

President

Annual Report for 2022

National Lutheran Secretariat President's Annual Report
Moving Forward in Tumultuous Times
July 2022

My brothers and sisters in Christ:

When I took office in July last year, I was thinking – or at least hoping – that we would soon be able to put health issues behind us and resume more normal activities. This past year has indeed proven to be a time of transition, but not a complete return to “normal.” On the very positive side, most of our Secretariats resumed holding weekends, some in 2021, many more this spring. Likewise, we’ve seen a steady increase in in-person Ultreyas across the country. And, of course, we are holding our first in-person Annual Gathering in three years! Praise God for His blessings to our community!

Even with all this positive news, there are challenges. Some Secretariats are still cautious about holding such gatherings, based on local conditions. Even within Secretariats who are holding weekends, some members are unable to participate due to health concerns. And while most of our weekends had no significant health issues, there were two instances where COVID spread on a weekend. All this taught us two things:

1. There are no one-size-fits-all answers. We must adjust to local conditions and act prudently based on the best judgment of the local leadership.
2. In these uncertain times, we must act graciously to one another, as we work as a community of faith. I am happy to report that I have seen and heard of many examples of this graciousness within the Via de Cristo family. Our love and support of one another during difficult times is a wonderful witness to a hurting world!

While all of you have been diligently nurturing Via de Cristo locally, the Executive Committee and the Appointed Committee chairs have been working to serve and support you. You can find reports from each of them in this binder.

One focus of the Executive Committee this year was to emphasize communication, not just *from* the Executive Committee but *across* and *between* the members of Via de Cristo.

- We started sending out monthly emails to the Lay Directors and quarterly to all members of VdC, providing updates on what the National EC was working on.
- Starting in December, I have been hosting a quarterly online Round Table discussion with all interested Lay Directors (Convener/President), where we can discuss common challenges, share solutions, and celebrate blessings. Many thanks to all who have attended.

2022 Via De Cristo | NLS Annual Gathering Business Meeting Agenda

- In September, we sent out a survey to all Secretariats, asking for your joys, concerns, and ideas where you needed assistance.
- In April, Pastor Paul Schmidlin led an online webinar on the Essentials of VdC. We recorded that session and it is now available as a training resource on our website.
- In May, we held a Town Hall videoconference to discuss by-law amendments originally proposed at the 2020 Annual Gathering. While the plan was to vote on those amendments this summer, the lack of an in-person quorum at the Annual Gathering has forced us to consider alternative plans. See the long-range plan for more details.

In the fall, our new website went online. Many thanks to Eric Needle, our new webmaster. We continue to seek feedback on how we can improve the site.

As we move into the latter half of 2022, I anticipate seeing us get even closer to “normal” – but the past two years have taken their toll and many Secretariats are working hard to reform and reenergize their communities. We on the Executive Committee, as well as your Regional Coordinators, are here to assist you in whatever way we can. I look forward to seeing how God works with and through all of us in the next year!

In peace and joy,
John Aclin
NLS President

