

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – APRIL 13, 2019
KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

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

Devotion Pastor Rhinesmith provided a devotional message focusing on Palm Sunday (the day after the meeting) and on the various forms of power at work in our lives.

Greetings Pastor Miller greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief description of the ministries of King of Kings Lutheran Church. She expressed particular appreciation for the Synod's support of King of Kings 2.0, a second ministry site in Loudoun County.

Vice President Crenshaw presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

SC19.04.09: To approve the agenda for the April 13, 2019, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the March 16, 2019, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Crenshaw asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

SC19.04.10: To approve the minutes of the March 16, 2019, Synod Council meeting.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

a. New Connections Campaign Overview and Update

Pastor Rhinesmith provided a brief update on the New Connections Campaign. A financial report for the campaign had been distributed in advance of the meeting, showing receipts and expenditures to date. Pastor Rhinesmith described the financial contributions as being on track. Among the next steps for the campaign is consideration of the means of deploying the funds received. With respect to the new connections components of the campaign, Pr. Rhinesmith noted that one upcoming focus is to assist congregations in becoming more intentional regarding invitations.

b. Christ Lutheran Church, Bethesda, Maryland

Bishop Graham and Pr. Rhinesmith provided an update on the status of Christ Lutheran Church, Bethesda. The congregation has moved out of the property it

owns and is preparing to sell it. Proceeds will be used, in part, to satisfy debts. Congregational activities are conducted at space rented from Imagination Stage, and supply preachers will lead worship through the summer. The Synod has provided financial support in the form of loans, but has advised the congregation that additional loans will not be made. This decision may have prompted the congregation to move out of its permanent facilities and into rented space.

2. Bishop Transition Task Force/Election Committee Update

Jackson Droney distributed a more complete summary of the results of the seven-week online survey for rostered ministers that had closed on March 15. He also led a discussion of the process for electing a new bishop at the 2019 Synod Assembly, including the ecclesiastical ballot, the withdrawal deadline, and the process for withdrawal. Recognizing that some individuals whose name will appear on the first (nominating) ballot may not be present at the Assembly, a discussion ensued regarding the acceptable forms of documentation of withdrawal from the process. A consensus was reached to the effect that a signed withdrawal form or e-mail message would be equally acceptable and preferred over other forms of verification. In extraordinary circumstances, a text message or telephone conversation would also be accepted as evidence that a nominee has withdrawn from the election process.

3. Synod Assembly Planning Update

The current draft of the Synod Assembly agenda had been distributed to the members as part of the materials for the meeting. Katharyn Wheeler provided a registration update. The early registration period has closed, and 235 individuals have registered thus far. The regular registration window will close on May 10. Ms. Wheeler also noted that the ELCA Guidebook App for the 2019 Synod Assembly is functional. Two virtual meetings to provide a tutorial on the use of the Guidebook App have been scheduled, one for May 15 and another for May 30.

Secretary Kevin Anderson noted that approximately one-half of the Synod Council will be elected to two-year terms at the Assembly. Members eligible for reelection were encouraged to consider whether to place their names in nomination and to communicate their intentions to the Nominating Committee. Members were also advised that, due to vacancies on the Committee on Discipline and the impending expiration of the terms of four members, the Committee membership will be extremely low if candidates to fill the vacancies are not identified soon.

4. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Graham:

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. Bishop Graham brought one roster matter to the Synod Council.

SC19.04.11: That Deacon Rebecca Kolowé be called by the Synod Council to serve as the Director of Operations of the Greater DC Diaper Bank in Silver Spring, Maryland, effective January 15, 2019.

- ii. Our Redeemer Update. Bishop Graham provided an update on the status of the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Washington, D.C., which had been placed under voluntary synodical administration pursuant to S13.25 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Synod. The interim pastor for this congregation has announced her resignation effective at the end of this month. The congregation has expressed its desire to be placed into a mission congregation status and to seek financial assistance from the Synod.

b. Director for Evangelical Mission in Transition, Pr. Rhinesmith:

Pastor Rhinesmith summarized the work of the two tables associated with his role, *i.e.*, New and Renewing Missions and Stewardship and Mission Support. He has asked each such table to address three specific questions: (1) Who are we? (2) What do we do? and (3) How do we communicate these matters to the Synod?

c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Ortiz

Pastor Ortiz reported that there are currently thirteen congregations in transition. Eight of them are in a study process, with their pastoral needs being served by interim or supply pastors. One congregation has extended a call. One additional congregation is in the process of calling a pastor. Two other congregations are currently awaiting names of potential candidates.

With respect to candidacy matters, there are four entrance candidates. One candidate has been approved for ordination.

The principal focus of Building Puentes is the Bishop's Convocation to be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, from April 23 to April 25. The Convocation has two Building Puentes components, and participants have been invited to remain after April 25 in support of pastors and congregations in Puerto Rico.

d. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Year to Date Financial Statements. Treasurer Julie Hamre had 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, 2019, in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a surplus in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$15,600. Although congregational mission support is higher than it was for the comparable prior-year period, some of the

differences are attributable to differences in the cut-off dates for year-end contributions.

- ii. **Status of Financial Statement Audit.** The field work for the external audit of the Synod's financial statement for the most recently-completed fiscal year has concluded. The auditors have provided a set of proposed adjustments from the existing books and records to be reflected in the audited financial statements.
- iii. **First Draft of FY 2020 Budget.** As part of the materials distributed in advance of the meeting, members were provided a copy of the current draft of the proposed budget for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2021. Discussion and questions focused on support for United Lutheran Seminary, campus ministry, technology and travel, and bank fees. A final proposed budget will be brought to the May meeting of the Synod Council for approval and recommendation to the 2019 Synod Assembly. Members were also advised that the Church Council recently agreed to continue the pilot program for mission support for the original five synods (including the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod) through January 31, 2021.
- iv. **Financial Implications of Transition.** Ms. Hamre noted that the approved budget for the current fiscal year did not include any funds for the expenses of transition to a newly-elected bishop. These expenses include an installation service for the new bishop and a farewell celebration for Bishop Graham. Total estimated costs of \$15,000 for these two events may be covered from existing sources without the need for a special appeal. The ability to cover these expenses will also permit offerings to be received at the two services to be made available to any other purpose designated by the Synod. Members were advised that bishops of companion synods had been invited to the most recent installation service for a new bishop, and that their travel costs were paid for out of Synod resources. It is possible that Global Mission funds may be available for this purpose.

5. Synodical Women's Organization

Sheena Foster highlighted parts of the written report provided in advance to the Synod Council, including the annual Convention of the Synodical Women's Organization to be held on May 4, 2019.

6. Youth Organization Report

Katherine S. noted that the next scheduled youth event is Shema, to be held on April 28 at King of Kings Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia. She also advised the Synod Council that Barbara Harner and Tony Harner would be resigning their positions as leaders of the Youth Organization. The identification of new leadership for the Youth Organization will be the responsibility of its own leadership committee.

7. **New Business**

Jackson Droney described a clergy workshop to be conducted by the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in July.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 11:19 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: May 18, 2019; The Village at Rockville, Rockville, Maryland.