

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – MAY 21, 2016
HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH, HERNDON, VIRGINIA

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

Greetings Bishop Graham provided a brief history and profile of Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

Devotion Bishop Graham also provided a devotional message based on Matthew 5:1-5, the Gospel lesson for Holy Trinity Sunday (the day after the meeting was held).

Dr. White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

SC16.05.24: To approve the agenda for the May 21, 2016, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the April 16, 2016, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President White asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

SC16.05.25: To approve the minutes of the April 16, 2016, Synod Council meeting.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

a. Proposal from King of Kings, Fairfax, Virginia

Pastor Hirsch brought a written proposal for a grant from the Faith Funds to be made to King of Kings Lutheran Church. The proposal had been adopted and recommended to the Synod Council by the New and Renewing Missions Table. The one-time grant of \$25,000, if approved by the Synod Council, will supplement the efforts of the congregation to reduce its mortgage indebtedness and thus to free up resources for other purposes. The recommendation to the Council was made with the provisions that: (1) the funds be used to free up resources for evangelical outreach; (2) the congregation be committed to sharing ten percent of its undesignated offerings with the larger church, *i.e.*, beyond the congregation itself; and (3) the majority of the loan (having a current principal balance of \$122,230) be paid through contributions by members of the congregation and the total amount of the grant must not exceed 1/3 of this remaining loan amount. The congregation would be asked to provide periodic reports to the Synod regarding its compliance with these conditions.

Pastor Miller provided additional background on the congregation and its finances and responded to questions from the Council.

SC16.05.26: To approve a grant of \$25,000 from the Faith Funds to King of Kings Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia, in accordance with the written proposal approved by the New and Renewing Missions Table and presented to the Synod Council, subject to the conditions and limitations set forth in such written proposal.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Vice President's Report

- i. Report of the Finance Committee. On behalf of the Finance Committee, Ms. Consiglio brought forth a proposed Mission Spending Plan for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2017, and ending January 31, 2018, for consideration by the Synod Council and ultimately by the 2016 Synod Assembly. The plan was developed for the second year of a pilot program in which the churchwide mission support is reduced to 35% of congregational mission support received, in exchange for the assumption by the Synod of direct financial responsibility for the compensation and benefits of the Director of Evangelical Mission and grants to congregations. The total authorized spending under the plan would be \$1,651,400, with the three largest components being Administration and Operations (\$755,000), Churchwide Mission Support (\$560,000), and Office of the Bishop (\$115,500).

Questions were asked, and comments were made, in the areas of funding for a new Racial Equity Team, support for campus ministry, seminary financial support, the Bishop's Emergency Fund, and the category of Administration and Operations.

SC16.05.27: To approve the Mission Spending Plan for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2018, as recommended by the Finance Committee, authorizing expenditures of \$1,651,400, and to recommend the adoption of the Plan by the 2016 Synod Assembly.

The members of the Synod Council expressed their appreciation for Ms. Consiglio's leadership of the Finance Committee, in recognition of her decision to end her membership on the Committee upon the conclusion of the its work for the current program year. Ms. Consiglio left the meeting at the conclusion of this matter.

3. Synod Council Primary Mission Table (Part 2)

- b. Proposal to Use Bethany Funds for Campaign Expenses

Pastor Hirsch brought forth a proposal to use a portion of the Bethany Funds to make provisional payment for the contracted costs of the Synod Capital Campaign approved by the Synod Council earlier this year. The three-year campaign has an established goal of \$2,250,000, and the cost of the services of Gronlund Sayther Brunkow, Fletcher, North Carolina, will be \$117,000. The Synod is expected to incur other out-of-pocket costs as well, including a part-time employee to assist solely with the campaign. The proposal contemplates that the initial transfer from the Bethany Funds would be restored to the extent that the campaign exceeds its goal, and that the use of these funds would be consistent with the purpose in establishing the Bethany Funds to grow the church.

SC16.05.28: To approve the use of up to \$117,000 from the Bethany Funds to pay the fees and expenses of Gronlund Sayther Brunkow, Fletcher, North Carolina, in their support of the Synod Capital Campaign, with such amounts to be returned to the Bethany Funds, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, to the extent that the amounts received through the campaign exceed the established goal of \$2,250,000.

c. Covenants between the Synod and Congregations Receiving Grants

Pastor Hirsch provided to the Synod Council, in advance of the meeting, a proposed form of Synod Grant Covenant, to be signed by any congregation receiving grants of any type from the Synod. The form was modeled after a similar form in use by the ELCA, and is necessitated by the recently-adopted approach of having the Synod be financially responsible for making and administering grants to its own congregations. The members were specifically directed to consider a proposed requirement to return the grant to the Synod if the congregation should close or cease to be affiliated with the ELCA within seven years after the date of the grant. However, the members acknowledged that, because such repayments are to be made out of the remaining assets of the congregation, if any, the Synod cannot be assured of being able to recover such grants even in these circumstances. In addition, the congregation will be asked to have its representatives' signatures notarized if the amount of the grant(s) exceeds \$75,000.

SC16.05.29: To approve the form of Synod Grant Covenant as presented to the Synod Council, for use in connection with any grants made by the Synod to any of its congregations.

4. Staff and Officer Reports (Part 2)

a. Bishop's Report

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

SC16.05.30: That Ms. Rebecca Kolowé, Diaconal Minister, be called to serve as Executive Director of the Western Fairfax Christian Ministries, effective April 25, 2016.

- ii. Rostered Leader Compensation Guidelines. Bishop Graham provided the Synod Council members with background information concerning the history and use of the Synod Compensation Guidelines for Rostered Leaders. The guidelines consist of a recommended minimum unadjusted salary amount and schedules of “points” to be added for additional degrees, experience, and other factors. The sole change being recommended is an increase in the unadjusted salary amount, with the recognition that such an increase would have a cascading effect on most of the other amounts set forth in the guidelines.

SC16.05.31: That the minimum unadjusted salary amount in the Synod’s existing Rostered Leader Compensation Guidelines be increased to \$58,844 for 2017, and that the increase be recommended to the 2016 Synod Assembly for its adoption.

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

- i. Bethany Funds Report. Pastor Hirsch provided the Synod Council with a preview of the written report of the Bethany Funds to be provided to the 2016 Synod Assembly. The report includes an overview of the nearly \$500,000 in grants that have been made since the Fund was created in 2011.
- ii. Proposed Merger of Epiphany (Dale City) and River of Grace (Dumfries). Pastor Hirsch also provided the Synod Council with an update of the steps taken by Epiphany Lutheran Church, Dale City, and River of Grace Lutheran Church, Dumfries, to combine their congregations. The precise form of this combination has yet to be decided by the congregations and their respective leaders, but concrete steps will likely be taken in the next few months toward a resolution.
- iii. Report of Grants by New and Renewing Missions Table. Pastor Hirsch reported that the New and Renewing Missions Table had approved the following grants: (a) \$12,000 to Oromo Evangelical Lutheran Church in Washington, D.C., for a youth worker to reach second and third generations; (b) \$3,325 to St. John's Lutheran Church in Aspen Hill, Maryland, for a new ministry reaching out to families with young children; and (c) to Augustana Lutheran Church (Santa Maria) in Washington, D.C., to send Emmanuel Caceres and Rosa del Castillo to an ecumenical Latino Mission Developers training event in Arizona. These grants are reported for informational purposes only, and do not require any action on the part of the Synod Council.

c. Vice President White

- i. Synod Assembly Planning. Vice President White provided a brief update on the planning for the June 2016 Synod Assembly. The update included a summary of the resolutions that had been submitted to the Committee on Reference and Counsel, whether before or after the deadline established for such resolutions to be considered by the Synod Assembly.

d. Treasurer's Report

- i. Review of Financial Statements. Pastor Knoll led the Synod Council through a review of the financial statements for the first three months of the Synod's fiscal year, *i.e.*, through April 30, 2016. These statements reflect a surplus in undesignated receipts over program expenditures of approximately \$114,000. The Treasurer noted that, for financial statement purposes, any congregational benevolence received after the end of February 2016 was considered as benevolence for the current fiscal year, even if the congregation had indicated that the remittance was intended as a benevolence for the prior year. This cut-off had been discussed with the Synod's external financial statement auditors, who agreed with its use as an acceptable accounting policy. Members of the Synod Council also discussed the level of the Synod's reserves in undesignated/unrestricted funds, for use in the event that its expenditures exceed receipts from time to time.

5. Synodical Women's Organization (Please see attached report)

Ms. Meier provided a brief overview of the organization's Annual Convention, held on April 16, 2016, noting in particular the post-event evaluations and the election or appointment of new officers.

6. Youth Organization Report

Ms. M. provided updates on the plans for a youth event and service project to be held on June 11, 2016, in connection with a Washington Nationals game.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 11:52 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: June 18, 2016, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland (immediately preceding the 2016 Synod Assembly).