Report of the Synod Council
Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod Assembly
June 19, 2015

The Synod Constitution and By-laws defines The Synod Council as "the board of directors of this Synod," which serves as its "interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly." (S10.02). The Council consists of four officers and members (rostered, lay, and at-large) from the Synod conferences, the Women's Organization and the Youth Organization representative.

You, the members of the Assembly, are the true governing body of the Synod. When the Council acts, we do so aware of the responsibility and authority you have placed with us, and the trust you have invested that we will with our efforts, our minds, and our hearts.

This year's Council has proven energetic, wise, and, most significantly, compassionate. In the role of Primary Mission Table for the Synod, we were blessed by the emergence of new worshiping bodies into our vibrant and diverse ELCA, including: a new authorized worship community, In Christ Fellowship; an Amharic-language gathering at Resurrection-Arlington; a Latino-centered congregation, La Sagrada Familia in Silver Spring, in the loving care of their sisters and brothers at St. Luke; and the bursting forth of River of Grace – Manassas into a newly independent congregation.

It is appropriate that congregations, like nature itself, have life cycles, and that there comes a time when the members of the Synod, through its Council, accept the closure of a congregation. And like nature itself, even these acts confer life-giving blessings to those who follow. In this way, our act to close Good Samaritan – Lanham was mournful, but mindful of a higher mission.

The drive for new and renewing missions has motivated the Council, through the planning and guidance of Rev. Phil Hirsch, our Assistant to the Bishop for New and Renewing Missions. The goal of several new or renewed church starts in the next three years is startlingly ambitious for our times, but a truly inspired challenge that we cannot wait to be a part of.

Last year, the Assembly adopted new bylaws enabling the Council to act in more flexible ways to call focused teams to do the work that the Holy Spirit has called them to do with the blessing and cognizance of the Council. One such team is the new Immigration team, brought the Council by Pastor Gerry Johnson, a vehicle for responding to the dire need for collaborative help for the many children of God fleeing from wars, disease, and hunger.

Our Mission Spending plan has reflected an orientation toward compassion for our neighbors, brothers, sisters, and the body of Christ. Even as our plan has involved less funding for the last several years, we have focused it in new ways, in the current year, by directly supporting a congregation beyond its synodical status, because of its special mission. For next year, we plan to take a leadership role in the whole of the ELCA by restructuring our funding for our local and regional needs while still making a 35%

commitment to the churchwide and worldwide missions through which God has healed and fed and comforted His children throughout the world.

The examples of the many thoughtful, devoted, and at times intensely difficult given in this reflect the involvement of the heart, mind, soul, and strength of each member of our Council. This year, the Council members are:

- Rev. Richard Graham, Bishop
- Dr. John White, Vice President
- Mr. Kevin Anderson, Secretary
- Mr. John Handley, Treasurer
- Rev. Christine Dunn (Montgomery Conference)
- Mr. Tom Kern (Montgomery)
- Rev. Mark Edwards (Virginia Conference)
- Stanley Medikonda (Virginia)
- Rev. Tom Knoll (DC Conference)
- Mr. Larry Evans (DC)
- Rev. Gerry Johnson (Fairfax Conference)
- Mr. Nels Hendrickson (Fairfax)
- Rev. Charles Oberkehr (Potomac Conference)
- Ms. Desiree Jessimy (Potomac)
- Rev. Emmanuel Grantson (Maryland Conference)
- Ms. Gretta Williams (Maryland)
- Rev. Margrethe Kleiber (at Large)
- Diac. Min Kathy Garrison (at large)
- Mr. Paul Culler (at large)
- Ms. Kathleen Meir (Synodical Women's Organization)
- Ms. Emily Moran (Youth Representative)
- Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop (ex officio)
- Rev. Phil Hirsch, Assistant to the Bishop for new and renewing missions (ex officio)

As a point of personal privilege, I must recognize the miracle that has been the work of Treasurer John Handley over the years of his service to the Synod. He has a transcendent intelligence of the sort one encounters rarely in a lifetime. He has devoted that gift, as well as a Herculean persistence and focus, to the extremely complicated work of the treasurer of this body, the steward of the gifts given to us, and of those we pass on, pass through, and invest in the diligent work of the Great Commission. Even as great a mind as his could not count the ways in which his efforts have enriched the hearts of the people in the area of our Synod, and the ELCA, and the world.

Respectfully Submitted,

John White
Vice President
Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America