

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 19, 2015**  
**FIRST TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, WASHINGTON D.C.**

**Call to Order** Dr. White called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

**Devotion** Pr. Elijah Mwitanti provided a brief devotional message.

**Greetings** Pastor Knoll greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of First Trinity Lutheran Church, its history, ministries, and its opportunities and challenges.

Dr. White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC15.09.40:** To approve the agenda for the September 19, 2015, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the July 25, 2015, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President White asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC15.09.41:** To approve the minutes of the July 25, 2015, Synod Council meeting

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

The Shepherd of the Hills grant proposal which was tabled at the July 25, 2015, meeting was brought forward, noting that the Council voted to table the motion and discuss the proposal this meeting.

Considerable discussion ensued around questions regarding prior grant requests, what reporting was required, and which benchmarks would be tracked. Additionally, there were questions about how grants are obtained. There was consensus that the available funding is unknown by many in the synod and that the procedure for application is unknown.

Stanley Medikonda and Pr. Rhinesmith agreed to take the results of, and request from, the conversation to the New and Renewing Missions Table.

**2. Staff and Officer Reports**

**a. Vice President White**

Vice President White expressed his concerns about the current Syrian Refugee Crisis and whether there was something that Lutherans could do directly to affect the crisis. Bishop Graham replied that, in addition to the Lutheran entities working on this crisis such as the ELCA Hunger Appeal and Lutheran World Relief, he would contact our companion synod in Slovakia to ask whether there was something to be contributed through our relationship.

**b. Pr. Tom Knoll, Treasurer**

He thanked outgoing treasurer, John Handley, for his work as treasurer and for helping Pr. Knoll transition to the position. Pr. Knoll gave an overview of the synod's finances.

**c. Bishop Graham**

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. Bishop Graham brought several roster matters to the Synod Council as a single resolution.

**SC15.09.42:**

That:

1. The Rev. Nana Opoku be placed on the retired roster, effective July 1, 2015;
2. The Rev. Dennis Hagstrom be placed on the retired roster, effective July 31; and
3. The Rev. Lisa Hufford be placed on leave from call, effective July 21, 2015.

- ii. Roster Matters for Information. Although not requiring any action on the part of the Synod Council, Bishop Graham noted the following additional matters affecting the Synod's rostered leaders:

1. The Rev. Nathan Swenson-Reinhold transferred from the Florida-Bahamas Synod, effective August 3, 2015;
2. The Rev. Paul Collinson-Streng transferred from the Southwestern Texas Synod, effective August 21, 2015;
3. The Rev. Wayne Shelor transferred to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, effective August 2, 2015;
4. The Rev. James Vigen transferred to the South Carolina Synod, effective August 11, 2015; and
5. Ms. Julie Bringman will be ordained and installed October 17, 2015, at Hope Lutheran Church, College Park, Maryland.

- iii. Office of Ecumenical Affairs. Bishop Graham asked that the Ecumenical Affairs Committee be allowed to overspend its budget by \$1,500 due to unforeseen costs this year. Several questions were asked. It was noted that this would be a one-time occurrence.

**SC15.09.43:** That the Office of Ecumenical Affairs be allowed to overspend its budget by \$1,500 in fiscal year 2015.

- iv. Support of “The Forgotten Luther.” Bishop Graham noted that the synod would not celebrate just one Reformation event in 2017, but that there would be a series of events in the synod between now and Reformation 2017. There will be no budget for these events, but they be determined as they come along in the life of the synod. The first in the series will be “The Forgotten Luther.” The outcome would be a public event to talk about Martin Luther.

**SC15.09.46:** That the Synod Council approve \$2,000 in support of “The Forgotten Luther.”

- v. The Reformation Service. Bishop Graham noted that costs for worship services at the National Cathedral have continued to rise. They have gone from \$400 to \$2,500 in 2014 and \$3,500 in 2015 for use of the facility. Materials fees, choir costs, etc. are in addition to this amount. Given past offerings, it is unlikely this fee will be covered with offerings. The Bishop noted that some people want to come to the worship service at the Cathedral and that when it was held at a different church it was very poorly attended. After discussion about whether to have the worship service and how to cover the cost, this service as an opportunity to worship together a consensus was reached that the service should take place and an evaluation of the service will be made after this year’s service. Offering will go towards the work of the National Cathedral.

It was noted that there will be a Reformation worship service at the Cathedral in 2017.

- vi. Racial Justice Conversations. Bishop Graham noted that racial justice conversations have been taking place in our synod, that a team had been formed for this work, and that this will be the topic of the Bishop’s Convocation.

**d. Vice President White**

- i. Synod Council DC Conference Clergy Position. Vice President White contacted Pr. Michael Wilker, DC Conference Dean, about the Synod Council vacancy resulting from Pr. Knoll’s election to the office of Treasurer. Pr. Wilker expects to have identified a candidate prior to the November meeting.

- ii. January 2016 Meeting. The Synod Council is looking for a venue for the January 2016 meeting. Stanley Medikonda will explore the possibility of Community Lutheran Church in Sterling, Virginia.

### **3. Synodical Women's Organization**

Ms. Meier reported that funds were raised for the University of Maryland campus ministry and the SWO continues a focus on human trafficking and bullying, including an online survey for youth. She also noted their fundraising emphasis for the coming year, La Sagrada Familia, and that racial justice conversations among the women's organization are changing.

### **4. Youth Organization Report**

Ms. M. reported that many youth attended and enjoyed the youth gathering in Detroit. She wondered whether they might also attend the Synod Assembly and reminded that Chrysalis is upcoming. Finally, she asked for prayers for the Herndon community in light of a recent tragic accident involving youth from Herndon.

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord's Prayer at 11:49 a.m.