

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – JANUARY 18, 2020
THE LAMB CENTER, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

Call to Order Vice President Crenshaw called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Devotion Pastor Triolo provided a devotional message reflecting on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday, a national holiday to be observed on January 20, and on the inequities in society.

Greetings Deacon Dave Larrabee greeted the members of the Synod Council and provided a brief history and profile of The Lamb Center, a daytime drop-in facility for the poor and poor in spirit attending to both physical and spiritual needs of the Fairfax homeless community. The organization provides breakfast, lunch, showers, laundry service, Bible studies, employment opportunities, housing and job counseling, AA meetings, a nurse practitioner clinic, a dental clinic, and more. Its emphasis is on providing a community of fellowship, support, empowerment, and learning together. The organization has been in existence for 27 years but has been in its present location only since 2016. It is currently supported by approximately 100 congregations. Deacon Larrabee also noted that Deacon Deb Haynes currently serves on the staff as Assistant Director of Case Management.

Bishop Ortiz and the two Assistants to the Bishop concluded this part of the meeting with prayers for Deacon Larrabee, Deacon Haynes, and The Lamb Center.

Vice President Crenshaw presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

SC20.01.01: To approve the agenda for the January 18, 2020, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the November 16, 2019, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Crenshaw asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

SC20.01.02: To approve the minutes of the November 16, 2019, Synod Council meeting.

1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table

- a. New Connections Campaign Overview and Update

Pastor Bailey discussed several of the recent and planned activities of the Campaign. Lutheran Church of the Covenant, Dale City, Virginia, has launched its own campaign. Reminders of pledges and commitments were prepared and distributed by the synod staff. Follow-up meetings have been held with representatives of congregations that have been conducting their own campaigns. A Mosaix workshop has been scheduled for February 15.

b. New Connections Campaign Financial Reports

Financial reports for the Campaign had been distributed to the Council in advance of the meeting. At the present time, the Campaign is projected to generate approximately \$1.7 million, of which approximately \$730,000 will be available for the direct use by the Synod.

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.

SC20.01.03:

That:

1. The Rev. Paul Collinson Streng be placed on the retired roster, effective February 1, 2020; and
 2. The Rev. Heidi Eickstadt be called to specialized ministry as Interim Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia, effective February 15, 2020.
- 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 the following additional matters affecting the Synod's rostered ministers:
1. The Rev. Greg Durig (retired) is serving part time as a bridge pastor at Community Lutheran Church, Sterling, Virginia, from January 12, 2020 through June 30, 2020;
 2. The Rev. Joe Vought (retired) is serving part time as Teaching Pastor at Lutheran Church of the Abiding Presence, Burke, Virginia, effective February 1, 2020;
 3. The Rev. Michael Guy (specialized ministry – interim) is serving as interim pastor at Grace Episcopal, Alexandria, Virginia (Virginia diocese) effective November 13, 2019; and
 4. The Rev. Beth Neubauer transferred to the South Carolina Synod effective November, 15, 2019.

- iii. Revised Mission Statement. The revised mission statement of the Synod was implemented effective January 1. A video presentation outlining the priorities of the Synod has been well received.
 - iv. Leadership Academy Updates. Bishop Ortiz reminded the Synod Council that the first event in the Leadership Academy Series, a “Three Holy Days Intensive” learning opportunity, will be held on January 30 and 31. Most of the details for the event have been confirmed. She also noted that registrations included representatives of neighboring synods.
 - v. Other Matters. Bishop Ortiz provided an update on her contacts in Puerto Rico, which had just sustained damage from a January 7 earthquake in the southwestern part of the island, together with numerous aftershocks. She also described her participation in the Duke Divinity Convocation of Christian Leaders, together with the insights, contacts, and opportunities that such participation has provided.
- b. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Bailey:
- Pastor Bailey provided an update on the work of two tables. The New and Renewing Missions Table, led by Pr. Shannon Anderson, had developed an electronic process for requesting grants, and has considered how to ensure accountability and feedback regarding the impact of those grants. The Stewardship and Mission Support Table is now led by Pr. Darcy Tillman, who has agreed to assume leadership of this table from Pr. Jeannette Leisk.
- c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Swenson-Reinhold:
- Pastor Swenson-Reinhold reported that 15 congregations are in some phase of leadership transition. One congregation is awaiting names. Four congregations are interviewing candidates. Ten congregations are in a study process.
- In addition, Pr. Swenson-Reinhold reported on the efforts regarding one of the Synod’s priorities, to equip and develop healthy leaders. A self-care and mental health team has been launched under the leadership of Pr. Karis Graham, and will address physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
- d. Treasurer’s Report:
- i. Clergy Housing Allowances for 2020. Treasurer Julie Hamre brought forward recommendations for housing allowances for ordained staff for 2019, noting that Pr. Swenson-Reinhold had not requested an allowance.

SC20.01.04: That for the year 2020, \$36,000 of the compensation paid to Bishop Leila M. Ortiz and \$55,000 of the compensation paid to the Rev. Lamar Bailey be designated as a rental/housing allowance in accordance with the provisions of section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code.

- ii. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Copies of the financial statements for the first 11 months of the Synod's current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended December 31, 2019, were distributed in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$34,700. Treasurer Julie Hamre identified several accounts where actual disbursements have been materially different from the budgeted amounts, and provided projections for the month of January, *i.e.*, to the end of the fiscal year. Such variances included line items for New and Renewing Missions support and support for the United Lutheran Seminary.
- iii. Appointment of External Independent Auditor. Ms. Hamre also reported that the Audit Committee had distributed a Request for Proposal to serve as the Synod's external independent auditing firm for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2020. Three firms responded, including the firm that had previously been engaged by the Synod for this purpose for many years. After considering the three responses, the Committee recommended that the Synod Council approve the engagement of Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes, PLC, Chantilly, Virginia, to serve as the external auditor for the current fiscal year.

SC20.01.05: That the accounting and auditing firm of Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes, PLC, Chantilly, Virginia, be engaged by the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod to serve as the Synod's independent auditing firm for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2020.

3. Synodical Women's Organization

Sheena Foster supplemented the written report that had been provided in advance of the meeting, noting in particular the one-day annual convention to be held on May 2, as well as the Eleventh Triennial Convention to be held in Phoenix, Arizona, from July 14 to July 16.

4. Youth Organization

A brief written summary of youth organization events was provided by the youth representative, who was not present for the meeting. On December 7, 2019, approximately 30 adults and youth from across the Synod gathered at Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Fairfax, Virginia, to discuss the future of the Synod's youth ministry program. This meeting, which lasted for about three hours, served as a platform to hear both youth and adult opinions of the ideal Synod youth ministry moving forward.

Suggestions included (a) more frequent, more sustainable events, (b) an increased opportunity for youth leadership at events, and (c) a strong emphasis on the application of Biblical, Lutheran teaching to everyday life and justice issues (such as bullying and gun violence.). Pastor Julia Boudrye of Lord of Life Lutheran Church has recently stepped into the coordinator position for youth ministry, but she needs a team of dedicated leaders to help her carry out the vision for youth ministry.

5. New Business

Secretary Anderson provided a brief report on the status of planning for the 2020 Synod Assembly, to be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland, on June 20. Voting membership will soon be determined and communicated based on the most recent congregational statistics reported on the ELCA Web site. A budget for the Synod Assembly was provided to the members of the Synod Council in advance of the meeting for the purpose of reviewing and approving the proposed registration fees for the Assembly.

Moved:

Seconded: To approve the proposed registration fees for the 2020 Synod Assembly as follows, with the same fees applying to rostered leaders, other voting members, and visitors:

Early bird registration	\$ 99
Regular registration	\$109

Moved:

Seconded: To amend the foregoing motion by substituting "\$125" for "\$109" and by substituting "Late registration" for "Regular registration."

SC20.01.06: To adopt the foregoing amendment to the motion.

SC20.01.07: To adopt the foregoing motion, as amended.

Secretary Anderson also discussed tentative plans to compile and publish records of attendance at Synod Council meetings for the 2019-20 Council year. Such records would be made available to the Nominating Committee and/or the 2020 Synod Assembly. The idea led to an extensive discussion of the work of the Synod Council, how meetings were organized and conducted, and the visibility of members in congregations and at other events around the Synod. Two specific matters were discussed:

- a. All members of the Synod Council were encouraged to attend the Congregational Council Retreat to be held at King of Kings Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia, on

March 14. Three of the officers, as well as synod staff and other leaders, are responsible for the content and delivery of the presentations.

- b. A team consisting of five Synod Council members agreed to plan a retreat for the Council to address some of the foregoing matters. The team consists of Bishop Ortiz, Barbara Bilodeau, Sheena Foster, Michael Sonnenberg, and Pr. Albert Triolo.

Finally, Bishop Ortiz reported that an event has been scheduled for November 21 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women. The event will be jointly sponsored by the Delaware-Maryland Synod.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 11:45 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: March 21, 2020; The Village at Rockville, Rockville, Maryland.