

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA  
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – 23 March 2024**

*Christ the King Lutheran Church in Great Falls, VA is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Piscataway 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 (on line)  
Melody Stachour, Fairfax - Lay  
Pr. Elijah Mwitanti, Fairfax - Rostered  
Pr. Eric T. Randolph, Maryland - Rostered  
Anita Smallin, Montgomery - Lay  
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 (on line)  
Breeze H Lawless, At-Large Youth (on line)

**Absent:**

Pr. Judith VanOsdol, DC – Rostered  
Rachad al-Mustamreh D.I. Love, Maryland – Lay

**Synod Staff:**

Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey  
Pr. Jason Shank  
Deacon Julie Stecker (on line)  
Katharyn Wheeler

**Guests: n/a**

**Vacancies:**

None.

**Devotions** led by Pr. Hank Langknecht using “Bricks and Straw” by Franklin Pierce Adams and Exodus 5.

**Call to Order** Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 9:07am. The secretary verified the attendance.

**Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.3.7** To approve the agenda for the 23 March 2024 Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes of the 20 January 2024 Synod Council Meeting.

## Reports and Other Matters

### 1. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Ortiz
  - i. Roster matters - **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.3.8** the following change in status: That the Rev. Amy Thomson Sevimli's On Leave from Call Status be extended to August 15, 2025.
  - ii. Events, activities, and other updates – see written report. Suggest to think about: synods that re not in a deficit are ones that have closed churches and sold buildings; closing may provide funds but there is the cost to the preaching of the Gospel.
- b. Treasurer's Report, Ms. Julie Hamre
  - i. Financial reports. 1) Provided 2023 pre-audit report. 2) Reviewed new format proposed by Mr. Anderson for the 2024 budget format, showing which line items would be funded from which funds. Propose using this for the Synod Assembly; makes it clear how the mission support and designated funds are being used. Sense of the council was that this was an improvement and suggested that the format be used for the broader synod communication. 3) Draft of FY 2025 budget provided for Council to review and comment; the version at the May meeting will be what is presented to Assembly.
  - ii. 2025 Staff Compensation – Staff was invited to exit the room during Council discussion. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.3.9** To approved a 5% increase for all staff salaries for 2025, which provides both a cost of living increase plus merit bonus. Discussed the idea (not moved) to provide staff members an "Audible" membership since they spend since they spend so much time driving.
- c. Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy & Mobility, Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey.
  - i. Pre-Assembly conference meetings are being scheduled.
  - ii. DC conference is still without a Dean.
  - iii. Discussed the former Horizon Internship Program, to providing funds for congregations that could not normally afford to support an intern. Program was ended by the ELCA, but we are exploring if something similar could be recreated that on a synod level, with funding of one-third from Synod, one-third from the congregation, and one-third from a TBD source of funding. Congregational Mission Fund that perhaps could be used. We are in conversation with United Seminary; they have some donors, and the Fund For Leaders has scholarship money that might applied. Need to identify site

and an intern for a pilot, possibility Hope Lutheran in Annandale for intern who can speak Spanish. Please hold in prayer.

- d. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Jason Shank
  - i. New and Renewing Missions Table – The Table held a retreat discussing purpose and vision of the table, discernment for future work.
  - ii. Stewardship and Mission Support Table – Attended first meeting, discussing how to function in the future. Added a few members. Continuing with current grants, adding a coaching grant through this table to support congregation stewardships campaigns.
  - iii. Racial Equity Team – working on new statement of purpose for the web site. We have 5 sacred ground team in progress. Working on two possible workshops for Synod Assembly, one with creation team; exploring a “Taste of Sacred Ground” workshop to talk about the program.
  - iv. Coaching Proposal – created, focusing on vitality, growth, and stewardship with a specific concentration on first-call pastors, vitality-centered pastors, and stewardship. **motion/second/passed SC24.3.10** to provide \$23,000 of Synod funds from the Congregational Mission Fund to support the coaching contract, which represents half the support; the other half would be from supported congregations, or grants from the NRMT.
- e. Assistant to the Bishop, Youth & Family Ministry, Deacon Julie Stecker.
  - i. See written report.
- f. Secretary’s Report, Barbara Bilodeau
  - i. Reviews/approvals of congregation constitution updates
    - Saint Stephen, Silver Spring: Concurred – please send final for official approval after voted on by Congregation
    - Emmanuel, Bethesda: Approved
  - ii. Proposed Resolution on ELCA Seal **SC24.3.11 motion/second/passed** to present a motion to the Synod Assembly that “we Memorialize the Church-wide Assembly to amend the Constitution of the ELCA to replace the Seal of the ELCA with the seal that is currently in use.”
- g. Vice President’s Report, VP Slagle Peck
  - i. Updates to Synod’s Harassment Policy – Context is this is for the Synod as an employer. **SC24.3.12 motion/second/passed** To make these changes in our employment guidelines.
  - ii. Proposed Transgender Inclusion Policy. Had discussion of the goals and context for this policy. Some outdated language was noted; recommended to vet this through the RIC team and other sensitivity readers. Decision: Table the decision until the language is revised and these two reviews are conducted.

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

- a. Update from ELCA Church Council, Sheena Foster, Provided a summary in council meeting from November (a little dated) with the next meeting in April 11-14 in Chicago. The report is in folder. Bishop Eaton returned as of March 18.

- b. Update from Commission on Renewed Lutheran Church, Melody Stachour.
  - i. Last meeting was mainly reporting from subcommittees, with a significant amount of activity as some subcommittees start to turn their work over. Of interest: the ELCA is identified as 3 expressions of the church; reviewing if there should be considered additional expressions and how to refer to them (for examples, camps, seminaries, colleges, and associated ministries like Lutheran World Hunger).
  - ii. The subcommittee requested that the Executive Committee provide member to fill an opening left by a native/indigenous person who unable to serve; and the answer of no. We are discussing it as a teaching moment that sometimes systems and governments intentionally or unintentionally create racist actions.
- c. Nominations Committee – Ms. Wheeler provided an update.
- d. Open floor for updates from liaisons – We formed a Bishop Election Transition Team chaired by Jackson Droney.
- e. Assembly: Noted the speakers planned for this Assembly as well as for the 2025 Assembly.
- f. Leadership Training – We had 90 plus people attend the training in February. Many Congregation members saw the Synod in a different light, and we are getting requests to do it again. We are looking for dates to for another before the assembly.

### **3. Youth Organization Report**

**Breeze L.**

### **4. New Business – n/a**

**The meeting adjourned** at 12:02 with prayer.

Next Scheduled Meeting: May 4, 2024, via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara A. Bilodeau  
Secretary