

WHAT: Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA
WHEN: April 17, 2010
WHERE: Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Temple Hills, Maryland

Present: Bishop Richard Graham, Secretary Rev. Dr. Marguerite Rourk, Treasurer John Handley, Jim Brookshire, Pr. Teka Fogi, Shirley Gibbs, Pr. Joel Guttormson, Marcia Ihnen, Deacon Kati Miller-Holland, Robert Joppa, Pr. Justin Lathrop, Phil Soucy, Pr. Kendall Summers, Amanda Wahlig

Absent: Kelsey Glass, Pr. Jane Halpern, Ruth Manchester, Pr. Beth Platz, Barbara Topel, Vice president John White, Pr. Michael Wilker

Staff: Assistants to the Bishop Pr. Phil Hirsch and Pr. Amy Sevimli, Synod Administrator Harold Sargeant

Guests: Richard Ahlberg, Wendell Anderson, Pr. Craig Settlage

The Council was welcomed by Pastor Kendall Summers. Bishop Graham called the meeting to order and gave devotions.

Minutes from the 13 March 2010 Council had been distributed on line and approved.

The draft of the Metro DC Synod Ministry Spending Plan for 2011 was distributed by Finance Committee chair Rick Ahlberg and Treasurer John Handley. It was noted that this plan includes our synod's benevolence to the ELCA at 44% rather than the 55% submitted for a number of years heretofore. After careful and prayerful examination of our responsibilities for supporting synod agencies, institutions and programming, the Committee determined that our most faithful response during these difficult economic days is the Ministry Spending Plan as presented (see attached). It has been stipulated, however, that should receipts exceed the \$2 million target for the year, then the synod will forward 55% of that amount to the ELCA. It is the synod's fervent hope that our benevolence may be restored to 55% as soon as possible.

The Rev. Dr. Craig Settlage, Director for Mission Support in the ELCA Section for Synodical Relations, was the Council's guest. He outlined the ELCA concerns and the inability to continue the central mission of the church without the fullest possible support from synods. The Metro DC Synod is proposing a reduction in benevolence to the ELCA from 55% to 44% in fiscal year 2011, which percentage equals approximately \$220,000, a significant sum to the church. Dr. Settlage noted that some synods reducing their usual benevolence could send a negative message to other synods, especially were synods like ours not so drastically affected by current economic exigencies. Some in the church might question why our synod was reducing benevolence when we have not been as decimated by the economic climate and results of churchwide decisions. Dr. Settlage reported that the ELCA is trying to re-examine all these issues comprehensively, rather than each synod deciding to act by itself. He warned of a downward spiral from which it could be nearly impossible to recover. Furthermore, it is the church's hope that persons in Pr. Phil Hirsch's position in other synods might help raise awareness of stewardship issues involved. Dr. Settlage also noted that in the Metro DC Synod congregations could take more responsibility for mission and bearing expenses. Deacon Kati Miller-Holland responded that across the ELCA it is metropolitan area synods that expend more of their money on social ministries.

Treasurer John Handley stated that postponing the vote on our synod's Ministry Spending Plan would affect neither a congregation's benevolence nor the formation of their own 2012 ministry spending plans. **MOTION SC10.04.01** to submit the 2011 Draft Ministry Spending Plan to the Synod Assembly for discussion at the May Session before a vote at the Fall Session was adopted.

Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Phil Hirsch, Director of Evangelical Mission, presented the plan to establish the "Metropolitan Washington DC Synod Stewardship and Mission Support Table" that would assist congregational stewardship, develop a unified mission funding strategy, communicate and interpret the church's mission work, and relate to gifts of Hope and the Lutheran Planned Giving Consortium (see attached). **MOTION SC10.04.02** to establish the Stewardship and Mission Support Table was adopted. Pr. Hirsch also reported that the mission at La Plata was reapproved by the ELCA, and that La Sagrada Familia has been approved as a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community and will be funded by the Metro DC Synod at \$15,000 per year.

Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Amy Sevimli reminded the council that in our synod this is *The Year of the Young Adult*, and that additional information and updates on the work of ministry with young adults will be forthcoming at the Assembly as well.

Synod Administrator Harold Sargeant presented the *Rostered Leadership Compensation Recommendations for 2011* with adjustments and modifications in the family and parental leave sections. **MOTION SC 10.04.03** was adopted to present the *Recommendations* to the assembly for approval and acceptance (see attached).

Marcia Ihnen, president of the Metro DC Synod Women of the ELCA distributed reports and the 2010 WELCA convention information and programming (see attached).

The draft of the Synod Assembly agenda and schedule was presented (see attached) along with the draft minutes of the 2009 Synod Assembly Spring and Fall Sessions. When revised and completed, the 2009 minutes will be submitted online to Council prior to the Assembly for a vote to present the minutes to the 2010 Assembly for approval and adoption.

Bishop Graham spoke of the LIFT (Living Into the Future Together) Task Force that will examine how our church will move into the future as God's called people who live and share the Gospel. He will offer additional information at the Bishop's Convocation later in this month, and LIFT is included in the Assembly information packet as well.

The next meeting of the Synod Council will take place Friday, 7 May 2010, prior to the Synod Assembly at the National Conference Center, with time and room location to be announced.

The meeting closed with prayer, adjourning at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Dr. Marguerite M. Rourk
Secretary of the Synod