

Delaware-Maryland Synod Annual Story

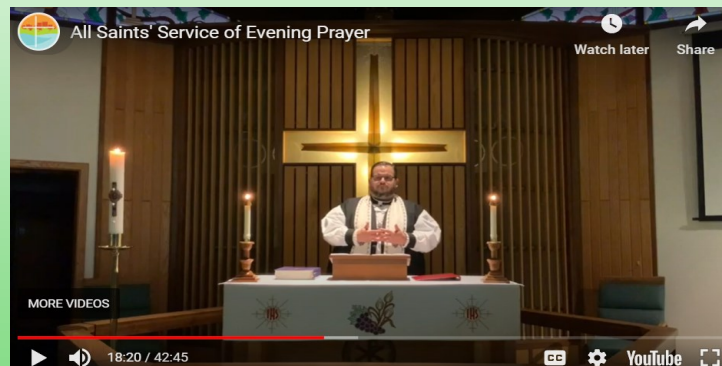


2020-2021

Discipleship Together

We support mission-critical ministries across our synod and empower our people to share the Good News of Jesus in and with their communities. Discipleship work focuses on congregational vitality, strategic mission planning, youth & family ministry, synod worship and journeying with congregations in conflict. This life-giving work means we:

- ◆ Support 10 new ministry starts and explorations across Delaware and Maryland.
- ◆ Accompany 12 strategic ministries, primarily urban and ethnic specific, offering training and coaching to ensure sustainability and vitality.
- ◆ Strengthen 12 congregation's cohort efforts in missional sustainability offering leadership, Mission, Digital Evangelism and grant writing webinars.
- ◆ Listen and learned with our African Descent congregations and offer special urban focused training.
- ◆ Have 17 congregations in the LEAD (Living Everyday as Disciples) process.
- ◆ Innovate ways to sustain Synod's youth and family ministry with online Lutheran Youth Organization gatherings among 61 youth from 22 congregations and create free synod-wide online Vacation Bible School for 154 children from 46 congregations.
- ◆ Engage over 300 members with our Facebook DE-MD Synod Reads Together and *Word for Word* podcasts learning faith stories and exploring scripture.
- ◆ Offered over 40 online worship services with our Bishop and special guests. We ordained 11 leaders, celebrated our Bishop's 20th Anniversary of Ordination plus staff preached over 75 sermons for congregations, even in COVID.



- ◆ Bishop and Assistants faithfully guide congregations to address conflict in Jesus-centered ways.

Connectedness Together

Throughout our synod we have ministries connecting to serve God's kingdom. These ministries happen with our brothers and sisters in Christ who make up the one body in Christ and the one work in Christ! This work together means we:



- ◆ Host the *Connected in Christ* event in February with over 150 attendees offering 10 workshops.
- ◆ Campus Ministry is active at five campuses across Maryland and Delaware.
- ◆ Creatively support Mar-Lu-Ridge moving online summer camp.
- ◆ Offer four Listen & Learn about Racism gatherings and monthly movie and book study.
- ◆ Moved area conference meetings to zoom and continued to equip, train and support.
- ◆ Over 100 folks participated in generosity training.



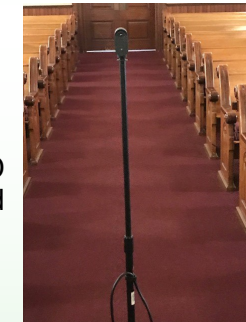
- ◆ Hunger Taskforce connects and funds over 24 of our over 45 feeding ministries in our synod plus helps access Lutheran Disaster Relief and ELCA Hunger grants.
- ◆ Offer 3 Resurrection Living & Giving sessions.
- ◆ Make the safe decision to cancel Assembly however still took up the resolution from Creation Care on supporting the Earth Charter.

Communication Together

Communication empowers people for ministry. Communication informs, sensitizes, supports, and builds a sense of community across our congregations, our synod and our greater church. Look at what we've done:

- ◆ Beginning in March, every week create and send a *Message from the Bishop* to explore scripture, offer prayers, share resources, promote online learning, and stay connected throughout the pandemic.
- ◆ Created new webpages for access to just-in-time COVID-19 resources, digital worship, relevant congregational generosity and communication practices, including racial justice, hunger, youth & family and creation care opportunities.
- ◆ Four Congregations received Communication Team grants and another 10 received synod COVID grants to assistance with programs needs.
- ◆ Monthly blog posts and active Facebook presence.
- ◆ Began regular Bishop with Rostered Leaders and VP with Lay Leader gatherings.

A Grant Story: St. Paul's in Walkersville had no technology when the new pastor arrived and had made do using a personal camera to record weekly sermons. When COVID hit we were thrust into the world of virtual worship, having personal cell phones broadcast our Lenten Series and Sunday Services. With a communication grant, we purchased a MEVO and iPad that now allows us to share our services and connect with parishioners who, for whatever reason, have not been inside the church for years, even connecting in a groom's family living in Turkey, to the wedding celebrated in Walkersville.



- ◆ In 2020 empowered over 50 leaders, both clergy and lay, to enhance their communication ministry by offering two workshops on Telling the Story of Faith and Transformation and Leveling Up: Free Digital Tools for Ministry.
- ◆ Recruited six lay leaders to participate in the ELCA Mission Interpreters Virtual Conference and have created a synod Mission Story Telling Team.
- ◆ Synod Council explored a two-part Faith Story Telling experience.

Leadership Together

In a time when the needs of congregations are rapidly changing, we believe it is important for all leaders in the church to be energized to serve with passion and health, and prepared to lead congregations into the challenges of ministry today and into the future. This means:

- Our Bishop and Staff walked alongside 62 congregations seeking new rostered leadership. We learned to hold Call Process meetings via zoom and at a distance and mastered drive-in call votes.
- Our Bishop led 11 socially-distanced ordinations lifting up new leaders throughout Delaware and Maryland, even celebrating two in a ball park!
- Over 35 leaders in candidacy.
- Over 90 leaders attended Zoom Bishops Leadership Retreat on Resilience.
- Offered 13 Lay Leader Zoom meetings with 70 participants the first day plus 10 Council Presidents Zoom meetings with information going out the 66 presidents across our synod.
- Over 50 congregations are in shared ministry partnerships or exploring the opportunity.
- Our synod has 25 CoachNet Trained Coaches eager to work with lay and rostered leaders.
- Continue to expand our Ecumenical partnerships with Episcopal/Lutheran shared ministries and Diocese and Synod collaborations.





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