

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA

SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – MAY 30, 2020

ELECTRONIC/ZOOM MEETING

Call to Order The meeting was held electronically, using the Zoom platform, in light of the public-health recommendations to avoid in-person meetings involving more than ten individuals. Interim Vice President Droney called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The roll was called to verify attendance.

Devotion During the portion of the meeting ordinarily set aside for an opening devotional message, Interim Vice President Droney led the Synod Council through an extensive discussion of the first three chapters of the book *Quietly Courageous: Leading Church in a Changing World*, by Gil Rendle.

Interim Vice President Droney presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

SC20.05.19: To approve the agenda for the May 30, 2020, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the April 18, 2020, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Interim Vice President Droney asked for corrections or amendments. Two minor corrections were noted for the record.

SC20.05.20: To approve the minutes of the March 21, 2020, Synod Council meeting.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

a. New Connections Campaign Overview and Update

Pastor Bailey noted that the Campaign continues to wind down, with Christy Hartigan, Campaign Director, being in the process of concluding her service in this capacity with a final report on the Campaign. Synod Council members agreed that a resolution to thank her for her service should be drafted and presented to the next meeting for approval.

b. New Connections Campaign Financial Reports

Financial reports for the Campaign had been distributed to the Council in advance of the meeting.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Ortiz:

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. No roster matters were brought to the Synod Council.
- ii. General Updates. Bishop Ortiz identified several events and initiatives completed or in process, including the following:
 - (a) The Conference of Bishops drafted and released a letter reaffirming a commitment to combat racism.
 - (b) The churchwide organization is developing resources to commemorate the “Emanuel 9,” nine individuals who were murdered at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Charleston, South Carolina, on June 17, 2015.
 - (c) The Synod office has been sharing, and will continue to share, information and resources on reopening congregations for in-person worship. Among other considerations, guidance will be provided on how baptisms and Holy Communion can proceed consistent with federal, state, and local health and safety recommendations.
 - (d) Weekly blogs have focused on the Synod’s mission statement.
 - (e) Opportunities for “Coffee with the Bishop” virtual events will be made available during the Pentecost season.
 - (f) In lieu of the reports that would have been distributed to the 2020 Synod Assembly, reports focusing on updates and activities since the 2019 Synod Assembly will be distributed in the month of June.
 - (g) A “year in review” video is also in the process of being produced.
 - (h) A virtual Pentecost service will be made available on Sunday afternoon, May 31. The components of the service were recorded before the onset of the civil unrest of the preceding week, and a supplemental message will be recorded in light of those recent events.

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

Pastor Bailey provided an update on the work of two tables and one team. The New and Renewing Missions Table has focused on the quality of worship in light of current circumstances. The Stewardship and Mission Support Table has organized a Zoom meeting on generosity led by Mike Ward. Carolyn Sowinski is stepping down as director of Gifts of Hope. Yvonne Lembo (Regional Gift Planner, ELCA staff) is helping to identify potential individual donors within the synod. Pastor Bailey also noted that he is the liaison to the Racial Equity Team. A Leadership Academy event on Creation Care and Climate Justice is being planned for June 25. Finally, he is working on congregational vitality with certain congregations.

In connection with this report, Treasurer Julie Hamre brought forward a request for authorization to disburse funds available in the Faith Fund/Mission Outreach, one of the fund subgroups established under the Faith Fund.

SC20.05.21: To approve the expenditure of up to \$10,000 from the Faith Fund/Mission Outreach in accordance with conditions and limitations to be established by the staff of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod.

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

Pastor Swenson-Reinhold reported that candidacy and mobility activities are ongoing. Candidacy interviews are scheduled for the week of June 1. One congregation has completed a call vote for a pastor through the remote/virtual meeting process. Two other congregations are in the call process. On June 3, a celebration will be held for discernment groups that have completed their six-month process. Two more groups will begin their work later in the year. The mental health team provided a Web-based meeting on grief and self-care on May 21.

In addition, Pr. Swenson-Reinhold reported that consideration of the Synod's office space needs are ongoing.

d. Interim Vice President's Report:

Interim Vice President Jackson Droney had distributed a written report in advance of the meeting and did not elaborate further on the contents of that report. He asked if members would be willing to draft the resolution of thanks and gratitude for the service of Christy Hartigan as the director of the New Connections Campaign. Treasurer Julie Hamre, Cindy Reese, and Pr. Lamar Bailey agreed to lead this effort.

e. Disaster Accompaniment Loan Fund Update:

On behalf of the Synod Council, Interim Vice President Droney also brought forward a proposed set of policies to govern the activities of the Disaster Accompaniment Loan Fund, the establishment of which had been approved at a previous meeting of the Council. After having established the fund and adopted its governing policies, the day-to-day responsibilities for the fund will be delegated to the New and Renewing Missions Table. Nevertheless, requests for loans would be approved by the Synod Council. The text of the proposed policies follows:

Purpose

The Disaster Accompaniment Loan Fund is established to support rostered ministers and congregations of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod dealing

with financial challenges resulting from an external event that causes the congregation's income to drop precipitously and unexpectedly.

While established during the COVID-19 Pandemic, this fund is intended to allow response to a broad range of crises that a congregation may face, such as, but not limited to fire, flood, and storm. Funds may act as a loan to support a congregation while awaiting insurance settlement or they may be used to cover on-going expenses to support ministry such as (but not limited to) staff salaries, benefits, and mortgage/rent.

Source of Funds

Initially funded by the Synod Council with \$10,000 from the Congregational Mission Fund, the fund will be supported through restricted contributions from congregations and individuals within the Synod.

The fund is intended to be self-sustaining as loans are repaid.

Management of the Fund

The Disaster Accompaniment Loan Fund will be managed by the New and Renewing Missions Table (NRMT). The NRMT will

- Receive and review applications for funds against the criteria and
- Forward applications and the NRMT recommendations to the Synod Council for action.

Recommendations will include the amount to be awarded and the loan payment plan.

Distribution / Criteria

Use of this fund is determined by the Synod Council at the recommendation of the NRMT and the bishop. Successful applications must demonstrate:

- Active ministries that currently benefit the community (especially but not limited to feeding programs, preschool as a ministry of the congregation, homeless housing, community outreach ministries, community gathering place for 12 step groups).
- Capacity to continue ministries for several years beyond the crises
- History of involvement in Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod (mission support, attendance at assembly, collegial participation of pastor)
- Staff that includes a pastor at least half-time

Priority will be given to applications that:

- Assist Vulnerable and Multi-Ethnic Communities
- Demonstrate creative problem-solving in approaches for ministry have the potential to be replicated in other congregations or organizations

No more than 75% of the fund balance will be committed to any single loan.

SC20.05.22: To approve the criteria for the operations of the Disaster Accompaniment Loan Fund as presented to the meeting, and to authorize the initial funding of \$10,000 from the Congregational Mission Fund.

f. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Copies of the financial statements for the first three months of the current fiscal year, through April 30, 2020, were distributed in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$4,200. Investment gains and losses have been removed from this total.
- ii. Paycheck Protection Program Loan Update. Pursuant to prior authorization by the Synod Council, an application for a loan under the federal Paycheck Protection Program was submitted to Capital One, the Synod's current financial institution. The loan application was rejected on technical (non-substantive) grounds and was resubmitted three weeks later. The application is pending as of the date of this meeting.
- iii. Budget Status for Remainder of Fiscal Year. Ms. Hamre noted that it may take one or two more months in order to be able to provide realistic forecasts of income and expenses for the remainder of the current fiscal year. Funds will be disbursed for camps and campus ministries in accordance with the approved budget, even though these expenditures will increase the operating deficit further.
- iv. Development and Approval of FY2021 Budget. Due to the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, a proposed budget for the next fiscal year beginning February 1, 2021, has not been prepared. A proposed budget will be developed by the Finance Committee closer to the start of the next fiscal year, to be approved by the Synod Council.

g. Secretary's Report:

- i. Synod Council Vacancies. In addition to the three existing vacancies on the Synod Council, Cleophas Tsokodayi (lay member, Montgomery Conference) had previously announced his intention to resign from the Synod Council effective at

the conclusion of this meeting. Secretary Kevin Anderson advised the Synod Council that Jennifer Slagle Peck had agreed to fill the vacancy in the Montgomery Conference lay member position until the 2021 Synod Assembly. Brief biographical information was provided to the members.

SC20.05.23: That Jennifer Slagle Peck be elected to the Synod Council, as the lay member from the Montgomery Conference, to serve until the 2021 Synod Assembly.

- ii. Communication of Governance Plans. Secretary Anderson also recommended that the reports to be provided in lieu of the 2020 Synod Assembly include a discussion of the plans for governance of the Synod until the 2021 Synod Assembly. Such a communication would include a description of the terms of the Synod Council members, the positions to be elected at the 2021 Synod Assembly, and the plans for adopting a budget for the next fiscal year, among others. A consensus developed for the letter to be distributed in the name and on behalf of all four officers, and Secretary Anderson agreed to provide a draft for review and distribution.
- iii. Future Synod Council Meetings. The Synod Council would ordinarily begin a new meeting year following the conclusion of each Synod Assembly. In lieu of an assembly this year, the next meeting of the Synod Council will be held on July 18, at which time a proposed schedule of meetings for the next year will be provided.

3. Synodical Women’s Organization

No report.

4. Youth Organization

The Synod Council’s youth representative reported that youth activities are being conducted principally at the congregational level.

5. New Business

Synod Council members noted several items of interest, including (i) the completion of a virtual hymn, “O Day Full of Grace,” by the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians for use on Pentecost, (ii) a virtual sermon by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton for use on Holy Trinity Sunday, and (iii) the completion of Leadership Academy—Council Leadership 102, on congregational finances, on May 28.

Cleophas Tsokodayi made closing remarks upon the conclusion of his service as a Synod Council member. The remaining members, in turn, thanked him for his service.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 11:46 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: July 18, 2020; Zoom/Electronic.