

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

## SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – NOVEMBER 13, 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. Vice President Slagle Peck called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The roll was called to verify attendance.

**Devotions** Vice President Slagle Peck played a video message from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton which addressed the ELCA's goal to engage one million young people and persons of diverse communities/identities in the coming years. The Bishop asked the video audience to consider "How can you say, 'I am a Lutheran,' without using those words?" Council members were gathered into small groups to discuss and come up with such a statement. Groups reported back to the full meeting and Vice President Slagle Peck led all in a prayer. The statements created by the Synod Council were subsequently shared on social media.

**Introductions** In light of the significant number of Synod Council members newly elected by the 2021 Synod Assembly, Vice President Slagle Peck invited four members to provide more extensive biographical introductions. Remarks were made by Pr. David Trott, Melody Stachour, Pr. Eva Steege, and Sheena Foster.

Vice President Slagle Peck presented the proposed agenda for the meeting, requesting that the order of reports be changed to accommodate the necessity for several members and/or speakers to leave before their originally-scheduled time.

**SC21.11.37:** To approve the agenda for the November 13, 2021, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the September 11, 2021, Synod Council meeting, the September 13-16, 2021, electronic meeting, and the October 9-13, 2021, electronic meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Slagle Peck asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC21.11.38:** To approve the minutes of the September 11, 2021, Synod Council meeting, the September 13-16, 2021, electronic meeting, and the October 9-13, 2021, electronic meeting.

## 1. Non-Recurring Matters

### a. Stewardship and Mission Support Table Report

Vice President Slagle Peck introduced guest Pr. Darcy Tillman, Chair of the Stewardship and Mission Support Table, to speak about the work of this table, as a continuation of the Vice President's initiative from the September meeting to orient and connect Council members with the various tables, committees, and teams of the Synod. Pastor Tillman described the meeting pattern and various recent activities of the table, with particular focus on the group's use of storytelling to lead and resource congregational leaders in stewardship, budget planning, and leadership support. Council members are invited to connect directly with Pr. Tillman if they wish to be involved with this table.

### b. Synod Assembly Planning Committee Report

Vice President Slagle Peck introduced the Chair of the Synod Assembly Planning Committee, Pr. Jeffrey Wilson, to share a proposal regarding the fee structure for the 2022 Assembly and ask for Council action to approve it. A written copy of the proposal was submitted to all Council members in advance of the meeting and was reviewed during a period of questions and answers with Pr. Wilson. The proposed fee per voting member would be the same dollar amount as was charged for the last in-person Assembly, with one exception. Rostered leaders, retired or on leave from call, would be charged a significantly-reduced fee.

**SC21.11.39:** To approve the Proposed Fee Structure for the 2022 Synod Assembly, in the form presented to the Synod Council by the Synod Assembly Planning Committee.

### c. Size and Composition of Synod Council

Vice President called for review and discussion of the document "Composition of Synod Council, Background and Recommendation, November 2021," prepared by the Executive Committee and submitted in advance to all Council members. The Executive Committee recommended in their report: ". . .that the Synod Council consider recommending (to the Synod Assembly) a reduction of our council size from 22 members to 18 members, and that the Synod Council consider further changes after engaging with the racial equity audit that is anticipated in 2022." The reduction of four members will be achieved by eliminating three of the four at-large member positions and the position reserved for a representative of the Synod Women's Organization. The remaining at-large position will be reserved for a young adult.

Discussion was centered on specific possible impacts of the proposed changes in size and composition of the Council, particularly a desire to ensure diversity and that future structure changes would ensure representation of individuals from many different identities and communities including women, young adults, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, queer community, ministers of Word and Service, and geographical/conference representation.

The Synod Council did not take any specific action, but arrived at a consensus to support the recommendations of the Executive Committee. Specific changes to the Synod's *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* will be presented to the January 2022 meeting for approval and recommendation to the 2022 Synod Assembly.

## 2. Staff and Officer Reports

### a. Bishop Ortiz:

- i. Roster Matters for Synod Council Action. Bishop Ortiz brought two roster matters to the Synod Council.

#### **SC21.11.40:** That:

1. The Rev. Sandra Shaw be placed on the retired roster, effective October 1, 2021; and
  2. The Rev. Michael Guy be called to specialized ministry to serve a two-point parish, Grace Episcopal and St. Luke Episcopal in Fauquier County, Virginia, effective November 1, 2021.
- ii. Roster Matters for Information. Although not requiring any action on the part of the Synod Council, Bishop Ortiz's written report to the Council noted several matters affecting the Synod's rostered ministers, as follows:
    1. Kelsey Kresse was ordained and called to service as Associate Pastor at Lutheran Church of the Abiding Presence, Burke, Virginia, on October 9, 2021;
    2. Joshua Wullenweber was ordained and called to serve as Associate Pastor at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in McLean, Virginia, on October 17, 2021;
    3. The Rev. Heidi Eickstadt was called to serve as the Associate Pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Falls Church, Virginia, effective September 19, 2021; and
    4. The Rev. Janelle Neubauer transferred to the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, effective July 15, 2021.

- iii. General Updates. Bishop Ortiz had distributed a written report to the Synod Council in advance of the meeting. Her remarks were focused on the Synod's connections to universities and colleges in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area and how we can grow our connections and ministries there.

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

Pastor Bailey provided a written report and gave additional remarks updating on the work of two tables, and the first meeting of a new cohort of congregations in transition that are participating in Intentional Discernment. He has been working collaboratively with Pr. Swenson-Reinhold in hosting trainings for pastors and deacons on the subject of transitions.

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

Pastor Swenson-Reinhold provided a written report and gave additional remarks, particularly on the subject of transition and change that are affecting the ministers and candidates for ministry of the Synod. She is working to support a new chair of the Candidacy Committee, Mr. Don Mullins. She emphasized the importance of recent close collaboration between herself and Pr. Bailey.

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

Deacon Stecker supplemented her written report. She expects to be on maternity leave this winter and is working to get the Youth and Family Advisory Team launched and active before that time. This team will give direction to the shared ministry with the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. and Delaware-Maryland Synods that is being developed. There is need for additional team members from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod: one rostered leader, one lay leader (paid or volunteer), and two youth members of high school age.

- e. Vice President's Report:

Vice President Slagle Peck provided a written report in advance of the meeting and made additional remarks:

- i. Plan for Racial Justice updates, including progress in interviewing proposals for a contractor to conduct an audit of the Synod's systems;
- ii. Engagement with the Executive Committee to develop recommendations for reducing the size of the Council;

- iii. Need to finalize the composition of the Nominating Committee in anticipation of need to fill many leadership vacancies during the Synod Assembly in June 2022; and
  - iv. Need to connect Synod Council members as liaisons or active members of many of the tables, teams, and committees presently active in the Synod.
- f. Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Julie Hamre was absent from the meeting, submitting two documents to Council members in advance of the meeting: "2021FY Budget vs Actual, February through October 2021" and "Statement of Financial Position, as of October 31, 2021." Pr. Eugene Kern, Synod Council liaison to the Finance Committee, gave brief remarks regarding revenue and spending, noting that after three fiscal quarters, income is 77 percent of budget and expenses are at 69 percent of budget.

**3. Synodical Women's Organization**

No report was offered.

**4. Youth Organization**

[No report]

**5. New Business**

[None]

**The meeting adjourned** with the Lord's Prayer at 11:50 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: January 8, 2022; Zoom/Electronic.