

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – MARCH 15, 2014
HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH, HERNDON, VA

Call to Order Dr. White called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Devotions Pr. Margethe Kleiber offered devotions on the Lenten theme of feasting and fasting.

SC14.03.06: To approve the agenda for the March 15, 2014, Synod Council meeting.

SC14.03.07: To approve the minutes of the January 18, 2014, Synod Council meeting, with corrections.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

- a. Discussion of By Law Amendments: Teams and other organizations. Bishop Graham had prepared and distributed a set of proposed revisions to Chapter 11 of the Synod's Constitution and By Laws. Council members were asked to provide comments to Bishop Graham and Interim Secretary Kevin Anderson in advance of the April meeting so that a complete set of proposed revisions to these governing documents could be presented to the Council at the April meeting. Members discussed alternative means of soliciting input from 2014 Synod Assembly voting members in advance of the Assembly.
- b. River of Grace: Pr. Hirsch provided an update on important events occurring within this congregation, currently under synodical administration. Pr. Hirsch noted that the Synod Council is scheduled to meet at River of Grace in May.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Graham:
 - i. Church Council nominee: Bishop Graham noted that a vacancy had been created on the Church Council when Pr. Amsalu Geleta moved out of the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod and into the Delaware-Maryland Synod. The Synod is required to nominate a pastor from this Synod to be elected by the Church Council to serve the remainder of Pr. Geleta's original term. Bishop Graham reported that Pr. Karsten Decker, Peace Lutheran Church, Bermuda, had agreed to serve in this capacity.

Seconded: To nominate Pr. Karsten Decker of Bermuda to the Church Council, to serve the remainder of the term of Pr. Amsalu Geleta, and to recommend his election by the Church Council.

ii. Roster matters:

SC14.03.09: To approve placing the Rev. Ray Michener on retired status, effective February 2014.

SC14.03.10: To approve placing the Rev. Jeanne Lowe, the Rev. Kendall Summers, and the Rev. Philip Gaines on leave from call, in each case effective January 2014.

iii. Other updates: Bishop Graham noted that the Council will be surveyed, on an anonymous basis, to assess the current state of satisfaction and enjoyment in this capacity. Responses to the survey will be evaluated in order to develop recommendations for content and format of meetings, composition of the Synod Council, and other relevant matters.

Bishop Graham also reported on tentative plans for a short sabbatical leave for himself later in the spring.

b. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Hirsch:

i. Signs of God: Pr. Hirsch reviewed a written proposal for a new synodically authorized worshipping community (SAWC) for the deaf in Washington DC (see attached report). The SAWC would be an affiliated ministry of Luther Place Memorial Church, and the lay evangelist would be employed by the congregation. The SAWC does not require a financial commitment from the Synod, but has applied for an ELCA grant and will also receive grant funding from Luther Place, contingent on the approval of the Synod Council. Although the budget was prepared to cover a two-year period, the authorization from the Synod Council is requested initially for one year. Pr. Hirsch discussed the leadership support to be provided by Pr. Sevimli and how the SAWC would be evaluated throughout the year.

SC14.03.11: To approve the establishment of an authorized worshipping community for the deaf, known as "Signs of God," pursuant to ELCA bylaw 10.02.03 and in accordance with the proposal attached hereto and made a part hereof, for a period of one year, effective immediately.

ii. In Christ Washington Fellowship: Pr. Hirsch provided an update on this authorized worshipping community, first approved by the Synod Council in March 2013 for a period of one year. This SAWC, which currently uses the facilities of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, North Bethesda, has met or exceeded

its benchmarks. Pr. Hirsch proposed that this SAWC be authorized for a second year.

SC14.03.12: To approve the continuation of an authorized worshipping community known as “In Christ Washington Fellowship,” pursuant to ELCA bylaw 10.02.03, for a second year, effective at the end of the first year for which it was originally authorized.

iii. Bethany Grant Proposal for Epiphany, Dale City: Pr. Hirsch introduced a proposal for a Bethany Grant for the benefit of Epiphany Lutheran Church, Dale City, Virginia, for the purpose of providing funds to supplement pastoral compensation. Pr. Hirsch discussed the nature of the proposal with the Council and responded to questions.

SC14.03.13: To approve a one-time grant of \$10,000 from the Bethany Fund for the purpose of supplementing pastoral compensation in accordance with the proposal attached hereto, payable at the rate of \$1,000 per month commencing with the month in which the pastor to be called by the congregation commences service to the congregation.

iv. New Start Strategy: Pr. Hirsch reported that a strategy for new congregations is in the process of being developed and will be shared with the 2014 Synod Assembly. No specific action was taken.

v. Capital Campaign Policy: Pr. Hirsch brought forward a recommendation on capital campaigns within the Synod from the Stewardship and Mission Support Table. The purpose of the recommendation is to address situations in which two or more organizations may be requesting authorization from the Synod Council for a Synod-wide capital campaign. The Council discussed its historical practices in authorizing Synod-wide capital campaigns, as well as the authorization of an ELCA Campaign by the 2013 Churchwide Assembly. No specific action was taken on this recommendation.

vi. Saint Michael's Truth (Mitchelville, Maryland) and Our Savior's Lutheran Church (Temple Hills, Maryland) Consolidation Vote: Pr. Hirsch reported that these two congregations had voted to approve the consolidation of their congregations under the name of “Saint Michael’s Truth,” but with the continuation of two campuses. The consolidation will become officially effective upon the satisfactory completion of a review of the consolidation documents by the Interim Secretary.

c. Vice President White

- i. Finance Committee: Dr. White reported on the status of his efforts to reconstitute a Finance Committee. A potential committee chair has been asked to consider, and is considering, whether to accept this position.
- d. Treasurer's Report:
 - i. Year-End Financial Statements: In view of the absence of the Treasurer from the meeting, the Council briefly discussed the financial reports that had been distributed in advance of the meeting for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2014. Members were invited to submit any questions to Treasurer Handley.

3. **Synodical Women's Organization**

Ms. Meier referred the Synod Council to her written report, and separately reported on the planning process for the Spring Convention and a list of in-kind donations currently being requested on the Synodical Women's Organization Web site.

- 4. **New Business**—The Synod Council briefly discussed plans for Creation Care Sunday, to be observed throughout the Synod on April 27, 2014.

The meeting adjourned with prayer at noon.