

# METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA

## SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – JULY 29, 2017

### LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER, McLEAN, VIRGINIA

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

**Greetings** Pastor Kessinger greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of Redeemer Lutheran Church, its demographics, and other characteristics.

**Devotion** Bishop Graham provided a devotional message based on Isaiah 43: 16-21. The passage admonishes us to focus on the “new thing” and not to remember the “things of old.” As we observe the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, we are reminded that we should move forward without dwelling too much on the past.

**Introductions** Inasmuch as the Synod Council included several new members who had been elected by the 2017 Synod Assembly, Dr. White invited all of the members to provide a brief biographical introduction.

**Orientation** An informal multi-part orientation session was held for the benefit of new members of the Synod Council, incoming officers, and continuing members. Secretary Anderson provided an overview of the composition of the Synod Council, the terms of office for each position, and the governing provisions that apply to Council elections and service. Bishop Graham identified each of the members of the Synod staff and their duties and responsibilities. Bishop Graham and Pr. Hirsch provided an overview of the tables, teams, and committees of the Synod. Pastor Hirsch described some of the characteristics of the congregations within the Synod. Secretary Anderson identified some of the key provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions, and continued with a description of the duties, responsibilities, and potential risks of service as a member of the Council. Bishop Graham concluded the orientation session by identifying the Synod attorney and describing the types of questions that could be raised for his consideration.

Vice President White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC17.07.24:** To approve the agenda for the July 29, 2017, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the June 16, 2017, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President White asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC17.07.25:** To approve the minutes of the June 16, 2017, Synod Council meeting.

### **1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

Pastor Hirsch provided an overview of the New Connections Campaign, which has established a quantitative goal of making 3,000 new connections throughout the Synod, as well as a financial goal. He emphasized that the objective of the campaign would be articulated as engagement rather than evangelism.

A separate report was provided on an initiative to provide coaching to every leader and congregation council in the Synod requesting such assistance. As part of the process of making these resources available, a new Web site has been developed and rolled out at [www.metrodccoaches.com/](http://www.metrodccoaches.com/). Because the coaching resources are to be made available through the New Connections Campaign, specific authorization of the expenditure of campaign resources for this purpose was requested. As part of the process of considering this request, Synod staff was directed to develop a process for prioritizing commitments made out of the new campaign in the event that requests for funding exceed available resources.

**SC17.07.26:** To express the support of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod for the Metro DC Coaching effort, as set forth in documentation provided to the Synod Council, with financial support of up to \$334,500 as needed and as available from the New Connections Campaign.

The Synod Council was reminded that three groups had been previously accorded status as synodically authorized worshipping communities (“SAWCs”) of the Synod and currently retain such status. They are La Sagrada Familia, In Christ Fellowship, and The Swahili Lutheran Church (SAWC). The Synod Council has historically granted SAWC status for a period of one year, consistent with the policies of, and documentation provided by, the ELCA churchwide offices. It had been the practice of the Synod to renew the status of each SAWC at or near the one-year anniversary of the first authorization. In order to streamline this process, it is the intention of the Synod leadership that, in the future, all SAWCs will be reviewed and renewed at the same meeting during the year (most likely November). Thereafter, the status of each SAWC will expire at the same time, subject to renewal. Prior to this time, Pr. Hirsch will ascertain whether transitional renewal authorizations would be required for any group whose status would otherwise expire prior to the November 2017 meeting.

### **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.

**SC17.07.27:** That the Rev. Theresa Hannon be placed on the retired roster, effective September 1, 2017.

- 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 one additional matter affecting the Synod's rostered ministers, *i.e.*, that the Rev. Cathy Feil transferred to the Delaware-Maryland Synod, effective May 31, 2017.
- iii. Anniversary Events. Bishop Graham reminded the Synod Council of events scheduled to take place in the fall to observe the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation and to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area.

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

No other matters, other than the matters discussed as Primary Mission Table matters above, were discussed.

c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Ortiz:

Pastor Ortiz described a recent trip to Peace Lutheran Church, Paget, Bermuda, to facilitate the call of a new pastor. She disclosed that eight congregations of the Synod are in various stages of calls. Finally, Pr. Ortiz described the current status of candidacy efforts.

d. Vice President White:

Synod Council Executive Committee Membership. Dr. White described the composition of the Executive Committee and its duties. Of the four members of the Executive Committee (excluding the officers), two members will continue in the second year of their respective two-year terms. Accordingly, two vacancies on the Committee remain to be filled, each for two-year terms. After soliciting nominations for these vacancies, Pr. Sarah Lewis and Jackson Droney agreed to serve in this capacity.

**SC17.07.28:** That Pr. Sarah Lewis and Jackson Droney are elected to the Executive Committee for terms that will expire on the earliest of (a) two years from the date of election, (b) the election of their respective successors, or (c) the expiration of their respective terms as a member of the Synod Council.

e. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Review of Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Although Treasurer, Pr. Thomas Knoll, did not attend the meeting, copies of the financial statements for the first

five months of the Synod's current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended June 30, 2017, were distributed in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$209,000. A portion of this deficit is the result of having fully disbursed the out-of-pocket costs for the Synod Assembly, which are not totally offset by registration fees. In addition, congregational benevolence for the first five months is approximately \$90,000 less than the comparable period for the preceding year.

- ii. Financial Statement Audit. Copies of the report of independent certified public accountants on the Synod's financial statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2017, were also distributed to the Synod Council in advance of the meeting.

f. Secretary's Report:

Secretary Anderson briefly discussed the processes for communicating with the Synod Council in between meetings, the development of contact information for each Synod Council member, and the proposed schedule of meetings for the remainder of the 2017-2018 Synod Council year.

### 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 2017 Tenth Triennial Convention, held on July 11-13, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which was immediately followed by the 2017 Tenth Triennial Gathering, on July 13-16.

### 4. New Business

Pastor Sarah Lewis brought two new matters before the meeting.

**SC17.07.29:** That the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod coordinate, but not directly provide or finance, training sessions for pastors and youth leaders throughout the Synod relating to youth suicide.

The Synod Council expressed its expectation that Synod staff members would return to a subsequent meeting of the Council with their progress in carrying out this resolution.

**SC17.07.30:** That the staff of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod investigate the feasibility of paying the health insurance premiums for active interim pastors during periods between successive calls.

The Synod Council expressed its expectation the Synod staff members would also return to a subsequent meeting of the Council with a summary of their findings in this regard.

At the conclusion of Vice President White's last meeting after eight years of service in this capacity, the members of the Synod Council, staff, and guests expressed their appreciation for his dedicated service to the Synod and its mission.

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord's Prayer at 12:25 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: September 23, 2017; St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Springfield, Virginia.