

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – NOVEMBER 21, 2015
SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH, HAYMARKET, VA

Guest: Pr. Mark Olsen, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

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

Devotion Pr. Gary Rhinesmith provided a devotional message based on the theme that Jesus was bold, and invited the members of the Synod Council to consider the opportunities that might present themselves by being bolder, as well as the limitations on the ability to act more boldly.

Greetings Pastor Olsen greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, its history, ministries, and its opportunities and challenges.

Dr. White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

SC15.11.47: To approve the agenda for the November 21, 2015, Synod Council meeting.

Dr. White began the business portion of the meeting by noting that a vacancy on the Synod Council, in the D.C. Conference clergy provision, was created when Pr. Tom Knoll began serving his term as Treasurer of the Synod. Dr. White further advised that the D.C. Conference had advised that Pr. Renata Eustis was willing to serve the remainder of Pr. Knoll's term as a member of the Council from the D.C. Conference. Pr. Eustis was therefore nominated for this position. There were no other nominations, and Dr. White declared the nominations for the D.C. Conference Clergy position to be closed.

SC15.11.48: To elect the Rev. Renata Eustis to serve as the Synod Council clergy member from the D.C. Conference, to serve until her successor is elected at the 2016 Synod Assembly.

The draft minutes of the September 19, 2015, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President White asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

SC15.11.49: To approve the minutes of the September 19, 2015, Synod Council meeting.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

Pr. Hirsch led the Council through a discussion of the function of the Primary Mission Table. Although the entire Synod Council also functions as the Primary Mission Table, Pr. Hirsch identified the differences in focus and responsibilities of the Council, as such, and the table. He also noted that a mission statement was in the process of being developed for the Primary Mission Table.

Pr. Hirsch then turned toward a discussion of the funds available for use outside of the annual budget for the Synod. The discussion included an identification of funds that were temporarily restricted to a particular use and those that are permanently restricted, together with the policies for the use of the funds. Finally, the members discussed the levels of authority established for the use of the various funds, noting that while the Bishop has discretionary authority over certain of the funds, either the full Synod Council or the New and Renewing Missions Table has authority over other funds. Pr. Hirsch noted that, while a complete policy regarding the authority for expenditures from any of these funds could be developed, such a process would require a thorough review of the underlying documentation (if any) creating each fund.

2. New Business

Vice President White moved the new business to this portion of the agenda in order to accommodate the participation of Pr. Kate Davidson, who led the Council in a discussion of the history of the Synod's Together in Mission event. Pr. Davidson noted that the costs of the event have not been met through ticket sales, and asked the Council to consider whether it should be regarded as a self-sustaining event or as a mission of the Synod, to be funded (in part) through sources other than ticket sales. A discussion ensued regarding prior years' attendance, the components of cost, and the benefits derived by those who attended and those who accessed the video recording of the event after the fact.

Moved:

Seconded: To approve the funding of \$4,500 for the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Together in Mission 2016 event.

SC15.11.50: To lay the motion on the table.

Vice President White announced his intention to bring the motion before the Synod Council at such time as an appropriate funding source can be identified, with the assistance of the Treasurer.

3. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop's Report

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. In Bishop Graham's absence, Ms. Wheeler brought two roster matters to the Synod Council.

SC15.11.51:

That:

1. Ms. Erin Swenson-Reinhold (newly-assigned Associate in Ministry) be called to special ministry as a staff counselor with the Center for Pastoral Counseling of Virginia, effective November 2, 2015; and
 2. The Rev. Theresa Hannon's status, as on leave from call, be extended for one year based on and following the approval of the Conference of Bishops.
- ii. Roster Matters for Information. Although not requiring any action on the part of the Synod Council, Bishop Graham's written report to the Council noted the following additional matters affecting the Synod's rostered leaders:
 1. The Rev. Nathan Swenson-Reinhold was installed September 26, 2015, at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia;
 2. The Rev. Paul Collinson-Streng was installed September 27, 2015, at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia;
 3. The Rev. Julie Bringman was ordained and installed October 17, 2015, at Hope Lutheran Church, College Park, Maryland;
 4. The Rev. Ray Ranker was installed October 17, 2015, at Hope Lutheran Church, College Park, Maryland;
 5. The Rev. Carmelo Santos was installed November 14, 2015, at Hope Lutheran Church, Annandale, Virginia;
 6. The Rev. Michael Gutzler was installed November 15, 2015, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Falls Church, Virginia;
 7. The Rev. J. Vincent Guss transferred to the Central States Synod, effective October 26, 2015; and
 8. Mr. Derek Solberg will be ordained and installed December 6, 2015, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Bethesda, Maryland.
 - iii. NLCS Reorganization. In preparation for the Synod Council meeting, Bishop Graham had forwarded to the members certain written information regarding the proposed reorganization of National Lutheran Communities & Services ("NLCS"), of which the Synod is a member. In general, the reorganization consists of the creation of a new parent entity identical to NLCS and the conversion of the existing NLCS to the National Lutheran Foundation, Inc. Following the approval of the NLCS Board of Trustees of the plan of reorganization, NLCS has asked that the Synod Council approve the plan.

SC15.11.52: To approve the plan of reorganization of National Lutheran Communities & Services, as outlined in the letter dated August 14, 2015, from Lawrence Bradshaw, President and Chief Executive Officer, together with the accompanying memorandum of Lerch Early & Brewer and the proposed changes to the bylaws of NLCS and the newly-created organization.

- iv. Pr. Sevimli's Sabbatical Proposal. In advance of the meeting, Bishop Graham had forwarded to the members a proposal prepared by Pr. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop, for a sabbatical leave, consisting of full-time leave for the months of November and December and part-time leave for the months of January and February 2016. The proposal was provided for information only, and no action was required to be taken by the Synod Council.

b. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Hirsch

- i. Pending Changes to Synod Funding Approach. Pr. Hirsch reminded the Synod Council of changes that had been previously approved by the Synod Assembly and the Synod Council effective February 1, 2016. The principal changes consist of the Synod's assumption of financial responsibility for the compensation of the Director for Evangelical Mission and for the cost of grants to congregations, to be offset by a reduction in the percentage of mission support from the Synod to the churchwide organization.
- ii. Shepherd of the Hills Grant Proposal. The Council took up the motion that had been made and seconded at the July 2015 meeting but laid on the table, as follows:

SC15.11.53: To approve a grant of \$75,000 from the non-Prince George's County portion of the Bethany Funds to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Haymarket, Virginia, to be paid in three installments of \$35,000 for the first year, \$25,000 for the second year, and \$15,000 for the third year.

Before adopting the motion, the discussion began with a question about the total amount of funding available from the non-Prince George's County portion of the Bethany Funds. It was determined that, between the short-term portion and the long-term portion, the total amounts currently available exceed the commitment of the Synod to this congregation. Pr. Hirsch noted that the ELCA has provided its approval for its similar share of the grant to this congregation.

- iii. Hope Lutheran Church/College Park Grant Proposal. On behalf of Bishop Graham, Pr. Hirsch brought to the Synod Council a recommendation for a \$10,000 grant to support the new collaborative partnership between Hope Lutheran Church, College Park, Maryland, and the Lutheran Campus Ministry

on the College Park campus of the University of Maryland. Written materials were provided to the Council in support of this proposal.

SC15.11.54: To approve a grant of \$10,000 from the Prince George's County portion of the Bethany Funds to Hope Lutheran Church, College Park, Maryland, in support of a collaboration between the congregation and the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Maryland, College Park, as set forth in the written materials provided to the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Council in advance of its meeting.

- iv. New Church Starts/Capital Campaign. Pr. Hirsch led a discussion of the Synod's long-term plans for new church starts and how they may be funded. He brought a written proposal for a Synod-wide capital campaign feasibility study to be conducted by Gronlund Sayther Brunkow, Fletcher, North Carolina, an organization that specializes in synod campaigns. The proposal is the result of interviews by Pr. Hirsch and the Treasurer of the Synod of several potential candidate firms and recommendations made by other synods. After further discussion, the Council voted on the recommendation.

SC15.11.55: To engage the firm of Gronlund Sayther Brunkow, Fletcher, North Carolina, to conduct a feasibility study with respect to a potential Synod-wide capital campaign, and to approve the expenditure of up to \$21,400 from the Mission Endowment Trust for the fees and out-of-pocket expenses of the firm.

c. Vice President White

- i. Synod Vice Presidents' Gathering. Vice President White provided a brief report of the synod vice presidents' gathering held in Chicago during the last weekend in October.
- ii. Synod Assembly 2016 Registration Fees. Vice President referred the Synod Council to the proposed budget for the 2016 Synod Assembly as well as the recommended registration fee for the Assembly, materials that had been provided in advance of the meeting. The Assembly is a one-day meeting to be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland, on June 18, 2016.

SC15.11.56: To establish the registration fees for the 2016 Synod Assembly at \$109 per person.

4. Synodical Women's Organization

Ms. Meier provided a written report in advance of the meeting but was unable to attend. Because this report identified April 16, 2016, as the date for the next Annual Convention of the

SWO, others noted that this date was also the date for a Synod Council meeting and the Together in Mission event.

5. Youth Organization Report

Ms. M. briefly discussed the Chrysalis event in December and the potential for additional youth participation at the 2016 Synod Assembly.

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