

Call to Synod

I am officially calling all delegates, visitors, and friends of General Synod 31 to join us in Baltimore, June 30 – July 4, 2017.

As always, Synod promises to be an inspiring and engaging event. Our keynote speakers include Aaron Mair, environmentalist and the first African American president of the Sierra Club, and Glennon Doyle Melton, activist, philanthropist, and author of the best-selling *Carry On, Warrior* and *Love Warrior*.

Preachers in worship include Amy Butler, Sr. Minister at The Riverside Church in New York; David Vasquez-Levy, President of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley; Kimberly Kendrick, Sr. Co-Pastor at Church of the Living Water in Philadelphia; and myself.

Consistent with our theme, “Make Glad!” - we intend to make the experience one that infuses participants with joy. We will celebrate what it is that makes the United Church of Christ one of this nation’s most consistent agents for social transformation. We will seek to articulate a vision and a hope for a future in partnership with God’s Holy Spirit, a future that engages us in a mission that matters.

We will celebrate in song, dance, art, and worship what it is that our Creator shares with us each day that comes as a blessing.

We will celebrate the rich diversity of thought, mind, body and spirit that is made evident when we come together in one place.

This will be our first opportunity to gather at Synod with a new Purpose, Mission, and Vision statement. In a spirit of true discipleship and discernment, we will explore together what commitments to love God and neighbor, to welcome all, and to build a just world for all looks like and requires of us.

We are a people who share core values of extravagant welcome, of continuing testament, and of changing lives. My hope and prayer is that all who join us in Baltimore will:

- feel that extravagant welcome;
- open their hearts and minds to hear the new word God is speaking to this people, in this place, at this time;
- discover who it is that we are called to serve and how it is we can partner with them to change lives and change the world.

Bring a spirit of love, of compassion, of openness, and of hope with you. I look forward to seeing you in Baltimore. Until then, let the light of the living Christ shine in and through you, and be known to all whom you meet along the way.

See you in Baltimore,

John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President