

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – NOVEMBER 18, 2017**  
**KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA**

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

**Devotion** Pastor Mwitanti provided a devotional message based on Joshua 3 and 4.

**Greetings** Pastor Miller also greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of King of Kings Lutheran Church. Members and staff were provided a copy of the November 2017 issue of *Connections*, the monthly newsletter of the congregation.

Vice President Crenshaw presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC17.11.35:** To approve the agenda for the November 18, 2017, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the September 23, 2017, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Crenshaw asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC17.11.36:** To approve the minutes of the September 23, 2017, Synod Council meeting.

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

a. New Connections Campaign Update

Pastor Hirsch provided a brief update on the status of the New Connections Campaign, using remarks to supplement the written report that had been distributed to the members of the Synod Council. The campaign most recently focused on many visits to Congregation Councils throughout the Synod. The campaign has obtained pledges from congregations and individuals in the aggregate amount of approximately \$917,800, noting that a portion of these funds will remain with congregations for their use. The first E-Vent training was held in September, and a second E-Vent has been scheduled for January 27, 2018. In addition, a two-hour stewardship training has been scheduled for January 6, 2018. The campaign's outside consultant has expressed the assessment that pledges are on track to meet the overall financial goal, recognizing that the financial component of the campaign is currently in a quiet phase.

b. New Connections Campaign Spending Plan

The written report of the campaign included a spending plan for the years 2017 through 2020, reflecting total anticipated financial needs of approximately \$950,000. Pastor Hirsch expressed more confidence about the 2017 and 2018 spending projections than the 2019 and 2020 numbers. Although a significant portion of the spending plan is devoted to coaching activities, Pr. Hirsch noted that coaching needs had been more modest than first anticipated.

c. New Mission Starts Update

Pastor Hirsch identified three new starts being supported by the campaign, *i.e.*, King of Kings, Holy Trinity/Merrifield, and Swahili Lutheran Church at Living Faith/Rockville.

## 2. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Graham:

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. Bishop Graham brought three roster matters to the Synod Council.

**SC17.11.37:** That:

1. The Rev. Teka Fogi be removed from the roster, effective October 16, 2017;
  2. The Rev. Eugene Kern be called to Interim Ministry to serve at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Washington, DC, effective November 1, 2017; and
  3. The Rev. Elijah Mwitanti be called to Interim Ministry to serve at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Fairfax, Virginia, effective November 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 the following additional matters affecting the Synod's rostered ministers:
1. The Rev. James Phillips transferred to the Southern California Synod, effective October 1, 2017.
- iii. Reformation Anniversary Events. Having passed the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, Bishop Graham noted the principal events that had taken place, 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; and (c) an October 31 Reformation Day event at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, with Bishop Eaton and

other ELCA leaders in attendance. The Washington National Cathedral worship service is believed to have had approximately 2,175 participants in attendance. In addition, within 24 hours of the service, approximately 5,000 streaming views of the service had taken place. Bishop Graham specifically acknowledged the work of Katharyn Wheeler and the planning committee in planning the many details of the service. The anniversary of the Reformation was also acknowledged at a recent interfaith conference.

- iv. Other Updates. Bishop Graham noted that other initiatives, that had been deferred until after the Reformation events had concluded, will now be resumed. In particular, the synod staff would be organizing a workshop on suicide awareness.
  - v. Update on Bishop Transition. In connection with the election of a bishop as the 2019 Synod Assembly, Bishop Graham provided an update on the efforts that will be required. A small group of individuals will be organized for the purpose of transition planning. A profile of the synod will be prepared in a manner similar to the profile that a congregation prepares as it calls a pastor. The group will study relevant ELCA documents and the processes undertaken by other synods that have recently elected a bishop. Nels Hendrickson has agreed to chair this effort.
- 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 one congregation having extended a call, two congregations interviewing candidates, and the rest in earlier stages of discernment and awaiting names of potential candidates. Three current conversations are being held regarding potential candidacy, and one candidate has entered the process.

Separately, Pr. Ortiz provided a written proposal to commission a team of lay and rostered leaders to coordinate all relief and support efforts between the Synod and the Caribbean Synod. The document described the efforts of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland, to partner with Iglesia Evangélica Luterana San Pedro in Toa Baja, Puerto Rico. The effort has been called “Building Puentes,” meaning building bridges. In light of the significant damage caused by Hurricane Maria, to expand the partnership to include the Synod and all congregations of the Synod.

**SC17.11.38:** To authorize the creation of a Building Puentes team, pursuant to S11.01.21. through S11.01.23. of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, to coordinate all support and relief

efforts between the Synod, its congregations and members, the Caribbean Synod, and Iglesia Evangélica Luterana San Pedro, Toa Baja, Puerto Rico.

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

Pastor Hirsch provided a written congregation-by-congregation analysis of mission support to the Synod for 2015, 2016, and the year to date, noting that the current status of such support is more positive than it had first appeared in September at the time of the last such report.

d. Vice President Crenshaw:

Ms. Crenshaw provided a brief report of a joint meeting of the Conference of Bishops and Synodical Vice Presidents that had been held in Chicago from September 28 through October 1, 2017.

e. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Review of Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Treasurer Julie Hamre previewed a new format for the financial statements for the first nine months of the Synod's current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended October 31, 2017. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$101,000. Questions were raised and addressed concerning the basis of reporting and the potential for inconsistency with prior reporting principles.

**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.

**4. Youth Organization Report**

Samuel S. identified upcoming youth events, including Chrysalis on December 1-3, the National Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas, in June 2018, and Shekinah in early 2018.

**5. New Business**

None.

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

Next Scheduled Meeting: January 20, 2018; Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia.