

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – September 9, 2023 (Zoom)**

The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Piscataway, Nacotchtank (Anacostan), Patuxent, Susqueahnnoch, Doeg, and Manahoac 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 – Lay
Pr. Judith VanOsdol, DC – Rostered
Pr. Elijah Mwitanti, Fairfax - Rostered
Brother Love, Maryland – Lay
Pr. Eric T. Randolph, Maryland - Rostered
Anita Smallin, Montgomery - Lay
Pr. Betty Landis, Montgomery – Rostered
Don Wallace, Virginia - Lay
Pr. Henry Langknecht, Virginia - Rostered

Absent:

Melody Stachour, Fairfax - Lay
Pr. Alexander P. Stall, Jr., Potomac – Rostered
Kirsten Nusum, At-Large Young Adult
Breeze H Lawless, At-Large Youth

Synod Staff:

Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey
Katharyn Wheeler

Guests:

Wendell Anderson – chair finance committee

Vacancies:

Potomac - Lay

Devotions led by Vice President Slagle Peck

Call to Order Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 9:22am. The secretary verified the attendance.

Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.09.20 To approve the agenda for the September 9, 2023, Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2023.

Reports and Other Matters

1. Council

- a. Welcome to New Members
 - i. Bishop Ortiz noted our Synod mission statement and current priorities, including: Equip and develop healthy leaders; Empower and nurture vibrant ministries; Encourage and model faithful accompaniment.
 - ii. Bishop Ortiz highlighted current synod offerings, including the new podcast.
- b. Council Commitments
 - i. The synod council is a board of directors that is encouraged to be
 1. An engaged board of directors; we don't rubber stamp.
 2. A support system to the staff; We ask "how can I be of assistance?"
 3. Ambassadors throughout synod about what is going on; we are a way to connect people with the synod and with each other.
 - ii. Reminded that all of us together we are the Synod.
 - iii. Reviewed the Council Commitments Document.

Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.09.21 To affirm that we agree with the commitments document as provided.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Ortiz
 - i. Roster matters - **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.09.22** the following change in status:
 - That Deacon Rebecca H. Kolowé be called to serve as Director of Operations at Sandy Spring Friends School in Silver Spring, MD effective May 30, 2023.
 - That the Rev. Julia Ogg be placed On Leave from Call for Study effective May 22, 2023.
 - That the Rev. Annabelle Markey be placed On Leave from Call effective July 11, 2023.
 - That the Rev. Lamar Bailey be placed On Leave from Call effective July 15, 2023.
 - That the Rev. Margrethe Kleiber be placed on the retired roster effective September 1, 2023.
 - That the Rev. Franklin Morales be called to Specialized Ministry as Canon Missioner for Latino/Hispanic Ministries in the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina effective July 1, 2023.
 - That the Rev. W. Ralph Heller be removed from the roster as he has transferred to the North American Lutheran Church effective July 12, 2023.
 - ii. Events, activities, and other updates – seen in written report

- iii. Status of DEM position / Mission Support to churchwide
 - a. Metro DC received a proposal from Rev. Phil Hirsch to modify the planned Mission Support from the Synod to Churchwide: That a) MetroDC provide 44.5% (from 35%) of mission support to church wide b) ELCA provides the expense of the DEM c) Metro DC becomes eligible to receive grants from churchwide.
 - b. It is intended that this would be “budget neutral” from the perspective of Metro DC, but have ministry advantages.
 - c. DEM would be called/employee of Synod, and churchwide would give us a grant to cover the DEM cost.
 - d. Recommended a document be written to establish the agreement between Metro DC and Church-wide, particularly in respect to expectations and reporting of the DEM.
 - iv. DEM Candidates: Churchwide to send weekly candidates. Several reviewed; Bishop in discernment with candidates.
 - v. Reported that the Staff retreat discussed hopes and expectations on the DEM vacancy; our very competent excellent staff can “hold down the fort” but have to decide what is possible and what is not with the reduced staff. Said yes to what is essential to the mission.
 - vi. Lutheran World Federation: Bishop Ortiz is at the pre-assembly gathering discussing the gender justice policy that was adopted 10 years ago but hasn’t been universally adopted. She shared the hope that they would go before the general council on Monday and present a report of demands and expectations of all churches in LFC. Has been a very difficult conversation; Bishop Ortiz is on the committee to present the message to the Assembly.
- b. Treasurer’s Report, Ms. Julie Hamre
- i. Financial reports: 58% of the way through the year and received 45% of mission support (it was acknowledged that mission support does not come in evenly through the year). We are a little bit behind, but this is not (yet) a problem. We have distributed 100% of ministry support (camps, etc). Office/admin expenses are right on target.
 - ii. St. Matthew DC Grant – Requested \$46k to come from designated funds for New and Renewing Missions. \$25k was dispersed by Executive Committee in August given time sensitive nature of request, with the rest to come here to Council. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.09.23** To distribute \$46k in quarterly payments from designated funds to support ministry at St. Matthew DC.
 - iii. Mar-Lu-Ridge Capital Campaign – information: Mar-Lu-Ridge is running a Capital Campaign; the Del/MD synod has committed to provide \$50k to the campaign over three years. Finance Committee suggests that MetroDC provide a gift from the fund that supports capital improvements, suggesting as a lump sum, of \$20k in additional to the budgeted amount of \$6k/year. Question raised if Metro DC should provide a similar gift to Camp Caroline

Furnace. The Finance Committee is collecting information and will come back later with a proposal.

- c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Sarah Garret Krey – about 25 active candidates in our process. Usually meet four times a year, but because we have so many candidates we have added a fifth meeting. Starting new discernment cohort in October, teamed with Virginia Synod. Very thankful that Deacon Alyssa is joining committee to have deacon representation.
- d. Assistant to the Bishop, Youth & Family Ministry, Deacon Julie Stecker – Deacon Stecker not in attendance, but Ms. Wheeler was able to speak about a recent meeting with about nine youth leaders on Zoom. Positive conversation; looking to have the synod establish the Committee, ensuring that it has representation across the conferences.
- e. Vice President’s Report, VP Slagle Peck
 - i. Synod Council Schedule – in report
 - ii. Racial Equity Strategic Planning Team – we have a few groups:
 - 1. Racial Equity Team was created in 2016. Created resources for the synod such as the Commemorations Calendar. The page on the website with lots of great resources including how to get a conversation started in your congregation about creating a racial equity team. Team is currently facilitating the Sacred Ground curriculum throughout the synod.
 - 2. Faith in Action Racial Equity Network: A wider organization to connect people who are or want to be engaged in justice work. The Network can be a way to gain support and connect with others. A year and 3 months old; still an experiment, we welcome participation.
 - 3. Racial Equity Strategic Planning Team. Trying to implement what we learned in the audit. Don’t expect to have a strategic planning team operating forever. Met several times over the year. Addressing one goal per year. Will present at the October 21, 2023 leadership summit. There are five focal groups:
 - a. Cultural shifts
 - b. Policies
 - c. Rostered leaders
 - d. Identify groups
 - e. Communications
 - iii. Open Liaison / Committee positions – see report and let VP Slagle Peck know if you are interested in supporting any of the synod’s committees or teams.
 - iv. Reminder about the synod council’s ongoing consideration of the land back memorial from the August 2022 churchwide assembly. A folder in our google drive contains information and resources. We encourage our congregations to include land acknowledgement in their physical spaces and announcements and to share resources to learn and foster connection with indigenous peoples. If you know of resources, please share in that folder.

- v. Personnel Manual. Last time this document was updated was December 2015. Update needed because our working world has changed since then. The manual in the folder is the one we propose to adopt; Synod lawyer has also reviewed it. We might be coming back to you with further updates as the Racial Equity Strategic Planning Team continues its review of synod policies and procedures. Will make amendments at that point. We discussed the potential use of this document as a template for congregations to use. As we add more from the Racial Equity Strategic Planning Team, we envision it could be a resource. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC23.09.24** To adopt the provided Personnel Manual.
- f. Secretary's Report, Barbara Bilodeau
 - i. Review of LSSNCA Bylaws – tabled for future, as LCMS has concerns and therefore more changes may be proposed.

~~3.~~

4. New Business

Next meeting will be November 4, 2023 at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Fairfax. Pr. Mwitanti and Mr. Wallace volunteered to help organize the opening worship. Brother Love noted that Nov 4 is his wedding day.

Pr. Mwitanti noted that from the reports from the [synod sStaff](#), that there are a lot of things going on. Want to thank them [and](#) acknowledge ~~that so~~ [how](#) much ~~theef~~ synod staff is doing. Please be intentional in our prayers and support for them.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 with prayer.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Full day retreat on November 4, 2023 at King of Kings Lutheran Church, Fairfax, VA

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara A. Bilodeau
Secretary