

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 21, 2019
ELCA WASHINGTON OFFICE (ADVOCACY AND FEDERAL
CHAPLAINCY MINISTRIES), WASHINGTON, D.C.

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

Devotion Bishop Ortiz provided a devotional message based on Exodus 18.

Greetings Pastor Reumann greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief summary of the work of the ELCA Federal Advocacy Office. She specifically noted the efforts of the office in connection with the sanctuary church status resolution and other actions taken by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Michael Sonnenberg summarized some of the resources that had been developed by the Federal Chaplaincy Ministries office.

Vice President Crenshaw presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

SC19.09.29: To approve the agenda for the September 21, 2019, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the July 20, 2019, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Crenshaw asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

SC19.09.30S: To approve the minutes of the July 20, 2019, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of a separate executive session of the Synod Council held on July 20, 2019, were also presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Crenshaw asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

SC19.09.31: To approve the minutes of the executive session of the July 20, 2019, Synod Council meeting.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

a. New Connections Campaign Overview and Update

Pastor Bailey briefly discussed the current activities of the Campaign, specifically noting the Prayer as Oxygen event for rostered leaders to be held on October 29 and 30. Financial reports for the Campaign had been distributed to the Council in advance of the meeting.

b. Administrative Expenses Authorization

Pastor Bailey also provided an update on the administrative expenses of the Campaign, noting that \$287,000 of such expenses had been authorized by the Synod Council in a prior resolution (SC16.09.43). In that prior resolution, the authorized expenses were to be paid out of the Bethany Funds and were also to be repaid to the Bethany Funds to the extent that the Campaign exceeded the established goal of \$2,250,000. Pastor Bailey advised the Council that, based on more recent estimates, the prior authorization would not be sufficient to pay the expected expenses of the Campaign.

SC19.09.32: To modify the prior resolution SC16.09.43 to increase the authorized fees and expenses of the New Connections Campaign by \$35,000, from \$287,000 to \$322,000.

2. Reports from the 2019 Churchwide Assembly

Bishop Ortiz and Secretary Anderson provided a report from the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 5-10, 2019. Using the post-Assembly ELCA press release as a guide, the following actions were discussed:

- a. Election of Bishop Elizabeth Eaton to a second six-year term as presiding bishop;
- b. Election of Deacon Sue Rothmeyer as secretary;
- c. Approval of social statement "Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Call to Action" and its implementing resolutions;
- d. Adopted "A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment;"
- e. Approved the triennium budget for 2020-2022;
- f. Adopted the "Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity in the ELCA;"
- g. Witnessed the presentation of the "Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent;"
- h. Adopted 26 memorials en bloc, ranging in topics from gun violence to engagement in the Holy Land and gender identity to seminary tuition;
- i. Adopted a memorial that affirms the ELCA's long-standing commitment to migrants and refugees and declares the ELCA a sanctuary church body;
- j. Adopted a memorial that calls for the development of a social statement and social message on the relationship of church and state;
- k. Adopted a memorial to encourage all synods and congregations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the ELCA's ordination of women in 2020, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women of color in the Lutheran tradition, and the 10th anniversary of the ELCA's decision to remove barriers to ordination for people in same-gender relationships;
- l. Adopted a memorial to support the vision and goals of the Poor People's Campaign that align with the ELCA's social teachings;

- m. Adopted a series of amendments to the “Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” including one that makes ordination the entrance rite for ministers of Word and Service, and an amendment to no longer count deacons as laypeople for representational principles;
- n. Adopted a resolution that committed the ELCA to support the World Council of Church's “Thursdays in Black” campaign toward a world without rape and violence;
- o. Adopted a resolution to commemorate June 17 as a day of repentance in the ELCA for the martyrdom of the Emanuel 9;
- p. Adopted a resolution to condemn white supremacy, calling all ELCA congregations to engage in a “study of the structures and rhetoric that empower and fuel racism and white supremacy and to take to heart the teaching of Scriptures, so we may all be better equipped to speak boldly about the equal dignity of all persons in the eyes of God;”
- q. Celebrated the end of Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA; and
- r. Elected members to serve on the ELCA Church Council, churchwide committees and churchwide boards, including Portico Benefit Services, the Mission Investment Fund, and 1517 Media.

In connection with the final matter, Secretary Anderson identified those members of the Synod who had been nominated to any of the foregoing boards or committees.

3. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Ortiz:

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. Bishop Ortiz brought two roster matters to the Synod Council.

SC19.09.33: That:

- 1. The Rev. Richard Graham be placed on the retired roster, effective September 1, 2019; and
- 2. The Rev. Daniel Rhinehart be placed on leave from call, effective September 1, 2019.

- ii. Roster Matters for Information. Although not requiring any action on the part of the Synod Council, Bishop Ortiz’s written report to the Council noted that the Rev. Eva Steege will serve as a contract pastor at Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, Maryland.

- iii. Other Matters. In her first report to the Synod Council since her term began, Bishop Ortiz provided updates and information on a number of different areas, including:

(A) The completion of the process of staffing the Synod office;

- (B) Some of her personal background;
- (C) Intentions regarding invitations received for participation in events, both within the Synod and beyond;
- (D) Review and revision of the Synod's mission statement;
- (E) The appointment of Pr. Julia Boudrye to lead the youth organization, following the resignation of Barbara Harner;
- (F) Recent confirmation (including documentation) of the Synod's status as a Reconciling in Christ synod;
- (G) Plans for the Synod Council to lead by example with a service project to be identified;
- (H) An update (provided by Katharyn Wheeler) on the service of installation for Bishop Ortiz, to be held on October 12; and
- (I) Plans (also provided by Ms. Wheeler) for a series of "Meet the Bishop" events to be held in January 2020 in each of the three jurisdictions of the Synod, *i.e.*, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

In connection with the three events described above, the planning committees would consist of the members of the Synod Council associated with their respective jurisdictions, with the at-large members being assigned to the District of Columbia event regardless of their actual geographical location. Three members of the Synod Council agreed to serve as the head of their respective committees: Pr. Jeanne Lowe for Maryland, Barbara Bilodeau for Virginia, and Michael Sonnenberg for the District of Columbia.

b. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Bailey:

In his first report to the Synod Council since assuming his new position, Pr. Bailey summarized his work with the New Connections Campaign, his meeting with the New and Renewing Missions Table, plans to meet with the Stewardship and Mission Support Table, and his participation in an orientation session for Directors for Evangelical Mission.

c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Swenson-Reinhold:

Unable to attend the meeting, Pr. Swenson-Reinhold provided a written report in advance of the meeting, describing the current status of mobility and candidacy efforts and synod staffing.

d. Vice President Crenshaw:

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, two members will continue in the second year of their respective two-year terms. Accordingly, two vacancies on the

Committee remain to be filled, each for a two-year term. After soliciting nominations for these vacancies, Michael Sonnenberg and Cleophas Tsokodayi each agreed to serve in this capacity.

SC19.09.34: That, Michael Sonnenberg and Cleophas Tsokodayi are each elected to the Executive Committee for a term that will expire on the earliest of (a) two years from the date of election, (b) the election of their respective successors, or (c) the expiration of their respective terms as a member of the Synod Council.

Discipline Committee. The Committee on Discipline is required to have 12 members. At present, there are several vacancies on each of this committee. One individual has expressed a willingness to serve a shorter term on the Committee on Discipline.

SC19.09.35: That Erica Vaughns, Hope Lutheran Church, Clinton, Maryland, is elected to serve on the Committee on Discipline for a term that will expire on the date on which the 2023 Synod Assembly has concluded.

e. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Acceptance of External Auditor's Report. The financial statements of the Synod have been audited by Yount, Hyde & Barbour, P.C., Winchester, Virginia, and their report was presented to the Synod Council in writing in advance of the meeting.

SC19.09.36: That the report of Yount, Hyde & Barbour, P.C., dated July 22, 2019, on the financial statements of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod as of January 31, 2019, and for the year then ended, are hereby accepted.

- ii. 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, 2019, in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$15,300.
- iii. Revisions to FY2020 Budget. Ms. Hamre provided background information in connection with a request for approval of changes to the budgetary accounting for certain staffing expenses. In view of the time that staff members have devoted (and will continue to devote) to the New Connections Campaign, Ms. Hamre has proposed to reallocate \$21,000 of synod staff compensation expenses from the Synod Assembly-approved budget to the New Connections Campaign. These expenses will be allocated to the "program" portion of the Campaign rather than to administrative expenses.

SC19.09.37: That the sum of \$21,000 be charged to the New Connections Campaign and credited to the synod staff compensation expense budget for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2020, based on the time devoted by members of the synod staff to program activities of the New Connections Campaign.

- iv. Bishop Installation Service. Ms. Hamre noted that the out-of-pocket costs of the October 12 installation service for Bishop Ortiz are expected to be between \$10,000 and \$12,000, with contributions toward these costs being solicited.

f. Secretary's Report:

Secretary Anderson led the Synod Council through a discussion of the amendments to the required provisions of the Model Constitution for Synods adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Pursuant to the governing documents of the church, such amendments automatically became part of the Synod's Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions upon certification by the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA shortly after the conclusion of the Churchwide Assembly. Recommended changes to the non-required provisions would be brought before the 2020 Synod Assembly for approval, but would need to be provided to all congregations of the Synod not less than six months before the Synod Assembly.

The Council then engaged in an extensive discussion of the size and composition of the Synod Council, motivated in part by changes to the representational principles adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. The Synod Council currently has 22 members, consisting of the four officers, two members from each of the six conferences, four at-large members, and one representative from each of the Synodical Women's Organization and the youth organization. No consensus emerged from the discussion regarding the nature and extent of any proposed changes to the governing provisions regarding the Synod Council. Accordingly, changes to be brought to the 2020 Synod Assembly will be confined to changes to the non-required provisions arising out of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, other clarifying and conforming changes, and other changes not likely to require significant development or discussion, or to encounter significant opposition.

4. **Synodical Women's Organization**

A written report had been provided to the members of the Council in advance of the meeting by Laura Stall, currently serving as President to fill a one-year term resulting from the resignation of the organization's former President. No further comments were made in connection with the report.

5. **Youth Organization**

Joseph T. provided a brief summary of the upcoming youth events in the Synod.

6. **New Business**

None

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 12:20 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: November 16, 2019; Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, Maryland.