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

# SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 15, 2018

# THE LAMB CENTER, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

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

**Devotion** Pastor Triolo provided a devotional message.

**Greetings** Deacon Dave Larrabee greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of The Lamb Center, a daytime drop-in facility for the poor and poor in spirit attending to both physical and spiritual needs of the community. The organization has been in existence for 26 years but has been in its present location only since 2016. It is currently supported by approximately 100 congregations.

Vice President Crenshaw presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC18.09.35:** To approve the agenda for the September 15, 2018, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the July 28, 2018, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Crenshaw asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC18.09.36:** To approve the minutes of the July 28, 2018, Synod Council meeting.

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

Pastor Hirsch provided an update on the New Connections Campaign. At present, congregations have made pledges of more than 1,000 new connections throughout the Synod, compared with a goal of 3,000 new connections for the duration of the campaign. Congregation councils are receiving coaching services through Metro DC Coaches. Two training events have been scheduled. The first is a virtual stewardship training to be held on Monday, September 17. The second is a conference, “Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church,” to be held at Peace Lutheran Church, Waldorf, Maryland, on Saturday, October 20.

* 1. Christ Lutheran Church, Bethesda, Maryland

Bishop Graham and Treasurer Julie Hamre provided an update on discussions with representatives of Christ Lutheran Church, Bethesda, following a recent meeting with these representatives. The congregation is at a turning point, having closed its day care center and thus losing some of its financial support for the operation of the facilities and other operating expenses. The Finance Committee of the Synod will review a limited, short-term financial support package to be proposed by the congregation and will bring it to the Synod Council for consideration and approval, most likely prior to the date of the November meeting.

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.

**SC18.09.37:** That:

1. Deacon Linda Pannebaker be placed on the retired roster, effective September 1, 2018;
2. Deacon Jeffrey Pannebaker be placed on the retired roster, effective September 1, 2018; and
3. The Rev. Amy Sevimli’s status on leave from call be extended for one year (noting that original leave was effective August 15, 2016).
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 additional matters affecting the Synod’s rostered ministers:
5. The Rev. Daniel E. Roschke transferred to the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod from the Pacifica Synod to serve as senior pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia, effective July 1, 2018;
6. The Rev. Janice Mynchenberg transferred to the Florida-Bahamas Synod, effective July 25, 2018;
7. Ms. Katherine Chatelaine-Samsen was ordained and installed as the Associate Pastor of Mission and Outreach at First Trinity Lutheran Church and St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, Washington, D.C., at First Trinity Lutheran Church on September 6, 2018; and
8. Mr. Ben Hogue will be ordained to be the Associate Pastor of Lutheran Church of the Reformation, Washington, D.C., at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Grand Junction, Colorado, on October 5, 2018.
9. Our Redeemer Update. Bishop Graham provided an update on the status of the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Washington, D.C., which had recently been placed under voluntary synodical administration pursuant to S13.25 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Synod. Pastor Eugene Kern, who had previously served this congregation, has moved to another interim pastor position, and supply pastors will fulfill the near-term needs of the congregation. Bishop Graham noted that Sheena Foster is serving as the liaison from the Synod Council to the steering committee, and that Pastors Tom Knoll and Tony Carpenter are also serving on the committee.
10. Synod Assembly Budget/Registration Fees. Pastor Kleiber joined the meeting to lead the Synod Council through a discussion of the 2019 Synod Assembly planning process and to seek approval of the recommended schedule of registration fees. The 2019 Synod Assembly will be held over two days, June 14 and 15, at the Marriott Hotel, College Park, Maryland. After a discussion of the 2018 Synod Assembly and the financial results from registration fees and expenses incurred, the motion was brought before the Synod Council.

**SC18.09.37:** That:

1. The registration fees for the 2019 Synod Assembly be set at $400 for rostered ministers and voting members;
2. The visitor fee be set at $375;
3. The fee for displays be set at $100 per table (no meals included);
4. An early registration rate of $350 be set for rostered ministers and voting members;
5. The early registration visitor fee be set at $325;
6. The early registration fee for displays be set at $75 per table (no meals included); and
7. There be an additional $25 discount for voting members under the age of thirty.
8. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Hirsch:

Pastor Hirsch provided a brief summary of mission support and initiatives. He also reported that a pastor has been called to serve at King of Kings 2.0, the Fairfax, Virginia, congregation’s mission start in Loudoun County, Virginia.

1. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Ortiz:
2. Building Puentes Update. Pastor Ortiz provided an update on Building Puentes efforts. A solidarity service is scheduled to be held simultaneously on September 20 at Hope Lutheran Church, Annandale, Virginia, and in the Caribbean Synod. Work trips are being organized for the summer of 2019.
3. Mobility and Candidacy. Pastor Ortiz provided a brief description of the current status of mobility and candidacy efforts. All congregations seeking pastors are currently in the interview process. Five other congregations are planning for the retirements of their pastors. Several individuals are in various stages of the candidacy process, including three new candidates and two more being endorsed.
4. Synod Staffing Update. With the resignation of Karen Krueger as Communications Coordinator, Katie Simbala no longer provides administrative support to Pr. Ortiz, but instead has been doing creative and communications work. The Synod is seeking to fill a part-time position for its communications efforts.
5. Vice President Crenshaw:
6. Synod Council Executive Committee Membership. In addition to the four officers, the Executive Committee consists of four other members elected from the Synod Council. Of these four elected members, one member will continue in the second year of his two-year term. Accordingly, three vacancies on the Committee remain to be filled, one for a one-year term and two vacancies for two-year terms. Three members of the Synod Council expressed their willingness to serve in this capacity.

**SC18.09.38:** That:

1. The Rev. Michael Guy be elected to serve as a member of the Executive Committee until the 2019 Synod Assembly;
2. The Rev. Albert Triolo be elected to serve as a member of the Executive Committee until the 2020 Synod Assembly; and
3. The Rev. Sandra Kessinger be elected to serve as a member of the Executive Committee until the 2020 Synod Assembly.
4. Consultation and Discipline Committee Vacancies. Several vacancies remain on the Consultation Committee and the Committee on Discipline. Members discussed potential means of identifying individuals to fill these vacancies.
5. Treasurer’s Report:

Review of Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Ms. Hamre had distributed copies of the financial statements for the first seven months of the Synod’s current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended August 31, 2018, in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately $10,000. She noted that mission support is running behind the amounts projected to be received for the year. Finally, Ms. Hamre reported that the Synod was making new investments in technology.

1. **Global Mission Committee Report[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Several members of the Global Mission Committee, currently chaired by Bishop Graham, met with the Synod Council for the purpose of providing a summary of their activities. The report began by noting the three companion synod relationships, *i.e.*, in Slovakia (Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession), Namibia (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia, and German Evangelical Lutheran Church – ELCIN), and El Salvador (Salvadoran Lutheran Synod). Through the Middle East Working Group, the Synod also has a relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

The Committee described its activities as a way in which the Synod relates to companion synods and other churchwide organizations. Among other activities, the Committee provides stewardship of the World Hunger Appeal in the Synod. Finally, the Committee noted the work of Young Adults in Global Mission and our permanent relationships with congregations in Bermuda, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands.

The Committee recognized its last Chair, Pr. Bob Allard, who was also present for the presentation.

1. **Synodical Women’s Organization**

Sheena Foster provided comments to supplement the written report that had been provided to the members of the Council in advance of the meeting by President Donna Nelson. In particular, Ms. Foster noted the scheduled September 22 Board Retreat, planning for the 2019 SWO Convention, the comment process for the proposed ELCA Social Statement on Women and Justice, and the current status of its fundraising goal.

1. **Youth Organization Report**

Katherine S. identified the youth events planned for the next several months, including Chrysalis on November 30-December 2; the ELCA Youth Ministry Extravaganza on January 24, 2019; Shekinah on March 15-17; and Shema on April 28.

1. **New Business**

Before adjourning, members considered whether to invite other groups to meet as part of upcoming Synod Council meetings, including the Candidacy Committee and the New and Renewing Missions Table. Members were reminded that photos will be taken at the November meeting, and that the date for the April 2019 meeting has yet to be confirmed.

**The meeting adjourned** with prayer at 11:45 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: November 17, 2018; Hope Lutheran Church, Clinton, Maryland.

1. The report of the Global Mission Committee was inserted into the middle of the Vice President’s report for logistical and scheduling purposes. The minutes have been organized so as to conform to the agenda in the form approved by the Synod Council. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)