

## **SUMMARY OF THE ACTIONS OF THE 2016 METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

The 392 voting members meeting May 19-21, 2016 at the Melville Marriott, in Melville, New York, approved memorials and resolutions, elected a Treasurer and members of the Synod Council, Consultation Committee and Discipline Committee, amended governing documents and adopted budgets.

### **Memorials Adopted**

#### **SA 2016:05.06      African Descent Lutheran Lives Matter**

**Resolved**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to include as part of the ELCA's observance of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation and the commemoration of the United Nation's International Decade of People of African Descent the following:

1. Request the Church Council to create a "Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community" similar to the "Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community (4/18/1994)" acknowledging the Lutheran church's complicity in the 400+ years of slavery and the oppression of other marginalized groups; that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences; and, that the ELCA has perpetuated racism and discrimination through attitudes, actions, policies and practices these communities still endure. The Council will bring this "Declaration" to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration and action with a recommendation to include this Declaration in the governing documents of the ELCA;

2. Request the Church Council to require the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC) in partnership with the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL) to recognize and dismantle white hegemony by lifting up, encouraging and incorporating academic exploration of Black Liberation theology across ELCA educational expressions, to allocate funds for the development of resources and to accomplish this by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and,

3. Request the Church Council to require the Congregational and Synodical Missions Unit of the ELCA, to work in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association to increase by 10% the number of African Descent leaders, congregations and communities served, thereby renewing its commitment (see African Descent Strategy, CWA, 2005) to create, sustain, reinvest in and support this plan of action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and to encourage Synods and congregations to do

likewise.

#### **SA 2016:05.12      Advocacy and Justice for Refugees**

**Resolved**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the ELCA churchwide assembly to:

Request that the Presiding Bishop communicate the church's commitment to the resettlement of refugees in the US and encourage steadfast support for this program to the President and Members of Congress; and

Request that churchwide units, in cooperation with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, provide easy access to resource materials for congregations to learn about and take part in ministries with refugees; and

Request that the Presiding Bishop, Church Council, and Synod bishops speak out publicly against hateful language that targets refugees and immigrants and against actions to exclude or discriminate against them.

#### **SA 2016:05.13      On Divestment**

**Resolved**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod meeting in Assembly direct the Metropolitan New York Synod Council to recommend that the ELCA Church Council take steps necessary to divest any and all funds the ELCA has invested in Caterpillar Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Company, and Motorola Solutions; and, with the assistance of the Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team of the churchwide organization, and taking into account the ELCA's Church Council-approved Social Criteria Investment Screens policy, develop an investment screen addressing companies whose products and services have significantly exacerbated the conflict between Israel and Palestine and the violation of human rights of Palestinians, further preventing a just and lasting peace in the region; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod meeting in Assembly memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to consider referring a motion to divest pension funds from Caterpillar Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Company, and Motorola Solutions to the Board of Portico Benefits Services for recommendation and action; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

#### **General Resolutions Adopted**

**SA 2016:05.02      To Reaffirm the Companion Covenant Between the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Metropolitan New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**Resolved**, that the Diocese and Synod now reaffirm the Companion Covenant of April 5, 1998, hereby recommitting Diocese and Synod to:

- Pray for, witness to and encourage one another as both bodies seek to serve Christ in our localities.
- Learn more about one another, as friends, partners and fellow members of the one body of Christ.
- Share our struggles, challenges, joys and new possibilities for the mutual upbuilding of the People of God.
- Provide opportunities for mutual exchange of lay people, clergy and judicatory staff in order for us to sincerely know one another as friends and Christians.
- Expand our understanding that the body of Christ has no geographical boundaries, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or socio-economic status and seeks mutuality among partners.

**SA 2016:05.03      Recognizing St. Lydia's, Brooklyn**

**Resolved**, that St. Lydia's be joyfully recognized as a congregation of the ELCA and accepted onto the roster of congregations of the Metropolitan New York Synod.

**SA 2016:05.04      On Mission Partnerships**

**Resolved**, that the 2016 Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod encourages each of its congregations to seek out as a mission partner another congregation which reflects a different racial, cultural, and/or geographic identity and context.

- Mission partners will form covenants to regularly share worship, service and fellowship in an effort to grow in relationship with and understanding of one another.
- Synod staff will facilitate matchmaking between congregations of the synod seeking mission partners.
- Congregations will also be free to enter into a relationship of mission partnership with another Christian congregation in their own community.
- All congregations will report the formation of such synodical or community based partnerships to the Metropolitan New York Synod before its next assembly.

**SA 2016:05.05      Regarding Full Participation in the Life of the Synod**

**Resolved**, that the section of the Synod Council Action 15:06/12 of June 23, 2015, which reads: "an individual may not serve on the Synod Council Executive Committee

while also serving or holding membership in a congregation that is a recipient of a Partnership Grant” be rescinded.

**SA 2016:05.09      On Committee Minutes**

**RESOLVED**, that committees of the Metropolitan New York Synod—including but not limited to the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, and the Claimed, Gathered and Sent Committees—keep minutes of their meetings according to best practices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that such minutes be maintained in the offices of the Metropolitan New York Synod and made available upon request; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that committees will provide to the Synod Council a summary of their actions and significant ongoing discussions and, when requested by the Synod Council, copies of meeting minutes.

**SA 2016:05.10      On Financial Transparency**

**Resolved**, that the report of the Synod Council to the regular Assembly of the Metropolitan New York Synod include the annual compensation established for the Bishop and those named as Assistant to the Bishop; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the report of the Treasurer of the Metropolitan New York Synod state clearly the entire cost for legal counsel incurred in the preceding year; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the report of the Treasurer of the Metropolitan New York Synod state clearly the entire monies paid to outside consultants in the preceding year, including to any individual, firms or corporations not subject to ordinary employment agreements with the Synod.

**SA 2016:05.11      On Advocacy and Justice for Refugees**

**Resolved**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod shall develop a plan and share resource materials to assist congregations in exploring the Christian calling to love and serve our refugee neighbors and to learn about: the experience and needs of refugees; the processing of refugees through the US refugee program; and ways to accompany refugees; and further be it

**Resolved**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod recommit to being an advocate and justice seeker for refugees, and request that the synodical bishop communicate our concerns to our Members of Congress and other elected officials; and further be it

**Resolved**, that the synod encourage congregations, individuals and communities to be the church at work in the world, offering welcome and hospitality to refugees through local ministries and in partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; and further be it

**Resolved**, that each congregation be encouraged to pray for refugees and annually host a Refugee Sunday ([www.lirs.org/refugeesunday](http://www.lirs.org/refugeesunday)); and further be it

**Resolved**, that a trust fund be established under Synod Council Supervision to provide for the immediate settlement and housing needs of refugees arriving in our Synod; this fund to be funded by offering on Refugee Sunday and by discretionary giving.

**SA 201605.14      Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Assessment Report**

**Resolved**, that the Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Assessment Report Pursuant to: The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process, proposed by the Gathered Committee and recommended by the Executive Committee and the Synod Council, be adopted.

**SA 201605.15      Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Financial Review**

**Resolved**, that the Minimum Synod Guidelines for a Congregational Financial Review Pursuant to: The Policy of the Metropolitan New York Synod on the Transition and Call Process, proposed by the Gathered Committee and recommended by the Executive Committee and the Synod Council, be adopted.

**Amendments to Governing Documents**

**SA2016:05.16      Bylaw amendment eliminating specific number of conferences**

S9.20.01      The conferences shall serve to nominate seats on the Synod Council.

S9.20.02      Two election cycles will elect one half of the Synod Council every other election year. Each of the conferences will be assigned to a cycle.

**SA2016:05.16      Amendment to continuing resolution eliminating specific number of conferences.**

S12.01.01 A2016 The synod shall be composed of conferences, grouped in four quadrants. The Synod Council shall assign each congregation to a conference.

### **Budget Resolutions Adopted**

**SA 2016:05.07 Ratified a Revised Budget of \$4,812,932 for Fiscal Year 2016**

**SA 2016:05.08 Adopted a Proposed Budget of \$4,522,199 for Fiscal Year 2017**

### **Elections Completed**

#### **SA 2016:05.01**

##### **First Ballot**

##### Treasurer

Mr. Frank Suttell

##### Consultation Committee

Ms. Nancy Casalino-Malone

Ms. Carol Trower

Mr. Eugene Hiigel

Mr. Mark Nocero

##### Discipline Committee

Ms. Jessica Raba

Mr. William Bushman

##### Synod Council

Rev. Christopher Mietlowski

Rev. Brenda Irving

Rev. Jeanine Owens

Ms. Denise Rutherford-Gill

Ms. Abby Triebel

Dcn. John Prosen

Mr. Leonel Avila

Mr. Christopher Vergara

Rev. Nicole Schwalbe

Ms. Cynthia Corley

Ms. Emma Turner

#### **SA 2016:05.06**

##### **Second Ballot**

##### Discipline Committee

Rev. Joanne Bond

Rev. Justin Kosec

Synod Council

Ms. Muriel Davis

Ms. Tabitha Johnson