

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA
SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 11, 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 On the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Vice President Slagle Peck invited the members to reflect on their individual and unique perspectives on that day. Participants were assigned to smaller breakout groups and subsequently reconvened.

Introductions In light of the significant number of Synod Council members newly elected by the 2021 Synod Assembly, Vice President Slagle Peck invited five members to provide more extensive biographical introductions. Remarks were made by Pr. Sarah Scherschligt, Cameron Johnson, Pr. Elijah Mwitanti, Andreas Dangin, and Pr. Krista Vingelis.

Vice President Slagle Peck presented the proposed agenda for the meeting.

SC21.09.31: To approve the agenda for the September 11, 2021, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the July 10, 2021, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Vice President Slagle Peck asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

SC21.09.32: To approve the minutes of the July 10, 2021, Synod Council meeting.

1. Staff and Officer Reports

a. Bishop Ortiz:

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

SC21.09.33: That:

1. The Rev. Susanne Bloom be placed on leave from call, effective September 1, 2021;
 2. The Rev. Shannon Anderson be called to serve in specialized ministry as Interim Pastor of Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Manassas, Virginia, effective October 4, 2021;
 3. Pending the completion of a satisfactory background check, the Rev. Kathryn Polycako be called to serve in specialized ministry as Interim Pastor of Living Faith Lutheran Church in Rockville, Maryland, effective at a time to be determined by the relevant parties (expected at the end of October or beginning of November 2021); and
 4. Pending the completion of a satisfactory background check, the Rev. Michael Guy be called to serve in specialized ministry as Interim Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Waldorf, Maryland, effective at a time to be determined by the relevant parties.
- 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. The Rev. Jeff Wilson was called to serve as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Riverdale, Maryland, effective September 1, 2021;
 2. The Rev. Judith VanOsdol was called to serve as pastor of First Trinity Lutheran Church in Washington, D.C., effective September 1, 2021;
 3. The Rev. Kate Costa was called to serve as pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Alexandria, Virginia, effective September 8, 2021;
 4. The Rev. Julia Ogg was called to serve as co-pastor of Community Lutheran Church in Sterling, Virginia, effective September 26, 2021; and
 5. The Rev. Gretchen Ritola transferred to the North Carolina Synod, effective July 1, 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 work of the Racial Equity Team, including deferral of the TED Talk-style Leadership Academy offerings and the involvement of youth and young adults.
- b. Vice President's Report (Part 1)

Vice President Slagle Peck used a part of her report as the basis for a more detailed discussion of four committees, tables, and teams. Bishop Ortiz began the discussion with a review of the purposes of each type of organizational group, as set forth in Chapter 11 of the Synod's *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions*. There are three tables whose intended duration is indefinite/permanent, consisting of the

Primary Mission Table, the Stewardship and Mission Support Table, and the New and Renewing Missions Table. Teams have a specific focus, while committees are prescribed by the governing provisions, including those set forth in the required provisions of the ELCA Constitution for Synods.

Following this brief introduction, Vice President Slagle Peck introduced four individuals to provide a more detailed discussion of the work of their respective groups, as follows:

- Pr. Franklin Morales, Racial Equity Team;
- Pr. David Slagle Peck, Worship Team;
- Treasurer Julie Hamre, Finance Committee; and
- Assistant to the Bishop, Pr. Erin Swenson-Reinhold, Conference of Deans.

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

Pastor Bailey provided an update on the work of two tables and one team, referring specifically to the status of Sabbath grants through the New and Renewing Mission Table and a Leadership Academy presentation on the development and use of a narrative budget. He also called attention to two scheduled listening sessions for the ELCA Task Force on Church and State and Civic Participation.

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

Pastor Swenson-Reinhold supplemented her written report. The Candidacy Committee welcomed three new members and launched Cohort H with four participants. She provided further updates on the First Call Theological Education fall retreat, activities relating to mobility, and a potential change in the name of the Mental Health/Self-Care Team.

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

Deacon Stecker was unable to attend the meeting, but had provided a written report in advance of the meeting. The report included updates on the organizing retreat for the Lutheran Youth Organization, the return to in-person youth events for the coming program year, plans for the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering, and continuing Growing Young discussion groups.

f. Vice President's Report (Part 2):

- i. Executive Committee Membership. Vice President Slagle Peck identified the four open positions for the Executive Committee in addition to the four officers. Normally only two at-large members would be elected to two-year terms following the most recent Synod Assembly. Because of the cycle disruptions

caused by the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, all four at-large members will be elected at the same time, two for one-year terms and two for two-year terms. No two at-large members may be from the same conference. Following the July Synod Council meeting, members were consulted regarding their willingness to serve in this capacity.

SC21.09.34: That:

1. The Rev. Elijah Mwitanti and the Rev. Eva Steege are each elected to the Executive Committee for a term that will expire on the earliest of (a) two years from the date of election, (b) the election of their respective successors, or (c) the expiration of their respective terms as a member of the Synod Council; and
 2. The Rev. David Trott and Cameron Johnson are each elected to the Executive Committee for a term that will expire on the earliest of (a) one year from the date of election, (b) the election of their respective successors, or (c) the expiration of their respective terms as a member of the Synod Council.
- ii. Nominating Committee. Members were asked to discern their willingness to serve on the Nominating Committee leading up to the 2022 Synod Assembly.
- iii. Racial Equity Update. Vice President Slagle Peck referred to a document entitled “A Plan for Racial Justice in the Metro DC Synod of the ELCA,” which had been approved by the Synod Council in May 2021 and subsequently released publicly. The plan calls for a three-part process consisting of (a) regular opportunities for rostered ministers and lay members to learn about racial justice and equity; (b) engaging a contractor to review specified systems of the synod; and (c) consideration of how the synod, as an entity, as well as its congregations, may issue reparations to people of color and work toward meaningful reconciliation. In furtherance of the first of the three processes, the Sacred Ground series has been made available to rostered ministers and lay members. In furtherance of second of the three processes, requests for proposal were distributed in the summer, and responses are being received and evaluated.
- iv. Climate Justice. Vice President Slagle Peck called upon Pr. Sarah Scherschligt to discuss a proposal for the creation of a synod-wide Climate Justice Team. A more definitive proposal will be formally presented to the Synod Council for consideration at the regularly-scheduled November meeting.

g. Secretary's Report:

Secretary Kevin Anderson provided a brief introduction to consideration of the size and composition of the Synod Council. A small group consisting of a few members of the Executive Committee will develop a proposal for consideration by the Synod Council at a subsequent meeting. If approved, amendments to the Synod's *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* will be presented to the 2022 Synod Assembly.

h. Treasurer's Report:

- i. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Treasurer Julie Hamre had distributed copies of the financial statements for the first seven months of the current fiscal year, *i.e.*, the period ended August 31, 2021, in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$30,800 before consideration of the relatively large surplus from the prior fiscal year and the transfer of a smaller amount from the Congregational Mission designated fund. The statements reflect the full-year funding of La Sagrada Familia, Gifts of Hope, youth ministry, and camps. The balance of the University of Maryland Campus Ministry budgeted line item will be funded before the end of September. Finally, prospects for a new campus ministry at Howard University were discussed.

2. Synodical Women's Organization

No report was offered, except for a reference to the scheduled September 18 virtual gathering.

3. Youth Organization

[No report]

4. New Business

[None]

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 12:05 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: November 13, 2021; Zoom/Electronic.