



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HONORING, CELEBRATING, AND SUPPORTING BALTIMORE

A statement from the Office of the Bishop of the Delaware-Maryland Synod

BALTIMORE, July 2019 – The Lutheran spiritual tradition was established in what became Baltimore City, and then its neighboring regions, by 1755. We have lived, served, worshipped and prayed here ever since. The Delaware-Maryland Synod is one of three Maryland expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the state. The Baltimore region is within our territory.

Our greater Baltimore spiritual community encourages civic engagement, advocates in international, national, state, and local contexts, teaches support for lawful government, prays for civic leaders, regards responsible citizenship as a religious calling, and provides human services, creation care, and education opportunities to people regardless of creed or status.

The people and places of the 7th Congressional District of Maryland are being seriously disparaged. As people of faith and good will toward all, we are dismayed by this recent senseless and mean-spirited characterization. The ELCA has congregations throughout the Maryland 7th. This District includes locations such as Columbia, Ellicott City, Sparks, and Phoenix. We serve the marginalized and neglected, as well as the prosperous and thriving communities in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. Our communities in the 7th represent varied ethnicities, races, generations, faith traditions, enterprises and public institutions. We are a miniature arena of the entire United States, diverse as to circumstance, advantage, need, and culture; we encompass all the current challenges in American public life. Our diversity is our strength and a gift from God. We are Baltimore.

“We believe equitable and just public arrangements are possible and socially preferable. Disinvestment and discrimination can be changed with thoughtful public service, democratic process, and collaborative action. We acknowledge that our community has not always been a successful agency for redress of injustice and inequality. For that we are truly sorry. But, as our community publicly stated about social disadvantage in America, The source of this many-faceted crisis...is profoundly spiritual. We will rise to the crisis, not by making a longer list of commitments, but by persisting with repentant hearts.” (*Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*, ELCA Social Statement, 1993).

We encourage and support public leadership and courageous action that addresses not just symptoms but also the causes of inequity and human suffering. We believe gathering stakeholders, citizens, civic and spiritual leaders to identify just responses to public problems leads to civic responsibility that serves the well-being and interest of all people, no exceptions. This is not policy only for the sake of distressed neighborhoods; it's for the sake of a peaceful and flourishing society, in order to form a more perfect union.

Our Lutheran witness and community intend to continue serving in and among the people of the Maryland 7th, with love and gratitude to God for the opportunity, hoping to be a blessing for all who live therein. We will continue to pray for, consult and collaborate with, and support others that do the same.

We are the Delaware-Maryland Synod, serving Baltimore for 264 years. Thanks be to God!

The Delaware-Maryland Synod is one of 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We serve ELCA congregations and ministries in Delaware and the Maryland counties of Allegany, Washington, Frederick, Carroll, Baltimore (City and County), Howard, Anne Arundel, Harford, Cecil, Queen Anne's, Wicomico, and Somerset. The ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world.

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