

Prayer Topics for Unity Synod August 11-20, 2016

Unity Synod brings together delegates from all around the worldwide Moravian Church. It occurs only once every seven years and is being held this year at the Rose Hill Hilton in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

The theme for this Synod is **Discerning the Unity Together**. This theme points us to some of the opportunities and challenges before us as we gather. How do the provinces relate to one another? How are we represented at Unity Synod and Unity Board? There are, as you might imagine, significant variations of membership and finances across the Unity. As of 2013, the provinces in Africa make up 78% of all Moravians in the world and contribute 19% of the Unity budget. The provinces in the North America and Europe make up 5% of the membership and contribute 67% to the budget. This is good and right, given the relative wealth (as measured by the Gross Domestic Product) of these two areas of the Unity. Representation and financial support for the work of our world-wide church will be a topic of conversation at synod.

Another topic for consideration is how we manage our differences – theologically, socially, and from a perspective of polity – and in what or whom do we find our unity? Are we autonomous provinces loosely connected? Are we one body made up of some thirty provinces? Pray for a spirit of listening and openness, for wisdom and grace.

Funding the mission and ministry of the Unity will be another broad topic for conversation. As with our own province, there are annual contributions to support various budgets of the Unity. Some provinces, like some of our congregations, find it very difficult to fully meet their share. How shall we as a synod respond? How can we continue to do what we believe God is calling us to do if we do not have sufficient funding? The Moravian Church Foundation (MCF) is a primary source of funding for many projects and mission causes around the Unity. Br. Graham Kerslake from Good Shepherd Church in Calgary, Alberta is the newly elected chair of the foundation. He will be in attendance at Unity Synod by virtue of his office.

Delegates from the Southern Province include John D. Rights (Konnoak Hills), Craig Troutman, (Raleigh) and David Guthrie (PEC President). Adriana Craver is going from the Unity Women's Desk. Bishop Sam Gray is one of the two Unity bishops attending synod. Angelica Regalado (Friedland), a Southern Province candidate for ministry, will be attending as a Spanish language interpreter.

Delegates from the Northern Province include Michael Johnson (John Hus Moravian Church in Brooklyn, NY), Staci Marrese-Wheeler (Lakeview Moravian Church in Madison, WI) and Betsy Miller (PEC President). In addition, Judy Ganz (Executive Director of the Board of World Mission) will be attending as Synod Secretary.

Please be in prayer for:

- Our hosts, the Moravian Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, and all of the local preparations.
- The Rev. Jørgen Bøytler (Unity Business Administrator), Rev. Robert Hopcroft (President, Unity Board), and the Rev. Errol Connor (Unity Synod President)
- The Unity Board (Presidents of all the Provinces) meeting Aug. 9-10, prior to the synod.
- Safe travels for delegates from around the world, arriving in Jamaica Aug. 11.
- Unity Synod as it carries out its important work Aug. 12-20. (Meetings Aug. 12-13, 15-16, and 18-20, 8:30 am – 9:30 pm. Worship service, hosted by the Jamaica province, Aug. 14. Rest day and outing, Aug. 17.)
- New relationships forged through honest sharing, for laughter and fellowship, a palpable sense of God's Holy Spirit at work in our midst.
- A fruitful conclusion of synod business that looks ahead with profound hope for the worldwide Unity to faithfully respond to Jesus' call to mission and service.
- God's blessings for safe journeys home, Aug. 20.