

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 17, 2016**  
**ST. MARK’S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA**

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

**Devotion** Pastor Sarah Lewis provided a devotional message based on Luke 14: 7-11.

**Greetings** Pastor Espinosa greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, its demographics, and its challenges.

Vice President White presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC16.09.41:** To approve the agenda for the September 17, 2016, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the July 30, 2016, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President White asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC16.09.42:** To approve the minutes of the July 30, 2016, Synod Council meeting.

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

a. Synod Campaign Update

Pastor Hirsch distributed a draft of a brochure outlining the New Connections Campaign which identifies its purposes, scope, and leadership, and includes a series of frequently asked questions. A substantial discussion ensued, including the expectation that each congregation would be asked to establish a growth goal; the focus on building congregations rather than on acquiring property; and the difference between “leading goals” and “lagging goals.” The Campaign will begin in earnest with the 2017 Synod Assembly.

b. Authorization of Campaign Brokerage Account

As a part of the preparations to organize the New Connections Campaign, the Synod staff considered whether it was desirable and appropriate for the Synod Council to authorize the establishment of a brokerage account. This account would be used to receive securities from donors to the Campaign who made in-kind contributions of property, and subsequently to sell them. After further investigation, Pr. Knoll

determined that the Synod already had a brokerage account in place with Thrivent Financial. Accordingly, no further action was taken.

c. Authorization of Increased Campaign Expenditures

Pastor Hirsch distributed a proposed budget for the Campaign, pursuant to which the estimated sum of \$287,000 would be expended in order to conduct the Campaign. The expenditures would be expected to be incurred primarily during the three-year period from 2016 to 2019, although some lagging expenditures could be incurred in 2020. The largest categories of expenditures would be devoted to the consulting firm's fees and expenses, a part-time director for the Campaign, and data entry. Synod staff clarified that, although many of its members would be devoting some of their time and efforts to the Campaign, their compensation would continue to be paid solely out of the regular annual budget of the Synod, and would not be allocated to the Campaign budget. However, a new part-time position will be created to provide day-to-day management of the Campaign, and the compensation of that individual will be treated as a Campaign expenditure. The Synod Council had previously authorized the expenditure of \$117,000, but the intent of the present motion was to provide a comprehensive authorization for all projected expenditures for the Campaign.

**SC16.09.43:** To approve the use of up to \$287,000 from the Bethany Funds to pay the fees and expenses of the New Connections 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, and

To confirm that the prior resolution SC16.05.28, authorizing the expenditure of up to \$117,000 to pay the fees and expenses of Gronlund Sayther Brunkow, is superseded in its entirety.

**2. Staff and Officer Reports**

a. Bishop Graham:

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

**SC16.09.44:** That:

1. The Rev. Elijah Mwitanti be placed on leave from call, effective July 1, 2016;
2. The Rev. Amy Sevimli be placed on leave from call, effective August 15, 2016;
3. The Rev. Jeanne Lowe be called to Specialized Ministry as the Chaplain of The Village at Rockville, effective August 1, 2016;

4. The Rev. Eva Steege be called to Specialized Ministry as Interim Pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, Clinton, Maryland, effective October 10, 2016;
  5. Ms. Debra Haynes, Diaconal Minister, be called to Specialized Ministry as Assistant Director for Case Management for the Lamb Center, effective October 16, 2016; and
  6. Mr. Dave Larrabee, Diaconal Minister, be called to Specialized Ministry as the Director of the Lamb Center, effective October 16, 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. Lamar Bailey was installed as pastor of Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, on August 15, 2016;
  2. Ms. Debra Haines and Mr. Dave Larrabee will be consecrated at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Fairfax, on October 15, 2016; and
  3. Dr. Erin Swenson-Reinhold, Associate in Ministry, will be installed at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, McLean, on November 6, 2016.
- iii. Report from 2016 Churchwide Assembly. Bishop Graham provided a summary of the actions that were taken by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, which was held in New Orleans from Monday, August 8, through Saturday, August 13. He noted (a) the combination of the three lay rosters (associate in ministry, deaconess, and diaconal minister) into one roster; (b) the approval of Declaration on the Way, documentation of an ongoing process that seeks to identify areas of common understanding between the ELCA and the Roman Catholic Church; (c) the approval of the ELCA’s strategy of Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO); and (d) the election of a new Vice President. Bishop Graham also noted that, of the six preachers for the daily worship services, three were from our Synod. They were Pr. Gordon Lathrop, Pr. Leila Ortiz, and Pr. James Phillips.
- iv. Changes to Synod Constitution. Kevin Anderson described one other action taken by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly concerning the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the ELCA. Changes to the Model Constitution for Synods and the Model Constitution for Congregations were adopted by the Assembly. Under the applicable governing provisions, changes to the required provisions of the Model Constitution for Synods were automatically implemented in each synod’s constitution upon receipt of official notice of the changes from the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA. The principal changes to the Synod’s Constitution consisted of the following: (a) the use of the term “Minister of Word and Sacrament” to refer to ordained pastors; (b) the use of the term “Minister of Word and Service” to refer to the members on the combined lay rosters; (c) the implementation of detailed procedures for the

removal or recall of synod officers; and (d) an enhanced process for providing mission support to the churchwide organization, in circumstances where a synod assembly has not authorized the full amount of support agreed upon between the churchwide organization and the synod council. Separately, the 2016 Churchwide Assembly approved the addition of a “seasonal member” category for congregations, but only if the synod council has previously authorized the use of this category by congregations within the synod. The officers will bring a resolution before the November Synod Council meeting to this effect.

b. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Ortiz:

Pastor Ortiz made her first appearance before the Synod Council as the Assistant to the Bishop. She provided some brief introductory remarks and shared some perspectives on her new role.

c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Hirsch:

In connection with the New Connections Campaign, Pr. Hirsch noted that the Synod would be seeking to hire a part-time director for the Campaign.

d. Racial Equity Team:

Pastor Phillips provided a brief update on the recent activities of the Racial Equity Team.

e. Vice President White:

Synod Council Executive Committee Membership. Dr. White noted that there were still two vacancies on the Executive Committee for two-year terms. After soliciting nominations for these vacancies, Pr. Robert Lewis and Pr. Elijah Mwitanti each agreed to serve a two-year term.

**SC16.09.45:** That, Pr. Robert Lewis and Pr. Elijah Mwitanti are each elected to the Executive Committee for a term that will expire on the earliest of (a) two years from the date of election, (b) the election of their respective successors, or (c) the expiration of their respective terms as a member of the Synod Council.

f. Treasurer’s Report:

Review of Financial Statements. Treasurer Pr. Tom Knoll provided an overview of the financial statements for the first seven months of the Synod’s fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended August 31, 2016. These statements reflect a surplus in undesignated receipts over expenditures of approximately \$52,000. Pastor Knoll also advised the Synod Council that Florence Heacock, the Synod’s bookkeeper, announced her

intention to resign her position in connection with her retirement from her full-time occupation. Finally, Pr. Knoll provided a brief overview of the financial condition of the churchwide organization.

### **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. This report described outreach efforts to women's organizations in congregations of the Synod, planning for the upcoming women's retreat, the 2017 SWO convention, and the next triennial convention.

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

Samuel S. led a brief discussion concerning the role of the youth organization representative to the Synod Council and efforts to connect with youth groups in congregations of the Synod. He also described his recent experience in attending the Summer Seminary Sampler program at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, and his plans to attend the National Youth Summit in early November.

### **5. New Business**

**500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation:** Bishop Graham described some of the events being planned to observe the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, which will take place in 2017. The goal of these events is to provide for general gatherings and to be pan-Lutheran in nature. The first of such events will take place on December 8, 2016, and will be co-sponsored by the Synod and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington. Using the title "Understanding Jesus means Understanding Judaism," the program is a day of study that will include local rabbis and provide an opportunity to relearn and reaffirm what it means to say that Jesus was a Jew. The presenter is Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies and Professor of Jewish Studies, Vanderbilt University Divinity School. The program will be held at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Bethesda, Maryland. Other events will be posted on the Synod's Web site when the details of these events are confirmed.

**Synod Communications:** Members engaged in a brief discussion of the means by which we communicate the actions of the Synod Council to congregations, conference deans, rostered leaders, and others. The Synod Council was reminded that slightly-streamlined versions of the minutes of the meetings are posted to the Synod's Web site, but only after the minutes have been approved at a subsequent meeting of the Synod Council. A recommendation was made to ask the Vice President to prepare a brief, informal summary of the actions taken at each meeting promptly after the conclusion of the

meeting. These summaries are designed to be available to the public weeks earlier than the minutes of the meeting become available.

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

Next Scheduled Meeting: November 19, 2016, at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia.