

# 2021

## Bulletin of Reports

### Part 2



*Photo courtesy of Elle Dowd*

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## **Bulletin of Reports**

The Bulletin of Reports appears electronically 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, including the agenda, resolutions and memorials, nominations, the proposed budget, etc. 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. In being 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, 2021.

## Office of the Bishop

**Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership, Mobility, and Candidacy - The Rev. Robin Simpson-Litton**

*“And we are witnesses of these things!  
The Holy Spirit whom God gives to those who obey,  
corroborates every detail!”  
Acts 5:32 (The Message)*

I look back on this past year in amazement at the call of the Holy Spirit. I also add that I am surprised, overjoyed and confounded as to how the work of the church, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has continued despite a Global Pandemic!

We are so blessed in this synod to have people who thought “outside the box,” and worked with me so that pastors and deacons could fulfill their mission of being called and ordained to serve the church. At the time of this writing, we have had 21 call votes with 7 more upcoming, in just this year. Lay leaders have held ballot boxes on long polls, provided traffic control, set up bandstands, collected ballots in the rain (and snow) and basically did everything and anything needed so that we could have call votes.

Call Committees used technology to work through times of quarantine. They made sure members received their surveys and that candidates were safely supported through the process. They planned ingenious ways to interview and novel ways to call their next pastors. Ordinations were done in stadiums and outside church buildings.

Next year, I anticipate an increase in the number of rostered ministers seeking new calls with increased retirement of our pastors as we slowly move to reopen our congregations. I also anticipate more movement within our rostered ministers.

The work of the church was also shepherded by our many interims who jumped in to support the work of the church. I applaud their flexibility and adaptability and ongoing focus of preaching and teaching God’s love in different forms and contexts.

Shared Ministry remains to be a ministry where the Holy Spirit is active. We now have 33 congregations doing some form of shared ministry with another 12 congregations discerning God’s call for the next season of their lives. We had our first Shared Ministry Gathering with Pastors & Deacons and will continue to meet quarterly. We are adding a lay leader component to our gatherings to offer support to congregation leaders.

I am blessed to be the staff representative to the Candidacy Committee. They continue to raise up leaders using their guidance and wisdom. Currently we have 35 people going through the Candidacy Process in our Synod.

I would like to thank the Deans who walk with me and the Synod Staff who supports me in my call to the Synod. Thanks, also, to John Auger whose concept of teamwork blesses all and a special word of thanks to Bishop Gohl who trusts me in this ministry where I can witness the work of the Holy Spirit each and every day. May God be the Glory!

With Gratitude and Thanks,  
Pastor Robin Simpson Litton

### **Co-Director for Evangelical Mission - Karen Kretschmann**

*“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*

*Acts 2:42-47*

Thankfulness fills my heart! Over this challenging year, I have witnessed our congregations, day by day, working together for any who had need, praising God in new and unique ways, and responding to God’s call to be loving and generous even in uncertainty.

I want to specifically thank you for your gifts of Mission Support in 2020. Through your generosity we live out the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ throughout our congregations, neighborhoods, and our greater church. In collaboration with the Rev. David Shank, Assistant to the Bishop for Development and Donor Relations and our Bishop Bill Gohl, we created an Annual Synod Story celebrating the many ministry accomplishments that only occur through congregations, individuals, and special funding gifts. Please check out our [Annual Story](#).

A few stories of our Discipleship ministry (Annual Story shares more):

- 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.
- Innovated ways to sustain Synod's youth and family ministry with online Lutheran Youth Organization gatherings among 61 youth from 22 congregations and created free synod-wide online Vacation Bible School for 154 children from 46 congregations.

Stories of our Connectedness sharing just a two of many (more in the Annual Story):

- Hosted the Connected in Christ event in February with over 150 attendees offering 10 workshops.
- Hunger Task Force connected with and funded 24 of our over 45 feeding ministries in our synod plus helped access Lutheran Disaster Relief and ELCA Hunger grants.

Communication stories including this testimony (Annual Story shares more):

- "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."

A few stories of our Leadership ministry (more in the Annual Story):

- 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 ballpark!
- Offered 13 Lay Leader Zoom meetings with 70 participants the first day plus 10 Council Presidents Zoom meetings with information going out to the 66 presidents across our synod.

This year our synod received \$1,627,429 in mission support from 145 congregations, ranging from less than \$10 to \$90,000. We are grateful for every gift and were especially amazed that during the pandemic, 45 of our faithful congregations gave more this year than in 2019. What a joy and testament to our work together. Please see our [2020 Mission Support Story](#) to find out how we actually allocated these funds across our areas of Discipleship, Connectedness, Communication and Leadership. Of course, first we gave 47% of this Mission Support directly to the ELCA at \$764,891, knowing that walking together we are able to proclaim the gospel of God's abundant love and generosity in Jesus Christ.

Our Synod Generosity Team is such a joy to work with. Over the last year, we have continued to experiment, and adapt to change. Our team said goodbye to several members, welcomed three new members and gained a new Co-Chair, Pastor Tara Magoon. Our purpose is to assist in building relationships and resources to enrich congregational giving and vitality through cultivating a culture of abundance, generosity, and good stewardship. Right when the pandemic started in March 2020, our team identified an immediate need to offer inspirational and practical online workshops on legacy conversations, generosity practices in a pandemic, aligning budgets to new ways of ministry, exploring generosity for the community and common good, adaptive planning in generosity, and continued work on cultivating year-round generosity. To access these presentations, check out our [Congregational Generosity page](#). This year a sub-team began working on a series to explore personal money and faith planning practices and through the Holy Spirit we were able to partner with a new program [Six Weeks on Money](#) which our synod has discount codes and special resources for congregations to offer this training in 2021. Our team continues to support the Creation Care Team where needed and is in partnership with the ELCA in a Mission Developer series on Church Finance practices for missional leaders. We are grateful to the Stewardship of Life Institute (SOLI) who funded an \$8,000 grant for our synod and assisted in funding the ELCA Mission Developer training. Starting in January 2021, our team has begun a deeply spiritual process to discern our continuing work. Please pray for us in this work we seek to accomplish with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Let me end sharing a few specifics on what I have been doing with my time. With the pandemic, my time leading workshops, sermons and congregational gatherings moved primarily online. I love preaching at our congregations, being able to share God's abundant generosity and love, and was honored to preach at 10 of our congregations this year, two outside, two socially distanced, three pre-recorded and the others online. Our generosity efforts had me facilitating six workshops as well as hosting eight others, offering me the opportunity to share generosity practices with folks across our synod at



least monthly. In February 2020, we had started our “Cultivating Year-Round Generosity” training, in partnership with Horizon Stewardship, with twelve congregations including over 50 members, and had to move that to zoom but still offered sessions April, May and August completing the series. I continued my involvement with the Connectedness Team and was delighted to assist in coordinating the February 8<sup>th</sup> “Connected in Christ” gathering, offering two workshops in storytelling with Pastor Kathy Ierien and assisting in leading the worship with our Bishop focused on generosity. I also continue to post *Connected in Prayer* and *Connectedness Stories* through our synod blog posts, to read some of them just scroll down [this page](#).

One of my great delights this year was getting involved with our Hunger Task Force. The Rev. David Shank and I had helped secure a Lutheran Disaster Relief COVID grant for \$35,000 that supported 18 feeding ministries and this spurred a desire to create a database of the feeding ministries across our synod. It has been fun to work with the team to disperse funds throughout COVID in places that need it most! I was also asked by the task force to join a sub-team to review six ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants submitted by our synod and we were delighted that three of these were funded. Learn more about them [here](#). Because of this involvement on the Hunger Task Force I participated in the ELCA Hunger Leadership Conference in January 2021 and was asked to facilitate a group discussion which was wonderful to hear about initiatives across our church. Over the summer I also worked with the Racial Justice Team assisting in setting up registration and hosting the “Listen and Learn about Racism”.

One of the highlights of the year has been recruiting five members to join a new synod Mission Storytelling Team. We began in the summer by attending an ELCA Mission Interpreters Training, working on our own storytelling and have even offered a Faith Storytelling session for our Synod Council. A little outside my scope of work, I was honored to work with Holy Spirit Lutheran Church in Eldersburg on their call process, even getting to do the parking lot call vote in the fall when they called Pastor Ginger Bennett. I continue to meet with the ELCA, weekly with the Director for Evangelical Mission group, monthly with ELCA initiatives as well as our Bishop has invited me to be part of our Synod Rostered Leader weekly gatherings where I am so grateful to connect with our leaders, even if only online.

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 as a disciple of Jesus Christ!

**Assistant to the Bishop for Development and Donor Relations - The Rev. David Shank**



Last year as we launched our new **Annual Synod Ministry Fund**, I quoted the scripture,

*“See I am making all things new.” (Revelation 21:5b)*

Our first year, 2020, turned out to be quite challenging. Global and national challenges abounded as a world-wide pandemic raged. Yet, our ministry here together within our Delaware-Maryland Synod continued. In some places, ministry flourished with new, creative, and adaptive ministries blossoming. Technology became a new tool for reaching others and our own congregations anew in the name of Christ. In other areas, ministry experienced great challenges. Through it all our Bishop, in his great leadership, and other synodical support staff “walked alongside” our churches. In support, in prayer, and in perseverance we all “ran the race together” as the apostle Paul would say, and we continue to do so today.

Through gracious financial support and gifts given we birthed that “something new.” The Annual Synod Ministry Fund was born in 2020. **We met our goal of raising \$200,000 and laid the foundation of this fund for the future.** In addition, when our churches needed our help the most, we raised an additional \$350,000 in gifts and pledges toward our **Delaware-Maryland Synod COVID-19 Relief Fund**. An effort that was made possible by the “strong roots” we laid together. In total we raised over \$550,000 in gifts and pledges. An additional lead gift of \$100,000 was also received. **That is over \$650,000 in gifts and pledges that were given in faith toward the glory of God and the ministry of Christ in the world. Praise Be!**

In 2021 we continue to grow this effort together. **We have set a goal this year of raising \$300,000 towards the future of our ministry in our synod** and we continue to lay the “strong roots” of this fund.

Gifts to our **Annual Synod Ministry Fund** truly make a difference in the lives of others. Gifts that assist in taking our church into the next generation and beyond. A gift to our **Annual Synod Ministry Fund** is a gift that ensures our Lutheran tradition will continue to be preached and shared. Gifts that will be put to work now, this year, birthing new faith communities and churches, revitalizing our existing churches, and strengthening our youth and family ministries in Delaware and Maryland.

I see this work as my call, and I see it as holy work to find the resources, and then nurture the relationship with those who give those resources to grow the ministry of

Christ and bring the love, grace, and kindness of Jesus to others. I am here to walk alongside you, and I am here to assist.

The Reverend David C. Shank, M.Div., M.A.R.

**Assistant to the Bishop for Youth + Family Ministry in Partnership with the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod, Deacon Julie Stecker**

What a year this has been! Like many of you, those of us serving in Youth + Family Ministry thought that, when we started canceling in-person gatherings in mid-March, we would be back up and running in a few weeks, maybe by June or July at the very latest. When it became clear that wasn't the case, our young people proved that they were ready to adapt. I have heard stories from all over our synod about how children and youth stayed connected to church while also figuring out how to engage in school online, many of them for the very first time. Congregations large and small have created opportunities for young people to continue digging deep into their faith, and I give thanks for the dedicated youth workers, deacons, pastors, and lay leaders who invest in young people no matter the circumstance.

On a synod-wide level, we also had to learn how to adapt to this new reality. Thanks to an incredible team of youth and adults, we were able to offer a digital Vacation Bible School experience for more than 150 children - allowing them to think about where they see Jesus in their everyday lives while staying safe and exploring the community where they live. The mentors and students of our high school leadership development program, the Lutheran Youth Organization, thought creatively about how they could share the work they normally do throughout the year in a digital format. They led two of our synod's online worship services, created monthly children's sermons and a Lenten video devotional series for kids, shared about advocacy opportunities on social media, recorded music that can be used by congregations and ministries in their own worship life, helped nurture community within the LYO and in their congregations, and wrote a curriculum for the online small groups they led throughout April and May. While this year looked very different, our young people remained committed to the work of leadership development and learned what it meant to lead - and care for themselves - in the midst of a crisis. If you know a youth who will be in grades 9-12 next school year who would be a great fit for the LYO, please encourage them to apply! There's still time - new applications are due by June 15, and you can find more information and the application [online](#).

And, in the middle of the year, the Delaware-Maryland and Metro D.C. Synods took a bold step as leaders in the church by forging an innovative partnership to share the work of Youth + Family Ministry. This means that the youth of both our synods will have the chance to learn, play, grow, and worship together (once it's safe to do so!) at shared youth events. That the Lutheran Youth Organization will become an even richer leadership program with the addition of new voices, perspectives, and backgrounds among its members. That adults who do the holy work of accompanying youth in their faith journey will have even more networking and professional development opportunities, as we take up a renewed focus on investing in these leaders. We've already started doing some of this work in our Growing Young discussion groups, which have been meeting since April, bringing together lay leaders and rostered ministers to share best practices, challenges, and ideas for strengthening our commitment to empowering young people in our context. This collaborative partnership means that we get to lift up the very best parts of Youth + Family Ministry from two vibrant and vital synods, as well as all the new possibilities and ideas this relationship brings, for the sake of young people in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

As we begin to imagine what life might look like on the other side of the pandemic, I hope you'll find ways to come and see what Youth + Family Ministry is about; to join us in this exciting season of ministry and bring your ideas and hopes and dreams to the table as we continue to create this ministry together.

## **Audit**

The Rev. Mike Louia, Finance Team Leader

Given that our synod's fiscal year begins on February 1<sup>st</sup>, we spent almost the entire fiscal year within the confines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, we live for a God of abundance and, while we could have experienced tremendous financial constraints throughout the year, that simply was not our experience. Thanks be to God and to the generosity of congregations and donors who financially supported our synod's various ministries during this most unusual year.

Highlights of this past year include:

- We experienced a sound financial year. Mission Support received (funding the annual Faith Spending Plan) totaled \$1,627,428 (47% of which was forwarded to our churchwide organization. Many thanks to Karen Kretschmann, our Assistant to the Bishop for Generosity in proclaiming God's generosity and helping us to live into the same.
- We received a \$148,800 Payroll Protection Program loan which we anticipate will be fully forgiven in the near future.
- We met our year-one goal for our Synod Local Ministry Fund with income of \$206,000. Thank you to Assistant to the Bishop for Donor Relations and Development, The Rev. Dave Shank, for leading this new ministry within our synod.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we established our synod's COVID-19 Fund as a source of grant funds for congregations in need of bridge financing to meet congregational financial challenges experienced during the pandemic. Funds totaling \$349,585 were raised and grants continue to be made from these funds.
  - Note: Combined funds raised in addition to Mission Support was \$555,595 – sum of Synod Local and COVID.
- Development of a consolidated Faith Spending Plan (consolidating our traditional Faith Spending Plan and our Synod Local Ministry Fund Plan) effective February 1, 2021
- Receipt of our annual audit (included in this Bulletin of Reports) which shows that our finance ministry is handled according to commonly accepted accounting principles with no concerns noted.

Additionally our team experienced several member transitions during 2020:

- San Dee Koons, Treasurer, completed her term before relocating to the west coast.

- Gary Kulik, Finance Team Chair, completed his term as team leader
- The Rev. Dr. Amsalu Geleta, Assistant to the Bishop for Administration and Director of Evangelical Mission, was called to serve as Senior Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Inner Harbor

Our thanks and appreciation to San Dee, Gary and Pastor Geleta for their faithful service.

- Donna Fairley began serving as our Treasurer, and quickly took on this important call and the work it entails.
- The Rev. Mike Louia began serving as Finance Team Leader in January 2021 and looks forward to serving in this role.

Donna and Pastor Mike join Lillian Tomececk, Barbara Schwarz (Financial Secretary), John Auger (Synod Vice President), The Rev. Dave Shank (Assistant to the Bishop for Donor Relations and Development) and Bishop Bill Gohl who meet monthly as they serve as stewards of our synod's financial ministry.

Included in this report, and requiring action during our upcoming synod assembly, are proposed Faith Spending Plan for 2022 and a copy of our most recent audit report.

In summary, despite a year of once-in-a-lifetime challenges, we were blessed by an abundance of financial resources supporting our call to make disciples in Jesus' name. On behalf of the Finance Team, accept our gratitude for your continued generosity. We are truly living into God's abundance!

Peace,  
The Rev. Mike Louia  
Finance Team Leader

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

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**Report on Examination of Financial Statements – Modified Cash Basis  
For the Fiscal Years Ended January 31, 2021 and 2020**

**KLOSTERMAN & ASSOCIATES**  
Certified Public Accountants

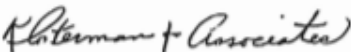
To the Synod Council  
Delaware – Maryland Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc.  
Baltimore, Maryland

We have audited the accompanying statement of assets, liabilities, and net assets – modified cash basis of the Delaware – Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Inc. (a nonprofit organization) as of January 31, 2021 and 2020, 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. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's management. 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 includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

As described in note 1, these financial statements were prepared on the modified cash basis of accounting, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than generally accepted accounting principles.

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, 2021 and 2020 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, on the basis of accounting described in note 1.

  
Severna Park, Maryland  
March 14, 2021



DELAWARE - MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS -  
MODIFIED CASH BASIS  
January 31, 2021 and 2020

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 1)	\$ 125,580	\$ 1,390
Total current assets	<u>125,580</u>	<u>1,390</u>
Long-term investments, at market value		
Schwab Managed Account	3,183,492	2,739,789
Ameriprise - Synod Ministry Fund	-	468,578
Schwab Money Market Fund	253,529	44,159
Mission Investment Fund	<u>160,531</u>	<u>155,465</u>
Total long-term investments (Note 3)	<u>3,597,552</u>	<u>3,407,991</u>
Property and equipment at cost, less accumulated depreciation (Notes 1 & 2)	<u>49,920</u>	<u>69,667</u>
Other assets		
Other assets	22,099	33,768
Deferred charges (net)	34,662	51,922
Mission Fund Loans	<u>5,508</u>	<u>5,508</u>
Total other assets	<u>62,269</u>	<u>91,198</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 3,835,321</u>	<u>\$ 3,570,246</u>
COMMITMENTS (Note 8)		
<b><u>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</u></b>		
Accrued payroll	\$ -	\$ 26,720
<b><u>NET ASSETS</u></b>		
Without donor restrictions		
Board - designated funds	3,315,884	3,313,822
Unrestricted and undesignated	<u>456,948</u>	<u>168,674</u>
	3,772,832	3,482,496
With donor restrictions		
Purpose restricted	<u>62,489</u>	<u>61,030</u>
Total net assets	<u>3,835,321</u>	<u>3,543,526</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 3,835,321</u>	<u>\$ 3,570,246</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, 2021 and 2020

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
<b>WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS</b>		
Revenues, gains and other support		
Contributions - proportionate share	\$ 1,637,541	\$ 1,745,133
Contributions - other	7,881	493,302
Contributions - Covid 19	232,194	-
Contributions - grants & subsidies	43,600	64,942
Contributions - designated giving	37,548	123,898
Contributions - designated funds	222,140	131,570
Contributions - closed congregations (Note 4)	-	1,500,894
Ministry fund receipts	200,553	87,601
Special fundraising receipts	75,064	36,529
Event receipts	4,044	101,027
Youth event receipts	10,106	114,163
Payroll Protection Program stimulus	148,800	-
Investment income designated for operations	<u>25,807</u>	<u>59,712</u>
	2,645,278	4,458,771
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>1,541</u>	<u>-</u>
Total revenue, gains and other support	2,646,819	4,458,771
Expenses from operating activity	<u>(2,634,500)</u>	<u>(3,628,877)</u>
Incr (decr) in net assets from operating activity	12,319	829,894
Non-operating gains and losses		
Loss from sale of assets	(7,812)	-
Investment return - not for current operations	(23,091)	40,448
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	<u>308,920</u>	<u>102,768</u>
Increase in net assets without donor restrictions	290,336	973,110
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>3,482,496</u>	<u>2,509,386</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 3,772,832</u>	<u>\$ 3,482,496</u>
<b>WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS</b>		
Contributions - pass-thru receipts	\$ 104,406	\$ 174,568
Contributions - restricted use receipts	3,000	37,161
Net assets released from restrictions		
Pass through payments	(104,406)	(174,568)
Restrictions satisfied by payments	-	(33,000)
Released from restriction	<u>(1,541)</u>	<u>-</u>
Incr (decr) in net assets with donor restrictions	1,459	4,161
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>61,030</u>	<u>56,869</u>
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 62,489</u>	<u>\$ 61,030</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, 2021 and 2020

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATIONS</b>		
Contributions - proportionate share	\$ 1,637,541	\$ 1,745,133
Contributions - other	19,550	493,302
Contributions - grants & subsidies	43,600	64,942
Contributions - designated giving	37,548	123,898
Contributions - designated funds	222,140	123,395
Contributions - closed congregations	-	1,500,894
Contributions Covid - 19 receipts	232,194	-
Payroll Protection Program subsidy	148,800	-
Ministry fund receipts	168,061	87,601
Special fundraising receipts	75,064	36,529
Event receipts	4,044	101,027
Youth Event receipts	10,106	114,163
Restricted use receipts	107,406	211,729
Pass-through receipts	322,937	-
Pass-through expenses	(305,678)	-
Partnership with ELCA	(775,004)	(872,566)
Discipleship expense	(171,175)	(232,106)
Connectedness expense	(193,810)	(199,982)
Communications expense	(11,004)	(3,139)
Leadership expense	(82,133)	(100,667)
Youth Events expense	(28,945)	(153,361)
Designated Fund disbursements	(334,493)	(137,701)
Designated Giving disbursements	(37,057)	(78,798)
Fundraising disbursements	(43,300)	(7,210)
Ministry fund disbursements	(5,050)	(27,036)
Grant disbursements	(21,475)	(41,043)
Event expenses	(2,489)	(97,377)
Pass - through gifts	(7,500)	(687,500)
Staff expenses	(614,019)	(641,679)
Synod operations	(320,126)	(346,473)
Restricted use payments	(104,406)	(207,568)
Net cash from operations	<u>(28,673)</u>	<u>768,407</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Investment draws	304,584	138,070
Investments purchased	(149,348)	(992,002)
Purchase of fixed assets	<u>(2,373)</u>	<u>(26,789)</u>
Net cash from investing	<u>152,863</u>	<u>(880,721)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash	124,190	(112,314)
Cash balance - beginning of year	<u>1,390</u>	<u>113,704</u>
Cash balance - end of year	<u>\$ 125,580</u>	<u>\$ 1,390</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, 2021 and 2020

	2021		2020	
	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction
Partnership with ELCA	\$ 775,604	\$ -	\$ 872,566	\$ -
Discipleship				
Support for New & Renewing	69,253		66,868	
Rise Up Dreams & Visions	24,026		83,635	
LEAD Expenses	41,464		78,317	
North Avenue Mission	19,124		-	
Support - Other	17,308	-	3,296	-
	<u>171,175</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>232,106</u>	<u>-</u>
Connectedness				
Connectedness Grants	22,500		24,000	
African Descent	-		18,550	
Campus Ministries	133,510		123,000	
Lutheran Development Alliance	10,250		10,250	
Mar-Lu Ridge	10,350		20,350	
Central MD Ecumenical Council	3,240		3,240	
Generosity Project expenses	13,802		7,518	
Connectedness - Other	158	-	1,249	-
	<u>193,810</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>208,157</u>	<u>-</u>
Communications Expense	11,004	-	3,139	-
Leadership				
Lutheran Theological Seminary	67,490		72,000	
Psych Evaluation	6,437		12,283	
Leadership Development	6,659		6,099	
Region 8 Office	600		7,791	
Programs & Operations	947	-	2,494	3,500
	<u>82,133</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>100,667</u>	<u>3,500</u>
Youth Events Expense				
Facilities Expense	5,723		130,367	
Supplies /Services	23,222	-	22,994	-
	<u>28,945</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>153,361</u>	<u>-</u>
Designated Fund Disbursements				
SLATE Expenses	38,974		45,151	
CLAIM Expenses	11,367		25,650	
Bishop's Discretionary Expenses	100,174		45,482	
COVID 19 Expenses	122,124		-	
Online Worship Expense	31,852		-	
Disbursements - Other	29,992	-	21,438	-
	<u>334,493</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>137,701</u>	<u>-</u>
Designated Giving Disbursements				
Mar-Lu Ridge	15,472		51,566	
St. Dymas	5,954		6,222	
Disbursements - Other	15,631	-	21,010	-
	<u>37,057</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>78,798</u>	<u>-</u>
Fundraising Disbursements	43,300	-	7,210	-
Ministry Fund Disbursements	5,050	-	27,036	-

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, 2021 and 2020

	<u>2021</u>		<u>2020</u>	
	<u>Without</u>	<u>With</u>	<u>Without</u>	<u>With</u>
	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Donor</u>	<u>Donor</u>
	<u>Restriction</u>	<u>Restriction</u>	<u>Restriction</u>	<u>Restriction</u>
Grant Disbursements				
Journeying Together	21,475	-	41,043	-
Event Expenses				
Synod Assembly	1,489	-	76,267	-
Other Event Expenses	1,000	-	21,110	-
	2,489	-	97,377	-
Pass- Through Gifts (Note 4)	7,500	-	694,500	-
Staff Expenses				
Salaries and Wages	377,832	-	435,563	-
Pension and Benefits	170,413	-	188,887	-
Payroll taxes	38,065	-	37,250	-
Continuing Education Expense	989	-	6,699	-
	587,299	-	668,399	-
Synod Operations				
Office Rent	72,021	-	68,508	-
Office Expense	49,413	-	34,912	-
Insurance Expense	18,049	-	14,239	-
Professional Fees	13,500	-	13,500	-
Equipment Lease Expense	7,072	-	11,699	-
Travel Expense	36,911	-	62,577	-
Conference of Deans	15,900	-	19,574	-
Bishop Synodical	-	-	30,919	-
Transitional Support	2,157	-	21,151	-
Council Programs and Operations	1,893	-	9,022	-
Associate for Donor Relations	86,000	-	-	-
Sabbatical Expense	6,000	-	-	-
Program & Operating Expenses	10,541	-	7,029	-
Depreciation Expense	14,309	-	13,687	-
	333,766	-	306,817	-
Pass Through Payments	-	104,406	-	174,568
Financial Aid	-	-	-	500
Seminarian Support	-	-	-	350
Mara Diocese Disbursements	-	-	-	27,500
Estonia Synod Disbursements	-	-	-	1,150
Total	\$ 2,634,500	\$ 104,406	\$ 3,628,877	\$ 207,568

See accompanying notes.

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2021 and 2020

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. The Synod's principal source of income is contributions.

Financial Statement Presentation

The financial statements present balances and transactions classified based upon the existence or absence of donor imposed restrictions. Net assets, revenue, contributed support, expenses, gains and losses have been classified into two net asset classes based on these donor imposed restrictions. A description of each net asset class follows:

Without Donor Restrictions – Net assets that are not subject to donor imposed restrictions including the carrying value of all property, furniture and equipment. Items that affect this category of net assets include contributions and bequests without donor restrictions, contributions with donor restrictions and bequests whose donor imposed restrictions were met during the fiscal year and investment income whose use is without donor restrictions, as well as all expenses incurred in connection with the operations of the Synod. Certain funds, generally set aside by Synod Council action are included in net assets without donor restrictions.

With Donor Restrictions – Net assets subject to donor imposed restrictions that will be met either by actions of the Synod or the passage of time. Items in this net asset category are contributions, bequests, and investment income whose use is limited to specific purposes by the donor. These amounts are reclassified when such restrictions are met or when time restrictions have expired.

Net assets that are subject to donor imposed restrictions which require them to be maintained permanently by the Synod. Items in this net asset category include gifts where donors have stipulated that the corpus is to be held in perpetuity and only the income can be made available for purposes without donor restrictions.



DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2021 and 2020

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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.

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. Cash and cash equivalents used by the Synod in managing its investments are reported in investments. The Synod maintains cash balances at its financial institution in excess of FDIC insurance limits. The Synod has not experienced any losses in such accounts and believes it is not exposed to any significant credit risk.

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.



DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2021 and 2020

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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. There were no unrelated business income activities during the years ended January 31, 2021 and 2020.

Investments and Related Income, Gains, and Losses

Investments are reported at fair value and consist primarily of stocks, exchange-traded funds, and mutual funds. The cost of securities sold is based on either the specific identification or average cost method. Investment income, gains and losses, and any investment related expenses are recorded as changes in net assets without donor restrictions in the statement of activities unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulations.

Revenue, Expenses, and Contributions

Revenues are reported as increases in net assets without donor restrictions unless use of the related assets is limited by donor imposed restrictions. Expenses are reported as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions. Gains and losses on investments and other assets or liabilities are reported as increases or decreases in net assets without donor restrictions unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulation. Expirations of net assets with donor restrictions (i.e. the donor stipulated purpose has been fulfilled and/or the stipulated time period has elapsed) are reported as reclassifications between applicable classes of net assets.

Contributions are recognized in the period received. Conditional contributions are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend are substantially met. Contributions of assets other than cash are recorded at estimated fair value.

Contributions received with donor imposed restrictions are reported as revenue of the net asset class with donor restrictions, as appropriate. Contributions of land, buildings, and equipment without donor imposed restrictions concerning the use of such long-lived assets are reported as revenue of net assets without donor restrictions.

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2021 and 2020

NOTE 1 - NATURE OF ACTIVITIES AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Recently Adopted Accounting Guidance

The Synod has adopted the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update No. 2016-14 (ASU 2016-14), Not-for-Profit Entities: Topic 958. The amendments in this update affect not-for-profit entities (NFPs) and the users of their general purpose financial statements. The amendments in this update make certain improvements to the current net asset classification requirements and the information presented in financial statements and notes about a not-for-profit organization's liquidity, financial performance, and cash flows.

NOTE 2 – PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Vehicles	\$ 26,789	\$ 51,457
Leasehold improvements	74,684	74,684
Furniture & equipment	37,744	37,744
Computer equipment	<u>37,791</u>	<u>35,419</u>
Total	177,008	199,304
Accumulated depreciation	<u>127,088</u>	<u>129,637</u>
	<u>\$ 49,920</u>	<u>\$ 69,667</u>
Depreciation expense	<u>\$ 14,309</u>	<u>\$ 13,687</u>

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2021 and 2020

**NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS**

Investments at January 31, 2021 and 2020 consist of the following:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
U.S. Equity Securities	\$ ---	\$ 143,691
Exchange –traded Funds		
US Treasury debt	95,296	58,582
Real Estate Invest Trust	157,033	173,613
US Corporate Bonds	---	11,193
Mutual Funds		
Emerging Market Debt	266,873	172,194
US Equity Funds	1,262,870	984,870
US Government Debt	511,301	511,301
US Corporate Bond	---	35,246
Inflation Protected Debt	150,393	138,788
International Equity	410,473	308,828
Global Fixed Income	324,405	398,969
Unit Investment Trust	---	27,458
Mission Investment Fund	160,532	155,465
Cash & cash equivalents	<u>258,376</u>	<u>287,793</u>
Total	<u>\$ 3,597,552</u>	<u>\$ 3,407,991</u>

The following schedule summarizes the investment return reported in the statement of activities for the years ended January 31, 2021 and 2020:

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Realized investment gains (losses)	\$ (23,091)	\$ 40,448
Unrealized investment gains (losses)	308,920	102,768
Dividend and interest income	44,737	75,924
Investment management fees	<u>(18,930)</u>	<u>(16,212)</u>
Investment return – net	<u>\$ 311,636</u>	<u>\$ 202,928</u>

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2021 and 2020

**NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS**

Investments detailed above are reported at fair value based on readily determinable market values using quoted market close prices. Fair value is the price that would be received for an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date.

Monthly distributions from investments was \$9,682 and \$9,000 respectively for the years ended January 31, 2021 and 2020 and was used to fund day-to-day operations of the Synod. The monthly distributions are made at a rate established by the Synod that reflect the anticipated returns of the investments and anticipated changes in the purchasing power of those investments. The rate established for 2021 and 2020 was 5% of the fair value of investments calculated on a twelve (12) quarter trailing average. If distributions exceed the actual dividends, interest, and net realized gains, the excess is distributed first from accumulated undistributed earnings, then from capital.

**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, and would be managed and disbursed at the direction of trustees from the Synod and the former ministry. Legacy gifting is often a part of planning for the conclusion and closure of a congregation's ministry.

In 2020, the Synod received cash contributions in the amount of \$1,500,894 from the closure and sale of church properties as follows:

Lord of Life Lutheran Church	\$ 399,926
St. Stephen and James Lutheran Church	635,269
Emmanuel Lutheran Church	<u>465,699</u>
	\$1,500,894

The funds are available for unrestricted use and have been recorded in the accompanying financial statements as unrestricted contributions. Funds in the amount of \$694,500 in 2020 were disbursed as pass-through gifts to various ministries in accordance with the legacy gift plan developed by each ministry in partnership with the trustees for the ministry assets. After any debts, including management of the facilities and debts related to sale of the property are satisfied, legacy gifts are disbursed and the residual is returned to the Synod Mission Fund for ongoing unrestricted use for new mission starts, redevelopments and strategic mission support, in accordance with the protocols for the use of the Synod Mission Fund. There were no contributions recorded in the fiscal year ended January 31, 2021 related to congregation closures.

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2021 and 2020

**NOTE 5 – PENSION PLAN**

Substantially all active employees of the Synod are participants in the ELCA Pension Plan, a qualified Defined Contribution Plan under ERISA definitions administered by Portico Benefit Services. For the years ended January 31, 2021 and 2020, the Synod contributed \$59,334 and \$62,362 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, 2021 and 2020, 47% and 50% respectively 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 14, 2021, the date which the financial statements were available to be issued.

**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 \$5,667 per month through April 2022. 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 \$301 per month. Occupancy expense for the years 2021 and 2020 was \$72,021 and \$68,508 respectively. The following is a schedule by year of future minimum rental payments:

<u>January 31,</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
2021	\$ ----	\$ 72,021
2022	73,134	73,134
2023	<u>18,439</u>	<u>18,439</u>
	\$ <u>91,573</u>	\$ <u>163,594</u>

DELAWARE-MARYLAND SYNOD OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, INC.  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, continued  
January 31, 2021 and 2020

NOTE 8 – COMMITMENTS

Operating Leases

Equipment Leases

The organization leases office equipment under operating leases expiring in various years through 2025. Lease expense for the years 2021 and 2020 was \$7,072 and \$11,699 respectively. Minimum future rental payments under non-cancelable leases having remaining terms in excess of one year as of January 31, 2021 and 2020 for each of the next five years are as follows:

<u>January 31,</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
2021	\$ ---	\$ 6,480
2022	6,480	6,480
2023	6,480	6,480
2024	6,480	6,480
2025	<u>2,220</u>	<u>2,220</u>
	\$ <u>21,660</u>	\$ <u>28,140</u>



## Vision Teams

### Communications Team

Daniel Mambu, Team Leader

Hi, my name is Daniel Mambu and for the last month and a half I've served as our Synod's Communication Team Leader. My time with this team has been short, but I've been able to see the work our team is doing in this community. A lot has happened this year as we all have had to adapt to life in a global pandemic. Though things have looked different, our team's goal and objectives have stayed the same. We've aimed to aid leaders and congregations in their communications-related needs.

One of the ways we've been able to do this is through our grant applications. We invited congregations in the Delaware-Maryland Synod who needed assistance in finding ways to connect with their members and community to apply. The team spent some time going through these applications. There have been a total of eight grants awarded at this time. Below are some of the ways that these grants have been put to use and the effects that they have had in these communities within our synod.

"After not being able to worship together for three months, it was so nice to get back to in-person worship. However, we noticed that some of our dear neighbors were not able to gather with us. With the help of the Synod Communication Grant, **Bethel Lutheran Church (North East, MD)** was able to purchase live streaming equipment and update our website. We've been able to increase our visibility and attendance, while also maintaining meaningful connections within our congregation and our neighbors in the surrounding community and beyond!"

"Thanks to the Communications Grant from the DE-MD Synod, the two congregations of **South Mountain Shared Ministry in Frederick County, MD** were able to purchase a MacBook Pro. This purchase, as well as other technology upgrades, made it possible for both congregations to establish digital worship. These worship opportunities reached members during stay-at-home orders, people in quarantine, homebound members that hadn't worshiped with their community in years, and people not associated with "the church".

"**Dreams and Visions** was honored to receive a communications grant from our Synod. We applied for the grant to allow us to purchase needed sound equipment for our worship services, such as microphones and amps. At the beginning of 2020, we were so glad to have high quality amplification. When COVID-19 hit, we stopped



in-person worship, but our microphones and stands were integral to the outdoor services we conducted outside. Proper amplification has made our services more accessible to those with hearing loss, and we are grateful to the Synod for providing these grants.”

“Receiving a Communications Team Grant enabled **Trinity Lutheran Church in Westminster, MD** to purchase a high-quality camera to record worship services that we could share online. The pandemic led to the need to provide worship for our community in new and creative ways, and it also highlighted the need to share worship online in non-pandemic times for those unable to join us in-person. The purchase of this camera has enabled us to share the Gospel with folks both in our community and beyond.”

“At **Holy Communion Lutheran Church in Fallston, MD**, we used our grant to subscribe to the platform of Monday.com. We are a growing church, and experiencing some of the painful growing pangs of moving from small church to large church. To streamline our communication and collaboration among the staff members and ministry teams, we use Monday.com to track our goals and tasks for each ministry. At any point, we have access to each other's progress and can easily collaborate in the areas where there are obstacles or use other people's experiences in the cross-pollination of ministry so that we do not need to "reinvent the wheel." Monday.com has been a gift that has helped to keep us organized, grounded, communicating between meetings, and learning.”

We are grateful to everyone who was able to share with us about what this grant has meant. As we move forward we are continuing to explore ways the communication team can aid our leaders and congregations. We have some upcoming projects that we believe will help. Thank you all for your support. We look forward to learning, growing, and working with all of you.

### **Connectedness Team**

Linda Chinnia, Team Leader

### **Connectedness Team 2020 Report**

The connectedness Team established seven goals for 2020:

1. Create an annual learning experience for congregations, conferences, programs and ministries and to share tools and teach best practices for connectedness and collaboration.

“Connected in Christ” was held on February 8, 2020 at Salem Lutheran Church in Catonsville. 149 participants attended representing each conference. Vision Teams presented workshops. Ministries and programs created displays to highlight their work.

2. On a yearly basis (Synod Assembly) through team liaisons, update and post the list of ministries and programs throughout the Synod.
3. By December 2020 support best practices of connectedness within the Synod through the Connectedness Grants- awarded six grants to partners total of \$22,500

<b><u>Organization</u></b>	<b><u>Connectedness Grant Award</u></b>
Creation Care Ministry	\$4,500
Community of St. Dysmas	\$2,000
Lutheran Community Services (LCS)	\$4,500
Mar-Lu Ridge	\$2,500
St. Philip’s Evangelical Lutheran Church	\$4,500
Hunger Task Force	\$4,500

4. Collaborate with Discipleship, Leadership +and Communication Team in planning. See Goal #1- Connected in Christ event
5. Through monthly articles/blogs/emails communicate and highlight the work of Synod ministries and programs and their efforts to collaborate.

Monthly articles in the Synod E-Letter and posted on the Connectedness webpage of the Synod website. Synod Facebook posts.

6. Develop strategies and framework to help congregational leaders identify volunteers for programs/ministries

This goal was tabled due to the COVID restrictions for in-person gatherings and work.

7. Support our synod Generosity Team as they work to accomplish the Generosity Team Planned Objectives geared toward growing a culture of abundance, enriching congregational generosity and giving, and providing stewardship resources across our synod.

The Connectedness Team budget for SY 2020 included \$5000 to support the work of the Generosity Team.

Team: Linda Chinnia- Team Leader, Rev. Sandra Alexis, Evangelist Lorraine Dryden, Claudia Harrington, Deacon Laura Heller, Mydea Karpeh, Karen Kretschmann, Nancy Louia, Suzannah Porter, Cynthia Slater, Geneva Wallace

### **Discipleship Team**

Ron Fairchild, Team Leader

For the past two years, our Synod's Discipleship Vision Team has worked diligently to support congregations in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our communities.

Current members of our team include: Colleen Carpenter-Gonia, Ron Fairchild (team leader), The Rev. Dr. Ed Kay, Karen Kretschmann, Heather Segar, Deacon Julie Stecker, and Cindy VanVliet. Our major activities and accomplishments since our last Synod Assembly include the following:

- Supported the growth and development of 8 new ministry starts and explorations including Church on the Square, Global Peace, Mountain of God International Church, Dreams & Visions, Beloved Community Multicultural Congregation, Mara Evangelical Lutheran Church, North Avenue Mission, and the Slate Project. We give thanks for the Rev. Dr. Amsalu Geleta's leadership of this work during his time in the Bishop's office. Since his transition, our team has included one of our Synod's mission developers in each of our monthly meetings in order to better understand we can support their efforts. It has been wonderful to see how God continues to bless these ministries with strong, faithful, and creative

leadership despite the challenges associated launching new ministries during COVID-19.

- Expanded and sustained the DE-MD Synod Reads Together Facebook group. We now have more than 300 people involved in this group, which is dedicated to reading and reflecting on Holy Scripture each day. Our original plan was for this to be a time-limited effort following our 2019 Synod Assembly. We see God at work in the gift and resource that this space is becoming for those in our Synod interested in strengthening their daily devotional practices. We especially want to thank everyone who writes reflections, reads the posts daily, and comments/likes them. If you haven't joined the DE-MD Synod Reads Together Facebook group, please consider doing that by visiting us here.
- Strengthened the focus on strategic ministries and congregational vitality. We recently completed a review of 13 renewing ministries that have been receiving grants either from churchwide or our Synod's Faith Spending budget or both in the last two years. We have also developed a cohort-based approach to encourage more congregations to learn from and with each other as we strengthen our ministries. We are in the process of considering how to capture the lessons learned from these efforts in some type of resource guide that others can use to replicate the model.
- Restructured our relationship with LEAD. Our team recently oversaw a thorough financial review of all of our contracts over the past 5+ years with LEAD. Based on those efforts, we were able to faithfully negotiate and execute an agreement resulting in a \$33,150 credit to our Synod to be paid back over a period of three years. We praise God for our relationship with LEAD, and for how the organization provides critical support for congregations in our Synod. We are in the process of finalizing a contractual agreement for services in 2021 and look forward to continuing to work with them in the future.

Our focus areas for the year ahead include:

1. Continuing to support new ministry starts and explorations, strategic ministries, and mission sustainability cohorts that directly involve 21 congregations across our Synod.
2. Capturing the lessons learned and stories about innovative strategies that congregations have used to strengthen discipleship during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Continuing to support those eight congregations currently involved with LEAD and to explore interest among other congregations in being part of that effort.
4. Launching a new This is My Story podcast series designed to encourage more lay leaders and rostered ministers across our Synod in sharing their faith stories.
5. Developing a three-year ministry plan for the new collaborative partnership with the Metro DC Synod focused on Youth and Family Ministry.

Thank you for everything you do to support the work of the Discipleship Vision Team. 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. John C. Nelson, Team Leader

Grace and peace to you, and to me, from God, our Heavenly Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. My name is John Nelson, and I am the chair of our synod's Leadership Team. The Leadership Team spent 2020-2021 following God's call through:

**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 Luther Seminary and has awarded scholarships based on applications received.

**Practice Discipleship:** Our Practice Discipleship ministry has continued to grow and expand within our synod. While taking an intentional pause during the beginnings of COVID-19, Practice Discipleship resumed its ministry in significant fashion by hosting a collaborative retreat with Mar-Lu-Ridge. This hybrid retreat, focusing on the topic of Sanctuary, was particularly popular as a virtual download, and the feedback from participants was incredibly positive. At present, in the spirit of cultivating adaptive leaders, and fostering collaboration, Practice Discipleship is exploring a partnership with our established coaching leadership to provide coaches for Young Adults.

**Bishop Leadership Retreat:** Our Bishop Leadership Retreat in October 2020, which was held virtually, focused on resiliency. The retreat was led by the Rev. Sarah Ciavarri, who is a certified facilitator of Dr. Brené Brown's curricula. Participation was slightly lower than previous years, due largely in part to rostered leaders indicating that they were "Zoomed out". Feedback from the retreat itself was generally positive, and suggestions taken from participants has led to a shift in programming in 2021 that will feature a retreat built around T.E.D. Talk style lectures presented by our Delaware/Maryland rostered and lay leaders. We are striving to create a retreat that is led by synod leaders for synod leaders. This is an ambitious undertaking for our team, and we need your help to actualize it. Our theme for the 2021 retreat is "The New Normal: Navigating Ministry in a Post-Pandemic World". We are inviting our rostered and lay leaders to share their learnings from this year of COVID-19 with their colleagues via 17-minute T.E.D. Talks. If you have not signed up to lead a T.E.D. talk and are interested in doing so, please sign up using the form included in the weekly synod communications.

**Coaching:** Coaching has been an area in which there has been significant growth within the 2020-2021 year. Leadership Team welcomed the Rev. Mark Walters as head of our coaching programming, with the Rev. Greg Fetzer moving into a support role. Mark and Greg have been working in earnest to build up a diverse and dedicated Coaching Ministry Team to support their individual efforts with our synod's coaches. This Coaching Ministry Team has continued to grow as the year has progressed. The primary focus for this sector of Leadership Team has been to create a "coaching culture" within the Delaware-Maryland synod. Mark and Greg have begun work to reestablish relationships with all our synod coaches and at present are working to create covenanted partnerships for all our available coaches. In addition to reaching out to our individual coaches, the coaching Ministry Team has begun to utilize our synod's media

opportunities to reach potential new coaches and clients. Our aim is to bring the tools and experience of coaching to anyone who wishes to utilize these services within our synod.

**Shared Ministry:** The development of shared ministry within our synod has continued with earnest, thanks largely in part to Assistant to the Bishop Robin Simpson Litton. Robin has begun assembling her own Shared Ministry Team to help her interact with and educate our shared ministry sites. Interaction and education are rapidly becoming the pillars of our shared ministry endeavors. Robin held her first shared ministry education event during the month of February. This event, which was attended by 33 individual congregations from 3 different synods, will be the first of hopefully quarterly gatherings of our shared ministry congregations. This event fulfilled another aspect of one of our long-term goals which is to begin to share with outside synods and judicatories our best practices regarding shared ministry implementation and accompaniment. The end product of this work will be a “Shared Ministry Manual” that will be made available to synods and judicatories that are interested in learning more about our processes.

As always, many thanks to those who have participated in the work of our Leadership Team: Deacon Paula Thistle; Colleen Carpenter-Gonia; The Rev. Stuart Luce; John Auger; Cindy VanVliet; The Rev. Mark Walters, The Rev. Greg Fetzer, the Rev. Robin Simpson Litton, and Pam Estes.



## **Conferences**

### **Allegany and Washington County Conferences**

The Rev. Linda Alessandri, Former 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)

Some call them hills, but here in Washington and Allegany Conferences, we call them mountains. The same LORD who made heaven and earth and these mountains, was our help and companion during the unexpected of 2020. Thanks be to God.

It started like most years. At our monthly conference meetings we pass on news about synod-wide events. Signed up to lead Sunday afternoon worship at Diakon nursing and assisted living centers in Hagerstown. Proposed a midweek Lenten pulpit exchange and theme. We considered possibilities --- A Spring Stewardship Event? Become a "western campus" for the Order of Saint Stephen Deacon program? A "field trip" to see the St. Francis Missal at the Walter's Art and have lunch nearby? We shared health and prayer concerns and celebrations. We shared holy communion and the fellowship of gathering around lunch tables.

Then we learned of this thing called COVID-19. When we were all asked to self-quarantine, we first thought, we would surely be back in our churches by Easter. But we weren't and we moved into a different world ---- trying to figure out how to be church, do ministry and support one another during a worldwide pandemic. We learned new technologies. We scrambled for ways to worship, nourish faith, and keep in touch with parishioners, those who did not navigate computers and those who did. We pondered how to stay faithful to worship traditions and sacramental theology in unprecedented circumstances. I'm sure our experience was similar to all the DE-MD conferences.

I, for one, would be forever indebted to my Washington and Allegany county colleagues. Faithfully meeting via ZOOM, we shared what we were learning, how our churches were dealing with worship, congregational communication and programs and the well being of our parishioners, our families and ourselves during a learn-as-we-go pandemic and a very disturbing election season. Later in the year, when it became possible to crack open the doors of our church parking lots and buildings, we continued to share the technology, plans and practices of our congregations, always keeping our eye on the care and safety of our churches and wider communities. Relying on the faithful work of

councils and special COVID teams in our congregations, we learned from each other, leaned on one another and did our best.

Amid all of this, we saw the synod and congregations continuing their efforts to extend calls to new pastoral leadership. Many thanks to Bishop's Assistant Robin Simpson Litton and the many call committees who worked through extraordinary circumstances to seek and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We welcomed The Rev. Sally Bartling (St. Luke's Lutheran, Cumberland and a West Virginia conference church) The Rev. Karl Muhlbach to Trinity Lutheran (Boonsboro,) The Rev. Mark Molter to St. Paul's (Frostburg,) and The Rev. Ryan Viands. We celebrated the calls of The Rev. David Eisenhuth to Trinity Lutheran (Hagerstown,) The Rev. Robert Lewis to the Conococheague Parish (Clear Spring,) The Rev. Hoda Zavandro to St. John Lutheran (Hagerstown) and the interim ministry of The Rev. Kibreab Gudeta at Christ Lutheran (Hagerstown,) and The Rev. Allen Reed at St. Peter's Lutheran Church [Beard's] (Smithsburg). We were also grateful for the interim work of The Rev. Karen Crosby at St. Paul Lutheran (Frostburg), The Rev. Stephen Hapenstall at St. Paul Lutheran (Cumberland) and The Rev. Ron Schlak at Trinity Lutheran (Boonsboro) who lovingly prepared the way for new pastoral leadership.

It has been an honor to be the Dean of the Washington and Allegany Conferences. (*Best wishes to our new dean, the Rev. Kim Nunburg.*) Distance provides a real challenge for our two conferences to meet and work together. While COVID-19 did not make that any easier, when rostered leaders met via ZOOM and when congregation members came together for on-line prayer, worship, Bible studies, confirmation classes and council and committee meetings, the Lord who made the heavens and the earth and these western Maryland mountains was surely present and at work among us and through us.

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

The Rev. Kati Kluckman-Ault, Former Dean

#### **Anne Arundel Conference**

The Anne Arundel Conference met through the gift of Zoom. Joint conference meetings with Baltimore West began in early 2021. Over the months of Covid, this conference supported one another in many ways. They began discussion about the possibilities of shared staff among the churches of the conference.

Rev. Bob Lehman began part time interim work at Christ Lutheran Church, Millersville.

Rev. Kati Kluckman-Ault, Rejoice Fellowship Glen Burnie, retired September 2020.  
 Rev. Maddie Tallman began a 3 year term call at Rejoice Fellowship, August 2020  
 Rev. Corey Bergman began a call at St. John, and St. Christopher's Episcopal church, Linthicum.

### Baltimore West Conference

The Baltimore West Conference met regularly through the past year via zoom. Joint meetings with AA conference began in early 2021. Mutual support was given through check-ins and idea sharing.

Rev. John Deason was called to St. Stephens Lutheran Church and Holy Apostles Episcopal Church, Arbutus

Please welcome the new dean to the AA/BW Conference, the Rev. Tamika Jancewicz who began her service February 1, 2021.

### Baltimore City Conference

The Rev. Christine Parker, Former Dean  
*No report yet received.*

### Baltimore North and East and Harford Conferences

The Rev. Lisa Arrington, Former Dean

Our 2020 calendar started off with great speakers at our monthly conference:

- Jan 2 Elaine Wagenfuehr, CLAIM
- Feb 6 What does St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute offer?
- Mar 5 Paul Hoffman: Come to be refreshed at the Lent Table
- April 2 Leadership webinar with Prof. Leah Schade, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship at Lexington Theological Seminary. Her writings address the "purple" phenomenon. Her book Preaching in the Purple Zone: Ministry in the Red-Blue Divide.

Ironically, right when everything shut down in April due to COVID, Pastor Stuart Luce had already scheduled a webinar for us! We immediately went into zoom for the first time and



stayed on zoom ever since. Since the summer of 2020 we meet by zoom to check in and share models of ministry in the pandemic. Yes, I am grateful for all the ways our synod encouraged us to stay connected in 2020. Even by Zoom we were engaged in planning to engage in the goals of our Synod Vision:

- Connectedness
- Leadership
- Discipleship
- Communication

In addition to our zoom meetings, we continued to share updates by email and I am so thankful for Pastor Ed Kay managing our Facebook group.

We gave thanks for those who moved on to new chapters beyond our conference:

- Pastor Lesley Radius
- Pastor Sarah Schofield Wright
- Pastor Eileen Kelley Warner
- Pastor Charlene Barnes
- Pastor Stuart Luce
- Pastor Chris Litton
- Pastor Jeanette Surita-Vazquetelles

We welcomed new interims in our conference such as:

- Pastor Eric Campbell, Grace Lutheran Timonium, MD
- Pastor Rob Blezard, St. Paul's Lutheran Aberdeen, MD
- Pastor John Spangler, St. John's Parkville, MD
- Vicar Ellen Krich, St. John's Essex, MD
- Pastor Paul Collinson Streng, Christus Victor, MD

We welcomed a new Dean: I am so thankful for the collegiality, gift of trust, and rotation in leadership. And now I invite you to rejoice with me in the election of a new dean for our conference, Rev. Laura Sinche. Her work with the synod and Baltimore Campus Ministry means she already knows so many of our congregations and rostered leadership. I look forward to being on this great conference team and being church together with you.

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

The Rev. Barbara Melosh, Former Dean

Delmarva North continues to meet in weekly gatherings for study of the Sunday texts, fellowship, synodical updates, and shared ministry. This conference comprises the nine ELCA congregations in New Castle county, Delaware. During 2020 we also welcomed Vicar Zach Wright (Bethel, North East Maryland) as a member of the conference during his internship year. Pr. John Nelson (St. Philip, Wilmington) serves as conference secretary.

Delmarva South, whose congregations are more geographically dispersed, meets once a month for devotions, prayer, shared ministry, and synodical updates. This conference includes four congregations in Sussex and Kent counties, Delaware, and four located on the eastern shore of Maryland.

Our major challenge during this time was of course the covid-19 pandemic and the abrupt lockdown in mid-March 2020. Our conferences quickly turned to zoom for our meetings, a useful source of mutual support and collaboration as we considered how to serve our congregations under drastically changed circumstances.

This period also saw a number of pastoral transitions.

#### Delmarva North

##### Departures:

- Pr. Scott Maxwell, St. Mark, Wilmington (new call)
- Pr. Daniel Swanson, Hope, New Castle (new call)

##### Arrivals:

- Pr. Amy Wright (Hope, New Castle)
- Vicar Zach Wright (Bethel, North East)

#### Delmarva South

##### Departures:

- Pr. Mark Molter, Community, Frankford (new call)
- Pr. Mark Walters, St. Andrews (retired)

##### Arrivals:

- Deacon Mike Hiner, St. Paul, Cordova
- Pastor Robert White, St. Paul, Cordova

- Pr. Valerie Strickert, St. Andrews, Dover
- Pr Kendall Summers, Grace, Easton
- Pr. Bettye Wolinski serving Grace of God, Millsboro; Community, Frankford; and Faith, Salisbury

Yours in Christ,

Pr. Barbara Melosh (former dean, Delmarva North and South

### **Frederick Conference**

The Rev. Terri Driver-Bishop, Former Dean

I was appointed by Bishop Gohl to be Interim Dean in January 2020 after our Dean Kathy Vitalis-Hoffman received a call to a congregation in Pennsylvania. At our in-person February meeting at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Frederick, we reviewed our conference life together. Our conference decided we wanted to spend more time getting acquainted with each other and sharing what's going on in our congregations. Worship was another high priority and we decided to spend at least 20 minutes for worship in the Good Shepherd sanctuary and share Holy Communion. Other ideas included finding someone to be a "confessor" who would meet with clergy and deacons to provide spiritual counseling, to foster great connection with the synod, to create a resource guide for our own use (i.e. Angie's list for church leaders), to share best practices with one another, and find joint areas of ministry to work on together.

By our March meeting, the pandemic hit and most churches ceased in person worship. Our conference meeting took place on Zoom and continued to do so for the remainder of the year. March and April conference meetings were simply sharing with one another how we were coping in our churches and personal lives in such a chaotic and uncertain time. Our support and encouragement of one another was invaluable. Our Tuesday Pericope Study group went on Zoom also and a few new people joined, bringing the group to 9.

In June, our main topic of discussion was the death of George Floyd on May 25. A peaceful protest march was held in Frederick and a number of clergy participated. At this meeting, Kim Hintzman offered to lead a study on the book *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram Kendi. This group continues to meet twice a month for discussion.

The conference continued to meet over the summer months for mutual support though we normally do not. Topics of discussion included social media, live streaming,

and other technology in use by congregations. In August, Susan Meier from the Synod Creation Care Team joined our conference meeting to share about the Earth Charter.

September brought a conference ordination and installation service for Phil Beck and Ron Brown at Nymeo Field at Harry Grove Stadium on September 27. We welcomed these colleagues to our conference. At our conference meeting we decided to do a joint Blue Christmas service together in December on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m.. Dave Simpson, Ken Gill and Cathy Feil pulled this together and it was well attended on Zoom by laity and clergy of the conference. We also set up a conference Youtube channel.

In November we welcomed David Shank to our conference meeting who updated us on various grants available to congregations from the synod and various ways for congregations to give to the synod. At a separate meeting led by Bishop Gohl, we elected Dave Simpson to be the Dean for a three year term beginning in January 2021.

During this year of 2020, the Frederick Conference developed closer relationships with one another than I have experienced in the last 8 years. Though the year was tough for everyone, I am grateful for this blessing. A special word of thanks to Bishop Gohl for his weekly updates for rostered leaders which kept us all informed of the latest Covid-19 information and for his wisdom shared to leaders in a time of crisis.

### **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.

Pre-COVID, we alternated between meeting at the Bell Cedars Retreat Center at Carroll Lutheran Village and various host congregations. Since March 2020 and COVID 19, we have met through ZOOM.

We continue our support of the shared ministries of Carroll Lutheran Village and Carroll Lutheran School.

At Carroll Lutheran Village, we have strengthened our relationship through Lutheran Social Ministries of MD Church Relations Director Pastor Stacy Brady and newer LSSMD CEO Jeff Branch. Pastor Eileen Kelly Warner and Pastor Sarah Schofield Wright have begun service as CLV Chaplains. We also gave thanks for the ministry of Chaplain Jimmie Schwartz upon his retirement. The Westminster Conference Clergy give thanks to CLV for assistance in getting Conference Clergy vaccines.

Carroll Lutheran School has been blessed with new ministry opportunities and growth during COVID 19.

In the last two years, we have welcomed Pastor Linda Fernandez at St. Mary's Silver Run, Pastor Ginger Bennett at Holy Spirit Eldersburg, Pastor Dot Lundgren as an interim. Pastor Mike Adams retired but continues to serve. Pastor Norma Schenning and Pastor Matt Schenning have transitioned to fuller stages of retirement. Pastor Cris Frigm is deployed for a year of military service in Germany. We also have been blessed by several seminarians and vicars.

A word of gratitude for the faithfulness of our Current Secretary Pastor Charlie Marshall. We grieve the passing of Charlie's beloved wife Caroline in December 2020.

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!

The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Dubsky



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

### **ELCA Churchwide Office - Presiding Bishop**

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

We’ve learned over the past year how resilient we are as church and as people of God. It’s been a time of pain, loss, injustice and uncertainty. It has also been a time of learning, listening and trying new things — stepping out of our comfort zones and into a more digital world. This church persevered in so many ways.

The churchwide organization has been working alongside all expressions and ministries of the ELCA and our partners to provide resources, share stories, engage members and keep our programs alive as we’ve shifted our focus to responding to the pandemic.

For the generosity of this church through its COVID-19 Response Fund, for the remarkable ways in which we connected to one another, and for the innovative approaches so many of you took to engaging your communities in the gospel, I want to say thank you. Thank you for your ingenuity, and for knowing that God has a plan for us and it’s one filled with hope.

As we look to the future, I invite you to dream with me for a moment.

Imagine more people knowing Jesus. Imagine creating communities of love and justice online and in real life. Imagine our online communities and pews filled with new, young and diverse members. Imagine spending more of your time collaborating with others to have a bigger impact in our neighborhoods and in the world.

That is the future I want to build with you. We’ve all experienced God’s ability to see us through challenging times and through new seasons of life. This is an invitation to be part of something that God is doing with and through us. There’s never been a better moment to share the way of Jesus and introduce more people to community, justice and love.

In peace,  
Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop

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

The Rev. Laura Sinche

2020 was a hard year with all of our campuses closed since early March, but it was also the year that 1 of our alum was ordained and 2 began seminary!

It was also the year that one of our students had a paying internship in computer engineering and sent in donations to our ministry every time she got paid since “the Lord told me that would be good to do.”

It was also the year that a student who wasn't raised in the church asked for a semester-long Bible study over Zoom so she could learn the stories of Jesus. She wanted to participate more fully in discussions with us and the first week she was excited to finally understand what happens at Christmas and why there are angels and shepherds in nativity scenes.

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

- We have continued to meet over Zoom every Tuesday night and have welcomed guests like Pastor Dave Simpson, Pastor Susan Beck (St. Dysmas) and have strengthened connections with the Towson Counseling Center.
- Our Bible studies have actually grown during this time and we have 2 each week.
- FoodShare, the food pantry for staff and students that our ministry began, has now been fully a part of a department in the university and is run by a VISTA volunteer. This was our fondest hope for the pantry when we began it 5 years ago!

At Morgan State this has been a hard year for us, since we weren't able to gather to serve others, which is the core of our ministry.

- Gathered weekly for Bible studies and caught up with other students through texts and phone calls
- Shared our van with North Ave. Mission, a new mission start in Baltimore, since we weren't using it to transport students this year

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

- Gathered weekly through Zoom to be the community of Christ. Students held up candles (and highlighters for some reason!) every week during prayer time to be united together.
- Were grateful for new connections with our closest congregation- The Churches of the Holy Apostles and St. Stephen Lutheran. They bought us a fire pit so that we could gather several times for s'mores in their parking lot since there were no opportunities to meet together on campus, even distantly.
- Welcomed alum to talk with us about what it's like to navigate finding a congregation to connect with as a young adult

- Had an amazing conversation with Rabbi Jeremy from UMBC Hillel about our shared scripture- specifically the sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 19)

Together we:

- Welcomed a Johns Hopkins student to our on-line community and we're cheering her on as she begins an affirming Christian group on campus.
- Met over the summer and in January since all the days look the same- this was a key lifeline for students who were disconnected
- Had alumni and supporters send care packages to 36 students at exam time in December

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

The Rev. Stacey Brady, Director of Church Relations

Lutheran Social Ministries of Maryland (LSMMD) continues to fulfill its mission while being significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This past year has brought innovative approaches to caring for older adults, tested our resolve and introduced many new practices. During the past year, we have seen the grace of God work through the residents, team and the families of our communities to sustain us.

Mitigating the effects of COVID-19 are a priority. With ever-changing regulations, we have responded rapidly to the needs of our communities. We have intensified our efforts to communicate with residents, families and corporate churches.

LSMMD was among the first to mandate the vaccine. Requiring team member vaccination is part of our moral and ethical duty for keeping residents, who have entrusted us with their care, and team members, who we need and value, safe. In January 2021, we began distributing vaccinations to residents and team members. Nine clinics later, we have vaccinated the majority of our team members and 1,500 residents. Between the two communities, Carroll Lutheran Village (CLV) and Lutheran Village at Miller's Grant (LVMG), an average of 98% of assisted living residents and 95% of independent living and Health Care Center residents have been vaccinated.

We also invited the corporate churches to our clinics. In February, 26 Westminster Conference rostered leaders, including synod staff, were vaccinated at CLV. In March, 60 DE-MD Synod's rostered leaders were vaccinated at the LVMG. We were truly blessed to have been able to share this blessing with the synod—a partner in ministry.

In August 2020, we introduced LSMMD's new mission and vision statements and core values.

Mission: Lutheran Social Ministries of Maryland, guided by our faith-based values, and through collaboration with affiliated ministries and ventures, forges relationships among the broader communities, leverages organizational capacity, and identifies and explores opportunities for further service.

Vision: Reimagining aging through innovation and thoughtful stewardship.

Core Values: Respect | Innovation | Integrity | Trust | Compassionate Service | Community

Both communities are in different renovation phases. CLV is first renovating its oldest apartment building, 201, followed by apartment building 205 and the Health Care Center. LVMG is adding a new building, which will add independent living apartments and a Memory Care unit and expand the assisted living residences and Health Care Center. Plans for the Chapel/ Performing Arts Center continue.

Because a report was not submitted last year, it is important for us to now share the celebration of Chaplain Jimmie Schwartz's 25 years of ministry. Schwartz resigned on Dec. 31, 2019. We give thanks to God for the ministry he shared among residents and team members. We also acknowledge and give thanks to God for the ministry of Deacon Don Myers who retired from CLV in 2020. His contributions were many among us.

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

Elaine Wagenfuehr, CLAIM Coordinator

The year of 2020 was a challenge for all of us – personally, professionally, and financially. Even though we were “physically distanced,” the staff and members of CLAIM (Coalition of Lutherans Advancing in Mission) continued working for our member congregations. We embraced the new “zoom” era and developed opportunities for us to engage in conversations with representatives from Baltimore City, Baltimore County and churches throughout the Delaware-Maryland Synod. These zoom programs allowed us to get to know people we would not normally have an opportunity to meet.

During the past year, we tried to keep people informed of changes and updates, provided information on programs to stay involved, directed people on how to obtain assistance, and worked with Lutheran Disaster Response, the Synod Generosity Team and the Synod Hunger Task Force in identifying and supporting congregations in their efforts to provide feeding programs for those in need. Our churches responded to our requests to meet the needs of many due to the coronavirus. Donations of food, money,

clothing and time poured into our communities, and churches reached out to embrace areas where they might not normally be involved. We launched a Facebook page for people to interact “Coping in COVID Times Faithfully.”

CLAIM worked with the DE-MD Synod’s Racial Justice Ministry Team in presenting a series of Critical Conversations and book studies exploring other ways to end racism and encourage brotherly love. We joined together with both ADLA (African Descent Lutheran Association) and RJT in planning for the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration. During Advent, several of our Order of St. Stephens Deacons led a Bible Study from ELCA World Hunger and plans began for an Interfaith Lenten book study led by teams of pastors and lay leaders.

Summer found us walking individually in our first “Virtual” Walk-A-Thon, raising nearly \$2,000 for programming, and Advent brought us back together with a Bible Study from ELCA World Hunger. Thanks to this fundraiser, covenant agreement donations, and individual donations, CLAIM was able to end its fiscal year slightly above budget.

CLAIM would like to welcome Ascension Lutheran Church in Towson as our new member congregation in 2020.

In 2021, we’ll be continuing Critical Conversations with discussions on Creation Care, Black Lives Matter, and embracing our LGBTQIA brothers and sisters.

Fundraising efforts will continue with a Virtual and In-Person Walk-A-Thon on Saturday, June 12th at Cylburn Arboretum. We’ll meet (masked and socially distant) at the Welcome Center at 9am, pray together and walk to CLAIM Baltimore for Christ. Anyone who does not wish to join us in-person is also invited to do their own virtual walk themselves or with family and friends. Plans are being formulated for a virtual gathering of social ministry leaders and a Church Leaders Forum in the fall.

Our hope is that we will continue to work together in 2021 and beyond. Without the collaboration of rostered leaders and lay leaders, none of this would have or will be possible. A very heartfelt thank you from CLAIM to its Board of Directors to all the pastors, lay leaders, volunteers and attendees who give of their time to make all this possible. And a special thanks to Bishop Rev. William Gohl, Jr. and the DE-MD Synod for its continued support and encouragement.

**Delaware Lutheran Office for Public Policy**  
The Rev. Gordon Simmons, Officer

The Delaware Legislature has been operating virtually during the past year. There are still sessions and hearings, of course, which I often attend through ZOOM. During the past year, the DE Lutheran Office for Public Policy has been following two issues: (1) Environment. In January the Legislature did pass a bill which revised the way in which renewable energy sources are monitored and raised the state's goal for renewable energy from 25% by 2025 to 40% by 2035. (We were a part of a coalition urging a 50% figure, but are nonetheless pleased that the goal was raised.) (2) Education. Because of a successful lawsuit, the state has now agreed, and enabling legislation is being passed, which will over the next four years allocate at least \$60 million extra annually to schools with high percentages of low income students and students learning English. Legislation is also being considered this year to (a) extend special education services down into grades K-3 and (b) establish mental health units in elementary schools.

The DE Lutheran Office for Public Policy will hold its "Lutheran Day at the Capitol" virtually this year, on Thursday, June 17 at 7 PM. It is entitled "Lutherans Study the Environment" and will include a book discussion of Bill Gates' new book "How to Avoid a Climate Disaster." Registration for the event is now open at [delutheranpublicpolicy@gmail.com](mailto:delutheranpublicpolicy@gmail.com).

### **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 and beyond. 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.

At this point, our presence is focused on the Synod web-page, the Facebook page "DAART Disabilities Forum of the DE-MD Synod," and being consulted in individual situations. Jesus let people be seen who were differently abled. We can do that too in our churches in liturgy, architecture, etc. 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 at [PastorSandyCAlexis@gmail.com](mailto:PastorSandyCAlexis@gmail.com) for more information.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Sandra Carlson Alexis

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

Scott Hadeker, CPA, CGMA, President/CEO

We express deep appreciation for and celebrate our partnership with the Delaware-Maryland Synod and its congregations. Through Many Hands, guided by One Heart, Diakon serves people in need of all ages, especially those with limited financial resources. Mark Pile, president/CEO since 2010, retired at the end of 2020. The Diakon board of directors named Scott D. Hadecker as president/CEO, effective Jan. 1, 2021.

In 2020, Diakon provided \$20.2 million in benevolent care, including \$2.1 million within the synod.

Along with other Diakon senior living communities, Diakon Senior Living – Hagerstown/The Ravenwood & Robinwood campuses focused throughout the COVID-19 pandemic on keeping staff members and residents safe. Measures included cohorting of positively testing residents, self-quarantining for staff who test positive, use of personal protective and negative air-pressure equipment and in-person visitation limitations.

Despite these challenges, Diakon Senior Living served nearly 800 residents and family members in 2021 through senior living accommodations and assisted living communities on both campuses—the Robinwood location also provides specialized assisted living for those with Alzheimer’s disease or similar memory-related illnesses—and skilled nursing and rehabilitative care on the Ravenwood campus.

The pandemic also had a significant impact on Diakon Adult Day Services, which operated a center on the Ravenwood campus offering daytime assistance to those living at home or with a relative. Both the Hagerstown center and one in Pennsylvania closed permanently in the fall of 2020, the result of an inability of this type of in-person service to remain open. The Ravenwood center served 23 people before it was forced to close in early 2020.

Frostburg Heights, a rental-assistance senior housing community in Allegany County, served 129 people last year through both apartment accommodations and its Choice program. The senior housing complex has historically maintained a beneficial



relationship with Diakon Youth Services, which serves youths at risk of not reaching their potential for success in society.

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 1,000 in the Delaware-Maryland Synod.

Scott D. Habecker, CPA, CGMA  
President/CEO

**Hunger Task Force**  
The Rev. Fred Melton, Chair

In the 14th Chapter of Proverbs, the author states that "The one who helps the needy, honors God." This could be a simple mission statement, per se, for the hunger ministries of our Synod and our Task Force.

Over the years, the Hunger Task Force has aimed to "honor God" in two arenas of ministry: (1) Encouraging churches to be involved with and supporting the ELCA World Hunger Ministry, and (2) Supporting congregations in their efforts to respond to local hunger needs.

In 2019 (the 2020 report is not in yet), approximately 50% of our synod churches supported the ELCA World Hunger Ministry with a total of \$ 314,938.00. Praise God for that generosity and the honoring of God. Part of the World Hunger ministries include funds used to support hunger projects in the USA, Domestic Hunger Grants, which provide up to \$10,000 grants per awarded applicant for three years. The Task Force helped to review several applicant congregations and agencies and in the past three years, five churches/agencies in our synod have received such support for addressing hunger issues on our territory.

In 2020, the HTF "partnered" with 35 churches and agencies, to raise a total of \$ 59,000.00 in support of feeding ministries. This included 13 churches who received \$500 matching grants for local food pantries and \$1,000 -\$5,000 in grants to 16 ministries sites for hunger ministries. The above local feeding ministries were diversified in ministries and sites across our territory, including such projects as: School backpack meals for children, expanded gardens for fresh foods donated to local pantries, hot meals for seniors, funds for non-perishables distributed to local food sites, etc.

The Task Force adopted 5 Goals for 2021. (1) To encourage ongoing, expanded congregational support of the ELCA World Hunger Program; (2) To build deeper supportive relationships with churches with "Feeding Ministries;" (3) To partner with



8-10 churches for new “\$500 Matching Grants” for local food ministries; (4) To ‘expand our vision’ of food ministries beyond direct food support, to include addressing root causes of hunger; and (5) To raise \$40,000 to support food ministries on our territory.

The Task Force prays for and encourages additional partnership with our synod churches . . .and to contact us for local support, ideas and to help generate additional funding for “helping the needy (and hungry),” to honor God.

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

Deacon Mindy Holland, Chaplain

The past year has strengthened my awareness of God’s provision in the face of challenges and the grace that comes in noticing and claiming silver linings midst even the hardest situations. The students of Lutheran Campus Ministry at UD are a resilient and inspiring group! After a strong beginning to spring term last February, including a student-led rotation of *Fellowship in Serving the Hungry* (FISH), our world tipped on its axis. I vividly recall standing in the chapel foyer with student leaders on March 10, not really wanting to leave. I was wondering, “Is this the last time that we can do this? How will COVID-19 affect LCM?” Having seen the unsettled looks on their faces that night, I imagine that their unspoken thoughts were similar. The next day, the first Delaware cases were diagnosed on campus, and the residence halls were closed. On March 17, our LCM group began gathering online, and by mid-April, convening via *Zoom* had become our norm and our community space for all things, whether worship, Bible study, one-on-one connections, or Exec Board meetings. It was a new day, and the students responded quickly and well to the changes.

In the midst of *Zooming* through 2020, it was tough to release opportunities for ice cream runs and game nights, apple picking and hayrides, and the treasured, in-person fellowship of our Senior Honor Night, fall fundraiser, and Advent party. Who could imagine LCM without our cornerstone Tuesday dinners?! And yet...and yet...The students of Lutheran Campus Ministry have remained committed to gathering, supporting one another, exploring God’s Word, and discussing hard topics of faith and life together in this new context. After attending online information sessions, hosted by student leaders, 3 new members were warmly welcomed to our group last fall, with 2 additional folks this spring; their presence and contributions have enriched our circle. Lutheran Campus Ministry continues to thrive and to provide a sacred space for students to grow in faith, discipleship, leadership, and community, even though it looks very different just now!

In addition, this year has brought deeper, stronger connections with LCM alumni. On many occasions since springtime, former students have “*Zoomed*” in to join us on Tuesdays, and an alumni-only group has convened via *Zoom* at least five times. As chaplain, I have shared more intentional pastoral care conversations with alumni than in past years, recognizing that many of them are living alone in apartments far from their families of origin and needing support and spiritual encouragement as much as our current students. Three of our alumni are also sharing their talents on our board!

LCM’s Directing Committee (board) members have remained faithful, prayerful, active, and engaged throughout these COVID-19 times, especially regarding property improvements. Over the summer, the bathroom in our student tenant apartments received a complete renovation, conducted almost exclusively by dedicated volunteers, and our chapel received welcome upgrades, tender care, and new painting inside and out. Our remarkably supportive bishop, the Rev. Bill Gohl, even traveled to Newark to take up a brush and join us for the socially distanced property day on October 7!

Since we could not gather in person for our annual fundraiser, we compiled and shared a devotional booklet with our LCM constituents and created and posted an LCM promotional video on *YouTube*: <https://tinyurl.com/whylcm>. We are deeply grateful for the generous, heart-warming response to these activities, including support from individuals, congregations, and our ever-supportive synod. What an incredible blessing! Thank you, thank you, to all of you who support Lutheran Campus Ministry at UD with your prayers, your caring, and your financial support. Our hearts rejoiced greatly over the outpouring of generosity at year’s end, and most recently, we are celebrating the news that LCM has been awarded a grant of \$16,472 from National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc., toward replacement of our chapel’s roof and flooring.

Thanks be to God! Please continue to keep our students, our staff, and our entire LCM community in your prayers, that we may continue to shine with the light of Christ and to serve faithfully and joyfully to the glory of God. †



## **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service**

Dr. Kristin Witte, Director for Outreach

Greetings siblings in Christ of the Delaware-Maryland Synod,

It has been a difficult year for all of us. Despite restrictive policy changes and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, LIRS has remained committed to our biblical mandate to welcome the stranger. In the last year:

- 2,782 refugees were welcomed through LIRS affiliates in 23 states.
- 440 unaccompanied migrant children were served through our foster care services and placed in loving homes during and after legal proceedings.
- 9,500 asylum seekers received Safe Release and Post Release services at our Southern border.

Even in these darkest of days, thousands of people from across the country partnered with LIRS to express their support for migrants and refugees through our annual programs and advocacy efforts. The compassion of our neighbors gives us hope, and we are proud to report that in the last year:

- 16,000 holiday cards and 500 gifts were sent to migrant children and families in detention through our annual Hope for the Holidays program.
- More than 600 ELCA clergy and lay leaders signed a letter drafted by the ELCA and LIRS urging Congress to work collaboratively to advance comprehensive immigration legislation.
- LIRS' work was featured on national platforms like NPR, the Washington Post, Center for American Progress, Religion News Service, The Christian Century, and Sojourners.

We are especially grateful for the congregations and communities in the Delaware-Maryland Synod who have continued their generous and prayerful support. We could not do this work without you.

Now, that work is expanding. In the coming year, the U.S. expects to welcome 125,000 refugees to our shores. LIRS is actively looking to congregations and faith leaders to partner with us in ways big and small, including donations, volunteer work, and participation in our annual programming. Emmaus: Congregational Discernment Network launches this spring for congregations to discern how they can best walk alongside refugees and migrants in their community, and Stand Up Speak Up, coming in Pentecost, is a new interfaith prayer vigil focused on advocacy. We encourage you to stay up to date on opportunities for individual and congregational engagement at the LIRS Action Center, found at [www.lirsconnect.org/get\\_involved](http://www.lirsconnect.org/get_involved).

With your support, we will continue to live our mission: witnessing to God's love for all people, standing with and advocating for migrants and refugees, and transforming communities through ministries of service and justice. Thank you for accompanying LIRS and our migrant and refugee siblings through 2021 and beyond. God bless you.

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

Sarah Lefler, Executive Director

I am not sure where to begin as I sum up my report for the year. So, I will begin with a prayer of thanks for the synod's continued support and prayers during what has proven to be a year like no other! I appreciate your personal concern and prayers, as well. God is present.

We were blessed to serve 2,000 people through small retreats, winter retreats before COVID, and cabin camping. It was a joy to welcome families into our cabins and lodge for time away, campfires, swimming, hiking, and rest. Many families came more than once, and all were grateful for the new environment after being home for so long. Dozens of camper families used the opportunity to get a taste of summer camp for their children, and we were so glad to see them enjoying the Ridge in this new way.

Our service core value came into play as we hosted the Emergency Family Shelter for the Religious Coalition of Frederick County during June and July. We have partnered with this ministry in the past, and serving them in this way was a blessing for us all. With the help of our chef, Tim Waskiewicz, and our baker, Paulette Harvey, we began a Bread Ministry. We have served congregations and community groups in local areas and in

Baltimore – Lutheran and Episcopal. It has been wonderful to provide food for the body and soul. To date, Paulette has baked 28,000 rolls and loaves.

The benevolence received from the synod helped us keep our operations going. We worked very hard to cut costs and to utilize the PPP loan we received, as well as two legacy gifts, to pay for staff payroll, summer staff payroll and lodging, and employee benefits. Knowing that we had dependable income was a relief, and it is appreciated more than I can express. Thank you for your continued commitment to outdoor ministry.

We look forward with great excitement to welcoming campers back to the mountain this summer. All safety measures are in place in accordance with the American Camp Association, the CDC, and the state of Maryland. Our health care team, led by Dr. Lindsay Fitch has been instrumental in policy development, and our summer staff is enthusiastic and ready to serve!

I know that our challenges are not fully behind us, but we are on solid ground because of our synod support, our generous and faithful donor community, and our ability to serve in new ways. We thank God for the strong foundation of community here at Mar-Lu-Ridge. The synod is an important part of that foundation, and we thank you for your support.

### **Mission Investment Fund**

The Rev. Kent Peterson, Regional Manager

The Mission Investment Fund, a financial services ministry of the ELCA, provides a strong, stable, faith-based way for individuals, congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals.

MIF provides a range of investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. We put those investments to work to fund building and renovation loans for congregations and ministries.

The result? Impact investments, with a transformative impact on our communities: Expanded worship spaces ... new space for education and youth ministry ... much-needed day care centers for working families ... industrial-grade kitchens and fellowship halls for community meals.

During the year-long pandemic, MIF provided assistance to investors who needed immediate access to their funds and to borrowers who needed flexibility with their loan payments. We collaborated with our ministry partner, the ELCA Federal Credit Union, to offer expedited loans for congregations, ministries and individuals, as well as Paycheck Protection Program loans for congregations and ministries to keep employees on the payroll and continue operations.

Our capabilities and capacity have never been stronger. At year-end 2020, MIF had 883 loans outstanding, totaling \$596.4 million. Investment obligations totaled \$543.1 million. With total assets of \$773.8 million and net assets of \$218.2 million at year-end 2020, MIF maintains a capital ratio of 28.20 percent—positioning MIF in the top tier of well-capitalized church extension funds.

Our steadfast support continues for the members, congregations and ministries of the ELCA and the many ways you care for a world in need. We are honored and humbled to walk alongside you as a trusted partner.

For more information about MIF capabilities, please visit our website, [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org).

## **Mosaic**

Linda Timmons, Mosaic President and CEO

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

During the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, we at Mosaic shared a consistent message with those we support, our workforce, donors and volunteers: Hope Beyond Measure.

As a faith-based organization and affiliated social-ministry of the ELCA, that message is core to who Mosaic is. In our 108-year history, no matter what challenges we faced, God ensured that Mosaic endured and thrived.

That was true in 2020 as well.

Hope beyond measure sustained the people we support to learn new things, even while staying physically isolated for their safety. One young man we support learned how to bake the chocolate cakes he has always loved to eat. A young woman we support learned how to read, and is proud to have now read more than 200 books.

Hope beyond measure sustained our workforce to power through really difficult situations. All of our staff members spend their shifts wearing masks, and many have gowned up, gloved up, goggled up, and worn N-95 masks to continue serving people who contracted the virus.

Hope beyond measure sustained our donors, even when they too were facing challenges. Mosaic is in the middle of a five-year comprehensive campaign and our faithful donors helped us meet our fundraising goals – even in the midst of a pandemic.

Hope beyond measure gave Mosaic the conviction to grow, and we've acquired services in four New England states that operate under the name Living Innovations. We know that for the long-term success of Mosaic, we must grow and expand our mission.

So, 2020 presented challenges like none other in my memory. But the year also reaffirmed God's faithfulness to this important work. We are grateful to call you partners.

We are grateful to call you partners.

### **Practice Discipleship: A Young Adult Ministry of the Delaware-Maryland Synod**

Clara Matucci

“A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:32-33

This passage was the core scripture from the February 2020 young adult retreat, and how prescient it turned out to be!

Practice Discipleship (PD), the young adult ministry in the DE-MD Synod, offers up brave space to explore together what it means to be the people of God and we discern our call to discipleship by listening to each other, to the needs of the world, and to God. PD is active and present in all who have ever touched PD, whether gathered or scattered across the Synod (and the globe!) in our own physical homes and communities.

Our foundation in listening guides us always. The highlights in this report come out of a reflective open conversation, published on our website: [demdyoungadults.org/2020](https://demdyoungadults.org/2020).

Our community shared experiencing Zoom fatigue, being “crushed by obligation,” feeling anxious and overwhelmed. With this in mind, we balanced much-needed refuge with space-making, creating opportunities to check in and listen to each other while taking time to prune. Amidst the friction and conflict ever-present throughout 2020, we used our existing infrastructure as a geographically diffuse but spiritually tight-knit community to explore and navigate peace with great intention and a focus on grace.

In January, as requested by 2019 retreat participants, we started “brunch church,” gathering monthly to worship with various congregations in DE/MD. In February we gathered physically at Mar-Lu-Ridge for the Peace & Conflict retreat. As the pandemic progressed, we listened to scientists and our leaders and chose to continue Brunch Church virtually through June, including a special virtual Easter gathering. We turned our spring event into an ongoing listening project, modeled after Story Corp, where participants interviewed each other or other people in their lives to share each other’s stories. We beta-tested the ELCA’s new 25th anniversary study guide for the social statement “For Peace in God’s World.” During the Christmas season we co-hosted weekly Wednesday Advent worship in partnership with Mar-Lu-Ridge, sent Christmas cards across the country, and hosted a virtual Christmas movie night, Christmas Eve worship and Christmas Day devotions written by the whole of our community. Other virtual touchpoints throughout 2020 included weekly huddles, small groups, and drop-in Bible studies, two community surveys, and regular Monday Motivations posted on social media. Overall our events and activities touched 311 participants in 2020.

Guided by the participation and feedback from these events, we kicked off our 2021 theme, Sanctuary, with a self-guided curriculum. We are planning with intention for the future, and anticipate starting virtual game nights and a Sanctuary group study in early summer.

Our closing passage, from “Sanctuary,” beautifully captures the humanity and communal spirit of PD: we are, each and all, God’s temple, anchored in community and in listening to the needs of each other and of the world around us.

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” 1 Corinthians 3:16

**Racial Justice Ministry Team**



“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (NRSV Micah 6:8)

It has been a year where we have felt like we were here for “such a time as this.” The national call for racial reckoning was simultaneously motivating and humbling for our team. Overall, the national focus on the sin of racism has been a sort of relief valve for this team. The team has been in existence for decades. Yet, until now, we have had very little success in garnering open ears, minds and hearts for the actions that need to be taken. A side-effect of this is that over the past few years as our siblings of color have become exhausted, our team has gradually become a team that is comprised mostly of white folks working to support our siblings of color.



The summer of 2020 presented us with a unique opportunity to reach out to Lutherans around the Synod and help them engage in learning about racism. Looking back, most people now realize that we were physically isolated, moving our lives into virtual spaces and at the same time bombarded with images of racism that we could not avoid. We were blessed with the support of the Synod staff that allowed us to create many online spaces to spread the message of anti-racism. We were able to update our website at that time and have since refreshed it with new information every few months. Early in 2021 we activated an email list in Mailchimp that has about 200 subscribers. And, thanks to a volunteer, we are actively engaged on Facebook with a small group of 72 members and growing.

Thanks go out to those who were able to volunteer to teach us during the “Listen and Learn” series in July and August, 2020. This series of 4 lectures on Zoom attracted the attention of nearly 200 people and engaged about 130. The series was also used in congregations. The video recordings and Powerpoint slides are now available on our website for future use.

Thanks to one of our dedicated committee members, we were able to expand a Movie and Faith Discussion program from The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Bel Air, Maryland, to the entire Synod through Zoom. The leader selects a movie each month that people can watch on their own and then get together on Zoom to discuss it. People who join these discussions are able to explore themes and feelings about racism, how to connect that to their faith, and possible actions to foster change.

Another project was to hire a minority-owned business to work with us to create a devotional series entitled “What God Says > What we Say.” The series explored difficult scripture lessons through a racial justice lens. The series was used in at least 6 different worship communities during Lent 2021. The videos and printed study guide are also now available on our website for future use.

The team was approached by a church member about the idea of creating a yard sign with the synod logo to publicly witness to anti-racism. With this volunteer, we made “Think, Pray and Act to End Racism” signs available at a cost of \$20. We had 5 congregations order signs including their church logo as well – 50 of which were ordered by Salem Lutheran church in Catonsville, Maryland.

In 2021 we formed a partnership with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Interfaith Coalition and the Racial Justice Circle. Coalition events give us another way to show public support for siblings of color in Baltimore and the surrounding counties. They also connect us with related public events such as recent rallies against Asian hate, and remembrance ceremonies held by the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project.

We have been working with Synod Council to study the Strategy on Authentic Diversity and to see what goals we can implement in our synod. The Strategy for Authentic Diversity was written by representatives of each ethnic organization of the ELCA as their goals they, as people of color, would like to see accomplished to work for racial justice in the ELCA, and was adopted by the 2019 ELCA National Assembly. By working with Synod Council to concretely identify how our synod can change policies and procedures in accordance with the Strategy, we hope to make systemic change in our own synod.

The most recent project we have taken on, thanks to many volunteers and the mentorship of the Racial Justice Circle, is to proactively engage with an entire congregation in a dialogue and learning series entitled “Honest Conversations on Racism”. We are grateful to Ascension Lutheran Church in Towson, Maryland who have 50 disciples participating in this pilot program. This series is a group conversation for 4 weeks, one evening a week. The congregation sits together (on Zoom or in person when it is allowed) to reflect on the video “Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity” and other current relevant material. At the end of the series, each person individually and the congregation collectively makes a pledge to continue to learn and take action against the many forms of racism that they encounter.

Of course, as with much church work, we are a small group who are stretched thin. The intensity of the past year has also made us more keenly aware of the work that has yet to

be accomplished. As a Synod within the ELCA, we have our own internalized racism that we must be aware of and consciously combat. We have many more people who chose NOT to engage in this work than those who have chosen to be engaged. Our prayer is that each person reading this will take the ELCA Anti-Racism pledge on the ELCA website (<https://elca.org/racialjusticepledge>) and consistently work through it. We think you will find that approaching life as a chance to “do justice” will deepen your faith and show you more clearly how to be Jesus in our world today.

### **Seafarers International House**

The Rev. Bob Schmitt

Greetings from the Port of Baltimore,

Like all ministries in this time of pandemic serving others in person has been a challenge. In March like all things, we shut down transport and visits. We resumed in June visits and limited transport in July and August. Fall though led to another pull back to only visits as shippers and our own Custom and Boarder Petrol restricted many seafarers to no shore leave. This meant ships came into the Baltimore Harbor, but land was unreachable for seafarers.

Christmas also provided a challenge as many of our congregations were not gathering to do things such as assembling our typical Christmas Gifts to seafarers. Thanks be to God though that many gathered things anyway and packed at their homes to provide hundreds of Christmas Satchels to our visiting seafarers.

Three things in the midst of the pandemic stood out for me. First our partner the Baltimore International Seafarers Center (BISC) provided important comfort when at the Dundalk Marine Terminal a tragic loss of life occurred in an accident for a seafarer. I was visiting that day but my colleague Pastor Don Bryant who had visited the ship the day before this happened returned to offer comfort on behalf of our ministry to those he had met the day before.

Second, was a visit I did to a regular ship visiting us at the Lazaretto terminal in Canton, where a female seafarer from Poland expressed her frustration during Covid being unable to visit sites in Baltimore. With a little effort we provided her with gifts and tourist information encouraging her so the next time we prayed she would be able to experience Baltimore.

Third was related to the Christmas Satchels. With a Thrivent Action grant I secured a reserve Officer who drills at the Navy Systems Support Center adjacent to the grounds of

Ft. McHenry worked with his unit to prepare 25 Christmas Satchels for fellow seafarers who visited Baltimore. Pictures are on both the SIH and BISC social media.

Although 2020 has been a challenging year, especially with our main funding source, the New York Seafarers house closed for months, we are very thankful for support of Congregations, members, and

the DEMD synod of this vital ministry. Something we all learned more about in 2021 in the news when many of our ships to Baltimore were delayed by the Suez Canal being clogged by a sister ship to those that visit the Seagirt terminal. For more information visit the Seafarers International House Website [www.sihnyc.org](http://www.sihnyc.org).