

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – NOVEMBER 21, 2020
ELECTRONIC/ZOOM MEETING

Call to Order The meeting was held electronically, using the Zoom platform, in light of the public-health recommendations to avoid in-person meetings involving more than ten individuals. Interim Vice President Droney called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The roll was called to verify attendance.

Devotion During the portion of the meeting ordinarily set aside for an opening devotional message, Interim Vice President Droney led the Synod Council through an extensive discussion of the tenth and eleventh chapters of the book *Quietly Courageous: Leading Church in a Changing World*, by Gil Rendle.

Interim Vice President Droney presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

SC20.11.33: To approve the agenda for the November 21, 2020, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the September 19, 2020, Synod Council meeting and separate draft minutes of an electronic vote of the Synod Council held on October 1-3, 2020, were presented to the Council for approval as a single matter. Interim Vice President Droney asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

SC20.11.34: To approve the minutes of the September 19, 2020, Synod Council meeting and the minutes of an electronic vote of the Synod Council held on October 1-3, 2020.

In connection with consideration of the minutes for the electronic vote to approve the racial equity letter, Secretary Anderson solicited the views of the members concerning the extent of the identifying information to be published on the Synod's Web site. Unlike the summaries of minutes of regular meetings, a consensus developed that the published summary of the minutes of the electronic vote should include the names of Synod Council members who voted on the motion and the names of members who abstained from voting on the motion.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

There were no matters to report.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Ortiz:

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. Bishop Ortiz brought two roster matters to the Synod Council.

SC20.11.35:

That:

1. The Rev. Heidi Eickstadt be placed on leave from call for family leave, effective July 11, 2020; and
 2. The Rev. Thomas Knoll be placed on the retired roster, effective January 1, 2021 (modification from previously-approved retirement date).
- ii. Roster Matters for Information. Although not requiring any action on the part of the Synod Council, Bishop Ortiz's written report to the Council noted one additional matter affecting the Synod's rostered ministers, *i.e.*, that the Rev. Elijah Mwitanti was called to serve as Senior Pastor at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia, effective October 12, 2020.
 - iii. General Updates. Bishop Ortiz had distributed a written report to the Synod Council in advance of the meeting. She highlighted the following events and initiatives completed or in process, as well as selected updates, including the following:
 - (a) The hours of the recently-hired administrative assistant will be temporarily increased, while the intern's service will conclude on December 4.
 - (b) Periodic meetings are held with staff, each of the six conferences, single rostered ministers, and rostered ministers of color.
 - (c) Synod leadership participated in several meetings, preaching, and teaching opportunities.
 - (d) Several Leadership Academy events have been planned for this fall and spring 2021.

Bishop Ortiz also discussed two other matters not included in her written report. First, in light of the allegations of misconduct made against composer David Haas, there have been discussions concerning whether his music would continue to be used by congregations and in Synod-wide events. Following this discussion, Synod leadership concluded that his music will no longer be used for Synod-wide events. The Synod leadership further recommends that congregations adopt a similar policy.

Second, the Synod will continue to recommend that, for the next eight to 12 weeks at least, congregations should refrain from holding in-person worship services. The same policies will be followed for Synod-wide events. Further recommendations will be made based on conditions as they develop.

b. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Bailey:

Pastor Bailey provided an update on the work of two tables. The Stewardship and Mission Support Table has focused, and will continue to focus, on cultural competence, the connection between stewardship and justice, collaboration with Yvonne Lembo, ELCA Regional Gift Planner, Metro DC Coaches, and partnership with Mike Ward, of Gronlund Sayther Brunkow (GSB) Fundraising.

The New and Renewing Missions Table has focused, and will continue to focus, on Sabbath and cultural competence, incorporating the voices of youth, administration of the Disaster Accompaniment Loan Fund, and a new round of COVID-19 grants by the churchwide organization.

c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Swenson-Reinhold:

Pastor Swenson-Reinhold briefly discussed the completion of Boundaries Training for rostered ministers, a churchwide requirement to be fulfilled every three years, the evolving and continuous nature of the discernment process, the completion of the first virtual First Call Theological Education retreat, the continued work of the Self-Care and Mental Health Team, consideration of improved access to mental health care through discussions with representatives of Portico Benefit Services, and updates on candidacy and mobility.

d. Synod Assembly Planning Committee Report:

Pastor Moen provided an update on the planning for the 2021 Synod Assembly. The Assembly is tentatively scheduled to be held virtually on June 4 and 5. The deadline for nominations and resolutions will be May 1. The planning committee prepared a proposed budget for the Assembly which included a set of proposed registration fees. Formal action on the proposed fee schedule will be postponed until the January 2021 Synod Council meeting.

e. Interim Vice President's Report:

Interim Vice President Jackson Droney had distributed a written report in advance of the meeting. He identified the next steps in consideration of the racial equity letter, consisting of (1) a study of reparations; (2) a request for proposal for expert consultation; and (3) consideration of the relationship between racial justice and

other justice. He also briefly discussed plans for a new book discussion beginning with the January 2021 meeting.

f. Secretary's Report:

Secretary Kevin Anderson provided an update from the recently completed Church Council meeting, which was held November 12-14. The following actions of interest to the Synod were identified:

- (a) The allocation of 2022 Churchwide Assembly voting members to the synods;
- (b) The requirement for the Synod to identify two lay female candidates, one of whom would be elected to the Church Council at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly;
- (c) The continuation of the mission support experiment through January 31, 2022, with reports, evaluation, and final action by the Church Council during the calendar year 2022;
- (d) Pending revisions to *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*;
- (e) Consideration of an aspirational document to replace the discontinued *Vision and Expectations* document; and
- (f) Approval and implementation of the Future Church design proposal.

g. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Synod Credit Cards. Treasurer Julie Hamre advised the Synod Council that, due to a change in the policy of Capital One, the Synod's primary bank and the issuer of credit cards to selected Synod leaders and staff, an alternative issuer was needed. After a search for a replacement issuer, she recommended that the ELCA Federal Credit Union be selected.

SC20.11.36: That the Treasurer of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod be authorized and directed to establish, on behalf of the Synod, a credit card account with the ELCA Federal Credit Union or other similar financial institution, and to provide such security for the Synod's obligations as the issuing institution may require; and

That the individuals holding the following offices or positions be issued one of such credit cards, with the amount of available credit to be determined by the Treasurer in consultation with the Finance Committee:

- The Synod Bishop;
- The Assistants to the Bishop; and
- The Office Manager.

- ii. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Copies of the financial statements for the first nine months of the current fiscal year, through October 31, 2020, were distributed in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a surplus in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$20,800. This number excludes the effect of unrealized gains in investments (approximately \$52,500) and the expected forgiveness of the Paycheck Protection Program loan (approximately \$104,000).

- iii. Development of FY 2021 Budget. In light of the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, the Synod Council will develop and approve a budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2021. A draft of the budget was presented to the meeting but will not be formally adopted by the Synod Council until the January 2021 meeting, prior to the start of the next fiscal year of the Synod.

3. Synodical Women's Organization

A brief written report was presented to the Synod Council in advance of the meeting.

4. Youth Organization

The Synod Council's youth representative reported that a youth leadership summit was held on November 6 and 7. Pastor Julia Ogg has stepped away from the leadership of the youth organization.

5. New Business

The Synod Council moved to executive session at 11:55 a.m. and returned to open session at 12:10 p.m.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 12:11 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: January 16, 2021; Zoom/Electronic.