

Districts will be having synods this year, with elections, fellowship, and setting of goals and priorities for the future. Often Moravian synods have some visitors from other denominations, either for the whole synod or for a cameo appearance.

Moravian representatives also are guests at gatherings of other denominations. In the next few months Moravian representatives will attend national gatherings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Methodist Church. Sometimes we will be represented by someone from the Provincial Elders' Conference, sometimes by a local pastor. Most of these denominations are groups with which we have already, or hope to have soon, full communion agreements. That is church talk for saying that we are not basically competitors but are working together as parts of the church of Jesus Christ, and that we are on the lookout for ways to share resources, efforts, and personnel.

Moravian representation at events of other denominations reminds us of these connections. It also makes the Moravian Church more visible to other Christian groups. It should also help us to see those connections in our congregation's community. In fact, our representation at national gatherings does not mean much unless we are also related to and working with congregations of other Christian denominations in our own town or city.

In many communities, congregations had ecumenical services last month on Good Friday or last November at Thanksgiving. In Casselton, North Dakota, Protestant and Catholic congregations prepare together for a Lenten musical service. Some members of the Goshen congregation in North Dakota spent time at the Moravian hospital in Ahuas, Honduras, last month. Several non-Moravians were also part of this mission trip. As a result more people know about how God is using Moravians—and non-Moravians—in Honduras. In the area where I live, a local prison serves as a detention center for undocumented persons awaiting deportation. Members of several local congregations who desire more compassionate national immigration policies hold a monthly Sunday afternoon service of prayer. Our communities are full of examples of Christians working together on things they feel are important to God and part of God's intention.

I had a humorous experience of this recently. At an ecumenical event, one of the Protestant leaders without thinking talked about "our pope"—and then felt a little embarrassed. But the pope is indeed one of the leaders of our Christian family.

*Lord Jesus, our Chief Elder, we are proud to be Moravians, but sometimes we feel apologetic because we are so small. Remind us that we are only one part of the large family of your followers. Help us to see more clearly the other members of this family and the ways you are inviting us to work together in ways that please you. Amen.*

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