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Greetings Commissioners, Presbytery Executives/Stated Clerks, Guests and Visitors:

Wow! Where did the last six months go? In just a couple of short weeks, we will gather in Richmond at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church for the **243rd Synod Assembly!** The dates are Monday-Tuesday, March 11 – 12, 2019. Please consult the website for more information about reservations and registrations.

In keeping with the theme of the Committee on Local Arrangements in Baltimore Presbytery, hosts for the 2020 General Assembly, the Synod Assembly Planning Team decided to utilize **Romans 12:1-2** as an over-arching theme. We want to see the Body of Christ (the Church) move from mere institutional living into missional action. The focus is in the areas of race relations, reconciliation, power and privilege. **Micah 6:8** adds good foundation upon which to build toward that end.

The Synod staff has been busy with PJC cases at the synod and General Assembly levels. The past six months have seen a flurry of educational activity for me. One such event involved a gathering of Synod Leaders in Montgomery, AL . January 13-16, 2019. It can only be defined as an immersion experience.

We scarcely returned back to our homes, I to Virginia, when the news erupted involving the Governor and Attorney General's respective bad decisions to wear blackface during their respective youths. Another charge was levelled against the Lt. Governor. (At this point, they are charges, not convictions.) Our attentions have been directed to each at dizzying speed, and one thing is completely clear to me: that in order to be about God's mission means that we need ALL hands, ALL hearts and ALL energies ***present and focused for BOTH days of the Assembly!!!***

None of us are superior to another, yet each is given gifts; hand-selected by God to be about the work of God in our world. Acknowledging the mistakes of the past and moving forward into a new direction is essential. We believe this is what God wants the Christ of Christ to do. Lots of focus will be placed on Races, Reconciliation, Power and Privilege during the Assembly. Come ready to work.

Significant time will be given to assessing where we are and how we got there. This will be an educational event. The plenary three is designed to offer commissioners and others an opportunity to take a giant step forward. From that point, we can plan and start implementing our path to change the direction we are heading.

It is my hope that we will meet promptly on Monday morning, fresh from our travels and a good night's rest the previous evening, and ready to get to the business at hand. I look forward to seeing you then!

Until then, I remain,

Susanne Hooker Taylor

Susanne Hooker Taylor
Commissioned Ruling Elder
Warrenton Presbyterian Church (USA)
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Moderator of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (2018-19)