

# **HIGHLIGHTS**

## **SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD, E.L.C.A.**

### **SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**

#### **September 25-26, 2015**

**The following are the highlights from the Synod Council meeting September 25-26, 2015. The full minutes of this meeting will be considered for approval at the next meeting of the Council on January 29, 2016**

**Thrivent Policies --** Greg Jahnke and Tim Barth from Thrivent made a brief presentation and then answered questions on the new Thrivent policies regarding the distribution of Thrivent Choice dollars. Greg has been a wealth advisor with Thrivent for 24 years. He and Tim were very straightforward in responding to questions. Greg has been a strong advocate for Thrivent to change their new policy and return to the old policy that allowed any 501 c.3 to receive Thrivent choice dollars. He indicated that he did not believe that the new policy will be changed any time soon.

**Treasurer's Report --** Treasurer Linda Lownes distributed two financial reports by email and distributed two more at the meeting. She reported that the total assets in the operating fund are \$370,876.11. Second quarter statements went out to all congregations. There are 33 congregations that have not given any mission support to date this fiscal year.

Linda offered that at the national treasurer's meeting she found that many synod councils have members who meet once a year with each congregation in the synod and discuss their level of mission support. They provide each congregation information on how the funds are used and encouraging higher levels of contribution. There was discussion about following the example of these synods now in the fall as this is the time churches are preparing their budgets.

**Witness Discipling Team report on Synod Properties --** Rev. Dr. Dawn Roginski provided background information on the four properties currently owned by the Sierra Pacific Synod. She described the work the Witness Discipling Team and Pr. Carlton have done in developing the yearly recommendations required by Synod Policy 13-001. They presented their recommendations to the Executive Committee September 10, 2015. The recommendations were:

- 1. Hilmar Property (formerly Berea Lutheran Church)**
  - a. Work out an arrangement with Nova Esperanza to purchase the sanctuary building.
  - b. Use the gathered research to make a decision about the parsonage property.
- 2. Cupertino property (formerly Redeemer Lutheran Church)**
  - a. Sell the building to the Taiwanese Lutheran Church or another church entity.
- 3. Oromo Congregation, San Lorenzo**
  - a. Further conversation with the pastor and key leaders to explore whether owning and needing to maintain a building is the best thing for their ministry.
  - b. If the ministry still thinks building ownership is in their best interest, transfer the building with an understanding that it would come back to the synod should the congregation dissolve.
- 4. Grace Lao, Richmond**
  - a. Explore the possibility of Grace Lao sharing the building with another mission start, perhaps a bilingual Asian ministry not restricted to the Lao people.

The Executive Committee, based on Policy 13-001, is responsible for the sale or liquidation of property. After receiving and evaluating the above recommendations of the Witness Discipling Team, the Executive Committee recommended to the Synod Council the following actions with regard to the four properties:

**Hilmar Property**

Sell the Hilmar property. The property will first be offered for sale to the congregation currently using the property.

**Cupertino property**

Sell the Cupertino property. It was the sense of the Council that the Cupertino property should be offered to the Good Shephard Taiwanese ministry currently occupying the property at a price based on the current appraisal and current zoning.

**Oromo-San Lorenzo**

A ministry review and recommendation should be developed by the Witness Discipling Team and presented to the Executive Committee by January 7, 2016.

**Grace Lao-Richmond**

Schedule this property for another annual review in September, 2016.

The Synod Council consented to all of the recommendations of the Executive Committee.

**Approval of the formation of a Young Adult Ministry Discipling Team (YAMDT) --** The Synod Council approved the formation of a Young Adult Ministry Discipling Team. The YAMDT will be a networking and advocacy instrument for the many and various young adult ministries and ministers in the Synod. This team will focus on: Campus Ministry, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, the various Young Adult Service Corps including LVC and LEVN, Outdoor Ministry's staff and interns, Mission Starts focused on young adult evangelism, Congregations that want to connect with young adults, and Young Adults doing ministry including clergy and lay people, with other potential populations to be determined as their work commences.

**The Council Approved the following actions at the meeting:**

- Policy 15-001 was approved to replace existing policies 11-001 (Fund for New and Renewing Congregations and Innovative Ministries) and the 13-002 (Mission and Ministry Endowment Fund). The council previously had two overlapping policies that focus on property and funds, 11-001 and 13-002. There were overlaps and conflicts between these two policies. The Executive Committee asked our synod attorneys to draft a single policy that combines the features of both existing policies and could replace them. The new policy that was drafted and was sent out to the Council a week before the meeting.
- Adriene Iverson was confirmed to serve as the CEO of Elder Care Alliance (ECA)
- The Merger of Calvary, Millbrae; Peace, San Bruno; and Our Redeemer, South San Francisco into one congregation which will utilize the campus of Our Redeemer as the primary site for ministry, with the Millbrae campus utilized for other ministry objectives.
- Jordan Haley has been appointed to the vacant District B lay male position on the Synod Council.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dennis Jones, Synod Secretary