

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – MARCH 21, 2015
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY COMFORTER, WASHINGTON,
DC

Call to Order Dr. White called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Greetings Pastor Ruffin greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history of the Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter, the nature of its membership, and the character of the congregation. At the conclusion of his remarks, Pr. Ruffin left the meeting.

Devotion Pastor Edwards provided a devotional message, encouraging those present to linger in Lent and not rush into Easter.

Vice President White began the business portion of the meeting by noting that the Synod Council was prepared to fill the two vacancies on the Council, *i.e.*, the vacancy created by the resignation of Kurtis Lowe as an at-large member and the vacancy created by the expiration of the term of the former youth representative and the absence of a candidate who was to be elected by the 2014 Synod Assembly. He then called for nominations for each of these two positions.

Pastor Kleiber nominated Paul Culler to be elected to the at-large Synod Council position and provided brief biographical information. There were no other nominations, and Dr. White declared the nominations for the at-large position to be closed.

SC15.03.05: To elect Paul Culler to serve as an at-large Synod Council member, to serve until his successor is elected at the 2015 Synod Assembly.

Pastor Edwards nominated Emily M. to be elected as the youth representative to the Synod Council. Inasmuch as the nomination for this position comes from the youth organization, no further nominations were sought.

SC15.03.06: To elect Emily M. to serve as the youth representative to the Synod Council, to serve until her successor is elected at the 2015 Synod Assembly.

SC15.03.07: To approve the agenda for the March 21, 2015, Synod Council meeting, after adding certain Synod Assembly planning matters to the agenda previously distributed.

SC15.03.08: To approve the minutes of the January 17, 2015, Synod Council meeting.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

- a. Good Samaritan, Lanham. Pastor Hirsch provided an update on this congregation, one that is currently under synodical administration. He reported on its membership, its worship attendance, and the nature and amounts of its receipts. The congregation had been the subject of a review by the members of the New and Renewing Mission Table, and at the conclusion of that review, the members of the Table recommended that the congregation be closed as an act of mission. Members of the Council discussed a variety of considerations in connection with this recommendation, and Pr. Hirsch responded to a number of questions.

SC15.03.09: To terminate synodical funding of Good Samaritan Lutheran Church, Lanham, Maryland, effective May 31, 2015.

- b. In Christ Washington Fellowship. Pastor Hirsch provided an update on this authorized worshipping community, first approved by the Synod Council in March 2013 for a period of one year and extended in 2014 for a second year. This SAWC, which currently uses the facilities of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, North Bethesda, is making plans to be recognized as a congregation. Pastor Hirsch proposed that this SAWC be authorized for a third year.

SC15.03.10: To approve the continuation of an authorized worshipping community known as “In Christ Washington Fellowship,” pursuant to ELCA bylaw 10.02.03, for a third year, effective at the end of the second year for which it was originally authorized.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Hirsch:

- i. River of Grace Update. Pastor Hirsch provided an update on this congregation under development. Based on the results of a formal review conducted in late 2014, River of Grace will charter as a new congregation in May 2015. It will then likely seek to end the synodical administration that was in effect. No further action was taken by the Synod Council in connection with this matter.
- ii. Campaign for the ELCA. Pastor Hirsch provided an update on this campaign, noting that it will focus on starting new ministries within the Synod.

- b. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Sevimli:

- i. The Journey. Pastor Sevimli reported that a three-year program for congregations in the Synod entitled “The Journey” had concluded during the preceding weekend.

c. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Year-End Financial Statements. Treasurer John Handley discussed the financial statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2015. These statements, which have not yet been audited by the Synod's external auditor, reflect a surplus of approximately \$5,000 of receipts over expenditures for the full year. The surplus was obtained through cost controls despite a continuing decline in congregational benevolence receipts.
- ii. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Financial statements for the month of February 2015, the first month of the Synod's current fiscal year, were not provided to the Synod Council in connection with this meeting.
- iii. Office Lease. Treasurer Handley also noted that the lease of the Synod's office space is scheduled to expire in November 2016.

d. Vice President White:

- i. Finance Committee. Karen Consiglio led a discussion of the proposed FY 2016 spending plans and the alternative approaches to these plans. One proposed approach is consistent with prior approved spending plans, in which the Synod remits 50% of its undesignated receipts to the ELCA churchwide offices, and the ELCA directly funds certain Synod-level programs and initiatives. In the second proposed approach, the Synod would reduce its remittances to the ELCA churchwide offices in exchange for the Synod's assumption of the financial responsibility for programs and initiatives currently funded by the ELCA. The latter approach will be proposed to the ELCA Church Council at its April 2015 meeting as part of a pilot project to include a small number of other synods. Although no specific action was taken by the Synod Council, the consensus among those present was that the Finance Committee should continue to pursue both alternative spending plans pending the expected Church Council action.
- ii. Synod Assembly Planning. Pastor Kleiber provided the recommendation of the Synod Assembly Planning Committee regarding the proposed schedule of fees for the 2015 Synod Assembly. In response to questions about the materials provided, Pr. Kleiber clarified that registrants will be required to pay both the approved registration fee for the appropriate category and the fee imposed by the external registration site.

SC15.03.11: To approve the following schedule of fees for registration at the 2015 Synod Assembly:

Ticket Type	Registration Fee
Rostered leader	\$ 350
Rostered leader with accommodations	\$ 460
Voting member	\$ 350
Voting member with accommodations	\$ 460

Visitor	\$ 170
Visitor with accommodations	\$ 280
Display representative	\$ 50
Display representative with meals	\$ 215
Display representative with accommodations	\$ 330

- iii. Immigration Team. Dr. White advised the Council that he would appoint Pr. Gerard Johnson as the liaison from the Synod Council to the recently-formed Immigration Team.

3. Synodical Women’s Organization

Ms. Meier identified planning for the April 11, 2015, convention of the Synodical Women’s Organization as the principal focus of its current activities.

- 4. **Bishop Graham Report**—The Synod Council went into executive session to receive Bishop Graham’s entire report to the Council. Pastors Hirsch and Sevimli were excused from the meeting prior to the commencement of the executive session.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord’s Prayer at 12:20 p.m.