

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 27, 2014
GOOD SAMARITAN LUTHERAN CHURCH, LANHAM, MD

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

Devotions Bishop Graham offered devotions based on Numbers 21.

Greetings Pr. Gloria Cline-Smythe, pastor of Good Samaritan Lutheran Church, welcomed the Synod Council and provided a brief history of the congregation, as well as a summary of its current challenges and initiatives.

SC14.09.30: To approve the agenda for the September 27, 2014, Synod Council meeting.

SC14.09.31: To approve the minutes of the June 21, 2014, Synod Council meeting.

Karen Consiglio and Nels Hendrickson did not vote on this motion.

SC14.09.32: To approve the minutes of the electronic meeting of the Synod Council held over a period from July 3 through July 8, 2014.

SC14.09.33: To approve the minutes of the June 21, 2014, Synod Assembly, subject to completion, and to recommend their approval by the 2015 Synod Assembly.

Karen Consiglio and Nels Hendrickson did not vote on this motion.

SC14.09.31: To approve the appointment of Robert W. Tuttle as the Synod Attorney pursuant to Section 8.13 of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Secretary Kevin Anderson circulated a schedule of the proposed meetings of the Synod Council for the next year, through and including the date of the 2015 Synod Assembly, requesting members to offer a location for each meeting and to provide devotions for the meetings.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

- a. **New Congregation Start Strategy.** Pastor Hirsch led a discussion of the strategy for new congregation starts, with a focus on leadership, location, and strategy. Pastor Hirsch also provided an update on the Campaign for the ELCA and its role in funding new starts.

- b. River of Grace Lutheran Church. Pastor Thomson provided an update on important events occurring within this congregation, currently under synodical administration, to supplement the written report that had previously been provided to the Synod Council. Pastor noted that the congregation intends to take steps to be recognized as a separate congregation of the ELCA within the next several months. Pastor Thomson also distributed and discussed budget plans for the years 2015 through 2018. Pastors Hirsch and Thomson responded to questions and comments from members of the Synod Council in the areas of worship attendance, mortgage debt financing on the congregation's facilities, income from leasing space to another congregation, and the amount and timing of expected financial support from the ELCA. A three-year proposal for funding from the ELCA and the Bethany Endowment will be considered by the New and Renewing Mission Table and be recommended for approval by the Synod Council at its November meeting.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Graham:

- i. Roster Matters. Bishop Graham provided background information on the roster matters to be approved by the Synod Council.

SC14.09.32: To approve placing Ms. Kathy Garrison, Mr. Wayne Ralston, and Mr. Peter Fotheringham on the retired roster, in each case effective September 1, 2014.

Kathy Garrison did not vote on this motion.

SC14.09.33: To approve placing the Rev. Ross Trower on the retired roster, effective August 1, 2014.

SC14.09.34: To call the Rev. Lisa Hufford to specialized ministry to serve as Interim Pastor of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church and Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Church, Washington, DC, effective July 1, 2014.

- ii. Service on the Synod Council. Bishop Graham provided a few brief comments regarding service on the Synod Council, including a reminder of the fiduciary obligations imposed on each member of the Council in carrying out their service.
- iii. Reorganization of the Synod Office. Bishop Graham also provided a brief summary of the plans for reorganization of the Synod staff, and distributed a one-page chart showing expected positions and lines of reporting responsibilities.

b. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Hirsch:

- i. Saint Michael's Truth Proposal. Pastor Grantson distributed a written proposal for short-term funding for Saint Michael's Truth Lutheran Church, using funds from the Bethany Endowment for Prince George's County. Pastor Hirsch noted that the New and Renewing Mission Table had recommended a short-term proposal and would continue to work to develop a long-term proposal for consideration by the Synod Council in November. Under the short-term proposal, the congregation seeks funding for two specific purposes, *i.e.*, bibles and hymnals and an African drum and dance program. Pastors Hirsch and Grantson responded to questions and comments from the Council.

SC14.09.35: To approve the expenditure of up to \$15,700 from the Bethany Endowment for Prince George's County for the ministry of Saint Michael's Truth Lutheran Church, Mitchellville, Maryland, to be used (a) to reimburse the congregation for bibles and hymnals and (b) to establish an African drum and dance program.

- ii. Together in Mission Proposal. Pastor Hirsch reported that the organizers of the 2015 Together in Mission event had requested \$5,000 in funding to defray costs not expected to be covered by projected registration fees. Pastor Hirsch responded to questions and comments from the members of the Synod Council.

Moved:

Seconded: To approve the expenditure of up to \$5,000 to defray the expected costs of the 2015 Together in Mission event in excess of projected registration fees and other revenue sources.

SC14.09.36: To postpone the foregoing motion regarding the 2015 Together in Mission event until the November 2014 meeting of the Synod Council.

c. Vice President White

- i. Synod Council Vacancy. Dr. White informed the Synod Council that Kurtis Lowe, an at-large member, had tendered his resignation from the Synod Council, effective on or about September 12, 2014. Although the Synod Council has the authority to elect an individual to serve the remainder of Mr. Lowe's term, Dr. White directed the Synod staff to identify potential candidates and report back to the Synod Council in November. Separately, Dr. White also noted that the position of youth representative on the Synod Council continues to be vacant.
- ii. Executive Committee Membership. Dr. White provided an update on the membership of the Executive Committee. The four officers of the Synod are *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee, and four other members are elected to serve two-year terms, with two such persons elected every year at the first meeting of the Synod Council following the Synod Assembly. Pastors

Edwards and Stephan have begun the second year of their two-year terms, and two members are to be elected to begin two-year terms.

- SC14.09.37:** To elect Kathy Garrison to a two-year term as a member of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, effective immediately, to serve until her successor's term begins following the 2017 Synod Assembly.

Dr. White announced that the election of the eighth and final member of the Executive Committee will be held at the regular November 2014 meeting of the Synod Council.

- iii. Synod Compensation Guidelines. Dr. White reminded the Synod Council that the Synod Assembly adopted a resolution requiring the Synod Council to conduct a study of the salary guidelines for clergy and rostered lay leaders, to include recommendations to improve salary program transparency, establish compensation benchmarks, and review the housing adjustment, and to report back to the 2015 Synod Assembly. Dr. White also reported that the Finance Committee had agreed to provide for the conduct of this study.

d. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Treasurer John Handley discussed the financial statements for the current fiscal year of the Synod through August 31, 2014. Mr. Handley noted that, while expenditures to date are generally at or below their budgeted levels, receipts are significantly below projected levels for the same period. He also reported that he will bring a motion before the Synod Council in January 2015 to use the reserve from the 2014 Synod Assembly to offset the expected deficit for the 2015 Synod Assembly.

3. Synodical Women's Organization

Ms. Meier referred the Synod Council to her written report, and called the members' attention to the 2014 Triennial Convention, plans to form two clusters in Maryland, the 2015 annual spring conference, and her service on the Conference of Presidents Planning Team.

- 4. **New Business**—The Virginia Conference made a request for guidance on same-gender marriage. Bishop Graham responded that he would provide copies of available informal guidance, noting that weddings are generally considered the province of congregations.

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 12:37 p.m.