

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – APRIL 22, 2017
LUTHER PLACE MEMORIAL CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Call to Order In the Vice President’s absence, the meeting was chaired by Secretary Kevin Anderson. Secretary Anderson called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Greetings Jackson Droney greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of Luther Place Memorial Church.

Devotion Cheryl Dwyer provided a devotional message based on excerpts from a book by Max Lucado, “Next Door Savior: Near Enough to Touch, Strong Enough to Trust.”

Secretary Anderson presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

SC17.04.09: To approve the agenda for the April 22, 2017, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the March 18, 2017, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Secretary Anderson asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

SC17.04.10: To approve the minutes of the March 18, 2017, Synod Council meeting.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

a. Synod-Wide Evangelism Strategy Development

Pastor Hirsch led the members of the Synod Council through a discussion of the draft Evangelism (Engagement) Plan, with a goal of having 3,000 new people connected to our congregations as active participants by June 2020. A brief written outline of the plan, in draft form, was distributed and thus formed the basis for the discussion. The plan identified three types of endeavors that could be used to achieve this goal, categorized under the headings “Reach Out,” “Welcome In,” and “Hang On.” The document generated substantial discussion and ideas. Pastor Hirsch closed the discussion by noting that the efforts to achieve this goal should be both organized and organic.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Graham:

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

SC17.04.11: That the Rev. Tarja Stevenson be placed on leave from call, effective January 1, 2017.

- ii. Further Update on Reformation 500th Anniversary Activities. Bishop Graham provided an updated summary of events scheduled during the year to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The first is a three-day event entitled “500th Anniversary—Martin Luther and the Catholic Tradition,” from May 30 through June 1, 2017. It will be held at Catholic University and the Lutheran Church of the Reformation and is co-sponsored with Catholic University, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Pontifical Committee of Historical Sciences, and the German Embassy in Washington. It includes a concert on May 31 at Lutheran Church of the Reformation, consisting of both new and familiar music. The second is the Reformation Sunday worship service at the Washington National Cathedral, on October 29. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton is scheduled to preach at this service, and will remain in the area for a few days following October 29 to participate in other events relating to the Reformation anniversary. Bishop Graham has also been contacted by representatives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon Church) for the purpose of discussing various partnership activities. On September 14 and 15, Georgetown University will be sponsoring Reformation Anniversary events, and Bishop Graham has been invited to preach. Finally, consideration is being given to an event to celebrate the African Lutheran partnership.

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

Pastor Ortiz provided a summary of the recent activities in her office. Three congregations have submitted their Ministry Site Profiles, the first step in seeking to call a pastor. Six congregations are in various stages of the process of calling a pastor. Four candidates will be seeking their first call this summer. Finally, Pr. Ortiz described the Synod’s cooperation with the Delaware Maryland Synod on immigration and refugee matters.

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

- i. New Connections Campaign Update. Pastor Hirsch provided an update on the New Connections Campaign, identifying the two aspects as (a) making new connections and (b) financing the efforts. He advised the members of the Synod Council that a Swahili group was taking steps that could result in being recognized as a synodically authorized worshipping community under the Synod’s governing documents. On the financial side, at the time of the meeting,

the Campaign had achieved a total of approximately \$338,000 in gifts received and pledges of future support.

d. Secretary Anderson:

Secretary Anderson had distributed to the Synod Council a draft of the Synod's Constitution and Bylaws showing a series of changes that had been developed for submission to the 2017 Synod Assembly. Most of the proposed changes are the result of actions taken by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, instituting the new titles of "minister of Word and Sacrament" and "minister of Word and Service" to identify the former ordained roster and the three lay rosters, respectively. Any provisions with a dagger (†) preceding the number and taking the form of "XX.XX" are provisions of the Constitution that are required to be adopted without modification as approved by the Churchwide Assembly from time to time. All changes made to such provisions by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly have been automatically incorporated into the Synod's governing documents. Such changes have also been reflected in the current version of the Constitution and Bylaws posted on the Synod's Web site. The 2017 Synod Assembly will be asked to approve conforming changes to non-mandatory provisions of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions.

Two other proposed changes were also discussed. Both changes would, if adopted, clarify provisions adopted in 2014 regarding the establishment of tables and teams. Under those provisions, all members of the Synod Council are automatically members of the Primary Mission Table. This table has no other members. One change will clarify that a member of the Synod Council may chair the Primary Mission Table, even though members of the Synod Council may not chair other tables. The other change will clarify that the Director for Evangelical Mission is not an *ex officio* member of the Primary Mission Table, even though the Director is a member of each other table.

Secretary Anderson also advised the Synod Council that these changes had been submitted to the Synod Attorney for his review, although no substantive response had been received at the time of this meeting. The proposed changes will be formally brought before the meeting of the Synod Council to be held in May, at which time the Council will be asked to recommend their adoption by the 2017 Synod Assembly in June.

e. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Review of Financial Statements. Copies of the revised unaudited financial statements for the full 12 months of the Synod's most recent fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended January 31, 2017, were distributed in advance of the meeting. After having been revised, these statements reflect a surplus in undesignated

receipts over expenditures of approximately \$21,000. The surplus was the result, in part, of historically high benevolence receipts during January 2017. Financial statements for the first two months of the current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended March 31, 2017, reflected a significant reduction in congregational benevolence and a deficit of approximately \$94,000 between undesignated receipts and expenditures.

- ii. Young Adult Initiative. In his written report to the Synod Council distributed in advance of the meeting, Treasurer Pr. Thomas Knoll advised the Council that the matter involving a line item in the fiscal year 2016 expenditures budget identified as Young Adult Initiative had been satisfactorily resolved. Accordingly, no action on this matter is being requested of the Synod Council.
- iii. Status of Budget Process. The process of developing of the fiscal year 2018 budget continues to be undertaken by the Finance Committee of the Synod. A proposed budget will be introduced to the Synod Council at its May meeting, with the goal of approving it at that time and recommending it for adoption by the Synod Assembly in June.
- iv. External Audit. Pastor Knoll also advised the Synod Council that the external auditors have completed their field work associated with their examination of the Synod's financial statements and would submit their report to the Synod Council in May.
- v. Resignation. Pastor Knoll also advised the Synod Council of his intention to resign as Treasurer when a successor can be identified and elected.

3. Synodical Women's Organization

Cheryl Dwyer provided comments to supplement the written report that had been provided to the members of the Council in advance of the meeting, and highlighted the upcoming Spring Convention to be held on May 6, efforts to combat human trafficking, and the 2017 Tenth Triennial Gathering, to be held July 13-16 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

4. Youth Organization Report

The Synod's youth representative identified a number of youth events recently completed, planned, or in the planning stages: (a) the middle school youth program, Shekinah, which took place in March at the 4H Center in Front Royal, Virginia, and involved approximately 200 youth; (b) a YM103 (Youth Ministry 103) event at Peace Lutheran Church, Alexandria, Virginia, on April 29; (c) a youth-led experience by LutheranGRACE called Facts Not Fear: Youth Reducing HIV and AIDS Stigma (still

pending); (d) Shema, an elementary age ministry, on April 30 at King of Kings Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia; and (e) two informational sessions regarding the 2018 Houston Youth Gathering, the first on May 20, and the second on May 21, both at Trinity Lutheran Church, Bethesda, Maryland.

5. **New Business**

Members received a brief update on planning for the 2017 Synod Assembly. Principal components of the agenda were identified. As previously announced, the ELCA will be represented at the Assembly by Presiding Bishop Eaton, and she has been invited to participate in several of the events throughout the two-day Assembly. Katharyn Wheeler provided guidance to the members on the registration process and asked that she be advised of any requests for Thursday night accommodations in advance of the 9:00 a.m. Synod Council meeting on Friday, June 16.

SC17.04.12: To adjourn the meeting.

The meeting concluded with the Lord's Prayer at 11:20 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: May 20, 2017, at All Saints Lutheran Church, Bowie, Maryland.