

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – MARCH 23, 2013
REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH, MCLEAN, VA

Motion 13.03.01 adopted the agenda for the March 23, 2013 Synod Council Meeting.

Motion 13.03.02 approved the minutes of the January 26, 2013 Synod Council Meeting.

Primary Mission Table Conversation

- **Report on River of Grace, Manassas, VA** **Pr. Connie Thomson**

Pr. Thomson thanked the council for the opportunity to renew the ministry at River of Grace. She provided a written progress report on year 1 River of Grace to the council. When she arrived attendance had been around 20. Now they average 75. There have been significant changes to the worship space. They will have their first charter Sunday on Pentecost Sunday. This will give people a chance to feel as though River of Grace is their church home (currently there is no option for membership since is not yet an organized congregation).

They had a stewardship campaign for the first time in three years. They are doing better than she expected financially. They had \$91,000 in pledges and \$15 in undesignated giving to date (vs \$10,000 in giving to date that was anticipated.)

It appears as though River of Grace has passed the tipping point of more newcomers than long time members.

- **Report of the Shape of the Synod Task Force** **Bishop Graham**

Bishop Graham gave a brief report. He noted that the purpose of the Shape of the Synod Task Force is to provide support for ministries like River of Grace. He highlighted the documents that were sent out earlier: *Working Assumptions of the Synod* and *Proposal for Action*.

Bishop Graham highlighted two items:

1. The business of revising the bylaws of the synod is still not done. A subgroup hopes to work on this project in the near future.
2. The synod finance committee has met twice and will get a mission spending plan prepared for the synod council by April.

New Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC)

(from split of the Mission Start, Indians for Christ, Rockville, MD) Pr. Hirsch provided background on Indians for Christ. They were developing as a congregation at Crusader Lutheran Church in Rockville. The congregation left the ELCA after the 2009 churchwide decision on human sexuality.

More recently the congregation split over the decision to purchase a building. (See attached proposal for more details.) At this time, Pr. Chandra Lite and 33 families would like to return to the ELCA.

The New and Renewing Mission Table is recommending that the Synod receive them as a SAWC

Motion 13.03.03 that the Metro D.C. synod receive *In Christ Washington Fellowship*, a Tamil-speaking community, as a synodically authorized worshipping community with the following objectives

1. Reestablish this as a new congregation.
2. Rebuild relationship with the ELCA and the Metro DC Synod.
3. Receive this congregation as a full, self-sustaining ELCA congregation.
4. Develop a new mission plan for the congregation's work.

Motion adopted.

- Oromo Evangelical of Washington DC Pr. Hirsch

The Oromo Evangelical Church of Washington DC has split into two factions of about equal sides around ethnicity and theology. Pr. Hirsch invited prayers for the groups and for Pr. Phil Anderson, who is serving as their interim pastor. This continues to be a difficult and contentious situation. Pr. Anderson is trying to be the interim pastor of both. Both congregations/factions worship at Grace Lutheran Church.

Pr. Grantson cautioned against placing too much emphasis on ethnic differences (use of "tribal" language in discussions of the conflict in the Oromo congregation) as opposed to theological differences. He highlighted the departure of a number of African specific ministries from the ELCA after the 2009 churchwide decision on human sexuality.

Staff and Officer Reports:

Vice President

Dr. White

- Update on Assembly Planning

There continues to be some question as whether or not the final fees for the synod assembly include accommodations. This will need to be determined by the planning committee in conjunction with the Synod Treasurer.

- Update on Bishop Election Planning

Dr. White reported that the synod continues to be in communication with the ELCA Office of the Secretary regarding the upcoming synodical election for bishop.

- Recognition of new WELCA Representative, Kathy Meier. The synod council welcomed Ms. Meier as our new WELCA Representative on Synod Council. Our previous representative, Bonnie Priebe, can no longer serve.

Treasurer

Mr. Handley

- Treasurer's Report
- FY 2012 End of Year Report

Mr. Handley noted that we finished the 2012 year with a small surplus. This breaks a five year trend of declining congregational benevolence.

He reviewed the various schedules. Please see attached reports. He noted that we have spent down some of the designated funds in order to maintain funding to campus ministry.

He noted that we are winding down our work with Lutheran Planned Giving Consortium.

He also walked us through the balances of the Faith Fund, the Mission Development Trust, and the Missions Endowment Trust, which fund some of the activities of the New and Renewing Mission Table.

- Youth Ministry Scholarship Fund

Mr. Handley also presented changes to the Synod's Youth Ministry Assistance and Education Fund criteria. It originally provided financial assistance for youth to participate in synodical youth events. New language proposes providing assistance for training/educational events for synod youth leadership and youth ministry adults.

Motion 13.03.04 to adopt the revised language for the Metro D.C. Synod Ministry Financial Assistance and Education/Training Fund.

Motion adopted.

Assistant to the Bishop

Pr. Hirsch

- Update on River of Grace, Manassas

Pr. Hirsch reviewed the metrics established for River of Grace. Worship attendance and growth trends are on track. They are a little bit below targeted levels with respect to pledged offerings but a little bit above targeted levels in unpledged offerings.

- Update on Shepherd of the Hills
Pr. Hirsch reported that Shepherd of the Hills worshipped in their new building last Sunday! This is a success to be celebrated.

Pr. Hirsch provided updates on *The Journey*. There were 84 people at the conference a couple of weeks ago.

- Stewardship Program for the Synod

We are putting together a stewardship program for congregations in the synod. It will be available at Synod Assembly. It is based on a similar program developed by the Metro NY Synod titled *That Christ Might Come to Have First Place in Everything*.

- University of Maryland New Ministry

The New and Renewing Mission Table has endorsed and funded a non-traditional ministry at the University of Maryland. The goal is to increase the numbers of non-Lutheran and non-Methodist participants.

The Bishop

Bishop Graham

- Report on Synod Finance Committee
Synod Finance Committee meets on April 8.
- Roster matters

(including Synod Council call to Pr. Chandra Lite)

It was noted that we will need to extend a synodical call to Pr. Chandra Lite when his roster paperwork is complete.

At the last meeting of the Conference of Bishops Leanne Schray was given permission to accept a non-stipendary call to Christ D.C. on 16th Street. At a later date the council will need to formalize the call.

Bishop clarified his belief that this synod should grow, that more people will be involved in small groups and Bible study, and that we should be growing in funding for mission. There is no reason why we can't be a growing, thriving synod.

WELCA Report

Ms. Meier

Youth Report

Mr. Hill

Closing Prayer and Adjournment at 11:56 am.