



## ANNUAL GATHERING ANNOUNCEMENT

Greetings to the Via de Cristo 4<sup>th</sup> Day Community.

**After much consideration and prayer, the NLS Executive Board has made the unanimous decision to cancel the upcoming face-to-face 2020 Annual Gathering in St. Paul, Minnesota, July 29-August 2.** With the state of our world and the Coronavirus rapidly spreading, we felt compelled to take action and relieve the VdC Community from wondering whether the Annual Gathering will be held or not.

Note that, because of the National Lutheran Secretariat Constitution, we ***MUST hold an Annual Meeting of Delegates.*** The details will follow.

For several weeks now, we have been compiling a Plan B for the Annual Gathering/Meeting. We will send all the information you need to participate virtually as a family of God.

In the following weeks, you will receive instructions/directions on how the virtual business meeting will be conducted and how to access the webinars. We will plan, research and try to make the whole process as easy as possible. Please bear with us as we travel through this unknown territory.

The elected leadership of each Secretariat should designate their delegate/delegates and Clergy delegate by **May 1**. Jeanne Gaston, NLS Secretary, needs to have those names and emails by May 15. Her email is [Secretary@viadecristo.org](mailto:Secretary@viadecristo.org). If you are unsure how many delegates your Secretariat is allotted, please contact Jeanne.

Items on the Business Meeting Agenda, that require voting by the delegates, will be sent out to the entire community by June 1 --- so that each community member can review, discuss and then officially provide their delegate/s with feedback.

Although we will not gather face-to-face this summer, we still have pieces of business to complete as part of this organization. One such item is the Election of Officers. We request that you search your hearts and minds, spend some time in prayer, and consider running for one of the three positions that will be on the ballot. Please go to [viadecristo.org](http://viadecristo.org) for information on the three open positions.

We trust that God leads us through this challenging time in history and that each of you and your families will be safe in His peace.

Our hope is in the Lord.

Wendy Showalter - President, Debbie Klatt - VP of Administration, Lindsay Daughtery - VP of Outreach, Pastor Sue Beall - Spiritual Director, Jeanne Gaston - Secretary, Jim Ryan - Treasurer

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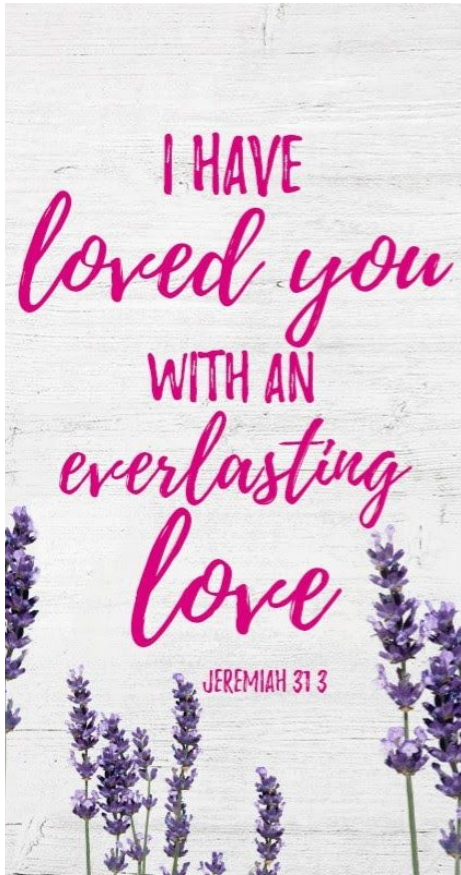
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Find the National Lutheran Secretariat online at: [www.viadecristo.org](http://www.viadecristo.org)



**Our Mission Statement:**  
By grace, with the Holy Spirit, we challenge leaders to discover and achieve their personal calling, assisting them to influence their environments with the Gospel.



## AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY

### WOW! What an outstanding and amazing opportunity we have!!

As many of you have already heard, the Annual Gathering for Via de in St. Paul, Minnesota has been changed. We have canceled our “in-person” gathering to an online format. I’m actually intrigued and excited to explore how we will be conducting our virtual business meeting. This will be a learning curve for myself and other Executive Board members.

We will have as much information available to you prior to the scheduled date of the July meeting. We also hope to give you an opportunity to watch webinars of different subjects and workshops associated with our weekends and secretariats. So, as we explore this unknown territory, we would appreciate prayers and guidance you may have. All suggestions are welcome.

I wonder how many Cursillistas can now have the opportunity to participate in the Annual Gathering. Think about it, some people who cannot travel, health, family or work issues, can now join us!!

We are also planning the 2021 Annual Gathering in Texas, so watch for future information!

Debbie Klatt  
NLS Vice President of Administration

## TAX ADVISOR REPORT

Greetings to all Via de Cristo 4<sup>th</sup> Dayers. This is the first time I’ve submitted an article for the Conexiones Newsletter and for a while I’ve been stumped on what to write. I decided to give you a peek into what I do in my appointed position as Nonprofit Compliance/Tax Advisor for the National Lutheran Secretariat (NLS). It’s a dry subject for most, but I enjoy it.

I work behind the scenes for the NLS to monitor new and revised laws and regulations related to nonprofit operations and tax compliance for organizations incorporated in the state of Minnesota (MN). I have experience researching insurance laws and regulations and serving on my local VdC secretariat and Kairos board for several years so I’m comfortable in this role and I accepted the appointment to do what I can to help the NLS. My main resources for laws/regulations are the MN Council of Nonprofits and various websites that cover legislative actions in the MN House of Representatives and MN Senate. Rarely are there changes that impact NLS, but when they do, I forward them to the NLS Executive Board. For the record, there were no relevant changes in 2019 and so far in 2020 there are no relevant proposed legislation.

I also work on special requests from the NLS to research topics of interest. For example, we are researching the need to designate a MN registered agent with the MN Secretary of State to overcome the requirement to change our business address every two to four years as our board members change. In addition, I’ve reviewed proposed changes to NLS bylaws and started drafting a Via de Cristo logo and trademark policy for our new website.

I want to wish everyone a blessed Easter season. During the trying times of the world’s COVID-19 pandemic, I pray that you will find peace and hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

De Colores!  
Rhonda Balsley

## THIS THING IS GETTIN' REAL

I hope this article finds everyone well and sheltered, but, statistically, that's not universally likely. Maybe it's basic writers block, or just a lack of focused attention which is interfering with the production of a cogent article about NLS happenings, plans and excitement for our Annual Gathering.

Lynn and I worship and serve at a small mission church which caters to the "least and the lost". A typical week will find us helping cook, serve and clean up at a free sit-down menu-driven breakfast for the community every Sunday. Four weeks ago, we celebrated the mission's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving the Pasco County Florida area's needs. A few days before this celebration we had served breakfast number 60,000. This breakfast has been the backbone of a ministry dedicated to living out *Matthew 25* in small ways, replacing despair with dignity, if only for a few minutes each week.

Somewhere between that Sunday evening celebration dinner and the following Sunday morning, the world felt like it had turned upside down. Gone was the elbow-to-elbow breakfast chatter and in its place was a line of cars and bicycles and more than a few on foot, each anxiously awaiting a take-out container of eggs and pancakes. In place of a menu, we have quarantine, social distancing and/or shelter in place as our newest daily conversation additives. And, of course, we must give thanks for the endless number of media networks who are committed to bringing each of us the latest facts and headlines, each attempting to out-sensationalize all others. When I wonder if things could get worse, I know all I need do is flip the channel selector and another *Breaking News Headline* will confirm our worst fears.

Besides breakfast on Sunday, we serve as a dinner meal-site on Thursdays. Last night we found a line of cars extending nearly a block in length – 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the food distribution. In less than 45 minutes we had run out of meals, family food packs and most of our supply of "pack-a-sack", a nutrition supplemental program focused on children living in homes experiencing food-scarcity. This thing is getting real!!! And fast.

But, as Jesus told the crowd in Luke 12:32, "Do not be afraid little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom". And in verse 35, he reminds his followers that none of us know the day or the hour when the Master will choose to return. As we live forward some 2000+ years, that Kingdom is still available to us, here - each and every day. If we strive, we can live in that Kingdom. All we need is faith and a willingness to allow love and forgiveness to triumph over hatred, bigotry and exclusion... and maybe a mask and some hand sanitizer.

By the time this article goes to print the landscape will have changed again, perhaps multiple times. Will we see each other in Minneapolis in July – I hope so. But if safety and prudence dictates deferral we will survive that as well. Until then, to paraphrase Mark 14:8 "We'll do what we can".

The only certainties are Luke 12 and Matthew 25. All I can offer is that in this time of stress, I find myself recalling a very familiar first sentence... Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful with the fire of your love....

God Loves You and So Do I..... DeColores  
Jim Ryan - NLS Treasure



## REGION 2 REPORT

“What I have heard from God is now mine to pass on to you—on the level of inner experience more than the level of knowledge.” ~ Richard Rohr

In this world we live in today, we may ask ourselves, “What or who should we believe”? These can be fearful times that may feel like all that we thought we knew is changing.

As Jesus grew closer in his relationship with his Father and matured, he used “Amen, Amen” at the beginning of his lessons. This signified that he had learned from and been given authority by God in what he was about to preach. It was not on his “knowledge alone but his level of inner experience or relationship with His Father.” Scripture was written to adapt and grow with us. God intended for us to mature and grow our minds using our inner experiences and relationship with Him.

Thomas, after the resurrection, doubts the very existence of Jesus when the others reported having seen him. Thomas must touch the wounds that he saw inflicted upon Jesus at the crucifixion. Proof that who stood before him was without a doubt, Jesus His Lord. The others used their personal experience with Jesus to recognize Him. They relied on the feelings that they undoubtedly had when He appeared to each of them as well as their inner experiences from the relationship that had formed during their time spent together. Disbelief was probably the initial response and then maybe it was the peace that passes all understanding? Remember, they were in hiding and fearful because, well... things didn't go exactly the way they thought they would. Life was uncertain, much of the religious knowledge they had been taught as children was being questioned and disputed by the very leaders that taught it! They were witness to a new promise delivered by The Messiah but now He was gone. Who were they to believe? Who was going to believe them? How were they to live? Should they go back to relying on the “knowledge they were taught” or progress forward using both their knowledge and experiences with The Christ? As disciples, they bravely moved forward preaching what they knew to be true as well as their inner experience and real experiences which stemmed from their relationships with Jesus.

We are called to be disciples of Christ, mature in our faith and not rely solely on the knowledge that has

been taught to us but also use the inner experiences that have developed and continue to evolve in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Living with the Holy Spirit within us and the scripture command to “Love the Lord God with all of your heart, soul and MIND” – Matthew 24:37. We are asked to go beyond the words of scripture and love others as we love ourselves. We are encouraged to believe without seeing and trust in the Lord those things that may not make sense right now. When we are fearful, we need to rely on our relationship and all we have learned, continue to learn and have yet to learn from The Lord.

May you experience the peace that passes all understanding from living a life in Christ.

Blessings,  
Shelli Eder  
Regional Coordinator Region 2



