

Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod

MINUTES of the 2016 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



“For the Healing of the Nations”
Saturday, June 18, 2016
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church –
Gaithersburg, Maryland

The following are the minutes of the 2016 Synod Assembly of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The 2016 Synod Assembly met on June 18, 2016, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

The minutes were prepared in the current form by the Secretary of the Synod and the Synod staff, reviewed by the Synod Council, and recommended for approval by the 2017 Synod Assembly.

Kevin D. Anderson
Secretary of the Synod

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DRAFT

**MINUTES OF THE 2016 SYNOD ASSEMBLY
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 2016
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH - GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND**

Introductory Activity

Prior to the opening of the Synod Assembly, a Synod Council meeting was held. Katharyn Wheeler organized Registration. An Orientation for New Voting Members was conducted by Richard Ahlberg, Synod Assembly Parliamentarian. Training was also conducted for Worship Assistants in advance of the Festive Eucharist.

**PLENARY SESSION 1
Saturday, June 18, 2016
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Gaithersburg, Maryland**

Opening of Assembly

Bishop Richard H. Graham called the Assembly to order at 10:06 AM.

Report of the Registrar

Present:	Lay Voting Members	148
	Rostered Voting Members	<u>97</u>
	Total Voting Members	245
	Visitors	19

Moved:
Seconded: To seat the Voting Members.

VOTED
SA16.06.01 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Synod Assembly Agenda, Rules of Procedure, and Absences

Following the seating of the voting members, Bishop Graham brought forth three items for adoption and approval as a single motion: the approval of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, the adoption of the 2016 Synod Assembly Rules of Procedure, and the approval of excused absences from among the rostered leaders.

Rules of Procedure

01. *To the extent consistent with the following rules of procedure, Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern.*

Voice and vote

02. *All persons under call, on leave from call, and retired on the roster of this Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, in attendance at this assembly, shall have voice and vote at the proceedings of this assembly. All interim pastors serving congregations of this synod, at the time of the assembly, shall have voice and vote.*
03. *Alternate lay members shall be seated if the regular lay members are unable to serve.*
04. *Persons giving reports during this assembly's proceedings who are not members shall be given voice, no vote, during that portion of the assembly.*
05. *The parliamentarian appointed by the Synod Council shall be given voice, no vote (unless a member) during the proceedings of this assembly.*
06. *The Presiding Bishop, or his or her representative(s), and ecumenical representatives shall be given voice, no vote during the proceedings of this assembly.*
07. *Duly elected and serving members of the Synod Council shall have both voice and vote at the synod assembly, in accordance with S7.28 of the constitution of the synod.*

Quorum

08. *One-half (1/2) of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.*

Proxy

09. *Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the transaction of any business of this synod.*

Items of Business

10. *With the consent of this assembly, the chair shall have the authority to call items of business before the assembly in whatever order is deemed by the chair most expedient for the conduct of assembly business. The chair shall limit discussions to items germane to the issues before the assembly.*

Resolutions

11. *Resolutions to be considered by the assembly shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Synod. In order to assure the resolution going to the floor of this assembly, such resolutions shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod prior to the promulgated deadline, which shall not be less than 30 days prior to the beginning of the assembly. The Secretary shall refer them to the Committee on Reference and Counsel. The Committee shall report to this assembly with its*

recommendations regarding the resolutions submitted, which shall constitute a motion to the floor of this assembly.

12. *Any resolutions submitted after this date are not guaranteed a place on the agenda and must receive a two-thirds vote in order to be heard. Any resolution not receiving a two-thirds vote will be referred to the Synod Council for disposition.*
13. *Multimedia presentations will not be part of floor debate on resolutions.*

Motions

14. *All main motions, to be made, shall be in writing and presented to the Secretary of the Synod immediately (Constitution and Bylaw amendments require five (5) signatures of members).*
15. *A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s).*
16. *A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately preceding question is not in order.*
17. *When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected.*
18. *Debate shall be limited to two (2) minutes per person, per speech.*

Elections

19. *Ballots shall be accepted only from those members who are seated within designated areas of the assembly hall.*
20. *Nominations from the floor shall be accompanied by the copy-ready vita and the consent of the person to be nominated, both to be submitted to the secretary at the time of the nomination.*

Minutes

21. *Minutes of this assembly shall be available for review by the Synod Council by the September 30 immediately following the assembly.*

Applications for Displays

22. *Due to space constraints, displays will not be permitted at the 2016 Synod Assembly.*
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Excused Absences of Rostered Leaders

The Rev. Dean W. Anderson
The Rev. Roger Berner
The Rev. Anne Dwiggin
The Rev. Gregory Gaertner
The Rev. Charles Hodges
The Rev. Gordon Lathrop
The Rev. Connie Miller
The Rev. Mark Olsen
The Rev. Wayne Ralston
The Rev. Lowell Schuetze
The Rev. Glen A. Sea
The Rev. Albert Swingle

The Rev. Myron Barbour
The Rev. Mark Brown
The Rev. Catherine Feil
The Rev. Phillip Gaines
The Rev. Robert Holum
The Rev. Daniel Martensen
The Rev. Elijah Mwitanti
The Rev. Ronald Qualley
Harold Sargeant, AIM
The Rev. George Schwantes
The Rev. David Sonnenberg

Moved:

Seconded: To approve the agenda for the Synod Assembly as set forth in Section 1.2 of the meeting materials for the Assembly, the Rules of Procedure as set forth above, and the excused absences as set forth above.

VOTED

SA16.06.02 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Approval of Minutes of 2015 Synod Assembly

Moved:

Seconded: To approve the minutes of the 2015 Synod Assembly as set forth in Section 9.1 of the meeting materials for the Assembly.

VOTED

SA16.06.03 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Introduction of Front Table

Bishop Graham introduced the individuals seated at the front table facing the Assembly, as follows:

Kevin D. Anderson, Secretary
The Rev. Philip Hirsch, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission
Dr. John White, Vice President
Richard Ahlberg, Parliamentarian
The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop

First Racial Equity Team Video

Bishop Graham recognized members of the congregation of All Saints Lutheran Church, Bowie, Maryland, and introduced a video from the Racial Equity Team featuring members of the congregation, entitled “JUST gRACE.”

DRAFT

Recognition of Ecumenical Guests

Bishop Graham introduced four ecumenical guests: Bishop Barry Knestout, auxiliary bishop, the Archdiocese of Washington; the Rev. Dr. Olaf Wassmuth, pastor, German Lutheran Church of Washington, D.C.; the Rev. David Bennett, president, Eastern District Moravian Church; and the Rev. Robin Dodge, ecumenical officer, Episcopal Diocese of Washington.

Report of the Bishop

Dr. White, Vice President of the Synod, assumed the chair and invited Bishop Graham to present his report.

After noting his nearly nine years of service since being first elected in 2007, Bishop Graham provided additional background concerning (a) the Synod's new mission statement; (b) the Synod's compensation guidelines; (c) the impending departure of Pr. Sevimli as Assistant to the Bishop; (d) the June 12, 2016, mass shooting at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida; and (e) the campaign being developed within the Synod.

Upon the conclusion of this report, Vice President White yielded the chair back to Bishop Graham.

Report of the ELCA Churchwide Representative

Bishop Graham introduced the Rev. Cherlyne V. Beck, Program Director, Support of Rostered Leaders and Schools, the representative from the churchwide organization to the Synod Assembly.

Pr. Beck began her remarks by reminding the members of the Assembly of the four themes developed by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton: We are church. We are Lutheran. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world. She continued with a video summarizing the work of the church in the United States and throughout the world. She thanked the Synod for the \$783,000 of benevolence to the churchwide organization from the Synod.

Pr. Beck continued with a preview of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, in August. The principal actions to be taken at the Churchwide Assembly include the following:

- Celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation;
- Election of a Vice President to a six-year term;
- Unify the three lay rosters into a single roster of ministers of Word and Service;
- Adopt a budget for the following three years;
- Consider proposals originating from synod assemblies across the country;
- Provide an update and background information on "Declaration on the Way," a statement of areas of agreement between the Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church; and

- Consider and adopt a strategy identified as Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO).

She closed with brief remarks concerning Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM), the designation of September 11, 2016, as the ELCA Day of Service, the Campaign for the ELCA, and an initiative to consider the future of the church known as “Called Forward Together in Christ.” Specific questions will be addressed in separate breakout sessions over lunch.

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Rev. Albert Triolo, Chair, presented the report of the Nominating Committee, describing the process that the Committee undertook to identify nominees for all open positions. He expressed his appreciation for the work of the Conference Deans, who served as the Nominating Committee, and to the Synod Assembly Planning Committee. Pr. Triolo introduced each of the nominees and referred the Assembly to the Candidate Information Forms that had been included in the advance materials for the Assembly.

DC Conference – Clergy
The Rev. James F. Phillips

At Large – Lay or Clergy
Jackson F. Droney

Fairfax Conference – Lay
Nels J. Hendrickson

At Large – Rostered
Rebecca H. Kolowé, Diaconal Minister

Maryland Conference – Lay
[no nominee presented]

SWO Representative
Cheryl Dwyer

Montgomery Conference – Lay
Dr. Cleophas J. Tsokodayi

Youth Representative
Samuel S.

Potomac Conference – Lay
Cassandra A. Smith

Consultation Committee – Clergy
The Rev. Renata E. Eustis
The Rev. Janice E. Mynchenberg

Virginia Conference – Clergy
The Rev. Sandra J. Kessinger

Consultation Committee – Lay
Karen Consiglio

Bishop Graham opened the floor to any additional nominations, by category. Hearing no additional nominations for Synod Council, Bishop Graham declared the nominations to be closed, noting that each of the open positions was uncontested. Hearing no additional nominations for the Consultation Committee, Bishop Graham declared the nominations to be closed, noting that each of the open positions was uncontested. With respect to both the Synod Council and the Consultation Committee, he noted that any unfilled vacancies would be filled by the Synod Council.

Report of the Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop

The Rev. Philip Hirsch began his report with remarks on the health of our congregations, and continued with comments on the Synod’s campaign, known as New Connections. He identified various means of

starting new ministries or expanding existing ministries, and held out the following congregations as examples: King of Kings Lutheran Church; Luther Place Memorial Church; Lutheran Church of the Abiding Presence; St. Michael's Truth Lutheran Church; and St. John's Lutheran Church, Aspen Hill/Rockville. He closed his remarks with an expression of gratitude for the service of Pr. Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop, who had previously announced her intention to resign her position.

Second Racial Equity Team Video

Bishop Graham recognized members of the congregation of Good Samaritan Lutheran Church, Lexington Park, Maryland, including the Rev. Mitch Watney. The Assembly viewed a video from the Racial Equity Team featuring a collaboration between this congregation and Dominican Apostolic, Lexington Park, entitled "The Encounter: Pastor Watney and Pastor Barber."

Instructions for Lunch and Meal Prayer

The Rev. Leila Ortiz, Associate Pastor, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, gave the Assembly instructions for lunch and offered a prayer. The Assembly recessed for lunch at 12:00 noon.

Lunch and ELCA Representative Discussion

Between 12:00 and 1:30 PM, the Synod Assembly was divided into two groups. During the first 45 minutes, one group broke for lunch and the other group remained in the sanctuary for a discussion with Pr. Beck, the ELCA representative. The discussion was intended to be interactive and designed to elicit suggestions and feedback regarding the future direction of the church. During the second 45 minutes, the two groups switched places.

The Assembly resumed at 1:30 PM following lunch and the group discussions.

“New Connections” Synod Campaign

Bishop Graham introduced Jackson Droney from Luther Place Memorial Church to discuss the New Connections Synod Campaign. Pursuant to this campaign, congregations will be asked to set a goal to grow by 10%. Small grants may be offered to congregations to assist them in achieving this goal. Some new congregations may be started through the Campaign, although it was noted that the most effective model is one in which an existing congregation begins a new congregation from within itself. However, other means of starting new ministries were also discussed.

Bishop Graham noted that volunteer and pledge forms were included in the Synod Assembly packet, and announced the personal pledge that he and Nancy Ann Mrs. Graham had made to the Campaign.

Report of the Synod Treasurer

The Rev. Tom Knoll reviewed the financial reports for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2016, describing the Synod’s operations as a conduit to support ministries throughout the church. More complete financial details were set forth in Section 4 of the materials provided to the Assembly.

Introduction of the Mission Spending Plan

Karen Consiglio, Chair of the Finance Committee, presented the 2017 Mission Spending Plan, as set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the materials provided in advance to the Assembly. Pursuant to a three-year pilot program approved by the Church Council, the Synod’s churchwide mission support has been reduced to 35% of the congregational benevolence received, in exchange for assumption of direct financial responsibility for the compensation and benefits of the Director for Evangelical Mission and for any grants made to congregations within the Synod. The proposed plan calls for budgeted expenditures of \$1,651,400, including \$560,000 of churchwide mission support. The Assembly was notified that the proposal would be brought before the Assembly for approval later in the meeting. No amendments were offered to the proposed spending plan.

Report of the Vice President/Synod Council

Dr. John White commended his written report to the Assembly, as set forth in Section 3.1 of the materials provided in advance to the Assembly. He noted in particular that his report was written and submitted before learning of Pr. Sevimli’s resignation as the Assistant to the Bishop.

Report on Synod Compensation Guidelines

Dr. White then provided background information regarding the compensation guidelines for rostered leaders that had been developed and approved in prior years. These guidelines consist of an unadjusted base amount, a “point” system, and housing allowance factors. For 2017, the Synod Council has recommended that the minimum unadjusted salary amount be increased to \$58,844, with the recognition that such an increase will also result in an increase in most of the other amounts set forth in the guidelines. The recommendation was included in Section 3.3 of the materials provided to the Synod Assembly in advance.

Moved:

Seconded: To approve the Rostered Leadership Compensation Recommendations for 2017, as set forth in Section 3.3 of the meeting materials for the Assembly.

VOTED

SA16.06.04 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Introduction to Voting Devices

Jacob Wood, Qwizdom Inc., offered an introduction to the voting devices, together with sample questions to demonstrate the various features of the devices.

Report of the Elections Committee/First Ballot

The Rev. Mitch Watney, Chair of the Elections Committee, led the Assembly through a series of elections by category of office.

For all open positions on the Synod Council, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly that there were no contested positions.

Moved:

Seconded: To elect all uncontested positions for the Synod Council by acclamation.

VOTED

SA16.06.06 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Bishop Graham declared that all of the nominees for the Synod Council had been elected.

For all open positions on the Consultation Committee, Pr. Watney advised the Assembly that there were no uncontested positions.

Moved:

Seconded: To elect all uncontested positions for the Consultation Committee by acclamation.

VOTED

SA16.06.07 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Bishop Graham declared that all of the nominees for the Consultation Committee had been elected.

First Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

The Rev. Mark Edwards, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee (R&C), reported to the Assembly.

Each resolution has two numbers, the R&C number, which will begin with "2016-" followed by a number. These are numbered in the chronological order received. The second number is the Secretary's number, which begins with a 6. These are the page numbers for the order in which they appear in the report. The Chair will present each resolution by giving the Synod Assembly both numbers. With the exception of the traditional "Expression of Thanks and Gratitude" resolution, the final resolutions were included in the materials provided to the Assembly.

Pr. Edwards advised the Assembly that if any member intends to propose an amendment to any of the resolutions, it would be helpful to have a written copy provided to the media coordinator as well as to the R&C Chair, so that it may be prepared as it was written for the Synod Assembly. The amendment will not be shown until it is moved from the floor.

Pr. Edwards reminded the Assembly that it is only the "Resolved" statements that are adopted. However, the "Whereas" statements are submitted as fact, lay out the issue or concern at hand, and lead to the proposed solution offered in the "Resolved" statements. Questions regarding statements in the "Whereas" clauses may be directed to a member of the R&C Committee or the author(s).

Finally, Pr. Edwards advised that any resolution arising out of the business of the Assembly must be submitted in writing to the Secretary. Should anyone have questions, they can be directed to any member of the R&C Committee.

Pr. Edwards explained that the R&C Committee advises and assists those who ask for action from a Synod Assembly. When a resolution meets the needs of the group asking for action, the R&C Committee puts it in proper order and then moves the resolution to the Synod Assembly. This action does not imply in any way that the R&C is in agreement with a resolution; the process is simply in compliance with Robert's Rules of Order for preparing and presenting resolutions to the Assembly.

Greetings to Other ELCA Synods Meeting in Assembly

WHEREAS, other synods throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are gathering in assembly at the same time as the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod meets in Assembly, and

WHEREAS, we are partners in the Mission of the Gospel with other synods of this church; therefore be it

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the Secretary of the Synod to extend best wishes to the other synods of the ELCA who are gathering in assembly this weekend our greetings in Christ and prayers for their faithful deliberation:*

*Northern Illinois Synod
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod
Upper Susquehanna Synod*

Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled "Greetings to Other ELCA Synods Meeting in Assembly."

VOTED Yes 204 No 3 Abstain 8
SA16.06.08 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

WHEREAS, *the United Nations Millennium Development Goals 2015 Report shows that due to global efforts, since the year 1990:*

- *"17,000 fewer children die each day,"*
- *"more than 1 billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty,"*
- *"the global under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half,"*
- *"the maternal mortality ratio has declined by 45 per cent worldwide,"*
- *"2.6 billion people who have gained access to improved drinking water;*

and since the year 2000:

- *"the number of out-of-school children of primary school age has fallen by almost half,"*
- *"new HIV infections fell by approximately 40 per cent,"*
- *"3.3 million malaria deaths were prevented in 12 years,"*

yet "despite many successes, the poorest and most vulnerable people are being left behind" and we continue to face serious environmental challenges; and*

WHEREAS, *in September, 2015, 193 countries of the United Nations General Assembly agreed on a new set of goals to build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), where "sustainable development goals" now include hunger, poverty, health care, education, gender, reduced inequalities, productive work, peace, justice and other specific and measurable goals in the context of what we have traditionally called "sustainability" or "creation care;" and*

WHEREAS, *the life and witness of Jesus which embodies the core values of our faith call us to the spiritual task of promoting healing and reconciling ministries that support full and productive lives for all people at home and abroad; and*

WHEREAS, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has a history of social justice engagement as shown in many statements and study documents, such as Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice (1993); and*

WHEREAS, *congregations in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area have a unique opportunity to take a leadership educational role because they have, and can access, members who work full time on these concerns in government, think tanks, advocacy offices, university and other programs on public policy and service delivery; therefore, be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly encourage the congregations of the synod to engage in thoughtful and prayerful study of the United Nation's "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," goals and consider activities in the light of that study and to inform the synod bishop annually on their progress in study and responses for the next five years; and be it further*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the bishop of the synod to forward this resolution to other synodical bishops in the ELCA and encourage them to promote and engage in similar processes; and, be it further*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and possible action.*

* *United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015, Foreword by Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General, 2015.*

VOTED Yes 190 No 13 Abstain 6
SA16.06.09 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Gratitude and Support for Military Service Members and Veterans

WHEREAS, *1.2 million Americans are currently serving in the various branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, and about 21.2 million American women and men are veterans of military service, and,*

WHEREAS, *hundreds of thousands of military personnel have been injured over the years and returned home with wounded bodies, minds, and hearts, and,*

WHEREAS, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is highly committed to ministry among those in military uniform and those who have faithfully, and often sacrificially, served this nation, as exemplified by the service of the Rev. Karis Graham, the Rev. Charles Hodges, the Rev. Jeffrey Jacobson, the Rev. John Kallerson, the Rev. Alexis King, and the Rev. Terri King, military chaplains rostered in this synod; therefore, be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans to encourage our Churchwide ministries, synods, and congregations to offer their gratitude and support for all military personnel, veterans, and their families and friends with tangible expressions of care and encouragement in one or more of the following ways:*

- a. *Express gratitude often and remain especially attentive to those serving in our Armed Forces, as well as veterans, including military and federal chaplains;*
- b. *Congregations provide to their members who serve in the military copies of the Prayer Book for the Armed Services, (Augsburg Fortress Publishing), a companion to Evangelical Lutheran Worship designed for those serving in uniform, veterans, and their families, to military personnel and their families, and collaborate with their synod and the ELCA Bureau of Federal Chaplains to donate additional copies of the prayer book to military chaplains for them to distribute to those in their care;*
- c. *Regularly lift up in prayer those who are serving and those who have served, and pray especially with and for members of the military who have been wounded or killed in the line of duty, as well as for their families;*
- d. *Regularly remember in Intercessory Prayer all of our Federal Chaplains, to include military chaplains, Veterans Administration hospital chaplains, and Federal Bureau of Prison chaplains, who bring the means of grace in the name of Christ Jesus on our behalf wherever they are called to serve;*
- e. *Lift up the vocation of those who serve in our Armed Forces, and encourage gifted women and men in our congregations to be open to the call of the Holy Spirit and the church for them to serve as ordained military and federal chaplains of our ELCA;*
- f. *The Presiding Bishop invite synods and congregations one Sunday each year (on the Sunday closest to Veterans Day) to especially remember in prayer those in military uniform, the veterans who have served, the wounded and their families in their recovery and in their coping, and the families of those who have lost their lives in military service who now live with pain and loss;*
- g. *Remembering that injuries of the mind, spirit, and relationships do not show as clearly as physical injuries, offer rituals of healing and reconciliation for active duty members and members of the Reserve and National Guard upon their return from deployment or special duty, and periodically thereafter;*
- h. *Conduct and/or participate in events in our congregations, conferences, and/or our synod that equip individuals and congregations to offer needed care and support for returning veterans. Such activities include the ELCA “Centurion Connection” and “Care for Returning Veterans” programs, support to wounded warriors, Partners in Care (a state National Guard initiative), and other efforts to receive those returning home with open hearts and arms;*

i. Realizing that not all honorably discharged veterans transition well, and some find themselves incarcerated, congregations which already have a prison ministry are encouraged to make a special effort to seek out incarcerated veterans to thank them for their service and to help them access their veterans' benefits so that they might have a more successful transition upon their release.

VOTED Yes 190 No 5 Abstain 5
SA16.06.10 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Recognition of Anniversaries

Bishop Graham introduced an audio-visual presentation commemorating the rostered leaders and congregations celebrating milestone anniversaries during the year.

Racial Equity Team Introduction and Live Chat

The Rev. Karen Brau, Luther Place Memorial Church, and the Rev. James Phillips, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, introduced the Racial Equity Team and outlined its goals and objectives.

Report of the Assistant to the Bishop

Bishop Graham introduced the Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop. Her written report was provided in Section 2.3 of the Assembly materials and was based on Ecclesiastes 3:1. Having previously announced her resignation as Assistant to the Bishop, her remarks also served as a farewell address to the Synod.

Consideration of the Mission Spending Plan

After having been introduced and discussed earlier in the agenda, the proposed 2017 Mission Spending Plan, as set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the materials provided to the Assembly, was brought to the floor for consideration. Bishop Graham advised the Assembly that, because the time for proposing amendments to the plan had passed, the plan was not open for amendment at this time.

Moved: To approve the 2017 Mission Spending Plan as set forth in Section 3.2.1 of the materials provided to the Assembly.

VOTED Yes 177 No 2 Abstain 3
SA16.06.11 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Second Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

Pr. Edwards, Chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee (R&C), provided the second report to the Assembly. He began by noting that the next three resolutions to be proposed for consideration by the Assembly (R&C Nos. 2016-04, 2016-05, and 2016-06) were received after the deadline established for their submission. For this reason, a separate vote (with a two-thirds majority) is required in order to secure the Assembly's approval to consider each of the resolutions to be considered.

African Descent Lutheran Lives Matter

WHEREAS, *African American, African Caribbean and African national communities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are gifted and culturally diverse. Within the ELCA there are more than 46,100 members that identify as people of African Descent, or 1.9% of the ELCA's total population; and,*

WHEREAS, *the ELCA African Descent community is within a denomination that affirms "There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; for all of you are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28)." We are called to be a church that embraces each person and confronts racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, age, gender, familial, sexual orientation, physical,*

personal and class barriers that often manifest themselves in unjust treatment, inequalities, exclusion and violence; and,

WHEREAS, the United Nations declared 2015-2024 the “International Decade for People of African Descent.” Whether as descendants of the transatlantic slave trade or as more recent migrants, people of African Descent constitute some of the poorest and most marginalized groups with limited access to quality education, health services, housing, and social services; and,

WHEREAS, the 1993 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted the social statement, “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity & Culture” as a confession of the sin of racism. Despite many advances by people of African Descent within the ELCA and society, racism and racial discrimination, both direct and indirect, de facto and de jure, continue to manifest themselves in inequality and disadvantage; and,

WHEREAS, African Descent theologians and scholars are often rejected and avoided within not all but many Lutheran academic institutions. African Descent rostered leaders acquire higher education debt, wait longer to receive calls, are less likely to receive full-time calls, and less likely to reach synod compensation guidelines; and,

WHEREAS, the majority of African Descent ELCA congregations were birthed out of “white flight,” a divestment from urban areas, taking socio-economic resources and abandoning a connection, call and witness. What is left are deteriorating, debt-filled buildings with shrinking memberships, in part due to the systemic and structural issues of discrimination and lack of full inclusion of African Descent gifts of leadership and worship styles; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to include as part of its observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the commemoration of the United Nation’s International Decade of People of African Descent the following:

- Direct the ELCA Church Council to create a “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community” similar to the “Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community (4/18/1994)” acknowledging the Lutheran church’s complicity in the 400+ years of slavery and the oppression of other marginalized groups; that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences; and, the ELCA has perpetuated racism and discrimination through attitudes, actions, policies and practices these communities still endure. The Council will bring this “Declaration” to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration and action with a recommendation to include this Declaration in the governing documents of the ELCA;*
- Direct the ELCA Church Council to require those who provide oversight and support for theological education in partnership with the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL) to recognize and dismantle white hegemony by lifting up, encouraging and incorporating academic exploration of Black Liberation theology across*

ELCA educational expressions, to allocate funds for the development of resources and to accomplish this by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and,

- *Direct the ELCA Church Council to require the Domestic Missions Unit of the ELCA to work in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association to increase by 10% the number of African Descent leaders, congregations and communities served, thereby renewing its commitment (see African Descent Strategy, CWA, 2005) to create, sustain, reinvest in and support this plan of action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and to encourage Synods and congregations to do likewise.*

Moved:

Seconded: To consider the resolution entitled “African Descent Lives Matter.”

VOTED Yes 126 No 40 Abstain 8

SA16.06.12 To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Bishop Graham declared that the resolution would be considered by the Synod Assembly, and discussion of the resolution ensued.

Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled “African Descent Lives Matter.”

VOTED Yes 154 No 29 Abstain 7

SA16.06.13 To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery

WHEREAS, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) confesses with our Native sisters and brothers that the whole of Creation is God’s work, that God declares it all as good, and that God’s Spirit dwells within it, and*

WHEREAS, *we confess that Jesus Christ became incarnate in human form to show God’s love and mercy to all humanity, in all its variety, and to every race and people on every continent of the earth, and*

WHEREAS, *we acknowledge with pain and regret the damage done to the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas by the European conquest and migration to what Europeans called a “new world,” but which was in reality already the homeland of many peoples, and*

WHEREAS, *we recognize that Christian churches were and remain complicit in that conquest, migration and dispossession, and that Christian churches helped develop conceptions of Native peoples that blamed them for their own ills and that continue to perpetuate prejudice and injustice against them and their descendants, and*

WHEREAS, *we deplore and reject the so-called “doctrine of discovery” originated with Pope Alexander VI in 1493 and entrenched in U.S. federal law in Johnson v. McIntosh (1823), that Native inhabitants have no property or any other rights which colonizing European nations and their sovereigns are bound to respect. This principle promotes the myth that the Americas were a largely empty land that European conquerors and migrants had a right to claim, occupy, and possess simply by virtue of their Christianity and their European civilization.*

WHEREAS, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the ELCA’s full communion partners--the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church and the Moravian Church--have publicly repudiated the “doctrine of discovery;” therefore, be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly offers herewith a statement of repentance and reconciliation to Native nations in this country for damage done in the name of Christianity and “civilization,” and memorialize the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to repudiate the “doctrine of discovery,” repent of the damage done in the name of the European Christian-derived “doctrine of discovery” and of complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, seeking reconciliation with Native nations in this country by:*

- *directing the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop to plan an appropriate ELCA national ceremony of repentance and reconciliation with tribal leaders, and provide resources for similar synodical and congregational observances with local tribal leaders, at all such times and places as are appropriate; and*
- *directing the ELCA Church Council, with the help of Native communities, to commit the ELCA to the development of resources, in the next triennium, to help its congregations and people understand and reduce the negative impact of the “doctrine of discovery” and its consequences for Native people in North America; and*
- *directing the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit to bring forward to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly a renewed strategy for ministry with Native people in the ELCA and accompaniment with North American Native communities in general, with a particular commitment to long-term, stable funding of ELCA American Indian and Alaskan Native ministries, increasing partnerships with congregations and synods in the ELCA, and promoting efforts with the Native communities within which our congregations and synods reside.*

Moved:

Seconded: To consider the resolution entitled “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.”

VOTED Yes 138 No 43 Abstain 7

SA16.06.14 To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Bishop Graham declared that the resolution would be considered by the Synod Assembly, and discussion of the resolution ensued.

Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.”

VOTED Yes 141 No 26 Abstain 3
SA16.06.15 To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Current American Political Discourse

WHEREAS, *during the current election cycle, a number of national candidates for high office have engaged in what many Americans would describe as hate-filled rhetoric, personal invective, bigotry, bullying and the politics of exclusion, and*

WHEREAS, *the Lutheran church worldwide strives at all times in in all ways to reflect the love of Jesus Christ for every man, woman and child, loving our neighbors as ourselves; and*

WHEREAS, *the life and witness of Jesus which embodies the core values of our faith call us to the spiritual task of promoting healing and reconciling ministries that support full and productive lives for all people at home and abroad, always honoring and nurturing the sanctity of the human spirit as a living manifestation of God’s love; and*

WHEREAS, *Jesus showed us and history taught us, it is incumbent upon each of us to live the Word of God and stand against the forces of hatred, fear and bigotry when we see them, not just to hear but to do, not to condemn but to uplift, not to cast out but to include, not to defame but to honor, not to hurt but to embrace, not to hate but to love, and*

WHEREAS, *the Founding Fathers created America and its body of laws reflecting God’s higher law, grounded forever in the belief that all people are equal in the eyes of God and man, united by how we are alike rather than how we are different; and*

WHEREAS, *America’s leaders, as sacred stewards of the hopes and dreams of the Founding Fathers, as humble representatives of the American people and as responsible and compassionate citizens of the Earth, must strive at all times to embody, reflect and honor these beliefs; therefore, be it*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly rejects the public expressions of hatred, fear and bigotry being made during current political campaigns and encourages national and local leaders to boldly, unequivocally and responsibly embrace the values of compassion, honor, respect, cooperation and compromise that are the heart and soul of America; and, be it further*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in Assembly direct the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Church Council for consideration and possible action.*

Moved:

Seconded: To consider the resolution entitled “Current American Political Discourse.”

VOTED Yes 120 No 32 Abstain 4
SA16.06.16 To adopt the foregoing motion.

.....

Bishop Graham declared that the resolution would be considered by the Synod Assembly, and discussion of the resolution ensued.

Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled "Current American Political Discourse."

Moved:

Seconded: To amend the resolution entitled "Current American Political Discourse" by inserting the phrase "and to relevant local and national political organizations" in the second Resolved clause after "Church Council" and before "for consideration".

VOTED Yes 160 No 24 Abstain 1
SA16.06.17 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Bishop Graham declared that the amendment was adopted, and consideration returned to the resolution, as amended.

VOTED Yes 120 No 32 Abstain 4
SA16.06.18 To adopt the resolution entitled "Current American Political Discourse," as amended.

.....

Expression of Thanks and Gratitude

WHEREAS, the task of providing facilities and support for a synod assembly imposes burdens and responsibilities physically, financially, and spiritually on the host organization outside of the normal parameters of mission; and,

WHEREAS, the 2016 Synod Assembly Planning Committee and numerous others have worked many hours to prepare for this assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly express its heartfelt thanks to God and to all whose support and effort have made this 2016 Synod Assembly a fruitful gathering of God's people, including:

- the Reverend Leila Ortiz and the staff and members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland who served as our gracious and accommodating hosts, provided parking assistance, communion elements and who served as ushers;*
- the Reverend Cherlyne V. Beck, representing the ELCA Presiding Bishop and who provided for informative question and answer sessions during lunch;*
- members of the synod Racial Equity Team for sharing thoughtful and challenging video segments and for writing the opening liturgy and intercessory prayers: the Reverend*

Shannon Anderson, the Reverend Karen Brau, the Reverend Gloria Cline-Smythe, the Reverend Renata Eustis, the Reverend Richard Graham, Ms. Deb Haynes; the Reverend Phil Hirsch, the Reverend James Phillips, the Reverend Leila Ortiz, the Reverend Jeff Jacobson, Ms. Wanda Rosado, the Reverend Carmelo Santos, the Reverend Amy Sevimli, Ms. Bianca Vazquez, and the Reverend Mitch Watney;

- *our ecumenical guests: the Most Reverend Barry Knestout, the Archdiocese of Washington and the Reverend Olaf Wassmuth, German Lutheran Church of Washington, D.C.; the Rev. David Bennett, Eastern District Mennonite Church; the Rev. Robin Dodge, Ecumenical Officer, Episcopal Diocese of Washington;*
- *Mr. Jacob Wood of Qwizdom, Inc. for providing invaluable and patient guidance in using the voting devices;*
- *the Reverend Amy Thompson Sevimli, Assistant to the Bishop; the Reverend Philip C. Hirsch, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission; Dr. John White, Vice President of the Synod; Mr. Kevin Anderson, Secretary of the Synod and the Reverend Tom Knoll, Treasurer of the Synod, for their wisdom and encouragement in planning and executing this assembly;*
- *Ms. Katharyn Wheeler, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop and Assembly Coordinator, for her tireless effort in arranging, organizing, and tracking preparations for the assembly, for supervising the registration process and on-site administrative support, and for tirelessly cutting out 400 paper hands for the “Healing of the Nations...” and the other tasks to keep worship planning on track; and the team of administrative volunteers for the “behind the scenes” work essential to a successful assembly: Maddie Tallman, Lee Shields, Katherine Chatelaine-Samsen, Jennifer DeValue, Wasihun Gutema, the Reverend Rich Zawistoski and members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church;*
- *the Synod Assembly Planning Committee, under the leadership of the Reverend Margrethe Kleiber, in tirelessly addressing the myriad details and decisions necessary in planning and supporting the program and agenda for this assembly: Ms. Katharyn Wheeler, the Reverend Richard Graham, the Reverend Heidi Moore, the Reverend Albert Triolo, the Reverend Mitch Watney, the Reverend Mark Edwards, Ms. Margretta Williams, Mr. Kevin Anderson, Mr. Larry Evans, Ms. Karen Krueger, Mr. David Carlson, and Mr. Philip Meuschke;*
- *the Synod’s Communications Director, Ms. Karen Krueger; Guest blogger, Margretta Williams; and Media Coordinators Mr. David Carlson and Mr. Philip Meuschke whose expertise and wisdom in designing and operating the presentation and communications equipment and content was invaluable to this assembly;*
- *the ELCA Mission Investment Fund for providing our lunch today;*
- *the Nominating Committee, consisting of the conference deans of the synod under the leadership of the Reverend Albert Triolo: the Reverend Anna Anderson, the Reverend Travis Kern, the Reverend Beth Neubauer, the Reverend Mitch Watney and the Reverend Michael Wilker;*

- *the Elections Committee under the leadership of the Reverend Mitch Watney;*
 - *the Assembly parliamentarian, Mr. Richard Ahlberg, for his wise counsel and the orientation session for those first time synod assembly voting members;*
 - *the Reverend Richard H. Graham, bishop of the synod, for his proclamation of the Gospel and his presidency of the Festive Eucharist;*
 - *the Reverend Leila Ortiz for serving this assembly as our chaplain and as assisting minister for the Festive Eucharist;*
 - *the Reverend Heidi Moore and Mr. Phillip Meuschke for leading our closing worship;*
 - *the Assembly Worship Planning Team, led by the Reverend Heidi Moore, for the inspirational Festive Eucharist and the closing worship and all who took a role in leading our worship as lectors, petitioners and communion assistants: the Reverend Carmelo Santos, Ms. Margretta Williams, the Reverend Terry Hannon, Mr. Leon LaCross, the Reverend Anna Anderson, Ms. Annette Njie, Ms. Jennifer DeValue, the Reverend Craig Endicott, Ms. Shannon Steene, the Reverend Tony Carpenter, Mr. Nels Hendricksen, the Reverend Eva Steege, Mr. Tim Murphy, Deacon Katie Miller-Holland, Ms. Heather Lutz, Mr. Kevin Anderson, Mr. Wasihun Gatema, the Reverend Janice Mynchenberg, the Reverend David Slagle Peck, Ms. Rebecca Kolowée, Ms. Jan Perry and Mr. Jerry Fuller;*
 - *Mr. Jeremy Grenhart, creative music director, Luther Place, Washington DC, musician, and Mr. Antonio Phillips, soloist for our Festive Eucharist;*
 - *Mr. Peter Schmidt, director of music, Good Shepherd, Gaithersburg for closing worship musician;*
 - *the Reference and Counsel Committee, under the leadership of the Reverend Mark Edwards;*
 - *all those who permitted their names to be placed before the assembly for consideration in elections for the Synod Council and the Consultation Committee;*
 - *those who are completing their terms of service on the Synod Council: Ms. Karen Consiglio; the Reverend Mark Edwards; the Reverend Renata Eustis; Ms. Kathy Garrison, Diaconal Minister; Ms. Desiree Jessimy; Mr. Thomas Kern; Ms. Kathleen Meier; and Ms. Emily Moran;*
 - *and our special thanks to the Reverend Richard H. Graham, Bishop of the Synod, for his leadership of this assembly.*
-

Moved: To adopt the resolution entitled “Expression of Thanks and Gratitude.”

VOTED Yes 169 No 3 Abstain 1
SA16.06.19 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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Pr. Edwards concluded the report of the Reference and Counsel Committee by introducing an emergent resolution to express the appreciation of the Synod Assembly for the service of Pr. Sevimli, who would soon be concluding her tenure as Assistant to the Bishop.

Special Expression of Thanks and Gratitude: The Rev. Amy Thompson Sevimli

WHEREAS, *The Reverend Amy Thompson Sevimli has served the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod for five years as Associate Pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Arlington, Virginia; and,*

WHEREAS, *Reverend Sevimli has more recently served as an Assistant to the Bishop of this synod for eight years in various roles, faithfully carrying out her duties with grace and diligence; going above and beyond expectations on a regular basis; and,*

WHEREAS, *Reverend Sevimli’s passion for bringing the good news of Christ to young adults and old and to those of other or no faith has been of immeasurable value to this synod and this church, providing accessible and authentic care for those struggling on their faith journey through life; and,*

WHEREAS, *exhibiting the same compassion and care for the people of the synod, Reverend Sevimli has skillfully guided candidates and congregations in the call process, helping to ensure proper leadership for the challenges that face the church today; and,*

WHEREAS, *Reverend Sevimli and her family are relocating to Tblisi, Republic of Georgia in August 2016 as her husband begins a new position of employment; therefore, be it:*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly expresses its deep, heartfelt appreciation to the Reverend Amy Thompson Sevimli for her dedication and devotion to the work of Christ’s church as pastor and assistant to the bishop; and further be it*

RESOLVED, *that at the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly extend its prayers for safe travel and blessings for her and her family in their new home; and, be it further*

RESOLVED, *that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly express its approval and acclamation of this resolution by one and all with our applause.*

Moved: To approve the resolution entitled “Special Expression of Thanks and Gratitude.”

VOTED (by acclamation)
SA16.06.20 To adopt the foregoing motion.

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The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

Bishop Graham briefly outlined some of the events that were being planned to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, including the following:

- A three-day event, from May 30 through June 1, “Martin Luther and the Catholic Tradition,” to be held at Catholic University and the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, co-sponsored with Catholic University, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Pontifical Committee of Historical Sciences, and the German Embassy in Washington;
- A performance by the National Lutheran Choir on October 22 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception; and
- A possible joint celebration with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod of the 100th anniversary of Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area.

Information regarding these and other events will be posted to the Synod’s Web site as details become available.

Conclusion of Assembly

There being no further business to bring before the Assembly, Bishop Graham presided over the order for closing of the Assembly, including the installation of the Synod Council and other elected positions. At 4:32 PM, the Assembly was dismissed for the closing worship, and the 2016 Synod Assembly was declared closed.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin D. Anderson
Secretary