

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – March 11, 2023
By Zoom

The MetroDC Synod is centered in Washington, D.C., the original and ancestral homelands of the Piscataway and Nacotchtak (Anacostan) peoples, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

Present:

Bishop Leila Ortiz, Bishop
Jennifer Slagle Peck, Vice President
Barbara Bilodeau, Secretary
Julie Hamre, Treasurer
Sheena Foster, DC
Pr. Judith VanOsdol, DC
Melody Stachour, Fairfax
Pr. Elijah Mwitanti, Fairfax
Pr. Angela Shannon, Maryland
Anita Smallin, Montgomery
Pr. Betty Landis, Montgomery
Don Wallace, Virginia
Pr. Henry Langknecht, Virginia
Pr. Eva Steege, At-Large
Andre Dangin, At-Large
Kirsten Nusum, At-Large Young Adult

Absent:

Pr. Sarah Scherschligt, Potomac

Synod Staff:

Pr. Lamar Bailey, Assistant to the Bishop, Director of Evangelical Mission
Katharyn Wheeler, Admin Assistant to Bishop
Deacon Ncole Roop
Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey

Vacancies:

MD Lay
Potomac Conference Lay
Member of Youth Organization

Devotions

Andre Dangin led devotions and opening prayer.

Call to Order Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order. The secretary verified the attendance.

Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.03.08 To approve the agenda for the March 11, 2023, Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2023, Synod Council meeting.

Reports and Other Matters

1. Council

- a. Council Vacancies. Noted two current vacancies: MD Conference Lay Position; Potomac Conference Lay Position.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Ortiz
 - i. Roster matters. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.03.09** To approve Roster Matters as follows:
 - That the Rev. Sarah Garrett Krey be called to serve at the Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy and Mobility effective July 1, 2022. (This was never officially in the roster matters)
 - That the Rev. LeeAnn Schray be placed on Leave from Call effective October 15, 2021.
 - That the Rev. LeeAnn Schray be placed on the Retired Roster effective April 1, 2023.
 - ii. Events, activities, and other updates.
 - The Bishop's written report was reviewed, including her recent trip to the Holy Land and the Extravaganza 2023 event for Youth Directors and Pastors.
 - Commission: ELCA members are invited to recommend or self-nominating people to serve on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. The Church Council will appoint 35 people, including two bishops. Nomination process closed March 9, 2023.
- b. SELECT LEARNING Conducted a discussion of the *Select Learning* proposal with Deacon Jodi Hanson, Director of Courses for Select Learning. Items noted:
 - Bishop Leila has been on the board.
 - This platform could fill a gap in what the seminaries aren't able to provide at this time (e.g., other languages).
 - Deacon Jodi desires to retire.
 - It is an independent incorporated entity, non-profit. It is under ELCA for tax status and South Dakota Synod has been the HR and financial gateway. *Select Learning* has paid the SD Synod to run the payroll.

- Synod would want the program to pay for itself. SL doesn't currently have an income stream to develop new courses; that would have to come from other grantors.
- Expect to ask synod attorney to review the legal aspects of the relationship.
- *Select Learning* is asking MetroDC to be their payroll manager. The financial structure and board may be revamped to reflect current realities including financial location in DC. New board elected and establish a task force from our synod. Board of *Select Learning* would hire the new Director.
- There would be no financial responsibility on the Synod to run the program, as *Select Learning* is a stand-alone program, but with a significant relationship.
- *Select Learning* would ask the Synod to establish a new board, but current board would need to affirm that.
- Deacon Jodi will send a current balance sheet to Treasurer Hamre.
- Relationship to set forward: available all around the country, look for expanded Spanish language. Noted that there formerly wasn't a budget for marketing.
- This is to be working with seminaries, not in competition.

After Deacon Jodi left the meeting, the Council concluded that a stronger statement of the relationship must be written, and have it reviewed with the Synod Attorney to identify any legal ramifications, to form a firm motion.

c. Treasurer's Report, Ms. Julie Hamre

- i. Financial reports – Current deficit to \$164k, better than the budget and what we expected at this point of the year. Had planned to use funds to cover the deficit, so net operating deficit is \$100k. This is the month we start serious work on the budget for 2024; if want a balanced budget then we need to do cuts from the operating budget. Set up a budget on how we use the reserve funds.

d. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Bailey –

- i. New and Renewing Missions Table. Thanks to PR Kirstin Tannas, a great partner chairing the table.
- ii. Racial Equity Team: Thanks to leadership of Pr Tom Knoll. Conversation on how the Racial Equity Team can align actions to the goals of the racial equity audit.
- iii. Stewardship and Mission Support Table. Offering two trainings and a gratitude film series, in final stages of editing. Sent out survey on the gratitude film series that concluded. Participation was high. Completed a storytelling video to lift up work of the synod and highlight the joy of generosity.
- iv. The ELCA Task Force on Studies for Civic Life and Faith has released a study curriculum for use throughout our church.
[//www.elca.org/civicsandfaithstudy](http://www.elca.org/civicsandfaithstudy)

e. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Sarah Garret Krey – Submitted written report.

Candidacy & Mobility: Have met with 29 out of 73 congregations; goal to meet

every congregation feels attainable. Had four call votes since July 2022. The joint Metro D.C. and VA Synod fall discernment cohort ended in February. Out of that cohort, we have several applications for entrance into the Metro D.C. candidacy process. The winter discernment cohort has begun with ten total participants. Holding regular meetings with retired rostered ministers, providing some connection. Was invited by Florida-Bahamas Synod to be part of a small cohort of young/new assistants to the bishop as a leadership and development cohort. A larger week-long gathering of assistants to Bishops will be next week. Four call votes recently with one installation; other installations pending. Encouraging Council members to attend installations and ordinations. Pr. Steege noted thanks for inviting retired pastors to gathering.

- f. Assistant to the Bishop, Youth & Family Ministry, Deacon Nicole Roop
 - i. Preparing for Transformers and Seekers event next week (March 17-19). At capacity for both with wait list. About half of MetroDC congregations are represented
 - ii. Road Trip event: Pr Landis noted that despite some adults attending in mourning for two people who died that week, that it was amazing how the resurrection was being proclaimed with high energy.
- g. Vice President's Report, VP Slagle Peck
 - i. Synod assembly update – Please register. Report from team is in the folder. If you are interested in helping, please let us know. The planning team is looking for workshop ideas and leaders; synod council members can also be hosts for ecumenical and other guests at the assembly We will meet at 8am that day; the assembly starts at 9.
 - ii. Gold Audit and Strategic planning team: met twice virtually in January, then in February in-person on a Friday night plus all day on Saturday.
 - iii. RIC Welcome Statement. Please give comments to strategic planning team this week; will form the version to present to Assembly to affirm. Answer the question of how the statement will be used: a) as conversation with rostered leaders are coming to our Synod, and ask that they could live into this welcome. We can't impose or require our congregations to align with this, but we have jurisdiction on rostered leaders. And b) as a resource and tool for congregations in reviewing their welcome and mission statements. We hope more congregations accept the invitation to become RIC.
 - iv. Land Acknowledgements. We have started to gather land acknowledgement examples. If you have one in your congregation, please share it by sending a copy or drop into the folder. These will be used to continue the conversation about training and how to engage.

3. Update from Church-Wide Council, Sheena Foster

- i. On April 20th an on-line meeting will vote on the slate of candidates for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church.

- ii. Scholarships for Lutheran Laywomen will provide assistance to Lutheran women studying for a career in other than ordained ministry and Scholarship for ordained ministry. Application deadline is April 5.
- iii. “Created to Be ELCA” Youth Gathering in New Orleans together with Multicultural Youth Leadership Event and the tAble (July 13-16, 2024) and ELCA Youth Gathering and Young Adult Gathering (July 16-20, 2024)

4. Committees, Tables, and Teams – Reports as needed
n/a

5. Youth Organization Report [TBI]

6. New Business
n/a

The meeting adjourned at 12:03 with prayer.

Next Scheduled Meeting: **May 13, Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, MD**

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara A. Bilodeau
Secretary