



ATLANTIC DISTRICT  
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

171 White Plains Road  
Bronxville NY, 10708  
914-337-5700  
Fax: 914-337-7471

August 22, 2019

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Ministry,

Greetings in the name of Christ Jesus! From October 7-9, 2019, the Rev. Oscar Benavides (*see attached biography*) will lead our Fall Conference for all Church Workers. This conference is for Pastors, Deaconesses, DCE, and DCO Commissioned Ministers from the Atlantic & New Jersey Districts. The title for the conference is “Understanding, Creating, & Shaping Community: A Systemic Approach to Faithful & Faith-Filled Change.” Under the guidance and direction of Pastor Benavides, conference attendees will learn how to seek change in themselves in order that God would use them to inspire changes in their congregations and the systems of their community by bringing forth unexpected ideas.

This Fall, the conference will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Delmar, NY. You can make arrangements for your hotel accommodations at the Hilton – Albany (*40 Lodge Street – Albany NY 12207*) by contacting the hotel directly – (518) 427-3040. A block of rooms at a special rate (*\$129/night – single rate; \$144 per night – double rate*) is available for conference attendees. Reservations must be made before **September 9**, SO PLEASE MAKE YOUR ARRANGMENTS ACCORDINGLY. You are not required to remain at the Hilton, but the rooms have been made available for your reservation (using the code “4AD”) before the previously mentioned date.

Please return the attached/enclosed registration form ***no later than September 25, 2019.*** E-mail & mailing information are included on the form. We look forward to our time together as we address this topic while growing in the theological and doctrinal understanding of our service to God’s people throughout our respective Districts.

In the Peace and Love of our Savior,

Rev. Matthew Ryan Gonzalez, Pastor  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church – The Bronx, NY  
On behalf of the Atlantic & New Jersey Districts Conference Committees

# FALL 2019 ALL WORKERS' CONFERENCE

## FAQ'S

### **Can you tell us a bit more about the conference topic?**

The conference will invite attendees to ask the following questions of themselves:

- How can I change mindsets and not just target behaviors?
- How can I focus on bigger systems to change and not just individuals?
- What can I do to have others listen to my ideas with an open mind and heart?
- What am I thinking, doing or saying that invites others to resist me?

Focusing on the kenosis from Philippians 2:1-11 and 1 Corinthians 5:16-21, these questions will help attendees engage their hearts and minds in considering how they lead, no matter whom they are called to reach.

### **Is this All Workers' Conference in lieu of the Fall Pastors' Conference?**

Yes, this conference is part of our Pastors' Conferences. After thoughtful conversations within our committee, we felt that it would only benefit congregations to have all workers learning and growing, especially within the topic to be engaged. As leaders desire to make healthy, Spirit-led changes within congregations and communities, having all workers (leaders) involved in the growth process is of great value.

### **The date for hotel reservation is too quick. What if I can't decide my reservation by then?**

The Hilton-Albany offered this date in order to give us a special rate for room reservation. Of course, you are not required to stay at the Hilton, nor are you required to take advantage of the setup for room reservations. Feel free to seek out your own accommodations as needed. The block of rooms will only be available until September 9, 2019. Following that date, all reservations will be on your own at any location desired. It is the suggestion of the committee that you seek out hotels that are within close range of Bethlehem Lutheran Church (85 Elm Ave. - Delmar, NY 12054).

### **Is my attendance required at this conference?**

For those in the pastoral office, the answer is yes. This conference is standing as our Fall Pastors' Conference, so your attendance is required and expected, according to our synodical handbook (4.8.2.d). If you are unable to attend, please provide a valid excuse of your absence, directed to your District Bishop/President.

For all non-ordained, commissioned and rostered workers, there is not synodical requirement for your attendance, but your attendance is expected and we hope you will take advantage of this great opportunity to gather and grow.

### **Why is there such a large block of time where we are not in conference sessions on Tuesday afternoon?**

After surveying and analyzing information and reviews of previous conferences, there has been a majority who have voiced their desire and appreciation for time of fraternal gathering and conversation. One clearly expressed desire has been to have the opportunity for activities that highlight the area in which the conference is being held.

Because of this, the Tuesday afternoon time has been blocked out for such fraternal time with activities made available for those who wish to participate. Though we understand that such a conference calls for church workers to spend multiple days away from their churches, we thoughtfully consider this to be a beneficial time for all attending.

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE/AGENDA**

2019 Atlantic District Fall All-Workers' Conference:  
"Understanding, Creating, & Shaping Community:  
*A Systemic Approach to Faithful & Faith-Filled Change.*"  
Rev. Oscar Benavides – Presenter/Facilitator  
October 7-9, 2019 ~ Bethlehem Lutheran Church – Delmar, NY

### **Monday – October 7**

12:30 – 2:00PM Check-in at Hilton-Albany & Registration at Bethlehem – Delmar, NY  
2:15PM Opening Prayer, Welcome, & Announcements  
2:30 – 4:00PM Session I (*Rev. Oscar Benavides*)  
5:00PM Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist at Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
6:30PM Dinner at Bethlehem Lutheran Church

### **Tuesday – October 8**

8:00 – 9:00AM Breakfast at Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
8:45AM Opening Devotion  
9:00 – 10:00AM Session II (*Rev. Oscar Benavides*)  
10:00 – 10:30AM Break  
10:30 – 11:30AM Session III (*Rev. Oscar Benavides*)  
11:30AM – 12:30PM Midday Devotion & Lunch at Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
12:30 PM Time for Scheduled Activities (as well as prayer, retreat, rest, etc.)

- Trip to National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY
- Trip to Downtown Albany for touring of State Capital City

***[DINNER IS ON YOUR OWN]***

### **Wednesday – October 9**

8:00 – 9:00AM Breakfast at Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
8:45AM Opening Devotion  
9:00 – 10:00AM Session IV (*Rev. Oscar Benavides*)  
10:00AM – 12 Noon District Caucuses  
12 Noon Closing Remarks, Prayer, & Sending



*Atlantic & NJ District Fall All Workers' Conference*  
*October 7-9, 2019 — Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Delmar, NY*  
*Registration Form*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation and Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee enclosed – *(Includes Meals & Conference Fees – HOTEL IS ON YOUR OWN!)*

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$85.00**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$50.00 [For Retired Pastors ONLY]**

***Payment and registration form due by September 25, 2019!***

Form of Payment: Check: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 3 digit code \_\_\_\_\_ Billing zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return with payment by September 25<sup>th</sup> via:**

***Email: [kathleen.donaghy@ad-lcms.org](mailto:kathleen.donaghy@ad-lcms.org)***

OR

***Snail-mail:***  
**Atlantic District--LCMS**  
**171 White Plains Rd.**  
**Bronxville, NY 10708**

***If the form is returned via e-mail, credit card payment is required.***

***If paying by check, please make the check out to:***

***Atlantic District – LCMS***

***(Memo: 2019 AD Fall All Workers' Conference)***

***THANKS!***

**Topic:**  
**“Understanding, Creating, & Shaping Community:  
A Systemic Approach to Faithful & Faith-Filled Change.”**

**Our Facilitator: The Rev. Oscar Benavides**



The Rev. Oscar Benavides is the Vice President of the FiveTwo Network and is responsible to serve the District Presidents in accomplishing their goals for new starts. He has been working with the Atlantic district for over a year and the Florida-Georgia District for two years. Previously he was a conference speaker, team coach and community development expert on the FiveTwo Team.

Oscar has been married to Jennifer for 29 years and has two adopted children, Bailey is a High School freshman and Micah is in Middle School. They also have fostered three children.

Previously Oscar spent 10 years as Executive Director of LINC-North Texas. where he launched a major initiative to reach public school families. When he left, it had 1,500 students in 15 public schools plus many families in bible study and financial literacy programs.

Oscar served at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church as pastor of Youth and Missions for 12 years. Thousands of youth were reached through creative outreach. Oscar served in many district committees and youth gatherings. Oscar took over 500 youth and adults on mission trips to Latin America and Africa.

Oscar is currently a facilitator for “System Change” with the Devos Urban Leadership Institute and “Mindset Change” with the Aringer Institute. He is on the host committee of the CCDA (Christian Community Development Association) Conference in Dallas, Texas.

Oscar received his pastoral colloquy from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 2004 and received a Master’s in Theology from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1994. He received several awards in Evangelism.

Favorite Verse: Micah 6:8. . . loves it so much he named his son, “Micah”.