

# METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA

## SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – APRIL 17, 2021

### ELECTRONIC/ZOOM MEETING

**Call to Order** The meeting was held electronically, using the Zoom platform, in light of the public-health recommendations to avoid in-person meetings. Interim Vice President Droney called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The roll was called to verify attendance.

**Devotion** During the portion of the meeting ordinarily set aside for an opening devotional message, Interim Vice President Droney led the Synod Council through a discussion of the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of the book *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.*, by the Rev. Lenny Duncan.

Interim Vice President Droney presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

**SC21.04.12:** To approve the agenda for the April 17, 2021, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the March 20, 2021, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Interim Vice President Droney asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC21.04.13:** To approve the minutes of the March 20, 2021, Synod Council meeting.

#### 1. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Ortiz:

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. No roster matters were presented for action at this meeting.
- ii. General Updates. Bishop Ortiz had distributed a written report to the Synod Council in advance of the meeting. Her remarks focused on certain aspects of the written report, describing one-on-one discussions with rostered ministers, the need for retired rostered ministers to disconnect from their congregations, the work of the Racial Equity Team, and the continuing efforts to achieve justice for all persons.

b. Assistant to the Bishop and DEM, Pr. Bailey:

Pastor Bailey provided an update on the work of two tables and one team. The New and Renewing Missions Table has approved a total of 23 Sabbath grants but has paused them due to financial limitations. The table will also be providing training of multi-cultural coaches to serve as resources for congregations seeking to grow in this area. Training will be developed with the assistance of Rev. Dr. MarQuita Carmichael Burton, University Assistant Pastor at Virginia Union University.

The Racial Equity Team is working with Deacon Julie Stecker to identify means to include youth and young adults in its efforts. The team is also planning a June 17 commemoration of the sixth anniversary of the murders of the Emanuel 9, nine African Americans who had gathered at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Stewardship and Mission Support Table has made final plans for its storytelling event via Zoom on April 22, with 61 individuals having registered as of the date of the meeting.

c. Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Swenson-Reinhold:

Pastor Swenson-Reinhold supplemented her written report by noting the continued involvement with the sixth and seventh discernment groups (Cohorts F and G), the significant number of discernment discussions with candidates and rostered ministers, and the development of congregational Ministry Site Profiles as the first step for congregations in leadership transition.

d. Assistant to the Bishop, Youth and Family Ministry, Deacon Julie Stecker:

Deacon Stecker was unable to attend the meeting, but provided a brief written report with an update on the status of Lutheran Youth Organization information sessions and Growing Young discussion groups.

e. Interim Vice President's Report:

- i. Synod Assembly Planning Update. Pastor Wendy Moen provided an update on the status of planning for the 2021 Synod Assembly. The Synod Council participated in a demonstration of the Web-based voting system that will be used for all elections. Most reports will be recorded in advance. Invited speakers will address three themes—Sabbath, Transformational Leadership, and Cultural Competency. Breakout sessions will be used as part of the Assembly.
- ii. Nominating Committee Update. Barbara Bilodeau provided an update on the work of the Nominating Committee, which consists of four members of the Synod Council and the six conference deans. There are 36 positions that must be

elected by the 2021 Synod Assembly. With the May 1 deadline for nominations approaching, there are a few positions with no nominees. Some conferences have not completed the process of nominating candidates for Synod Council positions. Gender balance is missing particularly in the nominees for voting members to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

- iii. Racial Equity Update. The ad hoc Racial Justice Planning group continues to meet for the purpose of refining a plan for racial justice. The final plan will be presented to the May 15, 2021, Synod Council meeting for its review and approval.

f. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Copies of the financial statements for the first two months of the current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended March 31, 2021, were distributed in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$33,500. The statements reflected the receipt of some registration fees for the 2021 Synod Assembly but did not reflect certain congregational mission support received during the period but determined to be attributable to the preceding fiscal year.
- ii. Development of FY 2022 Budget. The Finance Committee will develop a proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2022. This budget will be reviewed by the Synod Council at its May meeting and recommended for adoption by the 2021 Synod Assembly. It will be prepared on the basis that the synod will continue to follow the mission support experiment, pursuant to which benevolence remitted to the churchwide organization will be reduced in exchange for the synod's assumption of the financial responsibility for the compensation of the Director for Evangelical Mission and new mission starts within the synod.
- iii. Compensation Guidelines. A draft of the proposed Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines for 2022 was distributed in advance of the meeting. These guidelines are updated each year and presented to the Synod Assembly for approval. The language was updated to reflect that ordination is now the entrance rite for ministers of Word and Service as well as ministers of Word and Sacrament. A cost-of-living increase was applied to the base number used as the starting point for deriving recommended compensation levels. The guidelines will be further reviewed by the Synod Council at its May meeting and recommended for adoption by the 2021 Synod Assembly.

**2. Synodical Women's Organization**

Sheena Foster reported on plans for a virtual fall convention.

**3. Youth Organization**

The Synod Council's youth representative reported on the search for a successor youth representative on the Synod Council. Further updates will be available at the May meeting.

**4. New Business**

None.

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord's Prayer at 10:50 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: May 15, 2021; Zoom/Electronic.