

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – NOVEMBER 19, 2016**  
**LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA**

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

**Devotion** Bishop Graham provided a devotional message inspired by the lyrics of “Anthem,” written by Leonard Cohen, who had died on November 7.

**Greetings** Samuel S. greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of Lord of Life Lutheran Church, including its two campuses at Fairfax and Clifton, Virginia.

Vice President White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC16.11.46:** To approve the agenda for the November 19, 2016, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the September 17, 2016, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President White asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC16.11.47:** To approve the minutes of the September 17, 2016, Synod Council meeting.

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

**a. Synod Campaign Update**

Pastor Hirsch provided a brief update on the status of the New Connections Campaign, including the hiring of a part-time director for the Campaign.

**b. New Mission Start Proposal, Merrifield, Virginia (Holy Trinity)**

Pastor Hirsch described a proposal from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church to start a new ministry in the Mosaic District of Merrifield, Virginia. The idea has been many years in the making, and is a response to the perception that many Merrifield residents are unlikely to travel to Falls Church (the site of the Holy Trinity congregation) to worship on Sundays or for other activities. The effort, which is unlikely to result in a physical building, could produce an additional point of engagement during the week for young adults in the Mosaic District. Pastor Gutzler described the proposal as one in which the congregation would not be asking for financial support in the near

future. Instead, as funds are raised through the New Connections Campaign, a portion of these funds may be used to support the Mosaic District efforts. At the same time, the effort could be held up as an example of a type of activity that could result from the fundraising success of the Campaign. Because the Campaign is projected to raise funds over a number of years, the fundraising and project development and support could occur over similar timetables.

**SC16.11.48:** To express the support of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod for a new mission site development from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Falls Church, Virginia, in the Mosaic District of Merrifield, Virginia, with support of up to \$157,000 as needed and as available from the New Connections Campaign.

At the conclusion of this matter, Pr. Gutzler and Ms. Ihnen left the meeting.

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

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

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. Bishop Graham brought one roster matter to the Synod Council.

**SC16.11.49:** That the Rev. Conrad Braaten be placed on the retired roster, effective September 26, 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. The Rev. Kenneth Taylor transferred to the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, effective October 1, 2016;
  - 2. The Rev. Charles Oberkehr transferred to the Lower Susquehanna Synod, effective October 1, 2016;
  - 3. Ms. Debra Haynes and Mr. Dave Larrabee were consecrated at Lord of Life Lutheran Church on October 15, 2016;
  - 4. The Rev. Katherine Davidson and the Rev. Yvette Shock were installed at Faith Lutheran Church, Arlington, on October 30, 2016; and
  - 5. Dr. Erin Swenson-Reinhold, Associate in Ministry, was installed at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, McLean, on November 6, 2016.
- iii. Mar-Lu-Ridge Conservation Easement. Bishop Graham began by noting that the Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp & Retreat Center is legally under the joint control of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod and the Delaware-Maryland Synod. Accordingly, certain major actions require the consent of both synods. The Camp has agreed to grant a conservation easement to the State of Maryland, pursuant to which it will forgo further development beyond an identified

boundary, in exchange for a specified payment of money by the State. The proposal has previously been approved by the Board of Directors of the Camp.

**SC16.11.50:** To approve the grant of a conservation easement by Mar-Lu-Ridge Camp & Retreat Center to the State of Maryland under the terms and conditions described to the Synod Council.

- iv. United Lutheran Seminary Board. Bishop Graham brought forth a proposal to nominate a representative to the Board of Trustees of the new United Lutheran Seminary (“ULS”). ULS officially begins on July 1, 2017, and consists of the two previously separate seminaries of the ELCA, the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. He recommended that the synod nominate Dr. Tommie L. Robinson, Jr., to the ULS Board of Trustees as the representative of this synod.

**SC16.11.51:** To nominate Dr. Tommie L. Robinson, Jr., to the Board of Trustees of the United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia/Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

- v. Reformation Observance Updates. Bishop Graham provided a brief update on plans for the next event commemorating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. On December 8, the synod and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington will jointly sponsor a program entitled “Understanding Jesus means Understanding Judaism,” conducted by Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies, Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

b. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Hirsch:

Pastor Hirsch advised the Council that the Synod has two synodically authorized worshipping communities, whose authority is granted for a one-year period, subject to renewal. After a discussion of their respective activities and responding to questions, Pr. Hirsch recommended that each community be renewed for another one-year period.

**SC16.11.52:** To approve the continuation of two authorized worshipping communities known as “In Christ Fellowship of Washington, DC,” and “La Sagrada Familia,” pursuant to ELCA bylaw 10.02.03, for an additional one-year period, effective at the end of the year for which each such community was previously authorized.

c. Secretary Anderson:

- i. Seasonal Member Approval. The 2016 Churchwide Assembly made several modifications to the Model Constitution for Congregations. Among other changes, \*C8.02.e. provides for a new category of “seasonal” membership in

congregations. Under the new provisions, a seasonal member of one congregation may simultaneously maintain voting membership in another ELCA congregation. Seasonal members have limited voting rights and, in particular, may not vote on certain extraordinary matters, including any matter affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of the congregation or any matter concerning or affecting the congregation's affiliation with the ELCA. Seasonal members may not serve as officers or members of the Congregation Council of that congregation, nor may they serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly from that congregation. However, no congregation may grant seasonal membership unless the Synod Council shall previously have approved seasonal member voting on its territory.

**SC16.11.53:** To approve seasonal member voting on the territory of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, in accordance with \*C8.02.e. of the Model Constitution for Congregations as approved by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

- ii. Synod Assembly Voting Membership. Secretary Anderson next described the process set forth in the Synod's *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* for the determination of voting members to the Synod Assembly from each congregation. Historically, the process of determining voting membership and allocation to each congregation has taken place in April, after most of the congregations have submitted their parochial reports for the previous calendar year to the ELCA for posting to its Web site. This process ensures that the most up-to-date information is used in determining the number of voting members to which each congregation is entitled. However, some concerns have been expressed that the historical approach may come too late for Synod Assembly planners and for congregational budgetary purposes to be of practical use. Accordingly, the Synod Assembly planners have asked the Secretary to consider accelerating the process to January, despite the fact that the most recent parochial reports would not be available at that time. The pros and cons of the two approaches were discussed with the members of the Synod Council and staff present, and a consensus emerged that, for the 2017 Synod Assembly at least, the voting membership would be developed and distributed during the month of January.

d. Treasurer's Report:

Review of Financial Statements. In the absence of Treasurer Pr. Tom Knoll, printed copies of the financial statements for the first nine months of the Synod's fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended October 31, 2016, were distributed. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts compared with expenditures of approximately \$49,000. Questions relating to these statements were compiled and will be forwarded to Pr. Knoll for further discussion at the meeting scheduled to be held on January 2017.

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

Cheryl Dwyer provided comments to supplement the written report that had been provided to the members of the Council in advance of the meeting, and responded to questions.

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

Samuel S. led a brief discussion of youth events recently held or to be held, including Chrysalis, the National Youth Leaders Summit in North Carolina, Trinity Lutheran (Columbus, Ohio) Seminary program, United Lutheran Seminary/Gettysburg Theological Education for Youth, and the ELCA National Youth Gathering.

### **5. New Business**

January 2017 Meeting: Several members noted that the original schedule of Synod Council meetings for the 2016-2017 year provided for a meeting to be held on Saturday, January 21, 2017, at Luther Place Memorial. This schedule will likely conflict with events in the District surrounding the Inauguration (January 20) and others planned for the ensuing weekend. Dr. White announced that we would survey the members to determine if the optimal date for meeting would be January 21, as scheduled, or the immediately preceding or following Saturday (January 14 or January 28, respectively). A decision would be announced well in advance of the next meeting.

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord's Prayer at 11:40 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: January 2017, with specific date and location to be determined (as noted above).