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

# SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – APRIL 21, 2018

# SAINT STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

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

**Devotion** Vice President Crenshaw provided a brief devotional message based on Psalm 133 and Colossians 3: 12-13.

**Greetings** Pastor Bailey greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, an inclusive congregation. He expressed his gratitude for the support of the Synod in coaching and mentorship matters.

Vice President Crenshaw presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC18.04.17:** To approve the agenda for the April 21, 2018, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the March 17, 2018, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Crenshaw asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC18.04.18:** To approve the minutes of the March 17, 2018, Synod Council meeting.

1. **Synod Council Primary Mission Table**
   1. New Connections Campaign Update

Pastor Hirsch provided a brief update on the status of the New Connections Campaign. Thus far, approximately 700 new connections have been documented, which estimate does not include approximately 200 from the Swahili Lutheran Church. A summary financial report for the Campaign was also distributed, showing approximately $309,000 of contributions received, another $309,000 of outstanding pledges, and approximately $663,000 of outstanding “internal” pledges. This latter category consists of amounts that congregations have reported to be raised and used directly by them in connection with the Campaign.

* 1. Building Puentes Update

In his capacity as Chair of the Building Puentes Table, Pr. Santos provided an update on the current status of recovery efforts in Puerto Rico, based in part on his own travels to the island and those of Pr. Ray Ranker. He presented a series of recommendations for the Synod to partner with the Caribbean Synod in these efforts. They include (1) sponsorship of accompaniment trips to the Caribbean Synod; (2) supporting the presence of the Lutheran witness by making contributions to retirement funds or payroll for struggling local congregations; (3) collaboration with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland, in its efforts to support San Pedro Lutheran Church, Toa Baja; (4) encouraging members to travel to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; (5) partnering with other synods and ELCA Outdoor Ministries to provide Caribbean Synod pastors with needed rest; (6) initiating an ongoing fundraising campaign to support the efforts; (7) encouraging pulpit exchanges; (8) working with the ELCA Washington office and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services to sponsor synod-wide advocacy campaigns for Puerto Rico; and (9) praying for the people of the Caribbean area as another hurricane season approaches before they have fully recovered from Hurricane Maria.

1. **Staff and Officer Reports**
2. Bishop Graham:
3. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. Bishop Graham brought three roster matters to the Synod Council.

**SC18.04.19:** That:

1. Deacon Christine Connell be called to serve as the Executive Director of Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area, effective April 11, 2018 (position was effective January 30, 2016);
2. The Rev. Michael Guy be called to serve in specialized ministry as Interim Pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Arlington, Virginia, effective April 17, 2018; and
3. Deacon Katherine Miller-Holland be placed on leave from call for family care, effective April 21, 2018.
4. 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 matters affecting the Synod’s rostered ministers:
5. Deacon Peter Fotheringham transferred to the Lower Susquehanna Synod, effective March 21, 2018;
6. The Rev. Ronald Zschoche (retired) is serving as a contract interim pastor at Messiah Lutheran Church in Alexandria, Virginia, effective April 2, 2018; and
7. Deacon Christine Connell transferred to the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod from the Metropolitan New York Synod, effective April 11, 2018.
8. ELCA Church Council Meeting. Bishop Graham provided a brief summary from his attendance at the ELCA Church Council meeting in Chicago in early April. In addition to the other regular matters under the control of the Church Council, leaders and members are increasing their focus on congregational vitality.
9. United Lutheran Seminary Update. Bishop Graham also reported that he has been appointed to the Board of Trustees of the United Lutheran Seminary (Gettysburg and Philadelphia) as the Region 8 representative on an interim basis. The former representative was Bishop James Dunlop, who is currently serving as the Acting President of the seminary. Because the seminary intends to hire an interim president, Bishop Graham noted that Bishop Dunlop is expected to return to his former position as the Region 8 representative on the Board of Trustees.
10. Bishop Transition Task Force. Bishop Graham reminded the Synod Council that a transition task force will lead the Synod through the process of electing a new bishop at the 2019 Synod Assembly. Synod Council member Nels Hendrickson has agreed to chair that task force.
11. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Ortiz:
12. Further Building Puentes Update. Following Pr. Santos’s presentation, Pr. Ortiz noted that the focus of the first accompaniment/mission trip will be to repair Camp Eduardo Roig on Dorado, Puerto Rico. This is the priority established by Bishop Lozado of the Caribbean Synod because mission trips are hosted there and the camp serves as the location of the synod offices.
13. Mobility and Candidacy Update. Pastor Ortiz reported that four congregations are awaiting names of potential candidates and five congregations are in the study process. From the current roster of the Synod, there are four pending retirements likely to take effect before January 2019.
14. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Hirsch:

Pastor Hirsch reported that the New and Renewing Missions Table had sent five representatives of the Synod to visit the Garfield Memorial Church in Cleveland, Ohio, for training provided by the Mosaix network. The congregation has excelled at being a multi-ethnic and economically diverse congregation and has invited others to observe and interact with them in their worship and other activities.

1. Secretary’s Items:
2. Rules of Procedure for Electing 2019 CWA Voting Members. Secretary Kevin Anderson continued a discussion that began at the March 2018 Synod Council meeting. That topic is the process by which the 2018 Synod Assembly will elect its voting members to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, to be held in August in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Substantially more details were set forth in the minutes of that meeting. The question for the Synod Council is whether to recommend rules of procedure for the 2018 Synod Assembly to ensure that two of the six elected voting members are ministers of Word and Sacrament. The representational principles that apply to Churchwide Assembly voting members require that at least four of the six elected voting members must be lay persons. These principles do not require than *any* of the six voting members must be ministers of Word and Sacrament. After a substantial discussion, which included a summary of an informal poll that was taken of the rostered leaders of the Synod, a recommendation was proposed and acted upon.

**SC18.04.20:** To recommend to the 2018 Synod Assembly the adoption of a rule to ensure that exactly two of the six elected voting members of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly will be ministers of Word and Sacrament.

Ten members voted in favor of the motion, while five members were opposed to the motion.

Two other aspects of the voting process were discussed, but no specific action was taken. The Synod Council determined not to address the gender balance requirements for the 2019 Churchwide Voting members because existing governing provisions of the ELCA already provide the applicable rules. Under these rules, clergy voting members should include both males and females where possible. This provision will be satisfied if the 2018 Synod Assembly elects two female clergy voting members or one female and one male clergy voting members. It will not be satisfied upon the election of two male clergy voting members. Accordingly, the process must result in the election of at least one female clergy. The Synod Council also determined not to address the specific ballot process to be used at the 2018 Synod Assembly. That process will be left to the discretion of the Synod Assembly Planning Committee and the Elections Committee.

1. Synod Assembly Planning Update. Katharyn Wheeler provided an update on the Synod Assembly Planning process, including in the areas of registrations, nominations, candidate information forms, resolutions, and workshops.
2. Treasurer’s Report:
3. Review of Revised/Updated Year-End Financial Statements. Treasurer Julie Hamre distributed copies of the revised and updated (but still unaudited) financial statements for the Synod’s most recently completed fiscal year ended January 31, 2018. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately $51,600, compared with a projected deficit of approximately $36,000 at the time the budget was approved by the Synod Assembly.
4. Review of Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Ms. Hamre also distributed copies of the financial statements for the first two months of the Synod’s current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended March 31, 2018. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately $33,000.
5. Financial Statement Audit Status Update. Ms. Hamre reported that the Synod’s external auditing firm had completed two days of field work and will be completing their audit within the coming weeks. A draft of the financial statement audit report may be available for review at the May meeting of the Synod Council.
6. Proposed FY 2019 Spending Plan. Ms. Hamre distributed a preliminary draft of a proposed spending plan for the next fiscal year beginning February 1, 2019. This plan will continue to be reviewed by the Finance Committee and proposed to the Synod Council at its May meeting. This plan will be submitted to the 2018 Synod Assembly for its approval upon the recommendation of the Synod Council. Ms. Hamre invited comments from the Synod Council in advance of the May meeting. One change that will have an impact on the Synod’s operating expenses is that it will lose the sublease rents that had been previously received from the use of a portion of its offices by the ELCA Office of Federal Chaplaincy. Synod staff is currently renegotiating its lease with Community Family Life Services with the objective of offsetting the loss of sublease rent by reducing the overall rent.
7. **Synodical Women’s Organization**

Cheryl Dwyer was unable to attend the meeting but submitted a written report on the activities of the SWO in advance of the meeting.

1. **Youth Organization Report**

Samuel S. provided a brief report on recent and upcoming activities of the youth organization, including Shekinah in March 2018 and the National Youth Gathering to be held in Houston, Texas, in June.

1. **New Business**

None.

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord’s Prayer at 11:25 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: May 19, 2018; Luther Place Memorial Church, Washington, DC.