

# 2015 Synod Assembly Minutes



*Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America*

*June 19-20, 2015  
National Conference Center, Leesburg, Virginia*

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*The following are the minutes of the 2015 Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

*The 2015 Synod Assembly met on June 19 and 20, 2015, at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia.*

*The minutes were prepared in the current form by the Secretary of the Synod and the Synod staff, reviewed by the Synod Council, and recommended for approval by the 2016 Synod Assembly.*

*Kevin D. Anderson  
Secretary of the Synod*

**MINUTES OF THE 2015 SYNOD ASSEMBLY  
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD  
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, JUNE 19 AND 20, 2015  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER - LEESBURG, VIRGINIA**

**Introductory Activity**

Prior to the opening of the Synod Assembly, a Synod Council meeting was conducted. Katharyn Wheeler organized Registration. An Orientation for New Voting Members was conducted by Richard Ahlberg, Synod Assembly Parliamentarian, and the Rev. Jane Halpern. Training was also conducted for Worship Assistants in advance of the Festive Eucharist.

**PLENARY SESSION 1  
Friday, June 19, 2015  
National Conference Center  
Leesburg, Virginia**

**Opening of Assembly**

Bishop Richard Graham called the Assembly to order at 11:40 AM.

**Report of the Registrar**

Present:	Lay Voting Members	145
	Rostered Voting Members	<u>82</u>
	<b>Total Voting Members</b>	<b>227</b>
	Visitors	28

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To seat the Voting Members.

**VOTED**

**SA15.06.01** To adopt the foregoing motion.

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**Adoption of Synod Assembly Agenda**

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To approve the agenda for the Synod Assembly as set forth in Section 1.2R2 of the meeting materials for the Assembly.

**VOTED**

**SA15.06.02** To adopt the foregoing motion.

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## **Adoption of the 2015 Synod Assembly Rules of Procedure**

### ***Rules of Procedure***

01. *To the extent consistent with the following rules of procedure, Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern.*

#### ***Voice and vote***

02. *All persons under call, on leave from call, and retired on the roster of this Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod, in attendance at this assembly, shall have voice and vote at the proceedings of this assembly. All interim pastors serving congregations of this synod, at the time of the assembly, shall have voice and vote.*

03. *Alternate lay members shall be seated if the regular lay members are unable to serve.*

04. *Persons giving reports during this assembly's proceedings who are not members shall be given voice, no vote, during that portion of the assembly.*

05. *The parliamentarian appointed by the Synod Council shall be given voice, no vote (unless a member) during the proceedings of this assembly.*

06. *The Presiding Bishop, or his or her representative(s), and ecumenical representatives shall be given voice, no vote during the proceedings of this assembly.*

07. *Duly elected and serving members of the Synod Council shall have both voice and vote at the synod assembly, in accordance with S7.28 of the constitution of the synod.*

#### ***Quorum***

08. *One-half (1/2) of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.*

## **Proxy**

09. *Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.*

## **Items of Business**

10. *With the consent of this assembly, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order is deemed by the chair most expedient for the conduct of assembly business. The chair shall limit discussions to items germane to the issues before the assembly.*

## **Resolutions**

11. *Resolutions to be considered by the assembly shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Synod. In order to assure the resolution going to the floor of this assembly, such resolutions shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod prior to the promulgated deadline, which shall not be less than 30 days prior to the beginning of the assembly. The Secretary shall refer them to the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The Committee shall report to this assembly with its recommendations regarding the resolutions submitted, which shall constitute a motion to the floor of this assembly.*
12. *Any resolutions submitted after this date are not guaranteed a place on the agenda and must receive a two-thirds vote in order to be heard. Any resolution not receiving a two-thirds vote will be referred to the Synod Council for disposition.*
13. *Multimedia presentations will not be part of floor debate on resolutions.*

## **Motions**

14. *All main motions, to be made, shall be in writing and presented to the Secretary of the Synod immediately (Constitution and Bylaw amendments require five (5) signatures of members).*
15. *A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s).*
16. *A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately preceding question is not in order.*
17. *When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion*

*have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected.*

18. *Debate shall be limited to two (2) minutes per person, per speech.*

### **Elections**

19. *Ballots shall be accepted only from those members who are seated within designated areas of the assembly hall.*
20. *Nominations from the floor shall be accompanied by the copy-ready vita and the consent of the person to be nominated, both to be submitted to the secretary at the time of the nomination.*

### **Minutes**

21. *Minutes of this assembly shall be available for review by Synod Council by the September 30 immediately following the assembly.*

### **Applications for Displays**

22. *The Assembly Planning Committee shall determine the amount of space available for displays at each assembly site, year by year, and shall determine the fees charged for displays that are and are not directly related to the offices and divisions of this synod in coordination with the Synod Council.*

*Applications will be reviewed by the planning committee for content of display and how it relates to the Synod Assembly theme. Permission or license for displays at each assembly shall be given in light of the following priorities:*

*First Priority: Synod tables, teams, and committees.*

*Second Priority: Agencies and ministries directly affiliated with this synod, its congregations and/or the ELCA, including Augsburg/Fortress.*

*Third Priority: Independent organizations, services, or ministries related or useful to the ministry of this church (e.g., church fund raising organizations, ecclesiastical arts agencies).*

*In principle, display authorization at this synod's assemblies shall always be considered a privilege and shall never be considered a right of any organization not officially affiliated with this synod and/or the ELCA. In accord with available "third party space," the Assembly Planning Committee shall choose as many as*

*seems appropriate from among the applicants. Organizations whose prior behavior or whose styles of ministry are thought to be or have been demonstrated to be demeaning of persons of differing viewpoints as to their worth as individuals, or their worthiness to hear the Gospel or to live in community with other believers, shall not be permitted the privilege of display at assemblies of this synod. Decisions of the Assembly Planning Committee in this regard are considered final.*

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**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To approve the foregoing rules of procedure for the Synod Assembly.

**VOTED**

**SA15.06.03** To adopt the foregoing motion.

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### **Adoption of Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda consisted of the approval of absences from the Assembly and approval of the minutes of the 2014 Synod Assembly as set forth in Section 9.1 of the meeting materials for the Assembly.

### **Excused Absences of Rostered Leaders**

The Rev. Eleanor Abarno	The Rev. Robert Abarno
The Rev. Dean W. Anderson	The Rev. Philip G. Anderson
Mitzi Budde, AIM	The Rev. Steven Buechler
The Rev. Gloria Cline-Smythe	The Rev. Christine Dunn
The Rev. Gregory B. Durig	The Rev. Anne Dwiggin
The Rev. Brian Erickson	The Rev. Cathy Feil
The Rev. Gregory Gaertner	The Rev. Phillip Gaines
The Rev. Raymond H. Hartzell	The Rev. Wollom Jensen
The Rev. Terri King	The Rev. Gordon Lathrop
The Rev. Robert C. Lehman	The Rev. Annabelle Markey
The Rev. Thomas F. Montgomery	The Rev. Janice E. Mynchenberg
The Rev. Charles Oberkehr	Harold Sargeant, AIM
The Rev. Theodore Schneider	The Rev. Yvette Schock
The Rev. Glen A. Sea	The Rev. Tarja Stevenson
The Rev. Joseph Vought	

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To adopt the consent agenda as presented to the 2015 Synod Assembly.

**VOTED**

**SA15.06.04** To adopt the foregoing motion.

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**Recognition of Ecumenical Guests**

Bishop Graham introduced four ecumenical guests: Father Don Rooney, representing the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Virginia; the Rev. Tammie Rinker, representing the Eastern District of the Moravian Church, Northern Province; Alan Ronkin, representing the American Jewish Committee; and Counselor Helena Gray, representing the Embassy of Namibia.

**Keynote Speaker**

Bishop Graham introduced the Rev. Dr. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, Assistant Research Professor at the Institute for Ecumenical Research, The Strasbourg Institute, to present the first part of a two-part keynote address to the Assembly. The title of this portion was “1517 in the Light of 2017,” the text of which was subsequently made available on the Synod’s Web site at <http://metrodcelca.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/15sakeynote15172017pt1.pdf>.

The address explored the question of whether we can have Lutheranism without enemies, concluding with an invitation for the entire Assembly to sing a hymn written by Martin Luther’s friend and associate, Nikolaus Herman, “Let All Together Praise Our God.”

**Report of the Nominating Committee**

The Rev. Albert Triolo, Chair, presented the report of the Nominating Committee, describing the process that the Committee undertook to identify nominees for all open positions. He expressed his appreciation for the work of the Conference Deans, who served as the Nominating Committee, and to the Synod Assembly Planning Committee. Pr. Triolo introduced each of the nominees and referred the Assembly to the Candidate Information Forms that had been included in the advance materials for the Assembly.

**Office of Synod Treasurer**

David A. Appler  
The Rev. Thomas J. Knoll

**Fairfax Conference – Clergy**

The Rev. Elijah Mwitanti

**DC. Conference – Lay**

Larry J. Evans

**Maryland Conference – Clergy**

The Rev. Gary R. Rhinesmith

**Montgomery Conference – Clergy**

The Rev. Sarah W. Lewis

**Potomac Conference – Clergy**

The Rev. Robert L. Lewis, Jr.

**Virginia Conference – Lay**

Stanley R. Medikonda

**At Large – Lay or Clergy**

Paul Culler

The Rev. Gissela Varinia Espinosa

**Youth Representative**

Emily M.

**Committee on Discipline – Clergy**

The Rev. David Slagle Peck

**Committee on Discipline – Lay**

William G. Dinnison

**CWA Voting Member – Clergy Male**

The Rev. Michael D. Gutzler

The Rev. Robert L. Lewis, Jr.

The Rev. Raymond D. Ranker

**CWA Voting Member – Clergy Female**

The Rev. Katherine (Kate) Davidson

**CWA Voting Member – Lay Female**

Deborah K. Haynes

Suzanne M. Hazard

Kimberly K. Hintzman

Deacon Katherine S. Miller-Holland

Amanda J. Wahlig

**CWA Voting Member – Lay Male**

Larry J. Evans

David A. Larrabee

**CWA Voting Member – Youth or Young Adult**

Jesse Fonkert

Emily M.

**CWA Voting Member – Person of Color or Whose Primary Language is Other than English**

The Rev. Karsten Decker

The Rev. Anteneh Gabresalassie

Stanley R. Medikonda

The Rev. Leila M. Ortiz

Bishop Graham opened the floor to any additional nominations, by category. Hearing no additional nominations for the Office of Synod Treasurer, Bishop Graham declared the nominations to be closed. Hearing no additional nominations for Synod Council, Bishop Graham declared the nominations to be closed, noting that each of the open positions was uncontested. Hearing no additional nominations for the Committee on Discipline, Bishop Graham declared the nominations to be closed, noting that each of the open positions was uncontested and that any unfilled vacancies would be filled by the Synod Council.

Before declaring the nominations for Churchwide Assembly Voting member to be closed, Bishop Graham noted that the Rev. Anteneh Gabresalassie is a candidate in the category of persons of color or whose primary language is other than English. In connection with nominations for this office, Bishop Graham explained the representational principles that govern the Assembly's selection of voting members to the Churchwide Assembly, observing that the outcome of the election in certain

categories could affect the available choices in the remaining categories and that the elections would be ordered to ensure that the elected voting members, as a group, satisfy these principles.

### **Introduction to Voting Devices**

Jean Knight, Qwizdom Inc. Marketing Coordinator, offered an introduction to the voting devices, together with sample questions to demonstrate the various features of the devices.

### **Instructions for Lunch and Meal Prayer**

The Rev. Margrethe Kleiber gave the Assembly instructions for lunch and offered a prayer. The Assembly recessed for lunch at 1:00 PM.

**PLENARY SESSION 2**  
**Friday, June 19, 2015**  
**National Conference Center**  
**Leesburg, Virginia**

The Assembly resumed at 2:00 PM following lunch.

**Report of the Synod Treasurer**

John Handley reviewed the financial reports for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2015, noting that the financial results reflected a continuing trend of decreasing benevolence and the careful managing of expenses. He noted that the total congregational benevolence for the year was approximately \$1,716,000, and that the year was completed with a slight surplus. More complete financial details were set forth in Section 4 of the materials provided to the Assembly. He thanked the Assembly for its faithful support of the Synod.

He noted that the Synod's audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2015, are available to anyone who wanted a copy. He invited questions. There were none and the Assembly received the Treasurer's report with thanks.

In recognition of the conclusion of Handley's service as Treasurer, Bishop Graham noted that contributions could be made to the Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Center in Handley's honor.

**Report on Synod Compensation Guidelines**

John White, Vice President, provided background information regarding the compensation guidelines for rostered leaders that had been developed and approved in prior years. These guidelines consist of an unadjusted base amount, a "point" system, and housing allowance factors. For the current year, no general percentage increase to the unadjusted base amount is being recommended, and thus no formal action is being recommended to the Assembly for adoption.

**Report of ELCA Representative**

Bishop Graham introduced Carlos Peña, Vice President of the ELCA, the churchwide representative to the Assembly. He began with some background concerning the role of the Vice President and those of the other three officers of the churchwide organization, and continued with some of his own biographical information. Peña recognized the

oldest congregation in the Synod, New Jerusalem Lutheran Church, Lovettsville, Virginia. He expressed appreciation for the work of Bishop Graham and for the service of the Rev. Karsten Decker, who recently completed a term on the Church Council.

He acknowledged the mission support from the Synod of approximately \$877,000, representing 50% of the benevolence received by the Synod. In connection with the Synod's mission support, Peña noted that the Synod will be a "learning community" for mission support together with four other synods engaged in a pilot program to reduce the percentage of benevolence to the churchwide organization in exchange for the assumption of financial responsibility for certain expenses previously borne by the churchwide organization. He described the program as a potential "breakthrough in policy."

Peña continued by presenting the 2015 video for synod assemblies, "We Are Church." He noted that September 13, 2015 has been established as the date of the third annual "God's Work, Our Hands Sunday" day of service. He noted that the Campaign for the ELCA is in its second year, with four years to go. Peña provided information regarding ELCA programs that originated within the Synod, including the use of funds raised through the Malaria Campaign.

### **Introduction of Synod Staff**

Bishop Graham introduced the members of the Synod staff to the Assembly, consisting of the Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, the Rev. Phil Hirsch, the Rev. Shannon Anderson, John Handley, Florence Heacock, Dorothy Mogubu, Karen Krueger, and Katharyn Wheeler.

### **Report of the Bishop**

John White, Vice President of the Synod, assumed the chair and invited Bishop Graham to present his report.

Bishop Graham provided additional background concerning (a) the Synod's compensation guidelines; (b) the proposed mission spending plan, which reflects the first year in a three-year pilot program for reduced churchwide support in exchange for the assumption of direct financial responsibility for certain expenses; (c) recent discussions of race and justice; and (d) an awareness of a generational change with the recent deaths of some of the older clergy members.

Upon the conclusion of this report, White yielded the Chair back to Bishop Graham.

## **Report of Gettysburg Seminary**

Bishop Graham introduced the Rev. Michael Cooper-White, President, and the Rev. Angela Zimmann, Office of Seminary Advancement, from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. The representatives noted that a printed report from the seminary had been distributed to the Assembly, and thanked the Synod for its continued financial support of the seminary.

The Assembly recessed for a mid-afternoon break at 3:25 PM.

**PLENARY SESSSION 3**  
**Friday, June 19, 2015**  
**National Conference Center**  
**Leesburg, Virginia**

**Introduction of the Mission Spending Plan**

Karen Consiglio, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the 2016 Mission Spending Plan, as set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the materials provided in advance to the Assembly. Pursuant to a three-year pilot program approved by the Church Council, the Synod's churchwide mission support would be reduced to 35% of the congregational benevolence received, in exchange for assumption of direct financial responsibility for the compensation and benefits of the Director for Evangelical Mission and for any grants made to congregations within the Synod. The proposed plan calls for budgeted expenditures of \$1,660,000, including \$577,500 of churchwide mission support. The Assembly was notified that the proposal would be brought before the Assembly for approval later in the meeting. No amendments were offered to the proposed spending plan.

***Mission Spending Plan***

View on following page.

**MISSION SPENDING PLAN FY2016**

	2016 @ 35%	2015	
		Approved	2014 Actual
<b>Receipts</b>			
Congregational Mission Support	\$1,650,000	\$1,720,000	\$1,715,661
Interest and other support	<u>\$10,000</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>\$4,631</u>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$1,660,000</b>	<b>\$1,745,000</b>	<b>\$1,720,292</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Churchwide Mission Support	\$577,500	\$860,000	\$857,818
New and Renewing Missions	\$100,000	\$62,500	\$73,787
La Sagrada Familia	\$45,000	\$35,000	\$25,000
<b>Stewardship and Mission Support</b>			
Gifts of Hope	\$6,000	\$6,500	\$6,000
Table expenses and materials	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$1,500</u>	<u>\$0</u>
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>
<b>Office of the Bishop</b>			
Ecumenical Affairs Committee	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$3,432
Candidacy Committee	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$6,371
LTSG (Gettysburg Seminary)	\$82,000	\$83,000	\$90,000
Seminary Student Financial Aid	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$12,000
First Call Theological Education	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,800
Young Adults Initiative	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$1,331
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$104,000</b>	<b>\$106,000</b>	<b>\$114,934</b>
<b>Global Mission and Companion Synod</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>	<b>\$5,500</b>	<b>\$2,280</b>
<b>Camps and Campus Ministry Support</b>			
Camps	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$18,000
Campus Ministry	<u>\$60,000</u>	<u>\$60,000</u>	<u>\$57,500</u>
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	<b>\$75,500</b>
<b>Administration and Operations</b>			
Ordained Staff Comp & Benefits	\$435,000	\$270,000	\$271,828
Office Staff Comp & Benefits	\$145,000	\$160,000	\$132,418
Office Operations	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$78,107
Occupancy	\$90,000	\$85,000	\$77,977
Region 8 Support	<u>\$8,000</u>	<u>\$8,000</u>	<u>\$8,336</u>
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$748,000</b>	<b>\$593,000</b>	<b>\$568,666</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$1,660,000</b>	<b>\$1,745,000</b>	<b>\$1,723,985</b>

**Summary**

Churchwide	\$577,500	\$860,000	\$857,818
Synod Programs	\$334,500	\$292,000	\$297,501
Leadership and Operations	\$748,000	\$593,000	\$568,666
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,660,000</b>	<b>\$1,745,000</b>	<b>\$1,723,985</b>

## Report of the Elections Committee/First Ballot

The Rev. Mitch Watney, Chair of the Elections Committee, led the Assembly through a series of elections by category of office.

For the Office of Treasurer, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly that there were two candidates, as follows:

David A. Appler  
The Rev. Thomas J. Knoll

An electronic vote was cast, with the results of the vote to be announced at a later time.

For all open positions on the Synod Council, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly that there were no contested positions.

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To elect all uncontested positions for the Synod Council by acclamation.

**VOTED**

**SA15.06.05** To adopt the foregoing motion.

Bishop Graham declared that all of the nominees for the Synod Council had been elected.

.....

For all open positions on the Committee on Discipline, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly that there were no uncontested positions.

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To elect all uncontested positions for the Committee on Discipline by acclamation.

**VOTED**

**SA15.06.06** To adopt the foregoing motion.

Bishop Graham declared that all of the nominees for the Committee on Discipline had been elected.

.....

For the open positions as voting members to the Churchwide Assembly, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly, that only the positions for Youth or Young Adult and for Person of Color or Whose Primary Language is Other Than English would be held at this time.

The elections were ordered in this way in order to ensure compliance with the representational principles applicable to each synod in its election of such voting members. The nominees for Youth or Young Adult are as follows:

Jesse Fonkert  
Emily M.

An electronic vote was cast, with the results of the vote to be announced at a later time.

The nominees for Person of Color or Whose Primary Language is Other Than English are as follows:

The Rev. Karsten Decker  
The Rev. Anteneh Gabresalassie  
Stanley R. Medikonda  
The Rev. Leila M. Ortiz

An electronic vote was cast, with the results of the vote to be announced at a later time.

### **Report of the Vice President/Synod Council**

John White commended his written report to the Assembly, as set forth in Section 3.1 of the materials provided in advance to the Assembly, noting in particular the presence of grace in meetings of the Synod Council.

### **Recognition of Anniversaries**

Bishop Graham introduced an audio-visual presentation commemorating the rostered leaders and congregations celebrating milestone anniversaries during the year.

### **Report of Thrivent Financial**

Bishop Graham introduced Mark Knauff, representing Thrivent Financial, who provided a brief summary of an initiative known as “Thrivent Action Teams” to benefit local organizations.

### **Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop**

The Rev. Philip Hirsch began his report by introducing the Rev. Karen Brau, who will lead the newly-created Racial Equity Team. Pr. Brau described the goals and objectives of this team.

Pr. Hirsch continued his remarks by addressing the two principal areas of focus for his role, stewardship and evangelism. He noted that a stewardship conference would again be held in March 2016 and described trends in electronic and legacy giving. He also thanked the Rev. David Sonnenberg, who was making a transition away from his role on the New and Renewing Missions Table.

He introduced the Rev. Kate Davidson and the Rev. Michael Gutzler, who announced the Together in Mission event scheduled to be held in 2016.

Finally, Pr. Hirsch discussed the four different approaches to starting new ministries, with examples of each. The approaches consist of (a) congregations starting other congregations (the Amharic-speaking congregation started by Resurrection Lutheran Church, Arlington), (b) restarting or renewing congregations (River of Grace having started from the former Christus Victor), (c) true new starts (In Christ Washington), and missional communities, an “out of the box” approach (Church of the Savior, Washington, D.C.).

Pr. Hirsch concluded his remarks by noting that contributions to the Campaign for the ELCA made through the Synod offices would be used for new and renewing congregations, with 90% of the contributions being retained for use within the Synod’s territory.

### **First Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee**

The Rev. Mark Edwards, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee (R&C), reported to the Assembly.

Each resolution has two numbers, the R&C number, which will begin with “2015-” followed by a number. These are numbered in the chronological order received. The second number is the Secretary’s number, which begins with a 6. These are the page numbers for the order in which they appear in the report. The Chair will present each resolution by giving the Synod Assembly both numbers. With the exception of the traditional “Expression of Thanks and Gratitude” resolution, the final resolutions were included in the materials provided to the Assembly.

Pr. Edwards advised the Assembly that if any member intends to propose an amendment to any of the resolutions, it would be helpful to have a written copy provided to the media coordinator as well as to the R&C Chair, so that it may be prepared as it was written for the Synod Assembly. The amendment will not be shown until it is moved from the floor.

Pr. Edwards reminded the Assembly that it is only the “Resolved” statements that are adopted. However, the “Whereas” statements are submitted as fact, lay out the issue or

concern at hand, and lead to the proposed solution offered in the “Resolved” statements. Questions regarding statements in the “Whereas” clauses may be directed to a member of the R&C Committee or the author(s).

Finally, Pr. Edwards advised that any resolution arising out of the business of the Assembly must be submitted in writing to the Secretary. Should anyone have questions, they can be directed to any member of the R&C Committee. In addition to Pr. Edwards, the R&C Committee consisted of the Rev. Darcy Tillman and Harry Yee. Pr. Edwards expressed his appreciation for each of the members for their time and gifts that were shared as part of this team.

Pr. Edwards explained that the R&C Committee advises and assists those who ask for action from a Synod Assembly. When a resolution meets the needs of the group asking for action, the R&C Committee puts it in proper order and then moves the resolution to the Synod Assembly. This action does not imply in any way that the R&C is in agreement with a resolution; the process is simply in compliance with *Robert’s Rules of Order* for preparing and presenting resolutions to the Assembly.

### ***Greetings to Other ELCA Synods Meeting in Assembly***

***WHEREAS***, *other synods throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are gathering in assembly at the same time as the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod meets in Assembly, and*

***WHEREAS***, *we are partners in the Mission of the Gospel with other synods of this church; therefore be it*

***RESOLVED***, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the Secretary of the Synod to extend best wishes to the:*

*Florida - Bahamas Synod  
Caribbean Synod  
Northern Illinois Synod  
Upper Susquehanna Synod*

*and express to them our greetings in Christ as they gather in assembly.*

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**Moved:** To adopt the resolution entitled “Greetings to Other ELCA Synods Meeting in Assembly.”

**VOTED** Yes 187 No 1 Abstain 3

**SA15.06.07** To adopt the foregoing motion.

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**Conditioning U.S. Aid to Israel on Cessation of  
Israeli Settlement Construction in Occupied Areas**

**WHEREAS,** *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in assembly in 2005 adopted a “Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine” to build “a movement that will strengthen the resolve of political leaders to find a peaceful and just solution in the Holy Land” (I.A)<sup>1</sup>; and*

**WHEREAS,** *the Strategy commits the ELCA to work toward a “cessation of all settlement activities;” (II.B. 1.b) and*

**WHEREAS,** *the 2011 Metropolitan Washington, D. C. Synod Assembly received Kairos Palestine: a Moment of Truth as an authentic perspective of Palestinian Christians on the state of affairs in their homeland, and as an expression of their commitment to finding peace, justice, and reconciliation with their brothers and sisters through the way of the Christ we follow together;<sup>2</sup> and*

**WHEREAS,** *Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the transfer of an occupying power’s civilian population into occupied territory;<sup>3</sup> and*

**WHEREAS,** *Israel continues to announce new settlement construction and to actively build settlements on occupied Palestinian land;<sup>4</sup> and*

**WHEREAS,** *Israeli Housing Minister Uri Ariel estimates that the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem will increase 50% by 2020,<sup>5</sup> living in more than 125 Israeli-approved/sanctioned settlements<sup>6</sup> subsidized by the Israeli government at an estimated cost of \$281,050,000/year;<sup>7</sup> therefore, be it*

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<sup>1</sup> Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine:

[http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW\\_Strategy.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW_Strategy.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth, A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering: <http://www.kairospalestine.ps/content/kairos-document>

<sup>3</sup> Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49: <https://www.icrc.org/ihl/WebART/380-600056>

<sup>4</sup> Reuters, 6 April 2015: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/06/us-israel-palestinians-settlements-insig-idUSKBN0MX0T220150406>

<sup>5</sup> Jerusalem Post, 3 Mar 2015: <http://www.jpost.com/National-News/Housing-minister-sees-50-percent-more-settlers-in-West-Bank-by-2019-352501>

<sup>6</sup> B’Tselem, The Israel Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories <http://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics>

<sup>7</sup> The Macro Center for Political Economics, 19 Feb 2015: <https://www.scribd.com/doc/257760015/A-Comprehensive-Analysis-of-the-Settlements-Economic-Costs-and-Alternative-Costs-to-the-State-of-Israel>

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the synodical bishop to urge members of the Congress of the United States representing the districts of the synod to make future U.S. aid to Israel contingent on Israel's halt to all settlement-building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, that Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly encourages members of the synod's congregations to contact their congressional representatives and senators, asking them to support and apply this condition to future U.S. aid to Israel and that the Middle East Working Group of the synod provide information and resources in support of this advocacy on the synod website.



**Moved:** To adopt the resolution entitled "Conditioning U.S. Aid to Israel on Cessation of Israeli Settlement Construction in Occupied Areas."

A voting member sought to amend the motion by striking several of the "Whereas" clauses, but was advised by the Chair that, inasmuch as the Assembly does not vote to approve or disapprove such clauses, the amendment would not be permitted. Thereafter, the member continued by offering an amendment in the form of a substitute.

**Moved:**  
**Seconded:** To amend the motion by substituting for both of the "Resolved" clauses a single clause, "Resolved, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly direct the synodical bishop to urge the government of Israel to uphold the human rights of all Palestinians, and to improve chances for peace by improving their living conditions and access to civil services."

On behalf of the Middle East Working Group, a voting member, speaking against the amendment, stated that the group had endeavored to draft the proposed language with great care.

**VOTED** Yes 35 No 155 Abstain 13  
**SA15.06.08** To adopt the foregoing motion to amend the resolution.

Bishop Graham declared the motion was not adopted, and the Assembly returned to consideration of the motion.

.....

**VOTED** Yes 143 No 45 Abstain 13  
**SA15.06.09** To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

**Lay Rostered Voting Members at Synod and Churchwide Assemblies**

**WHEREAS,** *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) maintains rosters of ordained ministers and three lay rosters -- commissioned associates in ministry, consecrated diaconal ministers and consecrated deaconesses; and*

**WHEREAS,** *at least 60% of the voting members of synod and churchwide assemblies shall be composed of laypersons, with the remaining portion of voting members coming from the roster of ordained ministers (ELCA Constitution & Bylaws, Section 5.01.f-g); and*

**WHEREAS,** *persons from the three lay rosters who serve as voting members at churchwide assemblies are included among the number of lay voting members of churchwide assemblies; and*

**WHEREAS,** *the number of non-rostered lay voting members is thereby reduced when rostered lay persons fill those seats, thereby reducing representation of the non-rostered membership, the majority voice of our church; and*

**WHEREAS,** *the unique perspective of the lay rostered leader, whose combination of theological education and call to diakonia, serving on the boundaries between Church and World, is a critical voice in conversations regarding our Church; and*

**WHEREAS,** *both ordained and lay rostered voting members at assemblies serve congregations, agencies and organizations related to the ELCA and bring that unique perspective to the assembly; therefore, be it*

**RESOLVED,** *that the Metropolitan Washington, D. C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to amend the ELCA governing documents to require that at least 60% of the total number of voting members at synod and churchwide assemblies consist of non-rostered lay voting members, with the remaining voting members to be drawn from leaders on the four ministry rosters of the ELCA.*

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**Moved:** To adopt the resolution entitled "Lay Rostered Voting Members at Synod and Churchwide Assemblies."

**VOTED** Yes 126 No 55 Abstain 25

**SA15.06.11** To adopt the foregoing motion.

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### **Instructions for Dinner**

Pr. Kleiber gave the Assembly instructions for dinner. The Assembly recessed for the day at 5:55 PM. In the evening following dinner, a concert featuring *Lost and Found* was held, sponsored by The Village at Rockville.

**PLENARY SESSION 4**  
**Saturday, June 20, 2015**  
**National Conference Center**  
**Leesburg, Virginia**

Before the beginning of the morning plenary session, voting members had the opportunity to choose between attending a Bible study conducted by the Dr. Hinlicky Wilson and a workshop discussion of the proposed mission spending plan.

Bishop Graham called the fourth plenary session to order at 9:30 AM, and opened the session with prayer.

**Second Report of the Registrar**

Present:	Lay Voting Members	154
	Rostered Voting Members	<u>92</u>
	<b>Total Voting Members</b>	<b>246</b>
	Visitors	38

**Report of the Elections Committee/Second Ballot**

Pr. Watney, Chair of the Elections Committee, reported the following results of the election for the Office of Synod Treasurer:

The Rev. Thomas J. Knoll	104
David A. Appler	101

Bishop Graham declared that the Rev. Thomas J. Knoll is elected to the Office Synod of Treasurer.

Pr. Watney continued by reporting the following results of the election for Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of youth or young adult:

Jesse Fonkert	76
Emily M.	133

Bishop Graham declared that Emily M. is elected as a voting member to the Churchwide Assembly in the category of youth or young adult.

Pr. Watney concluded this report of the Elections Committee by reporting the following results of the election for Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of person of color or whose primary language is other than English:

The Rev. Karsten Decker	31
The Rev. Anteneh Gabresalassie	63
Stanley R. Medikonda	27
The Rev. Leila M. Ortiz	94

Bishop Graham declared that there was no election, with no candidate having received a majority of the votes cast. A second ballot for this position was announced, with the two candidates being Prs. Ortiz and Gabresalassie. An electronic vote was cast, with the results of the vote to be announced at a later time.

### **Report of Portico Benefit Services**

Bishop Graham introduced the Rev. Jeffrey Thiemann, President of Portico Benefit Services, to provide a report on behalf of the organization. Pr. Thiemann began his remarks by recognizing Secretary Kevin Anderson for his service as a member of the Portico Board of Trustees since 2009.

He described Portico as a self-funded plan, among the most efficient providers of benefits according to the consulting firm of Towers Watson. Referring to the ELCA's Philosophy of Benefits, he described it as having been based on John 10:10, which expresses the desire that all should have abundant life.

He commended the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod for having achieved a 65% participation rate in the member health assessment. As a result of achieving this goal, members received a 2% premium reduction, and another 1% was returned to the Synod. This was the first year in which all 65 synods achieved this goal.

Finally, Pr. Thiemann described a new feature of the health plan, *i.e.*, online medical care, available 24 hours a day, including for prescription authorization.

### **Report of the Assistant to the Bishop**

Bishop Graham introduced the Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop, who began by introducing the Rev. Michael Wilker for brief remarks. Pr. Sevimli described her role as increasingly administrative in nature, including the candidacy process, mobility, and pastoral transitions.

## Keynote Speaker (Part 2)

Bishop Graham called upon the Dr. Hinlicky Wilson to present the second part of a two-part keynote address to the Assembly. The title of this portion was “2017 in the Light of 1517,” the text of which was subsequently made available on the Synod’s Web site at <http://metrodcelca.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/15sakeynote20171517pt2v2.pdf>.

The address began by presenting five snapshots from Lutheran history, as follows, along with suggested readings for each:

1. From the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg in Austria and Germany;
2. From the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Vedanayagam Sastriar in India;
3. From the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Paavo Ruotsalainen in Finland;
4. From the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Gudina Tumsa and Tsehay Tolessa in Ethiopia; and
5. Also from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Nenilava in Madagascar.

The second portion of her address explored five ways to commemorate the Reformation in 2017, including (a) supporting Bible societies and translation programs; (b) the Luther reading challenge; (c) ecumenical activities; (d) preaching the law; and (e) re-confirmation. In connection with this portion of her address, Dr. Hinlicky Wilson provided resources and ideas for each of the five topics.

## The 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation

Bishop Graham made brief remarks on the observation of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation.

## Second Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Pr. Edwards, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee (R&C), provided the second report to the Assembly.

## ***Call for an Ecumenical Council to Address World Problems***

***WHEREAS, the world is facing enormous crises that threaten peace and stability between peoples and between nations--interreligious strife, climate change, depletion of the world’s natural resources, food insecurity, vast numbers of people unprepared for meaningful employment in the industries of the twenty-first century, and the immense economic divides***

*between the wealthiest few and the vast majority of the world's citizens;  
and,*

**WHEREAS,** *well-meaning and caring people can be found in all groupings of society;  
and,*

**WHEREAS,** *science and technology, when properly applied, can assist humans in  
being good stewards of God's gifts and in determining the future of our  
planet; and,*

**WHEREAS,** *a powerful and benevolent voice is necessary to overcome the resistance  
to joining disparate groups together; therefore, be it*

**RESOLVED,** *that the Metropolitan Washington, D. C. Synod Assembly requests that  
His Holiness, Pope Francis, as the leader of the world's largest religious  
organization, call an ecumenical council to bring together leaders of all  
major world religions, skeptics, agnostics and atheists in a concerted effort  
to deal with the enormous crises the world now faces; and, be it further*

**RESOLVED,** *that the Metropolitan Washington, D. C. Synod Assembly directs the  
bishop of the synod to communicate this request directly to Pope Francis  
in writing, as in the attached letter.*

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*His Holiness Pope Francis  
Apostolic Palace  
00120 Vatican City*

*Your Holiness:*

*We, the members of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are grateful to you for your  
leadership in recapturing the essential message of Jesus as together we  
seek to care for this God-given planet of ours and to serve humanity,  
especially the outcast, the poor, the homeless, the alienated.*

*We are writing to implore you, as the leader of the world's largest religious  
organization, to call an ecumenical council which would bring together  
leaders of all major world religions, skeptics, agnostics and atheists to join  
in a concerted effort to deal with the enormous crises the world now faces:  
religious strife, global warming, depletion of the world's natural resources,  
food insecurity, vast numbers of people destitute because they are  
unprepared for meaningful employment in the industries of the 21<sup>st</sup>  
century, and the huge and growing economic divides between the*

*wealthiest in every nation and the vast majority of the world's citizens. These are just some of the challenges that combine to create a questionable future for our planet.*

*Well-meaning and caring people can be found in all groupings of society. How can we come together to design and implement measures that will reduce the dangers we face? Science and technology, when properly applied, can allow us to become stewards of God's gifts in determining the future of our planet. We need a voice powerful and benevolent enough to bring us together. Please call for an ecumenical council to tackle these issues before it is too late.*

*Our prayers are with you as you walk in the footsteps of Jesus.*

*Sincerely,*

*The Reverend Richard H. Graham, Bishop  
on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Metropolitan Washington, D. C. Synod*

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**Moved:** To adopt the resolution entitled "Call for an Ecumenical Council to Address World Problems."

**VOTED** Yes 139 No 40 Abstain 15  
**SA15.06.12** To adopt the foregoing motion.

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### ***Welcoming Immigrants and Advocating on Their Behalf***

**WHEREAS,** *as Christians, we are called upon to welcome the stranger and the foreigner among us and to be kind to them [Matthew 25:35; Hebrews 13:2; Leviticus 19:34, etc.], and*

**WHEREAS,** *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) endorses comprehensive immigration reform, urging its members to advocate in support of this goal<sup>8</sup>; and,*

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages/Immigration?\\_ga=1.262528072.573209866.1430394342](http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages/Immigration?_ga=1.262528072.573209866.1430394342)

**WHEREAS**, *the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service promotes comprehensive immigration reform and an end to immigration detention of families and children in the US<sup>9</sup>; and,*

**WHEREAS**, *Bishop Richard Graham and Presiding Bishop Eaton, together with many other ELCA and Roman Catholic Bishops, have appealed to President Obama to end immigration detention families and children in the US<sup>10</sup>; therefore, be it*

**RESOLVED**, *that Metropolitan Washington, D. C. Synod Assembly encourage congregations of the synod as well as individual members to urge their Congressional representatives to end the detention of migrant families and to support comprehensive immigration reform that includes potential paths to citizenship for some 11 million undocumented persons in the United States<sup>11</sup>, using action steps developed and provided by the Synod Immigration Team.*

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**Moved:** To adopt the resolution entitled “Welcoming Immigrants and Advocating on Their Behalf.”

**VOTED** Yes 172 No 23 Abstain 4  
**SA15.06.13** To adopt the foregoing motion.

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### ***Racism and the Events in Charleston***

**WHEREAS**, *our sisters and brothers in Christ in Charleston are grieving the deaths of Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Tywanza Sanders, Ethel Lance, Susie Jackson, Daniel Simmons, Sr., Cynthia Hurd, Myra Thompson, DePayne Middleton Doctor, and Clementa Pinkney; and*

**WHEREAS**, *their murders are yet another manifestation of the systemic evils of racism and gun violence in this country; and*

**WHEREAS**, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has been ineffective in significantly changing the racism of this church or this country; and*

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<sup>9</sup> <http://lirs.org/cir/>; <http://lirs.org/family-unity/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://elca.org/News-and-Events/7734> ; [www.lirs.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/FaithLeaderLetteronDetention\\_150326.pdf](http://www.lirs.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/FaithLeaderLetteronDetention_150326.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/11/18/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/>

**WHEREAS**, *the ELCA and its predecessor bodies have often been silent and/or complicit in these systemic evils; therefore, be it*

**RESOLVED**, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly declares June 21, 2015 as a day of mourning, prayer, contrition, repentance, and contemplation concerning the events in Charleston on June 17th and other evil and violence perpetrated against people of color by white Americans -- and, in particular, by white Christians; and, be it further*

**RESOLVED**, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly, in order to avoid confusing the causes of racism with the means of racism, calls for a one-month moratorium on statements by its members concerning solutions by advocacy for gun control and/or gun rights; and, be it further*

**RESOLVED**, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly encourages its member congregations to place on the agendas for their next congregation council meetings the consideration of this resolution and adopt a resolution of similar content and forward such action(s) to the synod's Racial Equity and Racism Team.*

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Because the resolution was received after the deadline established for the submission of resolutions to be brought before the Assembly, a separate vote (with a two-thirds majority) is required in order to secure the Assembly's approval to consider it.

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To consider the resolution entitled "Racism and the Events in Charleston."

**VOTED** Yes 173 No 23 Abstain 2

**SA15.06.14** To adopt the foregoing motion.

Bishop Graham declared that the motion had been approved, and that the Assembly would consider the resolution at a later time in the agenda.

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### **Report of the Elections Committee/Third Ballot**

Pr. Watney, Chair of the Elections Committee, reported the following results in the second ballot for the election for Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of person of color or whose primary language is other than English:

The Rev. Leila M. Ortiz	115
The Rev. Anteneh Gabresalassie	82

Bishop Graham declared that Pr. Ortiz is elected to the position of Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of person of color or whose primary language is other than English.

For the position of Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of clergy male, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly that there were three candidates, as follows:

The Rev. Michael D. Gutzler  
The Rev. Robert L. Lewis, Jr.  
The Rev. Raymond D. Ranker

An electronic vote was cast, with the results of the vote to be announced at a later time.

For the three positions of Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of lay female, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly that there were five candidates, as follows:

Deborah K. Haynes  
Suzanne M. Hazard  
Kimberly K. Hintzman  
Deacon Katherine S. Miller-Holland  
Amanda J. Wahlig

The members of the Assembly were instructed that they could vote for up to three candidates. An electronic vote was cast, with the results of the vote to be announced at a later time.

For the position of Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of lay male, Rev. Watney advised the Assembly that there were two candidates, as follows:

Larry J. Evans  
David A. Larrabee

An electronic vote was cast, with the results of the vote to be announced at a later time.

In light of the results of the election of voting members to the Churchwide Assembly in the categories of youth or young adult and person of color or whose primary language is other than English, and to comply with the representational principles applicable to each synod, the Assembly is unable to elect a voting member in the category of clergy female.

## **Report of Lutheran World Relief**

Bishop Graham introduced Daniel Speckhard, President of Lutheran World Relief, to provide brief remarks about the work of LWR. He reported that the organization is taking “a step forward in faith” by seeking to double its reach by 2020. He closed his remarks by showing a video presentation demonstrating the work of LWR in the world.

### **Report of the Elections Committee/Fourth Ballot**

Pr. Watney, Chair of the Elections Committee, reported the following results in the first ballot for the election for Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of clergy male:

The Rev. Michael D. Gutzler	41
The Rev. Robert L. Lewis, Jr.	61
The Rev. Raymond D. Ranker	84

Bishop Graham declared that there was no election, with no candidate having received a majority of the votes cast. A second ballot for this position was announced, with the two candidates being Prs. Lewis and Ranker. An electronic vote was cast, with the results of the vote to be announced at a later time.

Pr. Watney reported the following results in the first ballot for the election of the three positions for Churchwide Assembly voting members in the category of lay female:

Deborah K. Haynes	120
Suzanne M. Hazard	88
Kimberly K. Hintzman	98
Deacon Katherine S. Miller-Holland	128
Amanda J. Wahlig	108

Rev. Watney also reported that 204 legal ballots were cast, with one additional ballot having been determined to be illegally cast. Bishop Graham declared that Deborah K. Haynes, Deacon Katherine S. Miller-Holland, and Amanda J. Wahlig are elected to the position of Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of lay female.

Finally, Pr. Watney reported the following results in the first ballot for the election of Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of lay male:

Larry J. Evans	80
David A. Larrabee	120

Bishop Graham declared that David A. Larrabee is elected to the position of Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of lay male.

## **Reception of New Congregation: River of Grace**

Bishop Graham introduced the Rev. Connie Thomson to describe the mission of River of Grace Lutheran Church and the lives that have been touched by the congregation in its community. Bishop Graham declared that River of Grace Lutheran Church is now a congregation of the ELCA and a part of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod.

## **Instructions for Lunch and Workshops**

Pr. Kleiber gave the Assembly instructions for lunch and the panel discussions and workshops scheduled to be held simultaneously with lunch. In addition to the two previously-scheduled sessions, consisting of a “We Are Church Together” panel discussion and a discussion of the proposed mission spending plan, Rev. Kleiber announced that a third session would also be held. This session is entitled “Lament, Love and Labor: A Race Discussion.” The Assembly recessed for lunch and these workshops at 12:00 noon.

**PLENARY SESSION 5**  
**Saturday, June 20, 2015**  
**National Conference Center**  
**Leesburg, Virginia**

The Assembly resumed at approximately 1:15 PM, and the session was opened by singing the Horatio Gates Spafford hymn, "When Peace Like a River."

**Consideration of the Mission Spending Plan**

After having been introduced and discussed earlier in the agenda, the proposed 2016 Mission Spending Plan, as set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the materials provided to the Assembly, was brought to the floor for consideration. Bishop Graham advised the Assembly that, because the time for proposing amendments to the plan had passed, the plan was not open for amendment at this time.

**Moved:** To approve the 2016 Mission Spending Plan as set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the materials provided to the Assembly.

**VOTED** Yes 160 No 2 Abstain 6  
**SA15.06.15** To adopt the foregoing motion.

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**Third Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee**

Pr. Edwards, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee (R&C), provided the third report to the Assembly.

***Expression of Thanks and Gratitude***

**WHEREAS,** *the staff of the National Conference Center in Lansdowne, Virginia have served as gracious hosts for the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly, providing facilities and support for this 2015 Synod Assembly; and*

**WHEREAS,** *the 2015 Synod Assembly Planning Committee and numerous others have worked many hours to prepare for this assembly; therefore, be it*

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly express its heartfelt thanks to God and to all whose support and effort have made this Synod Assembly a joyful gathering of God's people, including:

- *the staff of the National Conference Center in Lansdowne, Virginia;*
- *Jean Knight, Qwizdom, Inc. Marketing Coordinator for providing invaluable and patient guidance in using the voting devices;*
- *the Reverend Dr. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, for providing our Keynote address and for leading Bible Study and as a panelist for our workshop on Claimed, Gathered, Sent – A Guide For Conversation;*
- *Carlos Peña, Vice President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who served as churchwide representative and as a panelist for our workshop on Claimed, Gathered Sent – A Guide For Conversation;*
- *the Reverend Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop; the Reverend Philip C. Hirsch, Director of Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop for the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod; Dr. John White, Vice President of the Synod; and Mr. John Handley, Treasurer of the Synod for their guidance and encouragement in seeing this enterprise to fruition;*
- *Katharyn Wheeler, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop of our Synod and Assembly Coordinator, for her tireless effort in arranging, organizing, and tracking preparations for the assembly, for supervising the registration process and on-site administrative support; and the Synod's team of volunteers for the "behind the scenes" work that was essential in accomplishing this assembly: Patrick Ballard, Julie Bringman, Beth Clementson, Heidi Eickstadt, and Ellen Lundie;*
- *the Synod Assembly Planning Committee, under the leadership of the Reverend Margrethe Kleiber, in tirelessly addressing the myriad and small decisions necessary in planning and supporting the program and agenda for this assembly: Katharyn Wheeler, the Reverend Richard Graham, the Reverend Heidi Moore, the Reverend Albert Triolo, the Reverend Mitch Watney, the Reverend Sandra Shaw, the Reverend Mark Edwards, Kevin Anderson, Larry Evans, Ms, Karen Krueger, David Carlson, and Philip Meuschke;*
- *the Synod's Communications Director, Karen Krueger and Media Coordinators David Carlson and Philip Meuschke who offered their*

*expertise and wisdom in designing and operating the presentation and communications equipment and content so important to this assembly, and Patrick Ballard for diligently serving as our assembly blogger;*

- *those organizations that sponsored our refreshments during our breaks and at Friday evening's concert: The Village at Rockville, National Lutheran Communities and Services; Thrivent Financial for Lutherans; and the ELCA Mission Investment Fund;*
- *the Nominating Committee, consisting of the conference deans of the synod under the leadership of the Reverend Albert Triolo: the Reverend Anna Anderson, the Reverend Wendy Deeben, the Reverend Beth Neubauer, the Reverend David Sonnenberg and the Reverend Michael Wilker;*
- *the Reverend Mitch Watney for directing our elections;*
- *the Assembly parliamentarian, Richard Ahlberg and the Reverend Jane Halpern, for their wise counsel and for providing the orientation session for those attending their first assembly in this synod;*
- *the Assembly Worship Planning Team, led by the Reverend Heidi Moore;*
- *the Reverend Philip Hirsch for preaching at the Opening Worship, the Reverend Richard Graham for preaching and presiding at the Eucharist, the Reverend Wendy Deeben, Larry Evans, and Gretta Williams for assisting in the Thanksgiving for Baptism, and all who served as lectors, ushers, and communion assistants;*
- *Rod Harbin for his musical leadership for the Eucharist service;*
- *the immensely talented Lost and Found, George Baum and Michael Bridges, for leading our songs during Opening Worship and for their inspiring entertainment Friday evening;*
- *the Committee for Reference and Counsel, under the leadership of the Reverend Mark Edwards, the Reverend Darcy Tillman, and Harry Yee;*
- *all those who permitted their names to be placed before the assembly for consideration for election to Synod Treasurer, the Synod Council, the Committee for Discipline, and as voting members to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly;*

- *those who are completing their terms of service on the Synod Council: John Handley, the Reverend Christine Dunn, the Reverend Emmanuel Grantson, the Reverend Gerry Johnson, the Reverend Margrethe Kleiber, and the Reverend Charles Oberkehr;*
- *our ecumenical guests: the Reverend Dr. Christopher Agnew, Episcopal Diocese of Virginia; the Reverend Tammie Rinker, Eastern District Executive Board, Moravian Church, Northern Province; the Reverend Tom Andrews, Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C.; Alan Ronkin, The American Jewish Committee; the Reverend Donald Rooney, Ecumenical Officer of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arlington, and Deacon Joseph Rampino; and Counselor Lana Gray of the Embassy of Namibia;*
- *our guest representatives who addressed our assembly: Ambassador Daniel Speckhard, President, Lutheran World Relief; the Reverend Jeff Thiemann, President of Portico Benefit Services; and the Reverend Dr. Angela Zimmann, Advancement and Communication Executive and Visiting Professor of Preaching, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg;*
- *and our special thanks to the Reverend Richard H. Graham, Bishop of the Synod, for his leadership of this assembly, and to his wife, Nancy Ann, for her patient understanding and faithful support of our bishop and this church.*

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**Moved:** To approve the resolution entitled “Expression of Thanks and Gratitude.”

**VOTED** (by acclamation)

**SA15.06.16** To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

### **Considerations of “Racism and the Events of Charleston”**

Bishop Graham brought back to the floor, for consideration, the proposed resolution entitled “Racism and the Events in Charleston,” the consideration of which had been previously approved by the Assembly.

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To amend the resolution by striking the second “Resolved” clause in its entirety (calling for a one-month moratorium on statements by members of the Assembly concerning gun control and gun rights).

**VOTED** Yes 69 No 113 Abstain 5

Bishop Graham declared that the motion was not adopted. The Assembly continued consideration of the resolution as originally proposed.

**SA15.06.17** To adopt the foregoing motion to amend the resolution.

.....

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To amend the resolution in the first “Resolved” clause by striking the phrase “against people of color by white Americans – and, in particular, by white Christians,” and inserting in lieu thereof the phrase “in the name of racism.”

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To amend the previous amendment so that the phrase to be inserted in lieu of the language to be stricken is “due to racism – in particular, by white Christians.”

**VOTED** Yes 116 No 62 Abstain 13

**SA15.06.18** To adopt the foregoing amendment to the amendment.

.....

Discussion continued on the amendment to the resolution, as amended.

**VOTED** Yes 120 No 64 Abstain 7

**SA15.06.19** To adopt the foregoing amendment to the resolution, as amended.

.....

Discussion continued on the resolution, as amended.

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To amend the resolution in the third “Resolved” clause by adding the phrase “as one solution to racism” immediately following the phrase “gun rights.”

**VOTED** Yes 164 No 21 Abstain 4

**SA15.06.20** To adopt the foregoing amendment to the resolution.

.....

Discussion continued on the resolution, as amended.

**VOTED** Yes 163 No 30 Abstain 0  
**SA15.06.21** To adopt the foregoing resolution, as amended.

.....

For clarity, the complete text of the resolution, as amended and adopted, is as follows:

### ***Racism and the Events in Charleston***

**WHEREAS**, *our sisters and brothers in Christ in Charleston are grieving the deaths of Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Tywanza Sanders, Ethel Lance, Susie Jackson, Daniel Simmons, Sr., Cynthia Hurd, Myra Thompson, DePayne Middleton Doctor, and Clementa Pinkney; and*

**WHEREAS**, *their murders are yet another manifestation of the systemic evils of racism and gun violence in this country; and*

**WHEREAS**, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has been ineffective in significantly changing the racism of this church or this country; and*

**WHEREAS**, *the ELCA and its predecessor bodies have often been silent and/or complicit in these systemic evils; therefore, be it*

**RESOLVED**, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly declares June 21, 2015 as a day of mourning, prayer, contrition, repentance, and contemplation concerning the events in Charleston on June 17th and other evil and violence perpetrated due to racism -- in particular, by white Christians; and, be it further*

**RESOLVED**, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly, in order to avoid confusing the causes of racism with the means of racism, calls for a one-month moratorium on statements by its members advocating for gun control and/or gun rights as one solution to racism; and, be it further*

**RESOLVED**, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly encourages its member congregations to place on the agendas for their next congregation council meetings the consideration of this resolution and adopt a resolution of similar content and forward such action(s) to the synod's Racial Equity and Racism Team.*

Following the adoption of this resolution, Rev. Edwards announced that the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee was complete.

### **Report of the Elections Committee**

Pr. Watney, Chair of the Elections Committee, reported the following results in the second ballot for the election for Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of clergy male:

The Rev. Raymond D. Ranker	136
The Rev. Robert L. Lewis, Jr.	62

Bishop Graham declared that the Rev. Raymond D. Ranker is elected to the position of Churchwide Assembly voting member in the category of clergy male.

### **Conclusion of Assembly**

There being no further business to bring before the Assembly, Bishop Graham advised the Assembly to break at approximately 2:05 PM and to return for the festival eucharist and installation of the Synod Council and other elected positions.

### **Worship**

Bishop Richard Graham was the preaching minister for the closing worship service, during which the newly-elected Synod Council and other leaders were installed. The worship concluded at 3:30 PM and the 2015 Synod Assembly was declared closed.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Kevin D. Anderson*  
Secretary