

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – JANUARY 16, 2016**  
**ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH, ARLINGTON, VA**

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

**Greetings** Pastor Anderson greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of Advent Lutheran Church, its history, ministries, and its opportunities and challenges. As part of her remarks, Pr. Anderson also acknowledged a gift from the Faith Fund received by the congregation.

**Devotion** Kathy Garrison provided a devotional message based on the theme of random acts of kindness.

Dr. White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC16.01.01:** To approve the agenda for the January 16, 2016, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the November 21, 2015, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President White asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC16.01.02:** To approve the minutes of the November 21, 2015, Synod Council meeting

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

a. Proposed Synod Mission Statement

Bishop Graham distributed a draft of a proposed mission statement for the Synod, noting that it is intended to complement the proposed Synod-wide capital campaign. The statement provides a general focus on new and renewing missions. Bishop Graham asked for comments with a view toward final adoption by the Synod Council at its March meeting, noting that comments had already been received from a few members and staff with whom an earlier draft had been shared.

b. Synod Campaign Update

Pastor Hirsch provided an update on the proposed Synod-wide capital campaign, reminding the members of the Synod Council that funding for a feasibility study to be performed by Gronlund Sayther Brunkow, of Fletcher, North Carolina, had been

approved at the November 21, 2015, Council meeting. One of the purposes of the study is to articulate not what we want *from* congregations but rather what we want *for* congregations. As part of the study, Mr. Mike Ward, a partner of the firm, has met with Synod leaders and staff in order to obtain a better understanding of the history of the Synod. Pastor Hirsch acknowledged that the proposed campaign will, assuming it goes forward, be conducted at the same time as the Campaign for the ELCA. At the present time, the proposed capital campaign is in need of a name.

c. Continued Discussion of Designated Funds

Pastor Knoll brought forth several recommendations for the consolidation of certain of the designated funds, in those cases where the Synod Council had the discretion to do so.

**SC16.01.04:** To combine the Mission Endowment Trust and the Mission Development Fund.

The discussion then turned to the Bethany Fund, which was established upon the closure of Bethany Lutheran Church. When the Synod received a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the congregation's property approximately six years ago, the funds were segregated into four quadrants. All funds were to be used for new and renewing congregations. Two were designated for use within Prince George's County, while the other two were designated for use within the Synod but outside of Prince George's County. Within each geographical designation, funds were further designated for short-term purposes and long-term purposes, respectively.

**SC16.01.05:** To combine the four parts of the Bethany Fund into a single fund, known as the "Bethany Fund," and thus eliminate any geographical or temporal restrictions on its use.

There were 11 votes in favor of the motion, six votes opposing the motion, and one abstention.

d. Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp & Retreat Center Presentation

Andrew Parker, Chair of the Board of Directors of Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp & Retreat Center, provided the Synod Council with a brief history of the organization, which was established in 1958 by the Maryland Synod of the former American Lutheran Church. Mr. Parker also invited Heather Lutz, representing Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp and Retreat Center, to attend the presentation. He noted that, as a corporation, its two members are the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod and the Delaware Maryland Synod. He gave the Synod Council some insights into the financial condition of the organization and its long-term and short-term challenges. Mr. Parker raised the possibility of a capital campaign throughout the Synod and specifically asked the Synod Council to consider a restoration of its financial support

to prior levels. Bishop Graham noted that the request would be referred to the Finance Committee. Mr. Parker closed by noting that Mar-Lu-Ridge would be pleased to host any synodical events as needed.

e. Synodical Immigration Team Report

Pr. Gerard Johnson, Chair of the Synod's Immigration Team, provided a written report of the team's activities since its formation, and appeared in person to supplement the written report and to respond to questions.

f. St. Michael's Truth/Our Saviour's Grant Proposal

Pastor Hirsch presented a request for a grant to support an Afro-centric evangelism strategy at St. Michael's Truth, Mitchellville, Maryland, a congregation which now includes the former Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Temple Hills, Maryland. The proposal had been approved by the New and Renewing Missions Table and set forth in a written document submitted to the Synod Council in advance of the meeting. The support will permit the congregation to continue to provide an African drumming circle, to enhance its youth program, and to provide new signage at the Our Saviour's location.

**SC16.01.06:** To provide to St. Michael's Truth Lutheran Church, Mitchellville, Maryland, a grant from the Bethany Fund in the aggregate amount of \$103,405, with \$42,405 to be disbursed during the calendar year 2016, \$33,000 during the calendar year 2017, and \$28,000 to be disbursed during the calendar year 2018, subject to the continuing compliance with such reports and documentation as may be reasonably requested by the New and Renewing Missions Table.

## 2. Staff and Officer Reports

### a. Bishop's Report

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. Bishop Graham brought four roster matters to the Synod Council.

**SC16.01.07:** That:

1. The Rev. Philip Hirsch be called to serve as an Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission for the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, effective February 1, 2016;
2. The Rev. Rosario Hernandez's call to Specialized Ministry not be extended, effective January 1, 2016;
3. The Rev. Gerard Johnson be called to Specialized Ministry as an Interim Pastor, effective January 1, 2016; and

4. The Rev. Brian Erickson be placed on the retired roster, effective February 1, 2016.
- ii. Roster Matters for Information. Although not requiring any action on the part of the Synod Council, Bishop Graham's written report to the Council noted the following additional matters affecting the Synod's rostered leaders:
1. Mr. Derek Solberg was ordained and installed December 6, 2015, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Bethesda, Maryland;
  2. The Rev. Rosario Hernandez has been called to serve at St. Luke Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, Maryland;
  3. The Rev. Scott Zimmerer has been transferred to the Metropolitan Washington, DC Synod from the Northern Texas / Northern Louisiana Synod;
  4. The Rev. Scott Zimmerer will be installed at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Woodbridge, Virginia, on January 31, 2016;
  5. The Rev. Karis Graham is serving as interim pastor at Christ Lutheran Church, Bethesda, Maryland;
  6. The Rev. Tony Carpenter is serving as interim pastor at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Washington, DC (not on the roster); and
  7. The Rev. Gerard Johnson is serving as the interim pastor at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Centreville, Virginia.
- iii. Other Matters. Bishop Graham brought greetings from Pr. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop, who is continuing her sabbatical leave. He distributed a written report from Dorothy J. Sorrell, the Synod Malaria Campaign Coordinator, regarding the conclusion of the Campaign. Bishop Graham also noted the action of the primates of the Anglican Communion in suspending the Episcopal Church from full participation in the life and work of the Anglican Communion. Finally he noted the recent announcement from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia of their intention to form a new school of theology and leadership formation.

**b. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Hirsch**

- i. Luther Place Memorial Grant. Pastor Hirsch advised the Synod Council that the New and Renewing Missions Table had approved a \$5,000 grant to Luther Place Memorial for Sunday evening worship services.
- ii. Stewardship Workshops. Pastor Hirsch also announced that stewardship workshops will be held on two consecutive Saturdays in March, on March 12

at Hope Lutheran Church, College Park, Maryland, and on March 19 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Springfield, Virginia.

**c. Vice President White**

- i. Together in Mission Financial Support. Vice President White brought to the floor a motion that had been laid on the table at the November 21, 2015, Synod Council meeting because it did not provide for a source of funding for the requested financial support. The original motion is as follows:

**Moved:**

**Seconded:** To approve the funding of \$4,500 for the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Together in Mission 2016 event.

**SC16.01.08:** To amend the previous motion to provide that the funds shall be provided from the Baker Trust.

**SC16.01.09:** To adopt the foregoing motion, as amended.

**d. Treasurer Knoll**

- i. Financial Statements. Pastor Knoll, Treasurer, led the Synod Council through a review of the financial statements of the Synod for the first 11 months of the fiscal year, through December 31, 2015. These statements reflect a relatively small deficit of \$62,000 compared with total receipts of approximately \$1.77 million. The current financial condition of the Synod does not appear to require material changes in expenditures for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- ii. Designated Funds. Pastor Knoll brought forth one final proposal for the combination of designated funds.

**SC16.01.10:** To transfer the remaining balances of the Resurrection Fund and the New Congregations Fund to the Metro DC Campaign for the ELCA.

- iii. Other Matters. Pastor Knoll noted that the amounts in Schedule 5 of the Treasurer's report were not updated, and advised the Synod Council that the examination of the financial statements by the external auditing firm is scheduled to begin on Monday, April 4.

**3. Synodical Women's Organization**

Ms. Meier noted that the principal focus of the organization's activities is the planning for its April 16, 2016, Annual Convention, and that it is also working on human trafficking issues.

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

Ms. M. briefly summarized the Chrysalis event, which was held in December.

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord's Prayer at 12:15 p.m.