

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA  
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING –20 January 2024 via Zoom**

*The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod, is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Piscataway, Nacotchtank (Anacostan), Patuxent, Susquehannock, 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  
Pr. Judith VanOsdol, DC – Rostered  
Melody Stachour, Fairfax - Lay  
Pr. Elijah Mwitanti, Fairfax - Rostered  
Rachad al-Mustamreh D.I. Love, Maryland – Lay  
Pr. Eric T. Randolph, Maryland - Rostered  
Pr. Betty Landis, Montgomery – Rostered  
Wendell Anderson, Potomac – Lay  
Pr. Alexander P. Stall, Jr., Potomac – Rostered  
Don Wallace, Virginia - Lay  
Pr. Henry Langknecht, Virginia – Rostered  
Kirsten Nusum, At-Large Young Adult  
Breeze H Lawless, At-Large Youth

**Absent:**

Anita Smallin, Montgomery – Lay  
Sheena Foster, DC – Lay

**Synod Staff:**

Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey  
Katharyn Wheeler  
Pr. Jason Shank

**Guests: n/a**

**Vacancies:**

None.

**Devotions** led by Pastor Elijah Mwitanti on “dream on” as we shared our dreams for the synod.

**Call to Order** Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 9:34. The secretary verified the attendance.

**Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.1.1** To approve the agenda for the 20 January 2024, Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes of the 4 November 2023 and electronic vote on 14 December 2023.

## Reports and Other Matters

### 1. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Ortiz
  - i. Roster matters - **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.1.2** the following change in status:
    - That the Rev. Sarah Lewis be placed On Leave from Call – Disability effective December 12, 2023.
    - That the Rev. Connie Thomson be placed On Leave from Call – Family Leave effective January 1, 2024.
    - That the Rev. John Teitman be called to Special Ministry as Chaplain at UVA Health in Haymarket, VA effective November 23, 2023.
    - That the Rev. David Newman be called to Special Ministry as Interim Pastor at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Derwood, MD effective February 1, 2024.
    - That the Rev. Lynn Miller be placed on the retired roster effective March 1, 2024.
  - ii. Events, activities, and other updates – seen in written report
  - iii. Status of DEM position / Mission Support to churchwide – welcome to Pr. Jason Shank
- b. Treasurer’s Report, Ms. Julie Hamre
  - i. Financial reports: Mission Support is lower than we hoped; with only one more month for the fiscal year we don’t expected to meet the goal. Expect a deficit of \$50-100k; will take those funds from unrestricted reserves. We are starting financial plan for FY25; we expect to submit a prelim budget for the March meeting with a motion at the May meeting to present it at Assembly.
- c. Assistant to the Bishop, DEM - Pr. Jason Shank
  - i. New and Renewing Missions Table. King of Kings grant. Recommendation came from EC. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted (with 1 abstain): SC24.1.3** That a grant of following amounts be provided to King of Kings’ 2.0 (Dulles South) from the Bethany Fund: \$20,000 in 2024; \$10,000 in 2025; \$5,000 in 2026. Dulles South will work with the New and Renewing Mission Table throughout the three years in accordance with our grant recipient procedures, with the final payment occurring in 2026.
- d. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Sarah Garret Krey
  - i. Candidacy committee has been very busy. Need 3-4 more people to serve on the candidacy committee with 1 or 2 congregational pastors. Looking for host congregations for day-long candidacy meetings on Wednesdays.

- ii. Working to amend and broaden the language on the faith fund. It is currently restricted to tuition support. Many candidates have tuition support, but still have expenses.
- iii. Planning for a retreat for the candidates during the year.
- iv. A group has been appointed at Church-Wide to reform the ELCA candidacy process. Current process has very little flexibility. Working to identify inefficiencies and challenges for candidates. Pr. Garret Krey attended a hearing for the first draft of the process. Expecting a new process to be more decentralized. Should be presented to the Conference of Bishops in coming months, then presented for constitutional changes at 2025 churchwide assembly.
- v. Mobility: there's a lot of it. The Swahili Lutheran in the Montgomery conference is now worshipping in DC; suggested they should be moved to the DC conference. Agreed that it makes sense but will research any implication with Churchwide.
- e. Assistant to the Bishop, Youth & Family Ministry, Deacon Julie Stecker – not in attendance due to the current Extravaganza event. Many events in the next few months for youth, middle school, and elementary school children.
- f. Secretary's Report, Barbara Bilodeau
  - i. Motion from the Secretary **Moved/Seconded/Adopted SC24.1.4** to present a Constitution amendment to the Synod Assembly stating: RESOLVED That the text of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Constitution and Bylaws be amended to align with practice and amended S7.21.03 as follows: Congregations with a ~~baptized membership~~ active participants which consists of at least 10 percent persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English will be entitled to one additional member. That member will be a person of color and/or person whose primary language is other than English.”
  - ii. Motion from the Secretary **Moved/Seconded/Adopted SC24.1.5** to present a Constitution amendment to the Synod Assembly stating: RESOLVED That the text of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Constitution and Bylaws be amended to align with current practice as follows: S1.21. The seal of this synod is ~~three united flames emanating from the base of the cross. The name of this synod and the year of its constituting convention form the circular outer edge of the seal.~~ a world with a cross segmenting the globe in the center of the seal with the words METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD ELCA circling the outer edge of the seal. (An interpretation of this description is



- iii. For information and record, the following Congregation Constitutions were reviewed since the prior meeting:
  - i. Reviewed and provided recommendations to comply with the model passed at the 2022 Church-wide Assembly
    - 1. Church of the Covenant, Dale City (November 2023)
  - ii. Approved:
    - 1. Good Shepherd, Woodbridge (November 2023) - Passed by the Congregation in February 2023 - Agreed to consider this amendment approved, with the understanding that the typos would be corrected at the next opportunity.
    - 2. Lord of Life, Fairfax/Clifton (November 2023) Reviewed amended continuing resolutions. Reminded that we don't approve CRs, but provided a review for consistency and gave approval of current Constitution.
    - 3. Reformation, DC (December 2023)
    - 4. Good Shepherd, Gaithersburg (December 2023) Passed by their congregation 12/10/23
    - 5. Grace, Fort Washington (December 2023) Passed by their congregation 12/10/23
  - g. Vice President's Report, VP Slagle Peck
    - i. Discussed a fund for supporting ministers. Pr. Betty Landis volunteered to assist.
    - ii. Synod Council Schedule – in report.

## **2. Committees, Tables, and Teams - Reports as needed**

- a. Update from Commission on Renewed Lutheran Church, Melody Stachour
  - i. Info shared. Ms. Stachour is Chair of the “dismantling racism” subcommittee. Anyone should be able to request zoom link to attend the meetings. There is also “future church” effort, which has a working group of churchwide staff to re-define what it means to be church together. There is some overlap with the Commission, with information being shared.
- b. Open floor for updates from liaisons
  - i. Pr. Henry Langknecht shared that the Select Learning Board is working to move in new leadership; partner with seminaries and synods; and market themselves. Had first meeting this week.

## **3. Youth Organization Report**

**Breeze L.**

- a. Update of LYO events coming up. Breeze will be at the High School and Middle School retreats

## **4. New Business**

- a. Secretary Bilodeau presented the background and concerns of achieving the 60/40 ratio of lay voting members to rostered voting members at the Synod

Assembly, given the number of congregations and rostered members.

**Moved/Seconded/Adopted SC24.1.6** That the Synod invite a minimum of two voting members per congregation to the Synod Assembly. Congregations are strongly encouraged to consider persons of color, youth, or young adults aged 30 and under in their voting members as well as the gender balance referred to in S7.21C. Congregations may receive scholarships at 50% of the Assembly fee to encourage participation.

- b. Ms. Hamre and Ms. Bilodeau volunteered to draft a letter to establish the agreement with Churchwide on the support for the DEM when we receive the proposal from the ELCA.

**The meeting adjourned** at 11:41 with prayer.

Next Scheduled Meeting: March 20, 2024 at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Great Falls, VA

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara A. Bilodeau  
Secretary