

Bishop's Conference 2019

November 5-6, 2019

The Shawnee Inn

Northeastern PA Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

LETTING GO OF CERTAINTY IN ORDER TO SURVIVE



This year's Bishop's Conference will focus on the UNCERTAINTIES surrounding the reformation that is currently unfolding within American Christianity. Churches are closing, "Nones" are increasing, and the integrity of clergy is being questioned. It appears that all truth is equal. All reformations lead to questions and uncertainties. There is:

- Uncertainty in scriptural interpretation and dogmatic statements;
- Uncertainty in the life of the church and our worship practices;
- Uncertainty in our lives of faith, as people of God.

Dr. Peter Enns will help us create a safe space where we can discuss, share, think, and reflect on these uncertainties as church leaders.

From the Planning Committee

The conference will be held at The Shawnee Inn and Golf Resort, 100 Shawnee Inn Drive, Shawnee on Delaware, PA. It will be a two-day event beginning at 1:00 PM on Tuesday, November 5 and concluding at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 6. The registration cost will include one night's lodging, one dinner, one breakfast and one lunch.

To help first-call pastors attend, a \$50.00 discount will be given to all first-call pastors in the first three years of their call at the time of the conference.

For more information about the Inn, see their website at www.ShawneeInn.com.

Conference Overview

Tuesday, November 5

1:00 – Registration/Time to Enjoy Shawnee, Friends, and Some R&R
4:00 – Welcome and Get-to-Know Each Other
5:00 – Worship and Renewal of Ministry
6:00 – Dinner
7:15 – Session 1
9:30 – Worship

Wednesday, November 6

7:00 – Breakfast
8:30 – Worship
9:00 – Session 2
11:00 – Conversation with the Bishop
12:00 – Lunch
1:00 – Session 3

The following are Dr. Enns' descriptions of the sessions:

SESSION 1 – THE BIBLE

The Bible has been a non-negotiable source of information for Christian faith and practice for nearly all of Christian history. Along with that, the Bible also sports characteristics that on the surface appear to work against this role; namely, the Bible is ancient, ambiguous, and diverse. These characteristics, however, affect not *whether* we should look to it as our partner in faith, but *how* we do so—as a book that cultivates wisdom rather than being a “rulebook for life.”

SESSION 2 – THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Having a Bible like this—where antiquity, ambiguity, and diversity are baked into its pages—is an invitation to accept uncertainty and mystery in the life of the worshiping community. Without suggesting that doctrine is unimportant, the way the Bible “works” should also lead to assume a posture of doctrinal humility, where we hold our beliefs with an open hand rather than a closed fist. Creating such a tone would not only fall into line with the nature of the Bible but would create a safe space for those whose faith, for whatever reason, has begun to develop and “evolve.”

SESSION 3 – OUR OWN LIVES OF FAITH

What we do corporately must also be embraced individually. Faith is messy and working out that fact in our own souls is common—probably universal among people of faith. Simply acknowledging to ourselves that each of us is on a journey of faith and, embracing that fact as a good and normal dimension of the life of faith, is a path we must all take as we seek to know God more intimately. Furthermore, having the courage to speak of that journey with others cultivates authentic community.

Registration Details/Form

Overnight attendees – Includes registration fee, one night’s lodging and three meals (dinner on Tuesday, breakfast and lunch on Wednesday).

Single room - \$245 Double room - \$175
Triple room - \$150 Quad room - \$140

All prices are per person and include WiFi access; use of the fitness center, indoor pool and jacuzzi; business center access; a 6-hole pitch and putt course; and activities for all guests.

Day attendees – Includes registration fee and meal(s) for the day(s) you choose.

Tuesday - \$65 (includes dinner)
Wednesday - \$65 (includes lunch)
Two days - \$125 (includes dinner Tuesday and lunch Wednesday)

Spouses are invited to attend.

PLACE account funds may be used for the registration. **After paying** by credit card or check, mail a completed **PLACE withdrawal form** (found at www.godslove.org) to Debbie Frey at the synod office for reimbursement

PLEASE BRING A COPY OF *EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP* FOR DEVOTIONS.

Register for the 2019 Bishop’s Conference **ONLINE** by following the link on the home page, www.godslove.org.

IF REGISTERING BY MAIL, complete both sides of the form and mail with check (payable to NEPS) to Debbie Frey, Northeastern PA Synod, 2354 Grove Road, Allentown, PA, 18109-3044.

Registration deadline is October 1, 2019.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Staying at The Inn at Shawnee:

_____ Single room - \$245.00
_____ Double room - \$175.00
_____ Triple room - \$150.00
_____ Quad room - \$140.00

Commuting:

_____ Tuesday - \$65.00 (includes dinner)
_____ Wednesday - \$65.00 (includes lunch)
_____ Two days – \$125.00 (includes 2 meals)

TOTAL PAID \$ _____

I am a first-call pastor in the first three years of my call.
(Check here and deduct \$50.00 from the total amount.)

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER
OCTOBER 1**

Facilitator

Peter Enns (Ph.D. Harvard University) is Abram S. Clemens professor of Biblical Studies at Eastern University. He has taught undergraduate, seminary, and doctoral courses at numerous other schools, including Princeton Theological Seminary, Harvard Divinity School, Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia (now ULS), and Temple University.

Dr. Enns speaks and writes regularly to diverse audiences about the intersection of the ancient setting of Bible and contemporary Christian faith. He is a frequent contributor to journals and encyclopedias and has written, edited, and contributed to nearly 20 books.

Dr. Enns resides in suburban Philadelphia with his wife Susan. His popular podcast, *The Bible for Normal People*, can be found at www.peteenns.com, along with a complete list of his books. There you will find interviews with Fr. Richard Rohr, Rob Bell, Walter Brueggemann, Rachel Held Evans, to name a few. Two recent books are:

The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More Than Our “Correct” Beliefs – models an acceptance of mystery and paradox that all believers can follow and why God prefers this path because it is only this way by which we can become mature disciples who truly trust God. It gives Christians who have known only the demand for certainty permission to view faith on their own flawed, uncertain, yet heartfelt, terms.

How the Bible Actually Works: In Which I Explain How an Ancient, Ambiguous, and Diverse Book Leads Us to Wisdom Rather Than Answers—and Why That’s Great News – contends that there is no one right way to read the Bible. Moving us beyond the damaging idea that “being right” is the most important measure of faith, it offers an approach to Bible study that helps us focus on pursuing enlightenment and building our relationship with God—which, Dr. Enns argues, is exactly what the Bible was designed to do.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Name(s) of roommate(s): _____
- Please assign me a roommate.
- I have special needs (accommodations, dietary or otherwise). Describe:

INFORMATION FOR NAME TAG

1st name, nickname: _____

Congregation/Agency; Location: _____

COMPLETE ALL THAT APPLY

I am a: Pastor Deacon Spouse/Visitor/Staff