

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – May 13, 2023
Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, MD

Saint Stephen Lutheran Church in Silver Spring, MD is the original and ancestral homelands of the Piscataway and Nacotchtak (Anacostan) peoples. 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
Anita Smallin, Montgomery
Pr. Betty Landis, Montgomery
Pr. Sarah Scherschligt, Potomac
Don Wallace, Virginia
Pr. Henry Langknecht, Virginia
Pr. Eva Steege, At-Large
Andre Dangin, At-Large
Kirsten, At-Large Young Adult

Absent:

n/a

Synod Staff:

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

Vacancies:

Potomac Conference Lay
Member of Youth Organization
Maryland Lay
Maryland rostered

Devotions

Pr. Betty Landis led devotions and opening prayer on “The water (baptism) keeps putting you back on the path” with a clip from the movie Moana and discussion through “I wonder” cards.

Call to Order Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 930. The secretary verified the attendance.

Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.05.10 To approve the agenda for the May 13, 2023, Synod Council meeting; to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2023, Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes from the 2022 Assembly for presentation to the 2023 Synod Assembly.

Reports and Other Matters

1. Council

- a. Council Vacancies. Noted current vacancies: Potomac Conference Lay; Member of Youth Organization; Maryland Lay; Maryland rostered

2. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Ortiz
 - i. Roster matters. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.05.11** To approve Roster Matters as follows:
 - That the Rev. Mitchell Watney be placed on the retired roster effective June 1, 2023.
 - That the Rev. Amanda Nesvold be called to Specialized Ministry as Interim Pastor of All Saints Lutheran Church Bowie, MD effective May 1, 2023.
 - ii. Select Learning Discussion. Since the last meeting, we have the following additional information: Synod would become one of 3 partners; We would become the agent for paying the new director; It would not be up to this council to hire the director; Select Learning has liability Insurance; Select Learning has their own bank accounts. Noted that Bishop Ortiz serves on their board already, and would not be serving on their board as a representative of the Synod. Treasurer Hamre suggested that when the articles of incorporation are revised, the Synod should be noted as a partner. MetroDC Synod is being asked to 1) to be present on the Select Learning board (this might be the Bishop and/or designate, and/or another member appointed by Council) and 2) run the Director's payroll through our system. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.05.12:** To support the continued development of the relationship with Select Learning and authorize the Treasurer to develop the process to act as the payroll agent.
 - iii. RIC Committee. Philip Moeller joined the meeting to propose forming a Reconciling In Christ (RIC) Committee to: be the recognized focal point for continuous RIC efforts; promote fellowship among the existing RIC congregations; enable more congregations to become RIC; and support celebrating inclusivity for RIC Sunday and for PRIDE events;. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.05.13** To form a Reconciling in Christ Committee.
 - iv. Building Puentes. Bishop Ortiz noted that it had been her intention that following the recent support event in Puerto Rico, the funds would be

exhausted and our efforts would cease. Having seen the needs and appreciation first hand, it does not appear to be time to walk away. Other sources of support are for buildings and ministry; our relationship focuses on leadership wholeness and wellness. We may explore hosting their leadership here, asking congregations to perhaps host.

b. Treasurer's Report, Ms. Julie Hamre

- i. Financial reports – 1st quarter: We have a paper deficit. At 20% of mission support. Noted that the line “to be allocated” are credit card charges that will be assigned to the right budget lines. Thanks to Wendel Anderson we have \$750k of assets in a laddered CD earning interest.
- ii. 2024 Budget. 1) Proposal shows what we anticipate using from dedicated reserve funds. Would spend \$173k of dedicate reserve, approx. 10% reserve. 2) Expect a one-day Synod Assembly next year. The schedule shifted during COVID, and we will need a 2-day Assembly in 2025 for an election at the conclusion of Bishop Ortiz' first term. 3) Shows expected income from the laddered CDs. 4) Mission Support is extrapolated from the 2022 actual. 5) Expenses support 35% for ELCA. No longer an experiment. 6) Tracking of the RIC team expenses will be added. 7) Tables and Missions were asked each with what they wanted, but only 2 responded; numbers are based on what they they did in prior years.
- iii. **Moved into Executive Session** to discuss personnel compensation. Compensation guidelines include an amount for the FICA offset; without a history of showing or not showing the FICA offset in synod budget, proposed an addition to represent a portion of the FICA offset.
Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.05.14 To present the proposed budget as amended to the Assembly.

c. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Bailey – Submitted written report.

- i. Lots of assembly planning.
- ii. More and more grant requests. Released another round of sabbath grants. Will release partnership grants after assembly.

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

- i. Candidacy: We have so many candidates that we need an additional meeting, so we'll meet in May and June to conduct entrance, endorsement, and approval interviews. Working on redoing some of the questions in the candidacy process and intend to have reviewed by the racial equity team. Seeking a deacon to serve on the candidacy committee
- ii. Mobility: About a dozen congregations are in various stages of transition. Installations: encouraging greater turnout at installations.
- iii. Discernment cohorts continue. Getting good participation.

- e. Assistant to the Bishop, Youth & Family Ministry, Deacon Nicole Roop
 - i. Julie Stecker coming returning and Deacon Nicole stepping away.
 - ii. A challenge has been finding locations for events that are central-ish for both Synods and affordable. We are very excited to have found a place in WV, close to Hagerstown that is affordable and has everything we need.
 - iii. A meeting on June 14, 7-8pm, at St. Stephen plus zoom: invite everyone to help people understand what we're trying to do for youth and family ministry.

- f. Vice President's Report, VP Slagle Peck
 - i. Compensation guidelines. Propose an increase of 6%. Question raised of why Word and Service is less; it's not clear of housing allowance, and other differences. Noted that there is not sufficient time to provide a thorough review related to Word and Service before the Assembly; we would love to have a committee to review and re-evaluate for next year's Assembly. Consensus that we need to take care of our lay staff. Noted that there is also a Church-wide conversation on compensation. Ms Smallin volunteered to work on a review of lay compensation for 2024: will establish a working group, decide on how to approach to overhaul the compensation plans. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.05.15** To establish a working group, under the leadership of Ms. Smallin, to review of compensation plans for 2024.
 - ii. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.05.16** To send the Compensation Guidelines to the Synod Assembly as presented.
 - iii. Personnel Manual: Has not been updated since 2015. We are proposing lots of changes. The document owned by Synod Council. The next step is to send to racial equity/strategic planning team plus attorney for a review. Expect to conduct these reviews over summer and submit it to the Council in September for approval.
 - iv. RIC welcome statement. Resolution to go to the Assembly. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.05.17** – To submit the Reconciling in Christ welcome statement, as presented, to the Synod Assembly for affirmation.
 - v. We have formally concluded our relationship with Gold. Currently focused on the Strategic Planning team.

3. Committees, Tables, and Teams

- a. Update from ELCA Church Council, Sheena Foster. Nothing to report except commission.
- b. Update from Commission on Renewed Lutheran Church, member Melody Stachour: announced 3 weeks ago. Names on ELCA website. Members selected from 400+ nominations, include 35 people, a mix of lay, clergy, deacons, and bishops, from Alaska to FL/Bahamas. Mid-July will be the first meeting.
- c. Open floor for updates from liaisons

- i. Pr. Steege: The new chair for the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Committee is Pr. Chris Widner. Agreed to replace Mark Brown, who is stepping down. Would like to see some new members on the committee.

4. Youth Organization Report

[TBI]

5. New Business

n/a none

The meeting adjourned at 11:59 with prayer.

Next Scheduled Meeting: **At Synod Assembly, 8am, June 3, 2023, Good Shepherd, Gaithersburg, MD**

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara A. Bilodeau
Secretary