

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – JUNE 19, 2015**  
**NATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER, LEESBURG, VIRGINIA**

**Call to Order** Dr. White called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and extended a special welcome to Mr. Carlos Peña, Vice President of the ELCA. Mr. Peña was serving as the representative of the ELCA to the Synod Assembly scheduled to begin immediately following the conclusion of the Synod Council meeting.

**Devotion** Dr. White provided a devotional message in response to the recent murders of nine individuals at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

Dr. White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting. A proposal to recognize a new Racial Equity and Racism Team was added to the new business for the meeting.

**SC15.06.29:** To approve the agenda for the June 19, 2015, Synod Council meeting, as modified to add the proposal for a Racial Equity and Racism Team.

The draft minutes of the May 16, 2015, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval, as well as the minutes of an electronic meeting conducted on May 21 and 22, 2015.

**SC15.06.30:** To approve the minutes of the May 16, 2015, Synod Council meeting and the minutes of an electronic meeting conducted on May 21 and 22, 2015.

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

- a. Good Samaritan Lutheran Church, Lanham, Maryland. Pastor Hirsch brought to the Council a proposal relating to this congregation, which had been under synodical administration. At its March 21, 2015, meeting, the Synod Council voted to terminate synodical funding of this congregation effective May 31, 2015. Pastor Hirsch identified three alternative courses of action for the congregation: (1) closing the congregation as an act of mission, (2) combining/collaborating with another congregation; and (3) continuing as an independent congregation with a part-time pastor. The congregation has determined that it will pursue the third option, and intends to call its present pastor, Pr. Gloria Cline-Smythe, on a part-time basis. Pastor Hirsch also reported that the congregation has provided to the Synod office a budget which demonstrates a projected ability to provide for the compensation of a part-time pastor. Accordingly, the congregation has asked the Synod Council to remove it from synodical administration. If the Council approves this request, the

constitution of the congregation, as it previously existed, would once again become effective. In addition, the congregation would be required to elect its own officers and congregation council.

**SC15.06.31:** To remove Good Samaritan Lutheran Church, Lanham, Maryland, from synodical administration pursuant to S13.25 of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, effective immediately.

## **2. Staff and Officer Reports**

### **a. Bishop Graham:**

- i. Bishop Graham described the logistical challenges that confronted the Synod office during the last-minute preparations for the Synod Assembly.
- ii. 2016 Synod Assembly. Bishop Graham reported to the Synod Council that Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland, had agreed to host the 2016 Synod Assembly. Accordingly, he requested that the Synod Council formally establish the date and location for this event.

**SC15.06.32:** That the 2016 Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland, on Saturday, June 18, 2016.

### **b. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Hirsch.**

- i. Pastor Hirsch provided the Synod Council with an update on the financial backing that the Synod had provided to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Haymarket, Maryland. In order to facilitate a refinancing of its mortgage indebtedness with the Mission Investment Fund, the Synod Council had previously approved certain credit enhancements at its April 18, 2015, meeting. Subsequent analysis has determined that the congregation would not be able to provide for certain closing costs in connection with this refinancing without further financial assistance. In addition to the expected pursuit of a Fast Growth Grant, Pr. Hirsch recommended that the Council approve a small grant from the Faith Fund for the purpose of providing for payment of these closing costs.

**SC15.06.33:** To provide a grant from the Faith Fund of up to \$10,000 to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Haymarket, Virginia, to be used exclusively in support of the refinancing of its indebtedness with the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- ii. Pastor Hirsch also reported to the Synod Council that he would be taking a sabbatical leave beginning the week of June 22, and extending into September 2015.

c. Vice President White:

- i. Synod Assembly Registration Status. Pastor Kleiber reported that there were nearly 300 completed registrations for the Assembly, and commended the planning team for their efforts in connection with planning for the event.
- ii. Overview of Synod Assembly Agenda. Pastor Kleiber also led the Council in a brief review of the final agenda for the Assembly.
- iii. Reference and Counsel Update. Pastor Edwards, Chair of the Committee on Reference and Counsel, reported to the Council that there were four substantive resolutions that had been submitted to the Committee for review prior to presenting them to the 2015 Synod Assembly. The Committee will also present the traditional resolution offering greetings to those synods holding their assemblies at the same time as our synod, as well as a resolution of thanks and gratitude for those individuals who participated in leadership roles in connection with the Assembly.
- iv. Nominations/Elections Update. The Council was provided with a summary of the current status of all nominations for open positions to be elected at the 2015 Synod Assembly. Secretary Kevin Anderson provided additional background on the process for electing voting members to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, in light of the several representational requirements that apply to the composition of the voting member group.

d. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Treasurer John Handley distributed and discussed the financial statements for the four-month period ended May 31, 2015. These statements reflect a deficit of slightly more than \$23,000 for the first four months of the Synod's current fiscal year.
- ii. Financial Statement Audit. Mr. Handley also reported that the examination of the financial statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2015, by the Synod's external independent accounting firm had been completed. The result of the examination is an unqualified, or "clean," opinion from the firm.

**3. New Business**

Pastor Johnson brought to the Synod Council a proposal for recognition of a new Racial Equity and Racism Team, to be led by Pr. Karen Brau. Kathy Meier noted that the Synodical Women's Organization had already begun work on a similar initiative.

**SC15.06.33:** That the Synod Council recognize and support a synodical racial equity and racism team, in accordance with the written proposal presented to the Council, a copy of which is attached to and made a part hereof.

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord's Prayer at 10:14 a.m.