

**WHAT: Minutes of the Synod Council Meeting
Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, ELCA**
WHEN: May 6, 2011 - prior to the Synod Assembly
WHERE: National Conference Center, Landsdowne, Virginia

Present: Bishop Richard Graham, Vice president Dr. John White, Treasurer John Handley, Secretary Dr. Marguerite Rourk, Wendell Anderson, Jim Brookshire, Rachel Carle, Pr. Teka Fogi, Shirley Gibbs, Ruth Manchester, Deacon Kati Miller-Holland, Pr. Thomas O'Brien, Bonnie Priebe, Robert Schilpp, Pr. Kendall Summers, Barbara Topel, Amanda Wahlig, Pr. Michael Wilker, Gretta Williams
Staff: Assistants to the Bishop Pr. Phil Hirsch and Pr. Amy Sevimli, Synod Administrator Harold Sargeant
Absent: Rachel Carle, Pr. Amsalu Geleta, Pr. Jane Halpern, Pr. Dax Jordan
Guests: Pr. Mark Edwards, Reference and counsel chair
Mark Burkhardt, ELCA representative

Dr. White called the meeting to order and offered devotions.

Minutes of the Synod Council 16 April 2011 meeting were adopted as amended.

The ELCA representative to the Synod Assembly was introduced: Mark Burkhardt, Director of Congregational Centers for Mission, Churchwide Unit for Congregational and Synodical Mission

The Bishop relinquished his report time in favor of the Assistants to the Bishop.

Report of Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Phil Hirsch

+ The budget being presented is the first budget to reflect our synod's adjustment in ELCA benevolence from 55 to 50%.

Secret Visitor training is set for Saturday, May 14, and registration is open.

+ Resurrection, Kensington, will vote on whether or not to close on May 22, and will vote on giving their property to the Oromo Christian Fellowship.

+ Pr. Hirsch met with the Rev. Glen Lucas, his counterpart for this district of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, and heard about the LC-MS success in starting congregations. A joint Church Planning Conference is being arranged for January 2012, as their model is effective and worth studying. We will try to discern the ways that the Holy Spirit guides us in this arena.

Report of Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Amy Sevimli

+ Bethany, Forestville, is progressing in their closure process. The final service is set for Pentecost Sunday, June 12, at 3pm, with the bishop preaching, and all are invited. They are proceeding with closing in a way that will not require the d to take over the property, as they have signed an agreement with a realtor, and there are interested parties even now.

Report of the Treasurer John Handley

+ Mr. Handley stated that April is not been closed out, so there is no new Treasurer's Report.

+ The synod office has engaged a broker to help locate office space. About the best we can expect in the District with parking and metro access, etc., is for costs to be the same as current costs. Alexandria sites were suggested, but the broker does not handle Virginia properties.

+ Florence Heacock is the new bookkeeper.

Report of the Women of the ELCA

+ Bonnie Priebe noted that the Metro DC Synod WELCA Convention is tomorrow, May 7, at Abiding Presence in Burke. They will vote on adopting a flexible date plan for their convention in order to avoid the current situation of a schedule conflict with the Synod Assembly.

Gifts of Hope/United Lutheran Appeal

+ Pr. Hirsch noted that a change in By-Laws concerning the merger of Gifts of Hope and the United Lutheran Appeal was approved by a Synod Council motion which he will read to the Assembly.

Report of the Committee on Reference and Counsel

Pr. Mark Edwards, Chair, reported that there are eight resolutions to come before this Assembly: six on issues and two standard (resolution on greetings to other Synods whose Assemblies are meeting concurrently with ours, and resolution of thanks to all staff, participants and supporters of the Assembly). Voting on resolutions 1, 3, 5 and 7 is set for Friday afternoon after workshop sessions on two of those resolutions. Voting on resolutions 2, 4, 6 and 8 is set for Saturday afternoon.

Compensation Guidelines and Parental Leave

+ Synod Assembly action pertaining to the Rostered Leadership Compensation Recommendations for 2012:

At its 16 April 2011 meeting the Synod Council moved to accept and incorporate the following language into the Synod Compensation Guidelines. This language would replace the Family Leave Language found in the current Guidelines (Rostered Leadership Compensation Recommendations for 2011 containing the original language are available by selecting "Salary guidelines" under "For Congregations" tab at www.metrodcelca.org.)

It is recommended that congregations develop a program for parental leave which includes childbearing and childcare leave. The program should include both the birth and adoption of children and cover full salary, housing and benefits with the understanding that the individual would return to work for a minimum of six months after taking the leave. It is recommended that congregations provide paid childbearing leave of at least 8 weeks. This allows time to recover from the physical demands of childbirth as well as time for the emotional adjustment to a new child. It is also recommended that congregations provide paid childcare (for mother or father) leave of at least 4-6 weeks. This leave recognizes the need for parents to spend time bonding with the child. Childcare leave could run consecutively to childbearing or be split into small increments.

Congregations are encouraged to consider the provisions of the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) which allow for up to 12 weeks leave which can be a combination of paid and unpaid leave). FMLA leave can be used for personal or family member care situations.

Report of the Synod Administrator

+ Harold Sargeant reported that updating the synod's salary guidelines includes reviewing the current Consumer Price Index which increased this year by 3%. His proposal is to increase the unadjusted minimum salary by 3%, with computations for pastors being based on their housing situations, i.e. with or without a parsonage. All of this is to be updated after the Assembly.

MOTION SC 11.05.01 to approve the Compensation Guidelines was adopted, including Barbara Topel's leave stipulations quoted above and the proposed salary adjustments.

MOTION SC 11.5.02 to place the Minutes of the 2010 Synod Assembly before the Assembly was passed as the draft minutes were amended and corrected.

+ It was noted that at its April meeting the Synod Council moved to divide the Synod Assembly worship offerings between Lutheran World Relief designated for the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and the ELCA AIDS Initiative.

The next Executive Committee will be in July.

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 12:10pm.

+Respectfully submitted,

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