

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

## SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – MAY 15, 2021

### 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. 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 a discussion of the final three chapters of the book *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.*, by the Rev. Lenny Duncan.

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

**SC21.05.14:** To approve the agenda for the May 15, 2021, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the April 17, 2021, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Interim Vice President Droney asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC21.05.15:** To approve the minutes of the April 17, 2021, Synod Council meeting.

#### 1. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Ortiz:

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

**SC21.05.16:** That:

1. The Rev. Brent Thalacker be placed on the retired roster effective July 1, 2021; and
2. The Rev. Mitchell Watney be called to serve in specialized ministry as Interim Pastor of Nativity Lutheran Church, Alexandria, Virginia, for two years, effective July 1, 2021.

- 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 several matters affecting the Synod's rostered ministers, as follows:
  - 1. The Rev. Christine Dunn was called to serve as pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in North Bethesda, Maryland, effective February 1, 2021; and
  - 2. The Rev. Angela Zimmann transferred to the Lower Susquehanna Synod to serve as the Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Wilson College, effective March 15, 2021.
- iii. General Updates. Bishop Ortiz had distributed a written report to the Synod Council in advance of the meeting. Her remarks focused on certain aspects of the written report, describing one-on-one discussions with retired rostered ministers, a variety of speaking and teaching invitations, and an invitation to serve as one of two bishops on the Presiding Bishop's Strategic Planning Committee.

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 resumed the processing of applications for Sabbath grants after allocating an additional \$10,000 for this purpose. The table continues to plan training of multi-cultural coaches to serve as resources for congregations seeking to grow in this area. Training will be developed with the assistance of Rev. Dr. MarQuita Carmichael Burton, University Assistant Pastor at Virginia Union University.

The Racial Equity Team has completed a review of Sacred Ground and plans to offer this training in late spring. It continues to work with Deacon Julie Stecker to identify means to include youth and young adults in its efforts. The team is also planning a June 17 commemoration of the sixth anniversary of the murders of the Emanuel 9, nine African Americans who had gathered at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Stewardship and Mission Support Table completed its storytelling and generosity event on April 22, with approximately 45 individuals having participated in the event.

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

Pastor Swenson-Reinhold supplemented her written report by noting the continued involvement with two current discernment groups, the significant number of discernment discussions with candidates and rostered ministers, and plans for the 2021 Synod Assembly. Six congregations are actively involved in a call process.

d. Assistant to the Bishop, Youth and Family Ministry, Deacon Julie Stecker:

Deacon Stecker provided updates on the opening of applications for the Lutheran Youth Organization, Growing Young discussion groups, planning for the ELCA Youth Gathering in 2022, and the continuing search for a youth representative on the Synod Council. The schedule of youth-related activities and initiatives is described as ambitious.

e. Interim Vice President's Report:

- i. Racial Equity Plan. In advance of the meeting, Interim Vice President Droney distributed a copy of a revised draft of a document entitled "A Plan for Racial Justice in the Metro DC Synod of the ELCA." The plan calls for a three-part process consisting of (a) regular opportunities for rostered ministers and lay members to learn about racial justice and equity; (b) engaging a contractor to review specified systems of the synod; and (c) consideration of how the synod, as an entity, as well as its congregations, may issue reparations to people of color and work toward meaningful reconciliation. Editorial suggestions were made and other questions were raised by members.

**SC21.05.17:** To approve the document entitled "A Plan for Racial Justice in the Metro DC Synod of the ELCA," in the form presented to the meeting, subject to any non-substantive changes as the authors deem necessary and appropriate.

- ii. Schedule Updates. Interim Vice President Droney called attention to a number of upcoming meetings and events, including the June 3 meeting of the Synod Council in advance of the 2021 Synod Assembly, the Assembly itself, the July 6 meeting of the Executive Committee, and the July 10 meeting of the newly-constituted Synod Council.
- iii. Nominating Committee Update. Barbara Bilodeau provided an update on the work of the Nominating Committee, which consists of four members of the Synod Council and the six conference deans. With the May 1 deadline for nominations having past, the work of the committee is nearly completed. At the time of the meeting, there was no candidate for the youth representative to the Synod Council. There are more candidates than available positions in the offices of at-large Synod Council members, 2022 Churchwide Assembly voting members, lay members of the Consultation Committee, and nominees for the Church Council. All other positions are uncontested.
- iv. Other Synod Assembly Matters. Members reached a consensus that a breakout session should be offered for any participants who desired to discuss details of

the budget proposals for FY 2022. Secretary Kevin Anderson briefly reviewed the resolutions that will be brought before the Assembly. In addition to the traditional Greetings resolution, three substantive resolutions were submitted before the established deadline. A fourth substantive resolution was submitted after the deadline and will not be taken up by the Assembly unless the requisite approval has been obtained to hear it.

f. Secretary's Report:

Secretary Kevin Anderson distributed a draft of the minutes of the 2019 Synod Assembly in advance of the meeting. Such minutes will be presented to the 2021 Synod Assembly for approval. Interim Vice President Droney asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC21.05.18:** To approve the minutes of the 2019 Synod Assembly in the form presented to the meeting and recommend the approval of such minutes to the 2021 Synod Assembly.

g. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Copies of the financial statements for the first three months of the current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended April 30, 2021, were distributed in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$12,400. The statements reflected the receipt of some congregational mission support received during the period but determined to be attributable to the preceding fiscal year. Such amounts were received after the accounting cutoff established to distinguish between current-year revenues and prior-year revenues.
- ii. Approval of Compensation Guidelines. A draft of the proposed Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines for 2022 was distributed in advance of the April meeting and presented again to this meeting without substantive modification. These guidelines are updated each year and presented to the Synod Assembly for approval.

**SC21.05.19:** To approve the Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines for 2022 in the form presented to the meeting and recommend the approval of such guidelines to the 2021 Synod Assembly.

- iii. Approval FY 2022 Budget. The Finance Committee developed a proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2022. This budget projects revenues of \$1,039,500 and expenditures of approximately \$1,163,000, for a projected deficit of approximately \$123,500. The projected deficit is expected to be offset by unapplied surplus from the FY 2020 budget and authorized transfers from

certain restricted funds. It has been prepared on the basis that the synod will continue to follow the mission support experiment, pursuant to which benevolence remitted to the churchwide organization will be reduced in exchange for the synod's assumption of the financial responsibility for the compensation of the Director for Evangelical Mission and new mission starts within the synod.

**SC21.05.20:** To approve the proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2022, in the form presented to the meeting, reflecting authorized expenditures of approximately \$1,163,000, and recommend the approval of such budget to the 2021 Synod Assembly.

- iv. Status of Financial Statement Audit. The examination of the synod's financial statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2021, by independent auditors is scheduled to begin on Thursday, May 20.

## **2. Synodical Women's Organization**

Sheena Foster reported that there were no updates since the date of the April meeting of the Synod Council.

## **3. Youth Organization**

The Synod Council's youth representative advised that there was no new information to add beyond Deacon Stecker's report.

## **4. New Business**

None.

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

Next Scheduled Meeting: June 3, 2021; Zoom/Electronic.