



# 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.

## Winter Conference Assembly Devotional

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

C: Amen.

### Psalm 104 (Read Responsively)

<sup>1</sup>Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty,

<sup>2</sup>**wrapped in light as with a garment. You stretch out the heavens like a tent,**

<sup>3</sup>you set the beams of your chambers on the waters, you make the clouds your chariot, you ride on the wings of the wind,

<sup>4</sup>**you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.**

<sup>5</sup>You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken.

<sup>6</sup>**You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.**

<sup>7</sup>At your rebuke they flee; at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.

<sup>8</sup>**They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them.**

<sup>9</sup>You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.

<sup>10</sup>**You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills,**

<sup>11</sup>giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst.

<sup>12</sup>**By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches.**

<sup>13</sup>From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

<sup>14</sup>**You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth,**

<sup>15</sup>and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart.

<sup>16</sup>**The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.**

<sup>17</sup>In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees.

<sup>18</sup>**The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the coney. (continued on next page)**

<sup>19</sup>You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting.

<sup>20</sup>**You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.**

<sup>21</sup>The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.

<sup>22</sup>**When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens.**

<sup>23</sup>People go out to their work and to their labor until the evening.

<sup>24</sup>**O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.**

<sup>25</sup>Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great.

<sup>26</sup>**There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.**

<sup>27</sup>These all look to you to give them their food in due season;

<sup>28</sup>**when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.**

<sup>29</sup>When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

<sup>30</sup>**When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.**

<sup>31</sup>May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works —

<sup>32</sup>**who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.**

<sup>33</sup>I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

<sup>34</sup>**May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.**

<sup>35</sup>Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD, O my soul. Praise the LORD!

### **Prayer:**

O God, through water and the Holy Spirit, you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life. Stir up in your people the gift of the Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **Bible Study: John 21:1-21a**

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea.

But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. *(continued on next page)*

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

### **Reflection:**

Jesus is standing on the shore while the disciples are about 100 yards offshore. At the miraculous catch of fish, the Beloved Disciple recognizes Jesus – they had not recognized him to this point. Peter, stripped to his loincloth for work, covers himself, jumps in and swims to Jesus, leaving the other disciples to struggle with the net. Peter, however, is the one who goes back to the boat and single-handedly drags the net ashore at Jesus’ request. The fish and the bread remind us of the feeding of the 5,000. Jesus’ hosting a meal for the disciples connects to the Eucharist.

### **Consider the following questions:**

- What does Jesus mean by “feed my sheep?” What message can our synod and/or bishop take from Jesus’ directive to “feed my sheep”?
- What do verses four through six tell us about the work we set out to do in the world and Jesus’ involvement in that work?
- Taking Simon Peter away from the others, Jesus goes to where the pain is and asks the question that goes to the heart of it all, “Do you love me?” As the question is answered, the response is a command. A fresh challenge. A new commission. How does the new commission that Jesus gives Peter express hope for the future?

**Hymn:** (ELW #528) “Come and Fill Our Hearts”

### **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!**

*(continued on next page)*

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, by the power of the Spirit you have knit your servants into the one body of your Son, Jesus Christ. Look with favor upon your servants who are discerning their calling in Christ's name, including those who are discerning whether they have the gifts and attributes to be open to a call to be bishop of our synod. Give them courage, patience, and vision. Strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness in the world and of service to others, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

**Prayer:**

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, look on your church with grace and guide the minds of those who shall elect the bishop of our Lower Susquehanna Synod, that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries, 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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