

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – 16 August 2025**  
**Zoom**

*The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod wishes to acknowledge and honor the Piscataway peoples upon whose ancestral homelands we gather, as well all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place – this land – and call it home.*

**Present:**

Bishop Leila Ortiz, Bishop  
Bishop-elect Rev. Phil Hirsch  
Jennifer Slagle Peck, Vice President  
Patrick Anderson, Vice President Elect / Potomac - Lay  
Barbara Bilodeau, Secretary  
Julie Hamre, Treasurer  
Camille Trott, DC – Lay  
Pr. Judith VanOsdol, DC – Rostered  
Pr. Kelsey Kresse, Fairfax - Rostered  
Rachad Ya Ntima Esengo, Maryland – Lay  
Pr. Eric T. Randolph, Maryland - Rostered  
Anita Smallin, Montgomery - Lay  
Pr. Kari Parsons, Montgomery – Rostered  
Pr. Alexander P. Stall, Jr., Potomac – Rostered

**Absent:**

Mike Gutzler, Treasurer Elect  
Breeze Lawless, Fairfax - Lay  
Edyn Wheeler, At-Large Young Adult  
Ethan B, At-Large Youth  
Deborah Tyler, Virginia - Lay  
Pr. Elijah Mwitanti, Virginia – Rostered

**Vacancies:**

None.

**Devotions led by VP Jennifer Slagle Peck – question to discuss: “what is saving your life right now?”**

**Call to Order** Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 9:37am. The secretary verified the attendance.

**Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC25.08.31** To approve the agenda for the August 16, 2025 Synod Council meeting; and to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2025 Synod Council Meeting, and approve the minutes of the July 4, 2025 virtual vote.

**Reports and Other Matters**

**1. Council**

- a. Vacancy on 1 Sept: Potomac Lay - noted

- b. 2025-26 Council Commitments - reviewed
- c. 2025-26 Executive Committee members – send email if willing to serve. To be determined at end of this meeting.

## 2. Staff and Officer Reports

- a. Bishop Ortiz
  - i. Roster matters - **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC25.08.32** the following change in status:
    - That the Rev. Troy Jacobson be removed from the roster at his request effective August 16, 2025.
    - That Deacon Christine Connell be removed from the roster effective August 16, 2025.
    - That the Rev. Kirstin Tannas be placed on leave from call effective July 1, 2025.
    - That Deacon Emily DeMarco be called to Coalition Ministry effective May 11, 2025.
    - That the Rev. Amy Sevimli be called to Specialized Ministry as Synod Consultant effective June 15, 2025.
    - That Deacon Lewis Eggleston be called to Specialized Ministry as the Development Manager at Goodwill of Greater Washington effective
    - That the Rev. Amanda Nesvold be called to Specialized Ministry to serve as the Interim Pastor at St. John Lutheran Church in Rockville, MD effective August 11, 2025.
  - ii. Written report provided. Please keep the conference of bishops, the presiding bishop, and our bishop in prayer! I am grateful for the celebration of ministry together last week. Prepare for a possibly entering a lawsuit against the administration related to ICE and churches; we will be able to join once the transition has been made.
- b. Bishop-Elect Hirsch
  - iii. Synod Office Space: working to coordinate for space at St. Mathews in SW DC
  - iv. Vision for the first 90 Days: planning to have a diverse staff, announcing the full staff in January, not in pieces, so no big announcements until then. Will start working on grant applications, where unique circumstances that will help us.
- c. Treasurer's Report, Ms. Julie Hamre
  - i. Financial reports: notes walked through how the reports are laid out.
  - ii. Bishop Ortiz presented that we are trying to provide more internships at locations that are not financially strong enough to support an intern. Such internships would be a closer correlation to first call work. The Fund for Leaders internship pays 50%, synod 25%, congregation 25%. Proposed support to Christ the Servant (Montgomery Village) for one intern placed with Pastor Kari plus another site that could not support a full internship. **Moved/Seconded/Adopted: SC25.08.33** to fund two internships with Fund for Leaders - \$12k to Christ the Servant Lutheran and \$12k to a second site. 1 abstain (Pr. Parsons)
  - iii. **Bishops appeal:** There are funds in the Racial Equity fund from the Bold and Boundless appeal, and a team and plan to work on the Congregational Competency.
- d. Assistant to the Bishop for Candidacy & Mobility, Pr. Sarah Garrett Krey
  - i. Discussion of how our work in candidacy has been adopted at churchwide. Changing the church. Discernment groups

- e. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM
  - i. Holy Closure Updates:
    - Good Samaritan, Lexington Park, MD – closing of property probably in Sept mid-late. Good Sam former members appear to be landing at the local Episcopal or Methodist churches, and perhaps some going to St. Nicholas, which is a further drive.
    - Holy Comforter, DC – described some of the history for our new Council members. The remaining contact person from Holy Comforter has not returned contact attempts in many months.
    - Bishop Elect Hirsh noted that the ELCA is forming a resource hub for property management. When this happens, we hope to get some support from real estate, property management on how to keep property to support the sharing of the Gospel.
- f. Youth Organization Report, Ms. Katharyn Wheeler, Metro D.C. Synod Youth+Family Coordinator – Written report in the folder. Good details please read, share with your congregation, and encourage participation. Need adult mentors. The kids are doing an enormous amount of the planning and visioning, wonderful leadership opportunity. There are regional events in conferences which were hugely successful last year.
- g. Secretary’s Report, Barbara Bilodeau
  - i. Reviews/approvals of congregation constitution updates – none.
- h. Vice President’s Report, VP Slagle Peck
  - ii. Churchwide Assembly 2025 had many important actions. Suggest sharing and providing opportunities for studying the Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life.” Updates to social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” to less gender binary language; expect some further changes in 3 years. Lots of time was given to a recommendation, eventually passed, to change goal of youth/young adult participation/representation in Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees from 10% to 20%. Palestine memorial that passed was very similar to the memorial sent by our synod in June. We had opportunity to hear from the Bishop Elect of Lutherans in Holy Land where so much heartbreak happening. The highlight was worship! The Theological Discussion on Wednesday was the most beautiful 40 minutes of the Assembly. Watching from afar, it may look like a lot of outrage or critique, but I saw growth in our church as we recognize that we will make mistakes but we can acknowledge mistakes and be forgiven.
  - iii. Farewell thoughts provided.

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

None.

**4. New Business**

- i. Sharing of Good News

**5. Revisit Council Notes:**

- a. 4 people are willing to serve on executive committee. Based on the conferences layout (no two from the same conference) suggest Pr. Parsons and Ms. Camille Trott as 2 additional members. This was Affirmed by the Council.

**The meeting adjourned** at noon with prayer.  
Next Scheduled Meeting: TBD

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara A. Bilodeau  
Secretary