

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA

SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – MAY 14, 2022

ELECTRONIC/ZOOM MEETING

Call to Order The meeting was held electronically, using the Zoom platform, in light of the public-health recommendations regarding in-person meetings. Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The roll was called to verify attendance.

Devotions Ashelyn Mosby provided a devotional message based on Ephesians 3:14-19.

Vice President Slagle Peck presented the proposed agenda for the meeting and two sets of minutes as a single motion. The draft minutes of the March 12, 2022, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. The draft minutes of the 2021 Synod Assembly were also presented to the Council as a recommendation to the 2022 Synod Assembly for approval. Vice President Slagle Peck asked for corrections or amendments. Secretary Anderson disclosed that a small number of intentional (but minor) errors were inserted into the draft Synod Assembly minutes for the purpose of ascertaining how carefully the document was reviewed by other members. Such errors should be considered to have been corrected before being submitted to the Synod Council for further action. Aside from these items, there were no corrections or amendments.

SC22.05.16: To approve the agenda for the May 14, 2022, Synod Council meeting and the minutes of the March 12, 2022, Synod Council meeting, and to recommend the minutes of the 2021 Synod Assembly to the 2022 Synod Assembly for approval.

1. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Ortiz:*

i. 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 two matters affecting the Synod's rostered ministers, as follows:

1. The Rev. Brian Erickson, retired, transferred to the Rocky Mountain Synod, effective February 11, 2022, and

* The order of business was altered to accommodate the needs of certain voting members who were able to attend only the first portion of the meeting. These minutes have been prepared using the order set forth in the agenda and not necessarily in the order in which items were reported out or acted upon.

2. The Rev. Katherine Davidson transferred to the Rocky Mountain Synod, effective February 28, 2022.

- ii. Other Updates. Bishop Ortiz began by noting that she was serving as the chaplain for the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly, being held at the same time as this meeting. She also noted the May 1 public announcement of her appointment of the next Assistant to the Bishop for Mobility and Candidacy. Pastor Sarah Garrett Krey is currently serving as an Associate Pastor at Salem Lutheran Church, Catonsville, Maryland, and will begin her service on July 1, immediately after the conclusion of Pr. Swenson-Reinhold's service. Pastor Garrett Krey will be formally installed during the 2022 Synod Assembly.

Finally, she noted the most recent statement from Presiding Bishop Eaton regarding the Sierra Pacific Synod matter. Bishop Eaton has received the report of the listening panel and has announced that she will reach a decision on this matter by the end of May. Separately, the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly will take place from June 2-4, shortly after the expected announcement from Bishop Eaton.

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

Pastor Bailey provided a written report and made brief additional remarks regarding the work of two tables (New and Renewing Missions and Stewardship and Mission Support) and the Racial Equity Team. Pastor Bailey also referred to planning efforts for the 2022 Synod Assembly and to Cohort 2 of the Holy Listening Project, which had recently completed a two-day online retreat.

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

Pastor Swenson-Reinhold did not attend the meeting but provided a written report in advance of the meeting. The written report described the transition plans in the areas of Candidacy, Mobility, First Call Theological Education, Discernment Groups, and the Wholeness and Wellness Team.

- d. Assistant to the Bishop, Youth and Family Ministry, Deacon Julie Stecker:

Deacon Stecker was not present and did not provide a report.

- e. Assistant to the Bishop for Generosity, Pr. David Shank:

Pastor Shank was not present and did not provide a report.

- f. Vice President Jennifer Slagle Peck:

- i. Creation Justice Team Proposal. Vice President Slagle Peck called upon Pr. Sarah Scherschligt to present a proposal for Synod Council recognition of a new team to be known as the “Creation Justice Team.” A document was distributed in advance of the meeting setting forth a description of the vision, mission, strategy, structure, and budgetary implications of the team. Members discussed the proposal and raised questions. Members were advised that the offering at the 2022 Synod Assembly will be used for creation care efforts.

SC22.05.17: To recognize and support the creation of the Creation Justice Team of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, in accordance with the written proposal presented to the Synod Council and pursuant to S11.01.22. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the Synod.

- ii. Synod Assembly Updates. Members of the Synod Council received a written report from the Synod Assembly Planning Team, as well as the current draft of the agenda for the 2022 Synod Assembly. The report addressed some of the considerations in the event that the Assembly is changed from an in-person gathering to an online Assembly or a hybrid gathering. Further discussion of the proposed COVID-related health and safety requirements reflected differing approaches taken by other synod assemblies, differing views as to the desired approach, and concerns about the absence of prompt and complete communication of any such requirements to voting members, guests, and visitors.

The written report also included a status of the nominations process. Based on the nominees who have submitted their Candidate Information Forms, there are three Synod Council positions and one Consultation Committee position without an identified nominee. It is possible, however, that other potential candidates have agreed, or will ultimately agree, to be nominated but have not completed their required documentation.

- iii. Racial Equity Updates. Gold Enterprises has received and is reviewing relevant documents provided to them. A meeting involving representatives of the firm and representatives of the Synod (including the Executive Committee and Synod staff) is in the process of being scheduled. A survey for all Synod leaders will follow.
- iv. Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Committee. Vice President Slagle Peck called upon Pr. Eva Steege, Synod Council liaison to the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Committee, for a brief report. The Committee had met two days before the Synod Council meeting, and Pr. Steege summarized the work of the Committee in writing and during the meeting, including its desire for more lay participation in the work of the Committee.

g. Treasurer Julie Hamre:

- i. Account Signature Authorizations. Treasurer Julie Hamre noted that the Synod maintains financial accounts with Thrivent Trust Company and Capital One Bank. Pursuant to prior authorizations, any one of Bishop Ortiz, Treasurer Hamre, or Pr. Erin Swenson-Reinhold is authorized to execute documents and conduct business with respect to such accounts. As the result of the previously-announced resignation of Pr. Swenson-Reinhold, it is necessary to substitute another individual in her place as an authorized signatory. Bishop Ortiz and Treasurer Hamre have recommended that Pr. Bailey, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission, be substituted for Pr. Swenson-Reinhold.

SC22.05.18: That:

1. Any one of Leila M. Ortiz, Julie P. Hamre, and Lamar S. Bailey is hereby authorized on behalf of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod to execute documents and to conduct business with respect to its accounts with Thrivent Trust Company and Capital One Bank and to give instructions with respect to such accounts; and
 2. The Secretary of the Synod is authorized and directed to certify to each of Thrivent Trust Company and Capital One Bank that this resolution (or any resolution with similar effect using the financial institution's prescribed form) has been adopted.
- ii. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Treasurer Julie Hamre had distributed copies of the financial statements for the first three months of the current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended April 30, 2022, in advance of the meeting. The financial results were not further discussed with the Synod Council. These financial statements reflect a deficit of undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$89,800. Of this total, approximately \$18,100 consisted of realized and unrealized losses from invested assets. Thus, the deficit resulting from cash receipts and disbursements, exclusive of investment activities, was approximately \$71,700.
 - iii. Proposed Amendment of Current-Year Budget. At the March 2022 meeting of the Synod Council, two resolutions were adopted with budgetary implications for the current fiscal year of the Synod. In SC22.03.13, the bishop was authorized to employ one full-time administrative assistant as an addition to the current staff of the Synod. In SC22.03.14, the bishop was authorized to enter into an agreement with the Delaware-Maryland Synod for the part-time (approximately one-third) services of an Assistant to the Bishop for Generosity. These expenditures were not provided for in the budget adopted by the 2021 Synod Assembly. Pursuant to S15.13. and S15.13.06. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* of the Synod, the Synod is authorized to exceed the

expenditures authorized for synod staff approved by the 2021 Synod Assembly to the extent permitted by S15.13.06.

Current-year projections indicate that the Synod may nevertheless exceed the expenditures authorized by the 2021 Synod Assembly, as modified by the Synod Council. The 2021 Synod Assembly approved slightly less than \$1.2 million in total expenditures, exclusive of ELCA Churchwide Support. The Synod Council's authorization to authorize additional expenditures is thus limited to approximately \$60,000. The two initiatives authorized by the Synod Council may add up to \$100,000 in annualized expenditures. Accordingly, Treasurer Hamre has recommended that the Synod Council recommend to the 2022 Synod Assembly that the Assembly approve the additional expenditure authority for the current fiscal year.

SC22.05.19: To approve the proposed increase of \$100,000 in the budget for the fiscal year that began on February 1, 2022, beyond the amounts approved by the 2021 Synod Assembly, and recommend the approval of such increase to the 2022 Synod Assembly.

- iv. FY2023 Budget Proposal. The Finance Committee has developed a proposed budget for the next fiscal year of the Synod, the year beginning February 1, 2023. This budget projects congregational support of \$1,450,000, of which \$507,500 (or 35%) would be remitted to the ELCA for churchwide mission support. Together with projected other receipts of \$72,200, total proposed expenditures of approximately \$1,131,700 would result in a projected deficit of approximately \$117,000. For the year covered by this proposed budget, the projected deficit can be covered from current- and prior-year surpluses, recognizing the limitations on the ability to use such surpluses indefinitely into the future. Also for the year covered by this proposed budget, the expenses of the Racial Equity Team are expected to be covered by available restricted funds. More difficult choices will likely be required to be made for subsequent fiscal years of the Synod.

SC22.05.20: To approve the proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2023, in the form presented to the meeting, reflecting authorized expenditures of approximately \$1,131,700, and recommend the approval of such budget to the 2022 Synod Assembly.

- v. Proposed Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines for 2023. The approved Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines for 2022 were distributed to the Synod Council in advance of the meeting. Proposed updated guidelines for 2023 will be presented to the 2022 Synod Assembly for approval. These proposed guidelines will be substantively identical to the 2022 guidelines except for certain cost-of-living adjustments. The unadjusted minimum salary, established

separately for ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service, are proposed to be increased by 3.5% from 2022 to 2023. At the suggestion of a Synod Council member, the guideline rate for a supply pastor for one worship service would also be increased from \$150 to \$200.

SC22.05.21: To approve the Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines for 2023 in the form presented to the meeting and recommend the approval of such guidelines to the 2022 Synod Assembly.

2. Synod Women’s Organization

[No report]

3. Youth Organization

[No report]

4. New Business

Vice President Slagle Peck called upon Sheena Foster to discuss a letter received from representatives of Luther Place Memorial Church. The letter described the efforts undertaken by the congregation to support migrants transported from the border with Mexico to the District of Columbia by the State of Texas. The congregation has asked the Synod Council to (a) pray for guests and volunteers; (b) make an initial donation to a fund that will provide for emergency housing at hotels; and (c) communicate with other congregations to ascertain their willingness to provide space or volunteer to support the collective effort. No specific action was taken by the Synod Council at this time.

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 10:58 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: June 10, 2022; College Park Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, Hyattsville, Maryland (immediately preceding the start of the 2022 Synod Assembly)

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin D. Anderson
Secretary