

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD OF THE ELCA**  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 19, 2020**  
**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 involving more than ten individuals. Interim Vice President Droney called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The roll was called to verify attendance.

Interim Vice President Droney presented the proposed agenda for the meeting, noting that certain items would be taken out of order so as to reserve a significant amount of time for one of the items under his report.

**SC20.09.29:** To approve the agenda for the September 19, 2020, Synod Council meeting.

The draft minutes of the July 18, 2020, Synod Council meeting were presented to the Council for approval. Interim Vice President Droney asked for corrections or amendments. There were none.

**SC20.09.30:** To approve the minutes of the July 18, 2020, Synod Council meeting.

**1. Synod Council Primary Mission Table**

There were no matters to report.

**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.

**SC20.09.31:** That:

1. The Rev. Amy Sevimli's status as on leave from call be extended for one year, effective August 15, 2020;
2. The Rev. Wendy Moen be called to specialized ministry as the Interim Pastor for Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Alexandria, Virginia, effective September 7, 2020; and
3. The Rev. Thomas Knoll be placed on the retired roster, effective October 1, 2020.

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 the following additional matters affecting the Synod's rostered ministers:

1. Mr. Kenneth Champagne was ordained as Deacon and will serve as Deacon for Discipleship at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Fairfax, Virginia, effective September 7, 2020;
2. The Rev. Ralph Heller (retired) transferred from the North Carolina Synod, effective July 2, 2020;
3. The Rev. Betty Landis transferred from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod effective August 1, 2020, and is serving as the pastor at Saint Stephen Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, Maryland;
4. The Rev. Michael Lohmann extended his part-time contract with Epiphany Lutheran Church, Dale City, Virginia, through December 31, 2021;
5. The Rev. Tarja Stevenson transferred to the Virginia Synod, effective July 12, 2020;
6. The Rev. Katherine Chatelaine-Samsen transferred to the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, effective September 8, 2020; and
7. The Rev. Kendall Summers transferred to the Delaware-Maryland Synod, effective September 14, 2020.

iii. General Updates. Bishop Ortiz had distributed a written report to the Synod Council in advance of the meeting. She highlighted the following events and initiatives completed or in process, as well as selected updates, including the following:

- (a) The three ministry themes for 2021 will be Sabbath, Cultural Competence, and Transformational Leaders.
- (b) Two individuals were added to the synod staff, consisting of an administrative assistant and an intern.
- (c) A new director for Gifts of Hope has been identified and appointed.
- (d) Periodic meetings are held with staff, each of the six conferences, single rostered ministers, rostered ministers of color, strategic planning leaders, and the Executive Committee.
- (e) Synod leadership participated in several congregational meetings, including a vote by the members of Messiah Lutheran Church, Mt. Vernon, Virginia, to close the congregation.
- (f) Several Leadership Academy events were held in the summer, and several more events have been planned for this fall and spring 2021.
- (g) Several meetings have been held with ministries and groups outside of the Synod.

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

Pastor Bailey provided an update on the work of two tables and one team. The Stewardship and Mission Support Table has prepared a virtual educational opportunity for the fall, entitled “Beginning a Culture of Generosity,” in partnership with Mike Ward, of Gronlund Sayther Brunkow (GSB) Fundraising. He acknowledged the work of Pr. Darcy Tillman, Chair of the Table, and announced that a new part-time Gifts of Hope Director had been selected, effective October 1.

The New and Renewing Missions Table, through a subgroup, will administer the Disaster Accompaniment Loan Fund and review applications for grants. Grants to two congregations have been approved thus far. A pilot program for technology seed grants will be concluded, after three congregations received small grants.

Pastor Bailey also serves as the liaison to the Racial Equity Team. This team is conducting a ten-part film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith, entitled “Sacred Ground.”

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

Pastor Swenson-Reinhold noted the recent ordination of Kenneth Champagne as a Deacon. Three congregations have completed call votes, two congregations are awaiting names, one congregation is interviewing candidates, and a total of 11 congregations are in the study process.

The process for identifying and interviewing potential candidates for an administrative assistant to support (primarily) the two Assistants to the Bishop has concluded with the hiring of Katie Evans.

d. Treasurer’s Report:

- i. Year-to-Date Financial Statements. Copies of the financial statements for the first seven months of the current fiscal year, through August 31, 2020, were distributed in advance of the meeting. These statements reflect a deficit in undesignated receipts, compared with expenditures, of approximately \$28,800. This number excludes the effect of unrealized gains in investments (approximately \$52,500) and the expected forgiveness of the Paycheck Protection Program loan (approximately \$104,000).
- ii. Development of FY 2021 Budget. In light of the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, the Synod Council will develop and approve a budget for the fiscal year beginning February 1, 2021. A draft of the budget will be presented to the November 2020 meeting and will be adopted by the Synod Council at the January 2021 meeting, prior to the start of the next fiscal year of the Synod.

iii. Synod Compensation Guidelines. As a result of the cancellation of the 2020 Synod Assembly, the most recent Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines are those that were approved by the 2019 Synod Assembly for use in 2020. Treasurer Julie Hamre brought forth a recommendation to make cost-of-living adjustments to three components of the guidelines, but otherwise to use the current document for 2021.

**SC20.09.32:** To adopt the 2020 Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines as the Rostered Ministry Compensation Guidelines for 2021, with the following cost-of-living adjustments:

- Increase the unadjusted minimum salary for ministers of Word and Sacrament from \$60,538 to \$62,183;
- Where the use of a parsonage is included as a portion of compensation, increase the unadjusted minimum salary for ministers of Word and Sacrament from \$49,771 to \$51,223; and
- Increase the unadjusted minimum salary for ministers of Word and Service from \$40,131 to \$41,222.

e. Secretary's Report:

Secretary Kevin Anderson provided an update on a matter that is currently pending before the Church Council. A group of leaders from the churchwide organization is developing a Future Church proposal to determine how the church may most efficiently carry out its mission in light of available resources. One of the central features of this proposal is shared leadership, under which all three expressions of the church will be represented on leadership teams. The proposed design will better facilitate a unified culture across the entire organization. Final action by the Church Council is expected at its regular November meeting. Based on information shared with the Conference of Bishops, Bishop Ortiz advised that the position of Director for Evangelical Mission for each synod will likely be retained in the new organizational structure.

f. Interim Vice President's Report:

Interim Vice President Jackson Droney had distributed a written report in advance of the meeting and did not elaborate further on the contents of that report.

The principal focus of his report was a proposed statement of the Synod Council in response to recent events involving issues of racial justice. The matter had been discussed in concept at the July 2020 meeting of the Synod Council. Based on the views of individual members expressed at the previous meeting, a draft of the proposed letter was presented to the Executive Committee prior to its September 8

meeting. Following that meeting, a revised draft was presented to the full Synod Council for discussion.

A substantial discussion ensued. Interim Vice President Droney provided introductory remarks and then invited each of the members and staff to express their views on the draft letter. Final remarks were made by Bishop Ortiz and Interim Vice President Droney. Based on the consensus of the members, the following changes would be made to the draft before it is submitted to the full Synod Council for approval:

- The letter will be more explicit in its support for Bishop Ortiz and ministers of color;
- The language will be more specific in referring to policies, practices, and systems;
- The letter will affirm that Black lives matter “and are sacred,” adding the quoted language to the existing draft;
- The letter will recognize the unique position of the Synod, whose territory includes the Nation’s capital; and
- It will commit the Synod to the development of a more specific plan after the letter is issued.

Final action would be taken through the means of an electronic vote shortly after the revisions are completed.

### **3. Synodical Women’s Organization**

No report.

### **4. Youth Organization**

The Synod Council’s youth representative reported that a Faith Formation planning meeting was held on July 21. Consideration is being given to the conversion of two events—Shekinah and Chrysalis—in a virtual format.

### **5. New Business**

None.

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

Next Scheduled Meeting: November 21, 2020; Zoom/Electronic.