

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – JULY 25, 2015**  
**PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH, WALDORF, MARYLAND**

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

**Introductions** Inasmuch as the Synod Council included five new members who had been elected by the 2015 Synod Assembly, Dr. White invited all of the members to provide a brief biographical introduction.

**Greetings** Pastor Endicott greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of Peace Lutheran Church, its demographics, and its challenges.

**Devotion** Kathy Garrison provided a brief devotional message.

Dr. White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC15.07.34:** To approve the agenda for the July 25, 2015, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the June 19, 2015, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Secretary Anderson informed the Council that Kathy Meier had requested a clarification of the manner in which the existing activities of the Synodical Women's Organization with respect to racial equity were described in the minutes. The draft minutes were presented for approval as so modified.

**SC15.07.35:** To approve the minutes of the June 19, 2015, Synod Council meeting.

**Orientation** Bishop Graham provided a brief, informal orientation for Synod Council members, including the obligations of members of non-profit boards generally, the nature of the Synod Council, and its responsibilities as the Primary Mission Table of the Synod. Members discussed the nature of, and reasons for, abstaining from voting on a particular matter, as well as the circumstances under which a member may be recused from considering a particular matter. Bishop Graham also noted that the Synod has a designated legal counsel to the Synod, Robert Tuttle, who is available to members of the Synod Council on matters relating to their official capacities as Council members.

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

- a. Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Haymarket, Virginia. In the absence of Treasurer Handley, Secretary Anderson led the Synod Council through a discussion of the Council's prior consideration of this congregation's efforts to refinance its existing mortgage indebtedness and the Synod's financial support of those efforts. At its April 18, 2015, meeting, the Synod Council authorized the Synod to co-sign a second trust loan from the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ("MIF"), with the Synod's commitment limited to \$1.2 million. At its June 19, 2015, meeting, the Synod Council approved a grant of up to \$10,000 from the Faith Fund, to be used exclusively in support of these refinancing efforts. This grant was proposed after it was determined that the proceeds of the refinanced indebtedness, together with other available resources, would not be sufficient to retire the existing indebtedness and to pay all closing costs. Since the June meeting of the Synod Council, the congregation has requested MIF to increase the amount of its commitment in order to pay a prepayment penalty to its existing lender. At the time of the meeting, MIF had not responded to this request. Despite the expected increase in the amount of the MIF loan, the maximum amount of the Synod's guarantee of this loan is expected to remain at \$1,021,000.

**SC15.07.36:** WHEREAS, the Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, 4090 Sudley Road, Haymarket, Virginia 20169 (the "Congregation"), a congregation of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the "Synod"), wishes to obtain a loan (the "Loan") up to an amount of \$2,312,000.00 from the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ("MIF"), secured by a Deed of Trust on real property of the Congregation; and

WHEREAS, in order to induce MIF to make the Loan the Synod wishes to guarantee payment and performance by the Congregation of the Promissory Note evidencing the Loan, pursuant to a Guarantee Agreement a copy of which has been submitted to this meeting; and it is therefore

RESOLVED, that the proposed Guarantee Agreement as submitted to this meeting and attached to and made a part of this resolution is hereby approved. The officers of the Synod are authorized to execute the said Guarantee Agreement on behalf of the Synod, with such changes therein as are approved by such officers, and such officers are authorized to take all such further steps and execute all such further documents as are needed to carry out the intent of this resolution.

Bishop Graham brought a recommendation from the New and Renewing Missions Table for a Fast Growth Grant to the same congregation, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church. The proposal requests the Synod Council to approve a grant of \$75,000 from the non-Prince George's County portion of the Bethany Funds, to be paid over a three-year period. The expected rate of disbursement would be \$35,000

for the first year, \$25,000 for the second year, and \$15,000 for the third year. The funds would be matched by the congregation, but in the reverse (increasing) order, and by \$30,000 of funds directly from the ELCA. Considerable discussion ensued regarding the overall approach to providing financial support to congregations of the Synod and the awareness on the part of congregations that such grants are available. Bishop Graham noted that, while funds are available for expanding ministry, they are not generally available to prop up congregations.

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To approve a grant of \$75,000 from the non-Prince George's County portion of the Bethany Funds to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Haymarket, Virginia, to be paid in three installments of \$35,000 for the first year, \$25,000 for the second year, and \$15,000 for the third year.

The discussion of this motion continued, with questions about whether conditions would be imposed on the receipt of this grant. Bishop Graham advised the Council that the New and Renewing Missions Table would produce documentation regarding the proposed grant, such documentation was not available for the Council to review at this time.

**SC15.07.37:** To lay the motion on the table.

Although the motion was approved, dissenting votes and abstentions were noted. The motion will be considered at the September meeting of the Council, unless it is determined that it must be addressed sooner. In the latter case, it will be presented to the Council for an electronic vote prior to the September meeting.

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

a. Bishop Graham:

- i. Oromo Evangelical Church, Washington, DC. Bishop Graham advised the Synod Council that Oromo Evangelical Church has requested that the Council authorize this congregation's withdrawal from the ELCA. Section 9.23 of the ELCA Constitution provides that "a congregation that maintains as its pastor an ordained minister who has resigned or been removed from this church's roster of ordained ministers or that calls as its pastor one who has not been approved for the roster of ordained ministers may be removed from the roster of congregations of this church by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synodical bishop." In addition, section 9.62 of the ELCA Constitution provides a process pursuant to which a congregation may terminate its relationship with the ELCA. After consultation with the Secretary of the ELCA, Bishop Graham reported that section 9.23 could be invoked with respect to this congregation.

**SC15.07.38:** That, pursuant to section 9.23 of the Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Oromo Evangelical Church of Washington, D.C. (ELCA

Congregation No. 30769) is hereby removed from the roster of congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, effective immediately.

b. Vice President White:

- i. Synod Council Executive Committee Membership. Dr. White described the composition of the Executive Committee and its duties. Of the four members of the Executive Committee (excluding the officers), two members will continue in the second year of their two-year terms. Two vacancies on the Committee remain to be filled. After soliciting nominations for these two vacancies, Karen Consiglio and Margretta Williams agreed to serve.

**SC15.07.39:** That, Karen Consiglio and Margretta Williams are elected to the Executive Committee for a term that will expire on the earliest of (a) two years from the date of election, (b) the election of their respective successors, or (c) the expiration of their respective terms as members of the Synod Council.

- ii. Synod Council Vacancy. Dr. White noted that, with the election of Pr. Tom Knoll as Treasurer of the Synod, the position of Synod Council clergy member from the D.C. Conference will become vacant as of September 1, 2015. Dr. White agreed to contact the Dean of the D.C. Conference in advance of the September meeting of the Council in order to obtain a nomination to fill this vacancy.

c. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Overview of Financial Statements. In the absence of Treasurer Handley, Bishop Graham provided a general overview of the size of the Synod's budget, the sources of support, and the general financial condition of the Synod. More detailed information will be provided in subsequent meetings.

**3. New Business**

Bishop Graham provided a brief report on the 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering, which was held in Detroit on July 15-19.

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord's Prayer at 11:35 a.m.