

# SYNOD ASSEMBLY SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

## for the 2019 Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly

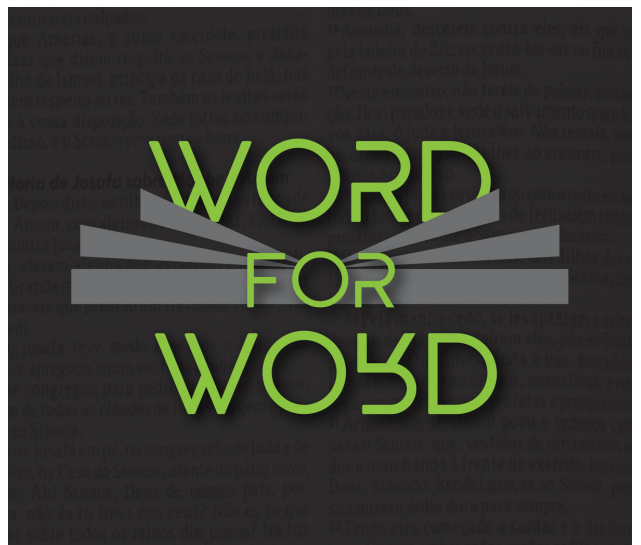
The Delaware-Maryland Synod, ELCA, Synod Assembly met May 30-June 1, 2019 at the Delta Hotel Baltimore Hunt Valley Conference Center under the theme *Holy Wisdom, Holy Word!* The attendance was 456 people (consistent for a “non-bishop’s-election” year), including 156 Rostered Ministers, 237 Lay Voting Members and 63 visitors.

# HOLY WISDOM, HOLY WORD!

Pastor Amsalu Geleta and Colleen Carpenter-Gonia, members of the Discipleship Team, gave an overview of the theme through an introduction of four lenses as ways for reading the Bible: **devotional, historical, literary, and theological**. Table groups were invited to consider and share their earliest memories of the Bible. Members then participated in a Bible Study on John 4:1-30. Pastor Sara Yotter led the Assembly in a presentation of “Spiritual Types,” completing a self-assessment and a four-corners exercise with others of the same Type. Assembly members participated in breakout sessions according to their spiritual type from the survey taken earlier: **Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength**. Pastor Ed Kay invited the Assembly to make a commitment to read the Bible daily. A resource was provided to assembly members, *The Moravian Daily Texts 2019*, to use as a guide. We were encouraged to have a plan, a daily time set aside to read the Bible. Other resources are being developed, providing ways to encourage the practice:

- on the web: [Moravian.org/the-daily-texts](https://moravian.org/the-daily-texts);
- a Facebook group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/demdreads>
- a new podcast, “word for Word,” beginning in June and posting every two weeks.

Congregations are asked to make a committee to daily Bible Reading together on “God’s Work. Our Hands.” Sunday. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Peter Enns, professor, blogger, author, and host of “The Bible for Normal People” podcast.



## ELECTIONS

**John Auger** was reelected to a second term as Vice President of the Synod Council, and **Pastor Kathy Vitalis Hoffman** was reelected to Synod Council representing the Conference of Deans. Newly elected to Synod Council are **Wendy Upchurch**, Allegany & Washington Conference; **Pastor Matthew Beers**, Frederick Conference; **Pastor Kevin Clementson**, Westminster Conference; and **Annika Jensen**, Youth Representative. **Pastor John Nelson** and **Jennifer Smith** were elected to the Consultation Committee; and **Pastor Lura Groen** and **Sallie Gartside, OSSD**, were elected to the Discipline Committee.



## FINANCIAL ACTIONS

### SY2020 Faith Spending Plan

Budgeted Congregation Mission Support matches the SY19 actual giving, ELCA Mission Support is at 47% in FY 2020, staff expenses will be cut by at least \$100K. Added anticipated giving for *Strong Roots for Wide Branches* emphasis, added an Associate for Donor Relations position.

### Forward in Faith Campaign

The four-year campaign with an original goal of \$2.5 million (\$2 million to the ELCA and \$500,000 directly to the synod). Mid-way into the campaign the goal was raised and \$3.6 million was eventually raised. The four Mission Teams have used the funds for many programs which support their mission and ministries.



## REPORT FROM THE ELCA

**Pastor Walter May**, Executive for Synodical Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, brought greetings from Bishop Eaton, sharing her message, "We are Church Together." Pastor May related the many stories of mission and ministry throughout our synod and offered thanks for our partnership with the ELCA. A video from Bishop Eaton was shown, highlighting a variety of ways churches are a vital presence in their communities: the church's mission is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the church is inclusive, diverse, multi-cultural with challenges to find ways to continue to reach out to those unchurched, different, and in need; the church values education with a shared responsibility to teach the faith; The church works to equip and support leaders; The church is globally connected, supporting companion synods throughout the US and the world; The church is a generous, giving church.



## REFERENCE &amp; COUNSEL

The following pieces of legislation, available on our Synod website, demdsynod.org under the "Synod Assembly, Synod Assembly 2019" tabs, were adopted:

**Resolution on Global Church Sunday**

That the Delaware-Maryland Synod ELCA Assembly encourages its congregations to set aside congregational time for a Global Church Sunday to be held in 2020 on the last Sunday of January – January 26, 2020.

**Resolution on World Hunger**

The congregations of the Delaware-Maryland Synod prayerfully recommit themselves to support Christ's ministry of mercy and empowerment through the ELCA World Hunger Program; and that our synod work to increase its congregational support of this ELCA ministry, increasing church participation from 50% to 75% through the Synod Years 2019 and 2020, ending in January, 2021; and that Christ the King Sunday in 2019 and 2020 be designated as our synod's ELCA World Hunger Sundays, and that all churches be encouraged to uplift and support this ministry on those days each year.

**Memorial on Gun Violence**

That our synod advocate with lawmakers on a local and national level to adequately fund gun violence research by the Centers for Disease Control, and to create and pass gun laws that save lives, such as: banning semi-automatic weapons that fire high-velocity rounds, banning accessories that simulate automatic weapons, establishing a database of gun sales and universal background checks, closing gun show and secondhand sales loopholes, raising the firearm purchase age to 21, dedicating more funds to mental health research and professionals, increasing funding for school security, encouraging responsible gun ownership, and holding gun owners responsible when their weapons are used illegally due to their negligence; and that we request our bishop to appoint a task force of rostered & lay leaders, including representatives of particularly vulnerable communities and marginalized voices, that will convene to provide resources and guidance to congregations and other ministries on how to address gun violence and assist those who are victims of gun violence; and to advocate with lawmakers on a local and national level to create and pass gun laws that save lives.

**Memorial on Portico Benefits for Churchwide Staff**

To restore the Portico insurance coverage to the spouses of ELCA Churchwide employees effective immediately; and to restore the Portico coverage to the original gold status level of coverage for Churchwide employees.

**Resolution Concerning Congregational Advocacy**

That all congregations in the Delaware-Maryland Synod be encouraged to keep their members informed on current state and national public policy by having at least one, but not limited to one, member to serve as a congregational advocate; and encourage the members of the Delaware-Maryland Synod to participate fully in public life by voting and by regularly contacting their state and federal representatives and sharing their opinions on pending legislation.

**Resolution on Becoming a Reconciling in Christ Synod**

That the synod shall, in faithfulness to the continued and pressing need for the church, in all of its varied and faithful expressions, extend a specific welcome to historically marginalized people and communities, adopt the following as their official statement of welcome as a Reconciling in Christ synod: *"The Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America welcomes all into the fullness of God's love. This welcome is inclusive of people of every race, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical or mental ability, sex, political perspective or socio-economic status. Rather than using our differences to divide us, we pledge to use our differences as gifts for our work together."*

**Memorial on Creating a Task Force to Create a New Document Related to the Expectations of Leaders in this Church**

To call for the creation of a task force comprising of members of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops as well as pastors, deacons, and lay members of this Church, with a majority of this task force being persons who self-identify as LGBTQIA+, persons of color, persons with disabilities, and/or persons whose first language is other than English; and to charge this taskforce to discern and propose an inclusive process in the creation of a new document regarding the vision and expectations of rostered leaders to replace the current Vision and Expectations, reflecting the interdependence of this Church to discern faithful ways forward.

## CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES

### 225 years

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Cumberland, MD  
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Upperco, MD

### 200 years

Mount Zion Lutheran Church, Frederick, MD

### 175 years

Mount Zion Lutheran Church, Rohrsersville, MD  
St. John Lutheran Church, Westminster, MD

### 150 years

Trinity Lutheran Church, Hagerstown, MD

### 100 years

St. John Lutheran Church, Linthicum Heights, MD

### 75 years

St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Baltimore, MD

## NEWLY ORDAINED & CONSECRATED

We welcomed Pastor Jeanette Surita-Vazquetelles (June 9, 2018); Pastor Christopher P. Schaefer (November 17, 2018), Deacon Michael S. Hiner (April 7, 2019), Pastor Gregory A. Hartman (May 18, 2019), and Pastor Tamika Jancewicz (May 26, 2019) to our roster.

## NECROLOGY

We gave thanks for these rostered persons who have died since the 2018 Synod Assembly:

Pastor Donald Arthur Haas  
Pastor Edward Harry Peppler  
Pastor John Christopher Ramsey  
Pastor Russell Edward Fink  
Pastor Carol Otilie Sipes  
Pastor Walter Phillip Fogarty  
Pastor Douglas Hugh Strachan  
Pastor Robert William Moore

## CONGREGATIONAL CLOSING

We gave thanks for 46 years of ministry through the former Lord of Life Lutheran Church (Edgewood, Maryland), which closed as of March 31, 2019.

## PASTORAL ANNIVERSARIES

### 5 years

Karen Albaugh, Kibreab Gudeta, Lauren Muratore,  
Meheret Caruthers

### 10 years

Mark Parker, Michael Louia, Naomi Olson Hartman

### 15 years

Flavia Skilbred, Kathleen Ierien, Sara Yotter, Vicki  
Hamel, W. Allen Reed

### 20 years

Ann Dentry, Eric Evers, Gregory Fetzer, Hoda  
Zavandro, Judith Moller-Gavlick, P. Lee Brumback,  
Robert Lewis Jr., Scott Maxwell

### 25 years

Anke Deibler, Eric Deibler, Mari Bunt

### 30 years

Eric Campbell, Julia Hart, Jurgen Hilke, Richard  
Rutkauskas Jr., Susan Roy, Virginia Price

### 35 years

Brian Hughes, David Howell, Jason Burns, Paul  
Baglyos

### 40 years

Edward Heim, Matthew Schenning, Nancy Kraft,  
Phillip Huber, H. Thomas Miller Jr., Torben Aarsand

### 45 years

R. Carl Myers, Charles Zang, Fred Melton, G. Neale  
Wirtanen Jr., Harry Wolpert III, John Seltzer, Joseph  
Donovan III, D. Lee Hudson, Richard Krebs

### 50 years

Michael Adams, Stephen Yelovich

### 55 years

Charles Frederick, David Himmler, John (Jack)  
Trautwein, Thomas Davison

### 60 years

Richard Hembrock, Bishop-Emeritus George Mocko

### 65 years

David Wasgatt Jr., Ray Blanset

Many thanks to our excellent Delaware-Maryland Synod Secretary Nancy L. Gordon for her impeccable note-taking at the Assembly!

