

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – 4 May 2024
Via 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
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
Wendell Anderson, Potomac – Lay
Pr. Alexander P. Stall, Jr., Potomac – Rostered
Don Wallace, Virginia - Lay
Pr. Henry Langknecht, Virginia – Rostered
Breeze H Lawless, At-Large Youth

Absent:

Sheena Foster, DC – Lay
Melody Stachour, Fairfax - Lay
Kirsten Nusum, At-Large Young Adult

Synod Staff:

Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey
Katharyn Wheeler
Pr. Jason Shank

Vacancies:

None.

Devotions led by Don Wallace

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

Moved/Seconded/Voted/Adopted: SC24.5.13 To approve the agenda for the 4 May 2024 Meeting, Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2024 Meeting.

Reports and Other Matters

1. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Ortiz
 - i. Roster matters - **Moved/Seconded/Voted/Adopted: SC24.5.14** the following change in status: That the Deacon Lewis Eggleston be called in Specialized Ministry as Director of Programs at Friends of Guest House effective October 1, 2023.
 - ii. Events, activities and other updates: Reviewing written report. Noted that Our Redeemer, DC, voted to leave the Synod; Synod staff met with some of the leaders and provided the recently developed leadership training.
- b. Treasurer's Report, Ms. Julie Hamre
 - i. Financial reports: Reviewed the format of the February-March report and how to display the use of designated funds. Noted that some congregations are working on their policies for when they receive gifts.
 - ii. Proposed 2025 Budget – Recommended that the offering from this 1-day Assembly be applied to offset the costs of the 2-day Assembly next year. **Moved/Seconded/Voted/Adopted: SC24.5.15** to recommend proposed 2025 Budget to Synod Assembly.
 - iii. Proposal for DEM in document titled “Summary of ELCA Proposal Regarding Church-Wide Support and Status of The Director of Evangelical Mission”. Much discussion followed. Consensus was to clarify in the document that the 2024 budget for Mission Support would be 45% (not just that it would be an additional 10%). Noted that the other four synods in the “experiment” have all made significant changes to the Mission Support. This document models our confidence in our relationship with Churchwide. At the moment the financial obligation is “a wash” but that it might change in the future; we could be asked to take the DEM responsibility again. **Moved/Seconded/Voted (8 in favor, 2 opposed, 0 abstain) Adopted: SC24.5.16** To proceed with the change in relationship with ELCA Churchwide as described in the document “Summary of ELCA Proposal Regarding Church-Wide Support and Status of The Director of Evangelical Mission.”
- c. Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy & Mobility, Pr. Sarah Garret Krey –
 - i. Received 4 new Mission Site Profiles in just a week and a half, so now busy making time to meet with candidates.
 - ii. Discernment cohorts are continuing though with a drop in participation. Need to be in discernment to see what it means going forward with small numbers, perhaps sharing all the information in an in-person 1-day discernment retreat, but you can't replace six months of intentionality (with readings, conversation, etc.)
 - iii. We have a nominee for Dean of the DC Conference; need to have DC conference to vote on that.

- d. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Jason Shank
 - i. Stewardship and Mission Support Table – We have identified an additional person to serve on table.
 - ii. Racial Equity Team – Developing prayer petitions to go on the web site. Will be working on resources articles, books that we can put on the website.
 - iii. Coaching Program Update – The “6 Wows” workshop will be held on May 18; we have 13 churches registered and we expect some increase. Coaching arrangements are being developed with several congregations committed with funding. Vitality coaching will be launched in August.
 - iv. New and Renewing Missions Table grant request received from St. Michael’s Truth; request is tabled to the next meeting so that the Executive Committee can review it first per our normal process.
- e. Assistant to the Bishop, Youth & Family Ministry, Deacon Julie Stecker – Report provided by Sarah Garrett Krey. There will be no June Highschool Leadership retreat this year due to too many conflicts. The combined Middle and High School retreat will be in November; attendance for both was lower, so we are going to try to combine them. 150 youth and adults are registered for the summer youth gathering.
- f. Secretary’s Report, Barbara Bilodeau
 - i. Report of congregation constitution updates - NONE
 - ii. Motion was passed in March on the 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.”) We have received guidance that the fastest way to propose the change to the ELCA seal is for the Synod Council to submit a request to the Church Council. **Moved/Seconded/Voted/Adopted: SC24.5.17** To amend the action SC24.3.11 to instead read that Synod Council will ask Church Council to amend the Constitution of the ELCA to replace the Seal of the ELCA with the seal that is currently in use.” This removes the action from the Synod Assembly agenda.
 - iii. Discussions in preparation for Synod Assembly, raised a concern that the motion to adjust the ByLaw S7.21.03 may cause confusion with whether Synod Assembly voting members need only be participants in their Congregation. Recommend additional words of clarification be added to the motion. **Moved/Seconded/Voted/Adopted: SC24.5.18** to amend motion SC24.1.4 to add words “as well as being a voting member of a congregation of this synod.” Thus reading: “Congregations with 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, as well as being a voting member of a congregation of this synod."

- g. Vice President's Report, VP Slagle Peck
 - i. Proposed 2025 Compensation Guidelines
Moved/Seconded/Voted/Adopted: SC24.5.19 to present the 2025 Compensation Guidelines as attached to the Synod Assembly for adoption.
 - ii. Proposed Transgender Inclusion Policy -
Moved/Seconded/Voted/Adopted: SC24.5.20 to adopt the Transgender Inclusion Policy for the Synod, dated 2024.04.27, as attached.
 - iii. Update, discussion and questions on the Rostered Leader Fund: 1. If there is an identified need, we want pastors to still be able participate in events like Bishops Convocation or Synod Assembly. 2. We are exploring the process of how to provide resources to rostered leaders (such as mentorship and coaching). 3. Establishing grants builds an invitation to relationship between synod and congregation. 4. We are still exploring other ways we can provide financial assistance to Rostered Leaders (for example, those who do not have health insurance, can't retire, working part time in other jobs, etc.) that is both reasonable and within our means, but will make a meaningful difference. 5. Does it make sense to establish another designated fund? 6. We are sharing this info with congregations that have received bequests, inviting them to be generous with what they've received.
 - iv. VP Slagle Peck requested that, in preparation for the Synod Assembly reports, Council members send her email reflecting on the work that we've done this year.

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

- a. Nominations Committee – Ms. Wheeler reported that there is a candidate for the Fairfax conference position but don't have the form yet. There is a plethora of candidates for the Churchwide Assembly. Missing 2 clergy for consultation committee. Have someone for every other spot. 2 youth for synod council position.
- b. Open floor for updates from liaisons

3. Youth Organization Report

Breeze L.

There is some displeasure by the youth on the locations of events this year: a lot of events have been at Mar-Lu-Ridge, which is well liked and central; but the Middle School/High School retreat was at a different location that wasn't enjoyed. The 2023 Middle School event was at a YMCA cap that worked well. We've noticed that we are lacking Virginia participants; perhaps more advertising would be beneficial. Suggested that Breeze could make a pitch for LYO at the Synod Assembly, and Pr. Stall agreed to include it.

4. New Business

Synod Assembly: Pr. Stall reported that the Assembly has 277 registrations. 71 are early/reg Rostered; 17 retired; the rest are Lay members. Volunteers has gone from 3 to 26. Pr. Mwitanti thanked the Synod staff for the visit to the congregation, building the understanding that the Synod is working.

The meeting adjourned at 11:44am with prayer.

*O Breathing Life, your Name shines everywhere!
Release a space to plant your Presence here. Imagine your possibilities now.
Embody your desire in every light and form.
Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom.
Untie the knots of failure binding us,
As we release the strands we hold of others' faults.
Help us not forget our Source,
Yet free us from not being in the Present.
From you arises every Vision, Power and Song from gathering to gathering.
May our future actions grow from here!
Amen.*

Next Scheduled Meeting: 1 June 2024, 8a.m. at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Fairfax, VA, at Synod Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara A. Bilodeau
Secretary