

Conference/Cluster Bible Study Gatherings

A Conversation Regarding the Election of a Synod Bishop

AGENDA

10:00am – 11:30am

Welcome/Purpose of Gathering

- Introductions
- Agenda and timeline for gathering
- Election of a synod bishop: discernment and call process

The Synod We Are

- Overview of Research and Evaluation reports and data
- What is a synod?
 1. Working definition: “to walk along side” or “to accompany”
 2. ELCA Constitutional provisions
 - ELCA Constitutional provisions
 - *Constitutions for Synods, Chapter 6*
 3. Synod mission statement/strategic plan

Worship and Bible Study/Dwelling in the Word

- Responsive prayer:

L: Show us your mercy, O God,
C: and grant us your salvation.

L: Give peace in all the world,
C: for only in you can we live in safety.

L: Keep the nations under your care,
C: and guide us in the way of justice and truth

L: Let your way be known upon the earth;
C: your saving health among all nations.

L: Let not the needy be forgotten,
C: nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

L: Create in me a clean heart, O God,
C: and sustain me with your Holy Spirit.

L: Lord, hear my prayer,
C: and let my cry come before you.

Let us pray: Great Counselor, we ask your spirit to hover over us as we seek your will and your words as our synod will call a new Bishop in May 2018. Keep us open to your will. Provide us with courage and determination as we journey as a synod to talk with each other, pray collectively and individually and we are patient with the process put forth. Speak Lord Jesus for we are open to your voice. **Amen.**

- **Leading God’s People**

Leader: Exodus 18: 1-12

18 Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. ²After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro took her back, ³along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he

said, “I have been an alien^[a] in a foreign land”),⁴ and the name of the other, Eliezer^[b] (for he said, “The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh”).⁵ Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, came into the wilderness where Moses was encamped at the mountain of God, bringing Moses’ sons and wife to him.⁶ He sent word to Moses, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you, with your wife and her two sons.”⁷ Moses went out to meet his father-in-law; he bowed down and kissed him; each asked after the other’s welfare, and they went into the tent.⁸ Then Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel’s sake, all the hardship that had beset them on the way, and how the LORD had delivered them.⁹ Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the LORD had done to Israel, in delivering them from the Egyptians.

¹⁰Jethro said, “Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh. ¹¹Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because he delivered the people from the Egyptians,^[c] when they dealt arrogantly with them.” ¹²And Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law in the presence of God.

Speak Lord Jesus for we are open to your voice. Amen.

Table group discussion: Exodus 18: 13-27

¹³The next day Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening. ¹⁴When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?” ¹⁵Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God.” ¹⁷Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. ¹⁹Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God; ²⁰teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. ²¹You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. ²²Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. ²³If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace.”

²⁴So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. ²⁵Moses chose able men from all Israel and appointed them as heads over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. ²⁶And they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any minor case they decided themselves. ²⁷Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went off to his own country.

Speak Lord Jesus for we are open to your voice. Amen.

