



# HUNGRY for GOD'S MISSION

2019 LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Because electing a bishop is one of the most important responsibilities in the life of a synod and a key responsibility of the Synod Assembly, our Synod Council calls us to prayerful deliberation. As an election, it is a process governed by the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of our synod; however, it is also a call process. As such, it involves discernment, from the perspective both of individuals and of our synod as a whole. Thus, engaging in prayerful reflection and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit are indispensable aspects of the process of nomination and election. To assist with our spiritual discernment, we have prepared devotions for the Winter and Spring conference assemblies. We trust God to guide our community in engaging a prayerful process for discerning God's will.

## Spring Conference Assembly Devotional

L: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

### Psalm 139: 1-18, 23-24 (Read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

<sup>2</sup>**You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.**

<sup>3</sup>You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>**Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.**

<sup>5</sup>You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup>**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.**

<sup>7</sup>Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?

<sup>8</sup>**If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.**

<sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

<sup>10</sup>**even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.**

<sup>11</sup>If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,"

<sup>12</sup>**even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.**

<sup>13</sup>For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>**I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.**

<sup>15</sup>My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

*(Continued on next page)*

**<sup>16</sup>Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.**

<sup>17</sup>How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

**<sup>18</sup>I try to count them — they are more than the sand; I come to the end — I am still with you.**

<sup>23</sup>Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.

**<sup>24</sup>See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.**

**Prayer:**

God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Grant us we pray, to be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. That which we know not, reveal; that which is wanting in us, fill up; that which we know, confirm; and keep us blameless in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**Bible Study**

**Prayer:**

We thank you, God, for this gift of scripture, where we may read and stand as if before a mirror, locating our frailties together with a passion for following Jesus, the God of peace. Lead us, Lord. Guide us, along the way. Let us see the good that we can do, and do it. Keep us mindful of the stakes of the matter as we practice believing according to your way. In the name of your Son, we pray,

**C: Amen.**

**Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20**

<sup>13</sup>When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup>They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup>"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup>Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup>Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

**Reflection Questions:**

- Why did people think that Jesus was a resurrected prophet?
- How do you interpret the insight, power and authority given to Peter?
- What do the Keys to the Kingdom bind/loose in today's church?
- What adjective would people use to describe a bishop?

**Prayer:**

Heavenly Creator, you revealed yourself to us in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Continue to reveal yourself to us through Christ's presence with us and through the witness of all we encounter. Thanks be to you for the work that ELCA members do in countries throughout the world. May your revelation to us in Jesus Christ instill in us the call to serve all people, strengthened through your Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

**Hymn:** (ELW #401) Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading

**Responsive Prayer:**

L: Come, Holy Spirit!

**C: Come, Holy Spirit!**

L: Come, breath of God and fill the minds and hearts of your people.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit;**

L: Come, fire of truth and kindle in us the flame of your love.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit!**

L: Come, font of wisdom, enlighten us and give us counsel and insight.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit!**

L: Come, leading spirit and guide our discerning.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit!**

L: Come, Holy Spirit!

**C: Holy Spirit, come.**

**Prayer:**

Almighty God, you have given your Holy Spirit to the church to lead us into all truth. Bless with the Spirit's grace and presence the people of our Lower Susquehanna Synod as we prepare to elect a bishop. Keep us steadfast in faith and united in love, that we may manifest your glory and prepare the way of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**Prayer:**

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

L: Let us bless the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

L: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**



**Lower Susquehanna Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



A Reconciling in Christ Synod

***Where the hungry are fed as we have been fed by Christ by:***

- Equipping Leaders
- Encouraging Cooperation
- Engaging in New Mission

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