

## ***SUMMARY OF THE ACTIONS OF THE 2015 METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SYNOD ASSEMBLY***

The 392 voting members meeting May 29-30, 2015 at the Westchester Marriott, in Tarrytown, New York, approved memorials and resolutions, elected voting members for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly and Synod Council, amended governing documents and adopted budgets.

### **Memorials Adopted**

#### **SA 2015:05.02      *Recommitting to the Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine***

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommit to a robust effort in accomplishing the goals set out in the *Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine* (2005) that include but are not limited to:

##### IN THE HOLY LAND

1. Peaceful coexistence of Palestinians and Israelis in their own recognized states
2. Economic empowerment of Palestinians
3. Negotiated final status agreement on two states with a shared Jerusalem
4. Protecting the endangered Christian witness
5. Ending illegal settlement building in the occupied territories

##### IN THE US

1. Education among ELCA members about the situation in the Holy Land
2. Advocacy by ELCA members with their members of Congress that reflects the urgency of the situation
3. To be the voice of the voiceless on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in US policy-making decisions.

#### **SA 2015:05.03      *Urging Divestment from Fossil Fuel Corporations***

**RESOLVED**, that the Metro New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to urge that, by May 1, 2017, all Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations and independent, cooperative, and related Lutheran organizations and investment corporations:

- a) Publish a list of the values of all their stock and bond holdings in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production,

or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and instruct asset managers employed by those entities do the same; and

b) Cease any new investments in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and instruct asset managers employed by those entities do the same; and

c) Ensure that, within five years, directly held or commingled assets in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas are removed from portfolios related to the ELCA; and

d) With the exception of congregations, release quarterly updates, available to the public, detailing progress towards such divestment.

#### **SA 2015:05.04      Eco-Reformation in the Context of Climate Change**

**RESOLVED**, that this Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly, recognizing the need for ongoing reformation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, memorialize the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to make climate change and ecological justice major themes in Evangelical Lutheran Church in America planning and activities leading up to and following the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

#### **General Resolutions Adopted**

##### **SA 2015:05.01      Resolution on Ministerium**

**RESOLVED**, that there be a yearly one day meeting (usually morning and afternoon) of the ministerium, and be it

**RESOLVED**, that the meeting be planned by the bishop and four representatives of the Conference of Deans, one each from each of the four Quadrants, and be it

**RESOLVED**, that this meeting commence with prayer in the celebration of the Eucharist, and be it

**RESOLVED**, that the topics for conversation be limited to practical issues relating to life within the congregations and ministries on the territory of the synod.

##### **SA 2015:05.05      To Divest from Fossil Fuel Corporations**

**RESOLVED**, that the Metro New York Synod shall:

- a) Publish a list of the values of all its stock and bond holdings in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and
- b) Cease any new investments in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and
- c) Ensure that, within five years, directly held or commingled assets in companies whose primary business is the exploration, extraction, production, or refining of coal, oil, or natural gas are removed from its portfolio, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same; and
- d) Release quarterly updates, available to the public, detailing progress towards such divestment, and urge all congregations within the Synod do the same.

**SA 2015:05.07      To Review Election Process for Voting Members to Churchwide Assembly**

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod election process for electing members to the churchwide assembly be reviewed by the Synod Council which will make a recommendation for adoption by the 2016 Synod Assembly.

**SA 2015:05.08      Metropolitan New York Synod Disaster Plan**

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod adopt the Disaster Plan; and

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod establish a permanent Disaster Response and Planning web page and made this Disaster Plan available on the web page; and

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod establish a Disaster Response Task Force consisting of at least one person from each quadrant, a member of the synod staff, and a representative from LSSNY. The Disaster Response Task Force will maintain familiarity with the Disaster Plan and ensure the Disaster Response and Planning web page contains current information and links, and assist the bishop and synod to assess the nature and scope of a disaster and appropriate synod response. The convener of the Disaster Response Task Force will participate in the Lutheran Disaster Response network; and

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod call upon congregations to develop and implement congregational disaster plans and share those plans with the synod office; and

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod encourage all rostered leaders to develop and implement personal or family disaster plans as examples of good stewardship.

**SA 2015:05.09      Amendment to Transition and Call Process**

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod adopt the proposed amendment to the Transition and Call Process.

**SA 2015:05.12      On Behalf of Augusta Victoria Hospital**

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly direct Bishop Robert A. Rimbo to draft a letter to the current Administration of the United States of America and members of the United States Congress within the boundaries of the Metropolitan New York Synod asking these leaders to encourage Congress to issue the letter authorizing the disbursement of funds through USAID to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people, including covering the Palestinian Authority debt to Augusta Victoria Hospital and the other East Jerusalem hospitals; and be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly invite members of our congregations to support our Bishop by contacting their own Senators and Representatives asking those leaders to do the same; and be it

**RESOLVED** that the Metropolitan New York Synod encourage congregations to have an annual Sunday of prayer and information sharing about the ministry of Augusta Victoria Hospital.

**SA 2015:05.13      Awareness-Raising, Accompaniment, Advocacy in the Holy Land**

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod prayerfully discern means to support our sisters and brothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, who work daily to promote understanding and peace through their ministries, schools and advocacy work; and be it,

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod support the work of the *Peace Not Walls* campaign and the MNYS Mideast Relations Committee through prayer and

participation in work that seeks to foster dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims around issues of justice in the Middle East; and be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod commit to raising awareness among its members and congregations about the situation on the ground in Israel-Palestine [i.e., by going to [elca.org/peacenotwalls](http://elca.org/peacenotwalls) and the website of our sister church The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land ([elcjh.org](http://elcjh.org)) to find resources; by reading the *Kairos Palestine Document, A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering* (2009); by attending film screenings and book discussions; by taking trips to the Holy Land that are focused on seeing the reality of occupation first-hand and speaking with Palestinians and Israelis working for peace and justice]; by engaging with neighboring rabbis and the congregants of neighbor synagogues in intentional conversation so that we can work together to meet our mutual goal of a just and secure, two-state solution which provides peace between the independent states of Palestine and Israel; and be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly invite the members of its congregations to reach out to their members of Congress and the current Administration, asking them to do what they can to reignite peace talks between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities and call for an end to settlement building, home demolitions and policies that work against negotiated peace with justice for the people of the Holy Land.

**SA 2015:05.14      Continued Commitment for Addressing Racism in Church and Society**

**RESOLVED**, that the continued commitment of the Metropolitan New York Synod to address racism in the church and society be affirmed and that the Metropolitan New York Synod begin to address issues surrounding internalized racial oppression; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod, as part of its strategic plan, design and implement antiracism training for all elected and volunteer synodical leaders; synodical boards, committees, teams; rostered leaders, synodically-rostered leaders, candidates in the call process, congregation call committees, and staff in the Metropolitan New York Synod; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that appropriate funds (out of the Sent budget) for the antiracism training of all elected and volunteer synodical leaders; boards, committees, teams; rostered leaders, synodically-rostered leaders, and staff within the Metropolitan New York Synod be allocated continually within the Metropolitan New York Synod's annual budget; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that by December 31, 2016 the Metropolitan New York Synod require elected, called, and volunteer synodical leaders; synodical boards, committees, teams, and staff to undertake the antiracism training developed by the Metropolitan New York Synod on a regular basis through which they can develop a common analysis, an antiracist identity, and the knowledge that will assist them in addressing, confronting, and working toward the dismantling of racism and reversing the effects of internalized racial oppression; and be it further;

**RESOLVED**, that the leadership of the Metropolitan New York Synod form an anti-racism team tasked with implementing the preceding resolutions.

**SA 2015:05.15      Synodical Communion Practices**

**RESOLVED**, that the Metropolitan New York Synod in its liturgies shall conform to the guidance offered by “*The Use of the Means of Grace*” [1997] namely, Principle 44 and Application 44c, using grape juice as the default non-alcoholic element.

**Amendments to Governing Documents**

**SA 2015:05.10      Constitutional Amendment to Create a single Committee on Nominations and Elections**

[This amendment was first voted on and approved at the 2014 Synod Assembly]

S9.03 amended to read as follows:

S9.03 Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Committee on Nominations and Elections.

S9.05 amended to read as follows:

S9.05 The Committee on Nominations and Elections shall nominate at least two persons for vice-president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.

**SA 2015:05.11      Amendments to Bylaws and Continuing Resolution on Nominations and Election Process for Synod Assembly Elections.**

**RESOLVED**, that amendments to the Bylaws and the Continuing Resolution on Nominations and Election Process for Synod Assembly Elections be adopted to conform with the adopted constitutional amendment.

**Budget Resolutions Adopted**

**SA 2015:05.16**      **Ratified a Revised Budget of \$4,130,093 for Fiscal Year 2015**  
**SA 2015:05.17**      **Adopted a Budget of \$3,982,684 for Fiscal Year 2016**

**Elections Completed**

**SA 2015:05.06**  
**First Ballot**

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Clergy

The Rev. Peter Rustico  
The Rev. Mark Erson  
The Rev. Perucy Butiku  
The Rev. David Parsons  
The Rev. Amy Kienzle  
The Rev. Khader Khalilia

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Lay Female

Dcn. Anita Williams  
Ms. Eleanor L. Sudbrock  
Ms. Maritza Tamayo  
Ms. Yvette Y. Brooks  
Ms. Hephzibah Penumaka

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Lay Male

Mr. Mark Goodwin  
Mr. Alex Lawrence  
Dcn. John Malone

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Young Adult

Mr. Nelson Silverio

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Multi-Cultural

Mr. Adolfo Ramirez

**SA 2015:05.18**  
**Second Ballot**

Churchwide Assembly Voting Member: Lay Male

Mr. Christopher Vergara

Synod Council: Lay Female

Ms. Karen Maulen