

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – October 26, 2024, 10am**  
**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  
Breeze Lawless, Fairfax - Lay  
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:**

Sheena Foster, DC – Lay

**Synod Staff:**

Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey  
Katharyn Wheeler  
Pr. Jason Shank

**Guests: n/a**

**Vacancies:**

At-Large Young Adult

**Devotions**     Breeze L. led the devotion noting the upcoming election with scriptures from 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy (prayers for those in authority that we may live in peace) and Psalm 22:28 (he rules over the nations).

**Call to Order** Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 10:12. The secretary verified the attendance.

**Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.10.33** To approve the agenda for the October 26, 2024 Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes of the September 7, 2024 Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes from the October 4, 2024 electronic vote. Agenda item to review the minutes from the 2024 Synod Assembly was deferred to next meeting to allow more time for review.

## Reports and Other Matters

### 1. Council

- a. Vice President Slagle Peck noted that we still have one vacant council seat for an at-large young adult. If you have suggestions, please let us know.

### 2. Staff and Officer Reports

#### a. Bishop Ortiz

- i. Roster matters - **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.10.34** To approve the following change in status:
    - That the Rev Katherine Tuttle be placed on Leave from Call effective July 1, 2024.
    - That the Rev. Krista Vingelis be placed on Leave from Call effective October 1, 2024.
    - That the Rev. Jeffrey Jacobson be placed on Leave from Call effective October 1, 2024.
    - That the Rev Amanda Nesvold be placed on Leave from Call effective November 1, 2024.
  - ii. Events, activities, and other updates
    - See written report.
    - We may be facing 4 holy closures of congregations. None are the same situation. We are trying to glean information and guidance from other Synods that have gone through this.
      - a. Holy Comforter, DC, may need to move into synod preservations instead of synod administration. Communication has ended, and the building has been abandoned. Expect a decision request at the January meeting.
      - b. One congregation is proposing holy closure in June; move into synod admin for sale of the building.
      - c. Other two have different timelines, but may or may not request synod administration, but expect sale of building. They are still in discernment.
- #### b. Treasurer's Report, Ms. Julie Hamre
- i. Financial reports were reviewed.
  - ii. Will be starting to form the 2026 budget to bring in for March meeting. There are many unknowns for the coming year.
  - iii. The Investments doing ok, going more up than down.

- c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Sarah Garret Krey – See written report. Additional information:
  - i. Recently had a very packed Candidacy Committee meeting, with good conversations. Had two entrance, two endorsements, and 1 approval.
  - ii. Pr. David Trott is stepping back so we are looking for two lay leaders to serve on Candidacy Committee. Always meet all day on a Wednesday, so that limits who can join. If you know any lay person with a flexible schedule, please send the name to Sarah.
  - iii. Mobility: see report. Please try to attend installations. Expect a call vote for King of Kings November. We currently have far more available interim pastors than interim needs, which is very unusual. We also see a slow down in receiving new profiles; very disappointing.
- d. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Jason Shank
  - i. See written report
  - ii. Met with Christ Bethesda this past week, after having previously sent a proposal for funds following the sale of their facility. They are currently not functioning as a congregation. The Synod asked for \$5m (can't get what you don't ask for), and they said it was not possible. They want to support things they have passion for. Conversation will continue.
  - iii. Appeal in 2025: Bold and Boundless: All funds will be coming to synod, half for local ministry fund and half to racial equity. We will do a soft launch in November with one announcement to let people know its coming. After we see what questions we get, we will do the official launch in January. Please share the one-pagers with council. We hope to share that the council will contribute to the fund, and that the Christ Bethesda will be the leaders and provide the seed money.
  - iv. Three grants for Council to review (request details in the folder). Council asked about the totals of grants we have already provided (running total) and status of other requests. Responded that there have been at least a couple where we didn't support the full request, giving suggestions of different avenues of funding; one did not meet the criteria at all.
    - 1. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.10.35** To approve \$15,000 be granted to St. Pauls Lutheran Church, Washington DC from the Faith/Mission Fund.
    - 2. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.10.36** To approve \$5,492.06 be granted to Peace Lutheran Church, St. Charles, Maryland from the Congregational Mission Fund.
    - 3. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.10.37** To approve \$15,000 be granted to Georgetown Lutheran Church, Washington DC from the Faith/Mission Fund.
- e. Secretary's Report, Barbara Bilodeau
  - i. Report of congregation constitution updates. None to report.

- f. Vice President's Report, VP Slagle Peck
  - i. Thank you for the careful conversation and discernment around the Gaza resolution. Received one feedback response and it was positive.
  - ii. Note synod staff is in preparation for transition. Conversations coming up with Church Wide on the logistics.
  - iii. Received a thank you from Church Wide on our mission support. Information is in the folder.
  - iv. Please continue to hold the one-on-one conversations.

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

- a. Synod Assembly Planning Team - proposed 2025 Fee Structure, Pr. Alex Stall.  
**Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC24.10.38** To approve the fee structure for 2025 Synod Assembly. The fees are consistent with every two-day Assembly back to 2019, with some increase for inflation.
- b. Transition Team report – katharyn. Make sure to do the survey.
- c. Open floor for updates from liaisons – n/a

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

- a. Breeze reported on the upcoming first event for Middle plus High School, which will be all about dreaming. There will be a traditional retreat in spring. The committee on conferences for youth is forming play and pray events, one to be held in Maryland or DC, the next is in Fairfax, where youth will gather to do something fun (like bowling) and then praying.
- b. Katharyn reported that the first play and pray youth event had 7 attendees. Nolin has already set up next one, and Breeze is working on third. It's great that the youth are doing the leadership.

### 5. New Business – Good news to celebrate and announcements

- a. It's a beautiful day!
- b. Bishop Ortiz noted that she was grateful to be invited to help form a Council of Bishops (COB) letter to church on the topics of the unwillingness to accept lies and deceit. During election season, this is encouraging. It has been well received and shared widely, with some other denominations posting the entire letter.
- b. The "Difficult Conversations" had attendance of over 15 last time and is getting a good response, asking for more.
- c. The ELCA Advocacy Office created network on elections to distribute different materials, preparedness score, and ways of connecting people during the election season in non-partisan way. Katharyn went to the first one; one held this past week.
- d. The Virginia Conference of rostered leaders met at Caroline Furnace last week. This is the first time this conference has done something like this, spending that much time together.
- e. Lift up The Ordination of Julie Jackson in Gettysburg November 23.

- f. University of Maryland is doing a discernment partner program. Students meeting with people on spiritual vocation, and then with people living vocation not in a spiritual job, to invite people in community.
- g. Pr. Betty Landis announced opportunities for prayer in next days: Epiphany Burtonsville will host a Taize service the night of the election.
- h. Next Tuesday is the Reformation Prayer Service.
- i. Peace Lutheran (St. Charles) will have an ecumenical Election Eve Service on 11/4 at 7pm. It will also be available online.
- j. Thank you for your work on Gaza resolution, even if it hasn't been widely acknowledged. Thank you for showing up in a faithful way.
- k. Be bold in naming those things: as of right now the synod Bishop is a woman, the VP is woman, the Secretary is woman, and the Treasurer is a woman.

**The meeting adjourned** at 11:51 pm with prayer.

Next Scheduled Meeting: January 25, 2025, 9am at LSSNCA, Alexandria, VA

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara A. Bilodeau  
Secretary