

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – 7 September 2024
Saint Stephen Lutheran Church

Saint Stephen Lutheran Church is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Piscataway and Nacotchtank (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 – Lay
Pr. Judith VanOsdol, DC – Rostered
Pr. Elijah Mwitanti, Fairfax - Rostered
Rachad Ya Ntima Esengo, Maryland – Lay
Pr. Eric T. Randolph, Maryland - Rostered
Anita Smallin, Montgomery - Lay
Pr. Betty Landis, Montgomery – Rostered
Patrick Anderson, Potomac – Lay
Pr. Alexander P. Stall, Jr., Potomac – Rostered
Don Wallace, Virginia - Lay
Pr. Henry Langknecht, Virginia – Rostered
Nolan G, At-Large Youth

Absent:

Breeze Lawless, Fairfax - Lay

Synod Staff:

Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey
Katharyn Wheeler
Pr. Jason Shank

Guests: n/a

Vacancies:

At-Large Young Adult

Opening Activity – VP Slagle Peck organized exercises to help members get to know each other, four rounds of dividing into teams of two or three, sharing answers to questions.

Call to Order Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 10:15. The secretary verified the attendance.

Moved/Seconded/Adopted: **SC24.9.23** To approve the agenda for the September 7 2024 Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes of the 1 June 2024 meeting.

Reports and Other Matters

1. Council

- a. VP Slagle Peck noted the Council opening for the At-Large Young Adult and that we are seeking four people for the nominating committee.
- b. The updated "Synod Council Commitments" document was reviewed. **SC24.9.24** To adopt the document "Synod Council Commitments 2024-2025 – for the 9-7-24 mtg.docx".
- c. Gaza resolution – The Synod Assembly had voted to "commit to Council with full consideration" of the Resolution 2024-004 titled "Peace in Gaza and Israel". The Executive Committee had subsequently discussed the resolution and had issued a request for comment to the Synod. The Council had extensive conversation on the Resolution and reviewed all the received comments. A group of Council members volunteered to assist in writing an updated statement reflecting the Council's thoughts with the intent of presenting a motion to be voted on in a few weeks, with a goal of issuing communications by the October 7 anniversary of the terrorist attack on Israel.

2. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Ortiz
 - i. Roster matters - **Moved/Seconded/Adopted:** **SC24.9.25** To approve the following change in status:
 - That the Deacon Deb Haynes be called to serve as Executive Director of Food for Others in Fairfax, VA effective August 21, 2023.
 - That the Rev. Amy Carter Feira be placed On Leave from Call effective July 1, 2024.
 - That the Deacon Mitz Budde be placed on the Retired Roster effective December 31, 2024.
 - ii. Events, activities, and other updates
 - Bishop Ortiz announced to the council that she has decided to not seek another term as bishop. She discussed that she would like to use this last year of her term to create a racial equity fund, with a goal of being "bold," as a legacy to the next administration. Expect a launch on November 1 until Epiphany, with a close on Pentecost.
 - Other information in the written report.
- b. Treasurer's Report, Ms. Julie Hamre
 - i. Financial reports were reviewed.
 - ii. Status of the proposed new DEM arrangement: discussing changing the 2025 mission support to CW from 35% to 42%, with receiving a grant to support the DEM at \$125,600.

- iii. Emergency grant for rostered leader: A grant was provided out of the Bethany Fund to assist a rostered minister, based on executive committee approval. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.9.26:** to approve and confirm the emergency grant of \$7500.
- iv. Approval of expenses for Leadership Academy & Bishop’s Convocation: Discussed that these are now annual expenses that should start having lines in the annual budget, and apply from the deficit for the overage difference. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.9.27:** To approve use of the Congregation Mission funds to support the Leadership Academy & Bishop’s Convocation events.
- v. Review and acceptance of 2023 audit: **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.9.28:** To accept the 2023 audit.
- c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Sarah Garret Krey – See written report. Additional information:
 - i. There may be a future conversation and proposal related to different types of calls than are traditionally issued. There have been three requests that have not followed the usual pattern. The changes would have to be approved by the council and then by the Conference of Bishops.
 - ii. Internships: discussion of the ELCA Fund for Leaders Internship Pilot Program. ELCA support may make it possible for internships at congregations that could not normally afford an intern.
- d. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Jason Shank
 - i. As mentioned by Bishop Ortiz, we are proposing a “bold” racial equity fund. The result may include establishing a chaplain at Howard University. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.9.29** to establish an appeal under the working title “Bold Vision for the Future” to start November 1, 2024 raising 1) undesignated funds for the Synod and 2) designated funds for racial equity.
 - 1. Pastor Landis requested that the pastor be contacted prior to conducting one-on-one conversations with individual donors.
 - ii. New and Renewing Missions Table. Two grant requests were presented. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.9.30** to 1) grant \$9549 from the Congregation Mission Fund to Nativity Lutheran Church, Alexandria, for one-time purchases of audio-vision, musical, and storage equipment, along with new signs and mounts to support community outreach and congregation growth. AND to 2) grant \$9000 to Lutheran Church of the Covenant, Dale City, from the Faith Mission Fund to address building foundation repairs to keep the building structurally sound.
- e. Secretary’s Report, Barbara Bilodeau
 - i. Report of congregation constitution updates. The following were approved:
 - 1. 6/9/2024 Saint Stephen, Silver Spring
 - 2. 7/23/2024 Church of the Covenant, Dale City
 - 3. 7/23/2024 Christ the Servant, Reston
 - ii. Secretary Bilodeau discussed the lay to rostered voting member ration was successful at the last Synod Assembly, and recommended it be done again.

Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.9.31 To allocate 1 additional lay voting member per congregation at the 2025 Synod Assembly to reach the appropriate balance of lay to rostered voting members.

- iii. Secretary Bilodeau also suggested that letter be sent to congregations in early November (rather than waiting until January) providing the preliminary voting member numbers and reminding that the members should be “elected” at congregation meetings. There was no objection.

3. Youth Organization Report, Ms. Katharyn Wheeler, Metro D.C. Synod Youth+Family Coordinator

- a. We are looking at conferences to have their own events, and encouraging congregations to partner with one or more other congregations to form events.
- b. Expect to see youth-led events.
- c. Additional info in written report.

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

- a. Update from ELCA Church Council, Sheena Foster – Noted recent documents on the ELCA website, including the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Audit Highlights from November 2023 and the notes from the August 2024 meeting of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC).
- b. Transition Team – Ms. Wheeler reported that the transition team has formed with Jackson Droney as lead with representatives from each conference and a lay/roster mix. They are working on a survey to be issued the 2nd or third week of October.

5. New Business

- a. VP Slagle Peck suggested we re-read the plan for racial justice.
- b. VP Slagle Peck noted the document in the “Memo on Synod Administration” (regarding the Synod administering for a Congregation) in the materials for the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 pm with prayer.

Next Scheduled Meeting: October 26, 2024, 10am via zoom

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara A. Bilodeau
Secretary