

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – APRIL 16, 2016**  
**ALL SAINTS LUTHERAN CHURCH, BOWIE, MARYLAND**

**Call to Order** Dr. White called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

**Greetings** Pastor Rhinesmith greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of All Saints Lutheran Church.

**Devotion** As part of his welcome and greetings on behalf of the host congregation, Pr. Rhinesmith also provided a devotional message based on the congregation's efforts to promote racial equality.

Dr. White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC16.04.18:** To approve the agenda for the April 16, 2016, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the March 19, 2016, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President White asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC16.04.19:** To approve the minutes of the March 19, 2016, Synod Council meeting

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

a. Proposed Synodical Mission Statement

In advance of the meeting, Bishop Graham had distributed the most recent draft of a proposed mission statement for the Synod. Having been originally drafted in December 2015, it had been revised on several occasions to reflect comments that had been received from time to time. After taking into consideration these prior comments, the following statement was proposed for adoption as the mission statement of the Synod:

The mission of our synod is to work with the Holy Spirit to make disciples for our Lord Jesus Christ. To do this we will nurture new and renewing centers for the proclamation of the gospel, where communities of Jesus's disciples gather who share the love of Jesus through their speech and actions.

As we pursue this mission we will:

Raise up a diverse group of leaders who are equipped to equip others and who care for our communities;

Address issues of race, poverty, injustice, and personal brokenness both locally and through our global companions, in ways that shape our common life and model courage and hope for our world;

Grow our financial resources and connect them with our ministries in ways that are transparent, responsible, and sustainable.

In the course of discussing further questions and addressing additional comments, Bishop Graham indicated the expectation that the mission statement would remain in use for approximately a year, at which time it would be reevaluated in light of the experience in applying it to the Synod's activities.

**SC16.04.20:** To approve the document entitled "The Mission of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod" as the mission statement of the Synod.

b. Update on Congregations

Pastor Hirsch provided a summary report on the status of the 75 congregations in the Synod in addition to two synodically authorized worshipping communities. Of these 77 communities of faith, 12 are classified as growing, 35 are stable, and 30 are declining or small. The discussion included an identification of some of the principal characteristics of congregations in each category. Members expressed their appreciation for the information that was provided, as well as the hope that similar information will be updated and provided to the Synod Council on a regular basis.

c. Synod Campaign Update

After having received a detailed description of the capital campaign feasibility study at the March 19, 2016, Synod Council meeting, and having approved a capital campaign, the Council was advised that the next significant step in the process is to introduce the campaign at the June 2016 Synod Assembly.

## **2. Staff and Officer Reports**

### **a. Bishop's Report**

- i. Roster Matter for Synod Council Action. Bishop Graham brought one roster matter to the Synod Council.

**SC16.04.21:** That the Rev. Shannon Anderson's call by the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod to serve as the Program Manager for Supported Ministries be renewed for a one-year term, effective April 18, 2016.

- 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. Brandon Johns has been transferred to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, effective March 16, 2016; and
  - 2. The Rev. Joel Guttormson has been transferred to the Northeastern Iowa Synod, effective April 11, 2016.

**b. Treasurer's Report**

- i. Review of Financial Statements. In the absence of the Treasurer, Bishop Graham led the Council through a review of the unaudited financial statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2016. These statements had been previously distributed and discussed at the March 19 Synod Council meeting, but had subsequently been updated in minor respects. Financial statements for the months of February and March 2016 were not available for review and discussion.
- ii. Preliminary Draft of Proposed Budget. Karen Consiglio discussed the broad parameters of a proposed budget for the Synod for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2017, currently under development by the Finance Committee. Among other considerations, Ms. Consiglio asked the Council for guidance on the advisability of presenting a proposed budget to the June 2016 Synod Assembly with a small projected deficit, or whether the budget should project a balance between revenues and expenditures. After further consideration by the Finance Committee, the final proposed budget will be brought to the Council for approval at the May 21 meeting and for adoption by the Synod Assembly in June 2016. Members of the Council inquired as to the level of unrestricted reserves available to absorb past and future deficits from operations. In the absence of the Treasurer, Synod staff agreed to obtain more information regarding the level of unrestricted reserves in connection with further development of the proposed budget.

**c. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Hirsch**

- i. King of Kings Proposal. Pastor Hirsch advised the Council of a request for the use of a portion of the Faith Funds. However, the request has caused the Synod staff and the New and Renewing Missions Table to give further consideration to the purpose of the Faith Funds, as well as the nature of any restrictions on their use. A more specific proposal will be brought to the Synod Council for discussion and approval at the May 21 meeting.

- ii. Renewal of SAWCs. Pastor Hirsch advised the Council that the Synod has two synodically authorized worshipping communities, whose authority is granted for a one-year period, subject to renewal. After a discussion of their respective activities, Pr. Hirsch recommended that each community be renewed for another one-year period.

**SC16.04.22:** To approve the continuation of two authorized worshipping communities known as “In Christ Fellowship of Washington, DC,” and “La Sagrada Familia,” pursuant to ELCA bylaw 10.02.03, for an additional one-year period, effective at the end of the year for which each such community was previously authorized.

**d. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Sevimli**

Pastor Sevimli had no formal report, but advised the Synod Council that approximately 25 congregations are in some form of transition regarding their rostered leadership. The number is unusually high when compared with the size of the Synod and the number of congregations.

**e. Vice President White**

- i. Synod Assembly Planning. Vice President White asked Pr. Mark Edwards and Margretta Williams to provide an update on the planning for the June 2016 Synod Assembly. Pastor Edwards reported that only two resolutions had been submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel prior to the deadline established for such resolutions to be considered by the Synod Assembly.

**f. Bishop’s Report (Part 2)**

Bishop Graham brought a recommendation for the approval of a new designated fund to be established to honor the memory of Barbara O’Keefe, who died in 2015 after many years of service to the church in various leadership positions.

**SC16.04.23:** To approve the establishment of the Barbara O’Keefe Fund for the Support of Global Mission.

**3. Synodical Women’s Organization**

In light of the fact that the organization’s Annual Convention was being held at the same time as the Synod Council meeting, there was no report prepared for, or presented to, the Council.

**4. Youth Organization Report**

Ms. Wheeler provided a summary of a proposed youth event being planned for June 11, 2016, in connection with a Washington Nationals game.

#### **5. New Business**

Pastor Mwitanti noted that Bishop Ernst //Gamxamub of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia will be present in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., area for several activities during the first week of May. Further details will be provided to the members of the Synod Council prior to the dates for these events.

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord's Prayer at 11:30 a.m.