

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 23, 2017**  
**ST. MARK’S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA**

**Call to Order** Vice President Crenshaw called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Devotion** Pastor Triolo provided a devotional message based on Luke 10: 1-12.

**Greetings** Pastor Triolo also greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, noting its 65-year history, a focus on the surrounding community, and Spanish-language worship services that were started 16 years ago.

Vice President Crenshaw presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC17.09.31:** To approve the agenda for the September 23, 2017, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the July 29, 2017, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Crenshaw asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC17.09.32:** To approve the minutes of the July 29, 2017, Synod Council meeting.

**Presentation** Rachel Carle, a former youth representative to the Synod Council, is currently serving as a Campaign Interpreter on the staff of the ELCA, sharing stories about Young Adults in Global Mission and other ELCA ministries. She had recently returned from a year in Cambodia, where she served as a YAGM volunteer. Ms. Carle distributed materials describing the global church and its activities throughout the world, and responded to questions from those in attendance.

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

Pastor Hirsch provided a brief update on the New Connections Campaign. Approximately 70 people participated in the E-Vent (Evangelism and Learning to Make New Connections), which was held on the immediately preceding Saturday, September 16, at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Great Falls, Virginia. He reported that the Campaign has received total financial commitments of approximately \$737,000, compared with a total goal of \$2.25 million. He also shared the commitment of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland, to fulfill ten percent of the Synod’s goal of making 3,000 new connections.

Pastor Hirsch had also prepared and distributed a two-page written summary of the Campaign, identifying each of the objectives, describing what had happened through June 2017, what is planned for the rest of 2017, and what is planned in 2018 for each objective. Among the current activities, described some of the current coaching efforts and completed or planned meetings with congregation councils. He discussed how the Campaign would measure interim progress toward these goals, and advised the members that staff was in the early stages of posting examples of new connections to the Web site.

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

### **a. Bishop Graham:**

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

### **SC17.09.33: That:**

1. The Rev. Karsten Decker be removed from the roster, effective March 6, 2017; and
  2. The Rev. Janice Mynchenberg be place on leave from call, effective September 4, 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 the following additional matters affecting the Synod's rostered ministers:
    1. The Rev. Jeff Jacobson was called by the ELCA to serve as Director of Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO) South West, effective July 5, 2017;
    2. The Rev. David O. Trott, Sr. transferred into the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod effective September 3, 2017;
    3. The Rev. Brett Davis transferred into the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod effective September 5, 2017; and
    4. The Rev. Robert Lehman transferred to the Delaware-Maryland Synod effective April 24, 2017.
  - iii. Reformation 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, including (a) the October 22 concert by the National Lutheran Choir at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception; (b) the October 29 Reformation Sunday worship service at the Washington National Cathedral, with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton preaching, (c) an October 31 Reformation Day event at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, with Bishop

Eaton and other ELCA leaders in attendance; and (d) an invitation-only fundraising dinner at the Mayflower Hotel on October 29, following the worship service.

- iv. Preliminary Report on July 2017 “New Business” Motions. Bishop Graham provided a status update on two motions that were adopted as part of the “New Business” portion of the July 29 Synod Council meeting. The first motion directed the Synod to coordinate, but not directly provide or finance, training sessions for pastors and youth leaders throughout the Synod related to youth suicide. Bishop Graham reported that this effort will be pursued more actively following the conclusion of the many events observing the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. The second motion directed the staff of the Synod to investigate the feasibility of paying the health insurance premiums for active interim pastors during periods between successive calls. Bishop Graham observed that this motion requires far more investigation and will not be completed quickly. The question has both federal income tax and regulatory implications, and a fuller understanding of these matters is required before a report can be prepared.
  - v. Update on Bishop Transition. Bishop Graham reminded the Synod Council that his term as bishop will end on August 31, 2019, and that he has made known his intentions not to serve another term. In order to prepare for the election of a bishop at the 2019 Synod Assembly, a committee will be formed and the Synod Council will be actively involved in the process of making plans for the election.
- b. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Ortiz:

Pastor Ortiz described the current status of mobility and candidacy activities. Seven congregations of the Synod are in various stages of calls, with four congregations interviewing candidates, one congregation close to extending a call, and two congregations awaiting names of potential candidates. A candidacy meeting will be held on October 10, with four candidates being considered for entrance and two for endorsement. A mentorship program is also being continued for first-call pastors.

Finally, Pr. Ortiz described her knowledge of the fate of Puerto Ricans following Hurricane Maria as well as local assistance and relief efforts.

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

Pastor Hirsch announced that Pr. Mark Olsen, currently a member of the ELCA staff, will serve as Chair of the New and Renewing Missions Table. He also distributed and discussed a congregation-by-congregation analysis of mission support to the Synod for 2015, 2016, and the year to date.

d. Vice President Crenshaw:

Presiding over her first meeting as Vice President, Ms. Crenshaw provided a brief biographical introduction. On behalf of the Synod Assembly Planning Committee, she also introduced the proposal for registration fees for the one-day Synod Assembly to be held in June 2018. Background materials and a proposed budget for the Assembly were distributed to the members in advance of the meeting.

**SC17.09.34:** That the 2018 Synod Assembly registration fees be set at \$109 for rostered ministers, voting ministers, and visitors, with an early registration rate of \$99.

e. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Review of Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Although Treasurer Julie Hamre did not attend the meeting, copies of the financial statements for the first seven months of the Synod's current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended August 31, 2017, were distributed in advance of the meeting. They had been prepared by the Immediate Past Treasurer, Pr. Thomas Knoll. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$146,000. Questions and discussion were deferred until the November 2017 meeting, when the Treasurer expects to be present and to have completed the transition of duties from the Immediate Past Treasurer.

### 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 plans for the 2020 Eleventh Triennial Gathering, to be held in Phoenix, Arizona, as well as some uncertainty regarding the timing and location of the 2018 SWO Convention.

### 4. New Business

Several matters were discussed that were not included on the agenda, although no specific action was recommended or taken.

Members discussed a recent report by Lutheran Social Services on the status of immigration efforts, with local needs considered as being higher than elsewhere in the country. Members also discussed the work of Lutheran Disaster Relief in Texas, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Finally, members expressed a desire to receive a report on the work of the Racial Equity Team.

**The meeting adjourned** with a prayer, led by Vice President Crenshaw, at 11:25 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: November 16, 2017; King of Kings Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia.