

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – JANUARY 18, 2014
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH, WOODBRIDGE, VA

Prior to the official beginning of the council meeting, Pr. Mike Gutzler welcomed the council and the Synod Global Mission Committee to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Pr. Gutzler also mentioned the upcoming Together in Mission event on Saturday, January 25.

The Global Missions Unit and the Synod Council

Bishop Graham welcomed Bishop Medardo Gomez of the Lutheran Church in El Salvador to the Synod Council meeting. Bishop Gomez briefly addressed the group and brought greetings from the churches in El Salvador and Central America. He spoke with appreciation for the work of the Lutheran Federation and its member churches to bring about peace in El Salvador after its prolonged civil conflict. He emphasized the hope we have in Jesus Christ. Bishop Gomez presented Bishop Graham with a gift, a banner from the church in El Salvador. Pr. Stephen Deal, Regional Representative for Central America translated Bp. Gomez's remarks.

As part of our joint session with the Synod Global Mission Committee, Pr. Bob Allard, chairperson of the Committee, introduced committee members and invited them to describe their activities, including descriptions of our relationships with companion synods in Slovakia, Namibia and El Salvador. As this year the focus is on our companion relationship with El Salvador, Bishop Gomez has recorded a message for the synod Web site.

The Council also received updates from the Middle East Working Group and the Malaria Campaign. With respect to the Malaria Campaign, the synod has achieved its goal of raising \$250,000 (\$270,000 has been received to date). Sixty-three percent of congregations have participated. We have more to do toward achieving our goal of 100% participation.

Dr. White called the meeting to order. In light of the vacancy in the position of the Secretary, Dr. White appointed Pr. Margrethe Kleiber as Acting Secretary for the meeting.

Dn. Kathy Garrison offered devotions on the theme of the Sabbath.

SC.14.01.01: To approve the agenda for the January 18, 2014, Synod Council meeting.

SC.14.01.02: To approve the minutes of the November 16, 2013, Synod Council meeting.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

- a. Discussion of By Law Amendments: Teams and other organizations Dr. White reported that Mr. Kevin Anderson, in his capacity as Interim Secretary of the Synod, will assist with the revision of the Constitution and Bylaws. Dr. White drew the Council's attention to Chapter 11, which pertains to synodical organization. Discussion ensued regarding the difference between teams and committee. The Council identified a need to define the difference between an office, a table, a committee, and a team prior to working on the language for the bylaws. The Council charged the Bishop, the Interim Secretary of the Synod, and the Shape of the Synod task force to bring a clean copy of the proposed bylaw changes to the March 2014 Council Meeting.
- b. River of Grace: Pr. Sevimli highlighted her report and the report of Pr. Connie Thomson. Although there are many encouraging signs, River of Grace also faces a number of challenges. The congregation currently worships 85, which is a significant increase from the baseline of 20, where they started 1½ years ago. At this time, however, growth appears to have reached a plateau. One reason for this may be that number of long time members (Christus Victor) have left. The congregation is changing rapidly as it establishes a new identity as River of Grace and some of the long-time members many not be happy with the changes. 2014 will be a critical year for River of Grace.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Graham:
 - i. Interim Secretary of the Synod: Bishop Graham reported that the Executive Committee approved the appointment of Mr. Kevin Anderson as Interim Secretary of the Synod until a successor is elected at the June 2014 Synod Assembly, following the resignation of Pr. John Bradford as the Secretary.
 - ii. Roster matters:

SC.14.01.03: To approve the call of call Pr. Gloria Cline-Smythe to Good Samaritan, Lanham, Maryland for a period of one year.

SC.14.01.04: To approve placing the Rev. Phil Anderson on leave from call and retaining Mr. Wayne Ralston and the Rev. Lisa Hufford on leave from call.

- iii. Church Council vacancy: Bishop Graham noted that the Council will need to appoint a replacement for Pr. Amsalu Geleta prior to the next Church Council meeting in April 2014.

Bishop Graham also reported that National Lutheran Communities and Services elected Pr. Scott Ickert and Ms. Donna Duss to its Board of Trustees.

- b. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Sevimli: Pr. Sevimli reported earlier on River of Grace.
- c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Hirsch:

- i. Pr. Hirsch provided an update on Good Samaritan, Lanham. Pr. Gloria Cline-Smythe will be installed on February 9.
 - ii. Pr. Hirsch also noted that he hopes to bring a proposal for a new synodically authorized worshipping community in the near future. It will be a ministry to the deaf community near Gallaudet University.
- d. Vice President White
- i. Creation Care Sunday: The Creation Care team requested the Synod Council to designate April 27, 2014, as Creation Care Sunday throughout the synod. The Creation Care team will be sending out information about Creation Care as the date approaches.

SC.14.01.05: To approve the designation of April 27, 2014, as Creation Care Sunday throughout the synod.

- e. Treasurer's Report, Mr. John Handley
- i. Mr. Handley walked the Council through the schedules 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the treasurer's report dated January 14, 2014. The end of the synod's fiscal year is January 31, 2014. Although benevolence is down, expenses are also down and the synod is on track to being able to balance the budget by year's end. Mr. Handley noted that the long-term trend is for congregations to give more to specific appeals and less to general operations. Bishop Graham noted that a discussion of long term giving trends might be useful.

3. Women of the ELCA

Ms. Meier highlighted aspects of her written report including the launch of the Synodical Women's Organization Web site. She also noted that Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas, Virginia, and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Gaithersburg, Maryland, are discussing convening women's gatherings.

4. Youth Report: Jack H. encouraged youth representation at the synod assembly.

5. New Business--no new business.