

WHAT: Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA
WHEN: May 7, 2010 – prior to the Spring Session of the 2010 Synod Assembly
WHERE: National Conference Center, Landsdowne, Virginia

Present: Bishop Richard Graham, Vice president Dr. John White, Secretary Rev. Dr. Marguerite Rourk, Treasurer John Handley, Jane Bossler, Jim Brookshire, Pr. Teka Fogi, Shirley Gibbs, Pr. Joel Guttormson, Pr. Jane Halpern, Deacon Kati Miller-Holland, Marcia Ihnen, Robert Joppa, Pr. Justin Lathrop, Ruth Manchester, Philip Moeller, Pr. Elizabeth Platz, Phil Soucy, Pr. Kendall Summers, Barbara Topel, Amanda Whalig, Pr. Michael Wilker
Synod Staff: Assts. to the Bishop Pr. Phil Hirsch and Pr. Amy Sevimli, Synod Admin. Harold Sargeant
Guests: Pr. Bill Nienstedt; Ms. Kristen Glass, ELCA representative

Vice president Dr. John White called the meeting to order at 11:10 am, and offered devotions and prayer.

Minutes from the previous meeting had been posted and approved on line.

Bishop Graham introduced and welcomed the ELCA representative to our Synod Assembly, Ms. Kristen Glass, Director of Young Adult Ministries for the ELCA in Chicago, who expressed her joy at being with our Synod and brought greetings from Presiding Bishop Hanson.

Report of the Bishop

+ Bishop Graham asked that the Assembly agenda be put before the Assembly for approval with two revisions: 1) the first ballot will not be during the 4:30 Plenary Session 2; but rather, 2) the first ballot, not the second, will be during the Saturday morning plenary session. The agenda at the registration desk is the corrected version. **MOTION SC 10.5.01** to present the amended agenda to the Assembly was carried.
+ The nomination and election procedures for electing voting members to the Churchwide Assembly necessitated a change in that the second ballot will not have a lay male candidate, as all positions for clergy and lay males are filled “by default” through the various persons who attend the CWA because of their positions. Therefore, the second ballot will have only women candidates. Pr. Nienstedt will address any questions along with Pr. Gary Rhinesmith.

Reports of the Assistants to the Bishop

Pr. Phil Hirsch reported that the Synod Assembly will formally receive the Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Church of Washington, D.C. (they were received and recognized at the 2009 Synod Reformation Service). Pr. Waaqtolla Dinagdee, now retired, will be here. This is the first new congregation received since Good Samaritan in Lexington Park in 1998.

+ Lord of Life/Fairfax has a new but not separate congregation, their “west campus” in Centreville.

+ The Synod’s newest congregation start-up is Belmont Ridge Church of the Resurrection. La Plata is scheduled to be next for development, as this mission has been approved and is being funded in part by the ELCA, and a pastor/developer is being sought.

+ La Sagrada Familia is working to incorporate.

+ Resurrection/Kensington is planning a ministry together with the Oromo Christian Fellowship.

All of these new faith communities need our prayers and support.

+ Indians for Christ has left the ELCA subsequent to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly votes, and they have returned \$38,000 to the Synod which monies will help to fund La Sagrada Familia.

+ The Division for Outreach will begin a “mission table” for support in June. Pr. Joe Vought will chair this group. Division for Global Mission is breaking off and there is a “Stewardship and Mission support Table” under construction.

Pr. Amy Sevimli noted that this year’s Assembly theme and synod emphasis is “The Year of the Young Adult.” Ms Kristen Glass is here from the ELCA to support and celebrate this ministry. The Rev. Karen Ward, pastor of the Church of the Apostles, a joint Lutheran/Episcopal congregation in Seattle, Washington, will offer keynote addresses at the Assembly.

+ Pr. Sevimli noted that three congregations are considering mission starts with young adults, two of which are First Trinity and Luther Place, both in D.C. First Trinity has committed their Associate Pastor (Pr. Wendy Moen), to pick a model for this ministry and to go out, meet young adults, and build a group. Their goal would be 50-75 participants the first year, increasing to 100-150 through the second year, with a review of this ministry in a year. First Trinity is funding a great deal of this ministry at the front end. Luther Place has 25 young adults already meeting at a local pub, and they bring in pastors/theologians to speak to them. Already having found a connection with Martin Luther, this group will probably not incorporate separately, but continue to be a Luther Place ministry. The Synod is looking for a sustainable model for ministry to bring together 50-100 young adults. Perhaps within this year more congregations will begin such ministries, with a goal of assembling a group that would mature together, yet also add a younger subset all along.

+ Pr. Hirsch reported that we are funding these ministries without ELCA support, and therefore we want to be in a position to sustain these ministries with resources. The Stewardship and Mission Support Table will look at this as well. La Plata was funded for this year, but the funding has been cut, so we are using designated reserves. The draft 2011 ELCA Mission Support Plan is considering a reduction to 44% in order that our Synod will be able to fund this and other ministries.

+ Kristen Glass asked what a Christian Community looks like (noting that “we don’t card at the door”), and that a lot of the challenge is that being part of a congregation/church is not an inherent part of our culture anymore. How do we include those who are not in that “old cultural mindset”?

Report of the Treasurer

+ A deficit of about \$30,000 is currently showing, but the figure will not last. The National Conference Center will not send Assembly registration monies to the Synod until after the Assembly, and those funds are the largest part of the amount currently appearing as a deficit.

+ We are at 26% of planned expenditures at the end of the first fiscal quarter, with some categories appearing high but which are “front-end loaded” payments. The Treasurer is preparing a revised April statement.

+ New mission starts are being supported with designated funds available for this year, but when we get beyond the seed monies, then we must build these planned expenditures into the Synod’s Mission Spending Plan. At its April meeting Synod Council voted to present the draft Mission Spending Plan to the Synod Assembly for discussion only at this spring session, in order to allow time for discussions and revision before the Assembly votes on the Plan at the fall session in September. Recruiting of mission developers/pastors has changed because we do not know if funding will be in place for next year.

+ Bishop Graham asked about the Compensation Guidelines. John White will introduce the Guidelines to the Assembly which will vote on them after a time for review. Changes include a 3% increase in adjusted compensation and recommendations for family leave for clergy and lay. See attached additions/changes conveyed by email. **MOTION SC 10.5.02** to include these changes on line was adopted.

+ **MOTION SC 10.5.03** recommending that the Synod pay the sum of \$10,000 from funds designated for mission support to Pastor Waaqtolaa Dinagdee to assist in his retirement and that the sum be designated as Housing Allowance for federal income tax purposes was carried.

WELCA Report

Marcia Ihnen, outgoing president of the Synodical WELCA unit spoke of how she had been privileged to be part of this Council, and the Council thanked her for her years of committed and faithful service.

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 12:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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