

WHAT: Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA
WHEN: March 13, 2010
WHERE: Community Lutheran Church, Sterling, Virginia

Present: Bishop Richard Graham, Vice president Dr. John White, Secretary Rev. Dr. Marguerite Rourk, Treasurer John Handley, Jim Brookshire, Shirley Gibbs, Kelsey Glass, Pr. Joel Guttormson, Ruth Manchester, Deacon Kati Miller-Holland, Robert Joppa, Pr. Justin Lathrop, Pr. Elizabeth Platz, Phil Soucy, Pr. Kendall Summers, Barbara Topel, Amanda Wahlig, Pr. Michael Wilker

Absent: Pr. Teka Obsa Fogi, Marcia Ihnen, Pr. Jane Halpern

Staff: Assistants to the Bishop Pr. Phil Hirsch and Pr. Amy Sevimli, Synod Administrator Harold Sargeant, Administrative Assistant Amy Acland, Communications Coordinator Karen Krueger

The Council was welcomed by Pastor Joe Vought, Community, Sterling, VA. VP John White called meeting to order and gave devotions.

Minutes from the 23 January 2010 Council meeting were approved as presented.

The next meeting date and place was announced: 17 April 2010 at Temple Hills, Maryland.

Business at the April meeting is to include presentations by ELCA consultant Pr. Craig Settlege describing ELCA ministries and their structure, and by Treasurer John Handley presenting from the Finance Committee a draft of the 2011 Metro DC Synod Ministry Spending Plan.

Reports:

Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Phil Hirsch, Director of Evangelical Mission

+ La Sagrada Familia in Langley Park - Pr. Hirsch noted that it was organized and has been maintained for years by Rosario Hernandez-Cruz. The Council was asked to accept La Sagrada Familia as a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community so that they may incorporate and call a pastoral leader. Ms. Hernandez-Cruz is graduating from Gettysburg Seminary and is ready to be called there. The Metro DC Synod applied to the ELCA for financial support for this pastoral position, and they are contributing \$10,000 toward a pastor's pension and insurance. MOTION SC03.10.01 for La Sagrada Familia to become a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community carried. The Synod Council will extend a call to a pastor on behalf of La Sagrada Familia. The next step is for them to become a mission congregation working toward chartering. The Bishop noted that this congregation will be the responsibility of the entire synod so that we all might help. St. Luke, Silver Spring, has been the financial agent for them thus far. La Sagrada Familia will not be able to become self-sustaining as quickly as other mission congregations might be, but once they incorporate they will form their own governing

board (Congregation Council). The Bishop also noted the extensive community service and outreach work carried out by Ms. Hernandez-Cruz.

+ Synod Structure - Pr. Hirsch described the process of examining our Synod structure (see attached). The ELCA wants each synod to have a mission plan showing plans and actions for service to the gospel. Our draft structure is illustrated as tables: Synod table is primary; three other tables: 1) new and renewing ministries; 2) vision and advisory; and 3) stewardship and mission support. These tables are foundational to our Synod's strategy and our initiatives that involve all 76 congregations in the Metro DC Synod.

Treasurer John Handley

+ Noted that fiscal 2009 reports were distributed, showing a deficit reduced to about \$2,000.

+ He encouraged more congregational participation in Thrivent's Simply Giving program.

+ Pr. Wilker noted that the Synod Council must carefully review how the Synod budget is funded as part of the preparation of a realistic spending plan for presentation to the Synod Assembly. The Finance Committee is to draft the 2011 budget for presentation to the Council at its April meeting, and the Synod Secretary is asked to allocate agenda time for Finance to present its draft and rationale.

Bishop Richard Graham

+ Pr. Carmelo Santos has been working on the draft of the ELCA Social Statement on Genetics which is to be presented on the ELCA website on or about 19 March.

+ Hambisa Belina has been approved to be ordained on 10 April in the Maryland/Delaware Synod. He grew up in the Oromo tradition, and will work in outreach and mission development in Maryland.

+ The Bishop nominated Pr. Sarah Scherschligt, Associate Pastor at Prince of Peace, Gaithersburg, MD, to be a Member of Mar-Lu Ridge and sit on their Board as a representative of the Metro DC Synod. MOTION SC03.10.02 to so appoint her was carried.

+ The Bishop requested that Synod Council meeting minutes be posted on the Synod website after the Secretary emails the draft to Council members for amendment and/or correction.

+ Former Council member Robert Smith has joined a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregation in response to ELCA Churchwide Assembly voting actions and ministry decision His replacement will be elected at Synod Assembly to serve the remainder of his term.

+ The Bishop acknowledged that our Synod ended 2009 in excellent fashion by way of a lot of hard work by many people. He conveyed his gratitude and thanks, and he encourages all who have toiled so diligently to seek some rest and renewal.

Vice president John White

+ Nominating Committee - Pr. Gary Rhinesmith (MD Conference Dean) has offered to chair the committee which is comprised of five deans with Pr. Summer, Kelsey Glass and Shirley Gibbs. They are working to present a list of nominees to Synod Council in April. Metro DC Synod voting members to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly must be elected at Synod Assembly.

+ Pr. Santos cannot attend the SC April meeting, as he will be defending his doctoral dissertation. The Council will invite him to the July meeting to report on the draft Social Statement on Genetics.

+ Synod Assembly draft agenda is to be posted soon.

+ Pr. Qualley is to work with us, and the Synod Assembly Eucharist offering is to be designated for Lutheran Disaster Relief in Haiti.

+ The Council needs to invite our liaisons and reinvigorate arrangements with unit representatives at various Council meetings. New assignments will be made in July, along with a schedule for unit representatives and liaisons to offer reports and updates.

Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Amy Sevimli

+ The Church wide representative to our Synod Assembly will be Kristen Glass. Pr. Karen Ward will also be there to present a keynote address and a workshop offering assistance with worship.

Administrator Harold Sargeant

+ Lanny Westfall from Global Missions in Chicago is to be in our Synod during the week of March 15.

+ Meetings for discussion of the draft Social Statement on genetics are to be arranged.

+ By virtue of being on Church Council, Pr. Amsalu Galeta is also an ex officio member of Synod Council, and he should receive all minutes and other Council communications.

Other Business

+ The Bishop noted that the Synod Structure Committee met and Pr. Hirsch gave his view on how parts of restructuring would be accomplished. The committee is developing a vision for restructure, and has had fruitful conversation. Pr. Wilker added that the committee's suggestions would not be presented for discussion until the Fall Session of the Synod Assembly, at which time there would be a clearer picture of restructuring, which would not be manifest in budgetary impact until 2012.

+ The Women of the ELCA report was presented by Shirley Gibbs (attached). The Metro DC Synod WELCA convention is scheduled for Saturday, 1 May 2010 at St. Mark's, Springfield, and will include workshops and discussions on race and racism. The WELCA Board meets again on 26 June.

+ Bishop Graham asked for feedback on what people think the Synod Council is doing when it meets. He spoke to Vice president White about Council members posing and answering questions such as, What have I learned by being on Synod Council? What contribution have I made that no one else could have made? What is it that Synod Council is doing? The Bishop suggested that we could formulate our own questions, answer them, then share with the Council.

Closing with prayer, the meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Dr. Marguerite M. Rourk
Secretary of the Synod