migrant and refugee leaders through the Migrant and Refugee Leadership Academy (MRLA). In 2018, LIRS focused on 5 key states for 2018 MRLA instead of a nationwide MRLA. The state level academies collectively trained 123 new migrant and refugee leaders with active participation from 30 Academy alumni leaders. The academies focused on enhancing migrant and refugee leadership skills, know your rights workshops, civic engagement strategies, and storytelling. MRLA participants advocated for increased refugee resettlement and an end to family separation by several in-district congressional visits. The current Migrant and Refugee Leadership Academy is comprised of 305 migrant and refugee leaders in 39 states across the US, representing 46 countries of origin.

To learn more about LIRS and how to get involved, visit: <https://www.lirs.org/>.

#### **Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp and Retreat Center**

Sarah Lefler, Executive Director

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” Eph. 2:8

Mar-Lu-Ridge experienced grace and community in many ways during 2018, and as we begin 2019 and the celebration of our 60th Anniversary, I wanted to thank you, our synods and our community, for your continued prayers and support. We served 4,500 retreat guests and 600 on-site and off-site campers this year. So many people heard the Good News of God’s unconditional love!

One exciting addition to our summer programming was our Mountain Outreach day visit program. We welcomed 3 day camps from synod congregations for a day of lessons, hiking, swimming and joyful fun on the Ridge. Time spent in God's creation is important for our young people, and we are committed to growing this program.

We also began our "Back to our Roots" campaign to reconnect and strengthen ties to our synod congregations. There are many ways we can support you through programming at your home congregation, space for discernment and study, and relationship building that benefits all ministry. Our Sabbath Day for pastors, vicars, youth leaders, and church workers was a wonderful day and we look forward to more events such as this.

Our camp parents had very positive feedback for us once again. We consider it a privilege to spend time with our campers and to lead activities that encourage personal growth as well as faith formation. One parent wrote, "The staff seems to be so welcoming and focused on making sure campers are having a great time." Another mother added, "My camper had a great time, loved the food, and wants to go back next year...We thank God for you."

The faithful donations of our synods and community members allow us to keep our operating costs low and focus on programming. This year was especially challenging with regard to unforeseen facilities projects.

Our Board of Directors has been hard at work and there is exciting news on the horizon that will create a firm foundation for future generations!

All are welcome as we celebrate 60 years of ministry and faith formation at Mar-Lu-Ridge, June 8-9. Family oriented events, good food, and time to connect and reconnect are just part of a special weekend of community and worship. Lastly, on a personal note, I am forever grateful for the community of faithful people who lifted me up and encouraged me when I was a young camper and staff member. To continue offering that support to present campers and staff is our mission. We thank God for the strong foundation of community here at Mar-Lu-Ridge.

### **Mission Interpretation**

Claudia Harrington, Coordinator

Mission Interpreters, volunteers from congregations in each synod of our ELCA, tell the story of how our offerings and gifts are transformed into effective ministries. They

remind us of how we make a difference in Christ's mission and the work of the church, and they thank people for their faithful giving. By sharing our time, talents, and offerings, you make mission and ministry possible in your congregation, our Delaware-Maryland Synod, and our ELCA.

As a mission interpreter, I have attended several workshops at the Churchwide ELCA headquarters in Chicago, prepared and updated a display board about Mission Interpretation and the connections for ministry and mission, collected stories from many of our Delaware-Maryland Synod partners and congregations, and contributed three stories each month for use in our synod E-letter.

In 2019, the Connectedness Team took over the submission of stories. Now stories will appear under Connectedness as a blog. Our goal is to focus on our Delaware-Maryland Synod ministries and help congregations make better connections with our ministries and each other.

Thank you for making a difference!

### **Mosaic**

Linda Timmons, Mosaic President and CEO

To our friends and partners in the Delaware/Maryland Synod where Mosaic provides services out of Delaware,

2019 was a year of growth and gratitude for Mosaic. In times of dramatic change, we're encouraged

by God's continued grace and remain grateful for your synod's commitment to ministry with and

among people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- We're pleased to partner with dozens of churches to support church hubs, which provide opportunities for people with and without disabilities to spend their days building relationships and community.

These connections are key to

the health and wellness of all people. To learn more about our community hubs, visit [mosaicinfo.org/church-hubs](https://mosaicinfo.org/church-hubs).

- At the end of 2018, we released a report that detailed just how much social connections and other factors influence people's health. It may seem ground-breaking, but we're not surprised. We've known for a long time that God's



people belong in community with each other. To read the full report, visit [mosaicinfo.org/qualityreport](http://mosaicinfo.org/qualityreport).

- Rejoicing Spirits, which helps congregations support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their loved ones in worship, continues to grow and evolve. More than 50 congregations across the nation participate in this transformative ministry. To learn more about this unique ministry, visit [rejoicingspirits.org](http://rejoicingspirits.org).

- Mosaic also announced the acquisition of Soreo in November. Soreo provides in-home supports to Arizonans with intellectual disabilities and older adults who want to remain in their homes. This new ministry is a natural way for us to continue to love and serve our neighbors in need. To learn more, visit [soreo.com/in-home-support](http://soreo.com/in-home-support).

We are continually impressed by the generosity of so many faithful donors and volunteers across the nation who support our mission. It is a deep joy of mine to ask new and long-term donors why they continue to give. More often than not, their answer centers around gratitude for all they have been given by God and a commitment to serve God's people. This gratitude and commitment strengthens and sustains our employees, contractors and the people we support.

## **Opioid and Addiction Team**

The Rev. Sara Yotter

The Synod Opioid and Addiction Team was formed by resolution at the 2018 Synod Assembly. Here are some of the reasons why:

- Every 11 minutes someone in America dies from an opioid overdose.
- Lest we think this is only a problem for young people, one in three Medicare Part D beneficiaries received a prescription opioid in 2016.
- Most of the forecasts produced by STAT predict the annual death toll will increase by at least 35 percent between 2015 and 2027. Under the gravest scenarios, it could triple — to more than 93,000 deaths a year.

The team quickly got to work creating the worship resource requested in the resolution to be used in all synod congregations on Sunday October 14th, 2018 for Opioid Crisis Sunday. You can access that resource at:  
<https://demdsynod.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2018/09/Opioid-and-Addiction-Sunday-Worship-Resource.pdf> .

The team has also been at work to create a series of workshops geographically across the synod for the Summer of 2019 to raise awareness and bring practical tools and resources to congregations across the synod. Stay tuned for more details!

If you would like to learn more, are interested in having a presentation at your congregation, or interested in being a part of the synod team that continues this faithful important work, please contact team members, the Rev. Sara Yotter (Joy Reigns, Edgewater) or the Rev. Melissa Lemons (Unity, Wilmington) or any member of the team.

Thanks to team members:

Joseph Barnes	St. John – Pimlico
Jenny Corkill	Joy Reigns – Edgewater
Kristy Hartigan	Metro DC Synod
Rev. Melissa Lemons	Unity Church - Wilmington
Rev. Jim Muratore	St. Luke's Church on the Ave
David Oslin	Church of the Good Shepherd –Bel Air
Rev. Stan Steele	St. Mark's Hagerstown
Bill Thomas	New Hope – Columbia
Vicky Whetstone	Salem - Catonsville
Rev. Sara Yotter	Joy Reigns - Edgewater

### **Region 8 Archives of the ELCA**

Evan Boyd

The ELCA Region 8 Archives are managed by the A. R. Wentz Branch of the United Lutheran Seminary Library, providing archival services for the eastern portion of Region 8. Sheila Joy, Archivist and Cataloger for ULS and Region 8, continues to manage the day to day operations of the Region 8 Archives. Evan Boyd, Library Director and Archivist of United Lutheran Seminary, supervises her work and sets archives policy.

2018 was a year of processing collections and assisting researchers via telephone, email, and walk-in. Goals for the Region 8 Archives this year included meeting with synod representatives, continuing to research and process materials from synod offices, and creating volunteer opportunities.

The Library hired its first student assistants and offered a paid summer internship.

Students spent most of their time processing collections while our intern, Ms.

Anne-Louise Monn, spent her internship processing six congregations, wrote for the Branches United blog, and reached out to synod offices to update contacts and strengthen communication with the synods.

Ms. Joy's time is still split between three major areas of work: the Region 8 Archives, the Seminary Archives, and cataloging materials for the Wentz Library. Although the workload is heavy, Ms. Joy places processing of Region 8 collections a top priority in the summer. Having a student worker and summer intern helped to complete these projects in an efficient manner. The archives continue to actively seek student workers, interns, and volunteers to assist in its processing work.

Mr. Boyd and Ms. Joy submitted a proposal for the ELCA Regional Archives Grant to digitize and make available online the minutes of the General Synod and the General Council. The grant was approved in February 2019 and the grant period will be March 1, 2019-February 28, 2020. The archives is very excited to receive this grant of \$2,907.60. The library and archives continue to be an evolving organism and space continues to be an area of concern. Mr. Boyd and Ms. Joy have begun implementing a space reorganization to better utilize our building. Currently, around 170 active congregations have material in our archives, but we no longer accept materials for active congregations. We will continue to urge active congregations to manage their own archives, rather than have us care for them.

Major Actions, 2018: Received 67 research inquiries, up from 56 the previous. Hosted 8 in-person research visits. Received materials from Allegheny and Upper Susquehanna Synods. Processed 12 collections from Lower Susquehanna, Delaware-Maryland, Metro DC, and Upper Susquehanna that have long waited to be processed. Successfully submitted an ELCA grant proposal for digitization

Goals for 2019-2020: Meet with Synod representatives. Continue to receive and process materials from synod offices. Host church visits in collaboration with Advancement office. Collaborate with Seminary professors and outside universities

It continues to be a pleasure to serve the needs of Region 8 synods.

If you have questions, concerns, or interested in volunteering with the archives in any way, please contact Evan Boyd via email at [eboyd@uls.edu](mailto:eboyd@uls.edu)

## **Seafarers International House**

The Rev. Bob Schmitt

I would like to thank all the congregations who have participated in support to the mission to seafarers this past year. Our two major projects Christmas Satchels for Seafarers (end of each year) and the Prayer and Cookie project (year-round) have strong support from congregations in the territory of the Delaware Maryland Synod. Visiting nearly 100 ships myself and the joint ministry with our Episcopalians partners at the Baltimore International Seafarers Center visiting over 1000 ships makes Baltimore a favorite port for our international seafarers to visit.

The Highlight of 2018 for me was gathering over 700 Christmas Satchels and boxes from our many congregations. One pickup had my van filled in back, all the seats and even my front passenger seat with over 150 wrapped Christmas boxes (see the various pictures). The Baltimore International Seafarers Center gave out over 1400 Christmas boxes between Thanksgiving and early January. But the generosity has continued into 2019. From late January to Early March congregations, youth groups and women's groups have made a special effort to provide around Valentines Day lovingly home baked Cookies for not only my self but all the chaplains at BISC to distribute (check out the attached pictures) over 400 dozen cookies and prayer cards. A special thanks to Thrivent members who used their action grant money to purchase cookie dough from the warehouse stores to be baked. Cookies and prayer cards are welcome throughout the year but this special effort around Valentines Day is a warm welcome to seafarers after a cold weather travel across the North Atlantic.

Your help with this outreach to the world visiting us puts the church in contact with persons from 6 continents and over 50 countries. Visit our display in the ministry room. Pick up some Prayer and Cookie Boxes or Christmas Satchels to fill, or if knitting is your gift there is yarn and directions to knit caps and scarfs for the sailors who come from 'warmth' to the 'cold weather' of Baltimore. If traveling to New York City consider staying at the New York Hostel and Hotel.

For more information visit the Seafarers International House Website [www.sihnyc.org](http://www.sihnyc.org) or contact me directly at [K.Robert.Schmitt@comcast.net](mailto:K.Robert.Schmitt@comcast.net)