

INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING
IK Synod Conference Room
Indianapolis, IN

Minutes

Friday, April 4, 2025 – 7:00 pm-9:30 pm EDT
Saturday, April 5, 2025 – 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. EDT

Synod Council Members Present: Bishop Tim; Ted Miller, Vice President, Julie Slavens, Secretary; Harry Albers, Treasurer; Rev. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar; Rev. Ryan Bailey (Saturday); Rev. Emmanuel Penumaka (Saturday); Rev. Vicki Garber; Rev. Bimen Limbong (Saturday) Rev. Grace Pardun; Rev, Kristin Rice; Deacon Jody Winter; Larry Ahlersmeyer; Mike Hoover (via Zoom); Debbie Zehr; Dee Ann Daniels (via Zoom); Chris Walda; Nicole Lee; Laura Nicholson.

Synod Council Members Absent: Rev. LaDona Webb; Greg Platt; Nancy Bennett; Dianna Hunsinger; Noah Smith; Ella Engelau.

Staff Members Present: Rev. Dan Forehand; Rev. Priscilla Gerdes.

Synod Attorney, Josh Tatum and Tina Smith, WELCA Representative, were present.

Friday, April 4

The meeting began at approximately 7 pm with Gathering Prayer led by the Meeting Chaplains, Grace Pardun and Kristin Rice

Bishop Tim led a round of Getting (re)acquainted with one another by asking everyone present: *Where have you sought or seen resurrection or new life recently?* Everyone shared their experiences of where they saw resurrection during the past few months.

Julie Slavens stated the minutes of the January Council meeting were in the dropbox file. She asked if there were any changes. None were made. Jody Winter moved to accept the minutes of the meeting as presented. Larry Ahlersmeyer seconded.

ACTION SC 2025/8: The Synod Council approved the minutes of the January 2025 meeting unanimously.

Vice President's Report

Ted Miller provided a summary of his report which he reported was in Dropbox for the April meeting.

Secretary's Report

Julie Slavens provided an Executive Committee report. She stated the Executive Committee had approved the waiver of registration fees for the Assembly for a congregation and an individual as stated in her report which was in Dropbox.

Julie Slavens also gave a Nominating Committee report reflecting who had been slated to date. Detailed information was included in her report in Dropbox.

Treasurer Report

Harry Albers provided a report on the end of year financials and the current year to date revenues and expenses. These reports are in Dropbox. He also provided an initial presentation of Proposed 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 budgets. He provided an update to 2025-2026 budget; he stated the finance committee moved \$10,000 dollars from the support for Valparaiso University to the Disaster Response Director salary to cover for the expenses if the grant renewal is denied. The budget and changes were also in the Dropbox. Harry went over the budgets in general.

The meeting closed with a Closing Prayer by the Meeting Chaplains at approximately 9:15 pm.

Saturday, April 5

The meeting began Saturday morning with a Morning Prayer Service led by the Meeting Chaplains at approximately 9:30 a.m.

The council members who were not present for the Friday evening meeting were given the opportunity to answer the question: Where have you seen the resurrection? Those members shared their experiences.

Bishop Tim shared some Synod Assembly updates. He announced the times for the Breakout Sessions: Friday, June 6 at 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM and at 2:30 PM to 3:15 PM. He was working on putting some together and other people have submitted some requests. Most will be repeated so there may only be five or six topics covered.

Bishop Tim shared the proposed changes made to the Synod Assembly Agenda by the executive committee. These changes involved timing changes that needed to be made to accommodate questions of Vice President candidates and the elections. The executive committee recommended the changes for Council's approval.

ACTION SC 2025/9: The Synod Council approved the recommended changes to the 2025 Indiana-Kentucky Synod Assembly as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Bishop Tim then presented the Rules of the Assembly. He handed out a copy and went over them stating they were pretty much the same as last year's rules for the Assembly. Bishop Tim recommended approval of the Rules of the Synod Assembly as presented.

ACTION SC 2025/10: The Synod Council approved the proposed Rules of the 2025 Synod Assembly as presented and recommended by the Bishop.

Bishop Tim stated there were committees that needed to be appointed for the Synod Assembly.

For the Reference and Counsel committee he recommended Pastor Tim Knauff as chair, Chris Walda, Pastor Vicki Garber, Pastor Dan Forehand, and Josh Tatum as the Synod Parliamentarian.

ACTION SC 2025/11: The Synod Council approved the recommendation of the Bishop concerning members of the Reference and Council Committee, who are Josh Tatum, Pastor Vicki Garber, Pastor Dan Forehand, Tim Knauff (Chair), and Chris Walda.

Bishop Tim then moved to the Election Committee. Since the voting will be done electronically only a few people were needed. Mike Hoover and Pastor Grace Pardun volunteered to be on this committee. Bishop Tim agreed and made the recommend to Council that Mike Hoover and Pastor Grace Pardun be appointed to the Election Committee.

ACTION SC 2025/12: The Synod Council approved the recommendation of the Bishop concerning the members of the Election Committee, who are Mike Hoover and Pastor Grace Pardun.

Ted Miller stated volunteers were needed for the Minutes Committee which reviewed the draft minutes of the Assembly over the summer months. This was not a committee that is voted upon. He and Bishop Tim asked for volunteers. The following people volunteered: Ted Miller, Mike Hoover, Dee Ann Daniels, and Tina Smith.

Bishop Tim stated Pastor Alexa Kvande had been asked to be on the Credentials team and Josh Tatum agreed to be Parliamentarian for the Assembly.

2025-2026 Budget Changes

Harry Albers presented the changes to the 2025-2026 budget as recommended by the Finance Committee to move \$10,000 from the Valparaiso University benevolence amount of \$20,000 to the line item for the Disaster Relief Director to cover salaries and expenses needed if the Lily grant is not renewed.

ACTION SC 2025/13: The Synod Council approved the revised 2025-2026 budget as recommended by the Finance Committee to address the potential loss of grant money.

Proposed 2026-2027 Synod Budget and 2027-2028 Synod Budget

Harry Albers reported on the budgets for the next two years. The approved budgets will be presented to the Assembly for approval. The proposed budgets were provided in the Dropbox.

ACTION SC 2025/14: The Synod Council approved for presentation to the 2025 Synod Assembly per the recommendation of the Finance Committee the budget for the next two fiscal years: 2026-27; and 2027-28.

Proposed 2026-2027 Compensation Standards

Pastor Priscilla Gerdes as the staff representative for the Compensation Committee presented the recommendations to the compensation guidelines for rostered members of the Synod. She went over the increases and how the committee determined these increases. She also reported the committee is wanting to look at the compensation for the Synod Appointed Ministers but this will take some time and the committee was not ready as this will take time to research and make recommendations.

ACTION SC 2025/15: The Synod Council approved the recommended compensation standards from the Compensation Committee.

Congregational Concerns

Bishop Tim report on the Disaffiliation vote by St. Paul, Milton, KY. It had its first vote to disaffiliate on March 12, 2025, and the result was 100% for disaffiliation. The next vote will be in 90 days. The concerns of the congregation are social issues and the Synod will not resist the congregation's wishes to leave.

Strategic Ministries – Annual Renewal for Authorizations

Bishop Tim recommended annual renewals for the following congregations:

1. Bethel Lutheran Church, Gary, IN
2. Mara Ev. Lutheran Church in Indianapolis (MECI)
3. Mount Pleasant Lutheran Church (The Apple Tree Center), Kendallville, IN
4. Trinity Lutheran Church, Lebanon, IN
5. ON-HOLD - Grace and Glory Lutheran Church, Prospect, KY
6. So Much More Ministries, Fort Wayne, IN (Synod Authorized Outreach Ministry)

Harry Albers abstained with respect to number six as his spouse is the pastor and director of the ministry.

ACTION: SC 2025/16: The Synod Council approved the recommendation of the Bishop to approve the following ministries as Strategic Ministries or Synod Authorized Outreach Ministries as designated.

- 1. Bethel Lutheran Church, Gary, IN**
- 2. Mara Evangelical Church in Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN**
- 3. The Apple Tree Center a ministry of Mt. Pleasant Lutheran Church, Kendallville, IN**
- 4. Trinity Lutheran Church, Lebanon, IN**
- 5. So Much More Ministries, Fort Wayne, IN (Synod Authorized Outreach Ministry)**
- 6. Grace & Glory Lutheran Church, Goshen, KY (GRANT ON HOLD)**

Bishop Tim reported Faith, Jeffersonville, IN has sold its property but will remain nested in the "old" sanctuary per the agreement with the buyer.

Bishop Tim reported that St. Mark and Grace & Peace of Evansville voted to merge. St. Mark voted to agree with consolidation on March 19, 2025. Grace and Peace will not be using its buildings as part of the merger. The congregation needs to be under Synod Administration until the building is sold. The Synod Council needs to approve this and appoint an administration council. Bishop Tim recommends the following persons to be on the council: Rachel Mayes, Debbie Zehr, Dan Forehand, Jody Winter, and a member of Grace and Peace to be named later.

ACTION SC 2025/17: The Synod Council approved the recommendation of the Bishop to put Grace and Peace in Evansville, IN on Synod Administration until it sells its buildings.

ACTION SC 2025/18: The Synod Council approved the Synod Administration Committee for Grace and Peace upon the recommendation of the Bishop. The committee members are Rachel Mayes, Debbie Zehr, Pastor Dan Forehand, Deacon Jody Winter, and a member of Grace and Peace.

Bishop Tim also reported Grace and Peace is updating its State Documents.

Roster Concerns

Bishop Tim reported as a For Your Information that Pastor Joshua Burkholder's final On Leave From Call extension was granted at the 2025 Spring Council of Bishops meeting.

Synod Authorized Calls

Bishop Tim asked the Council to approve Pastor Grace Pardun to a call with the Seamen's Church Institute, an Ecumenical Ministry associated with the Episcopal Church and for Deacon Adrainne Gray as Executive Director of the Lutheran Diaconal Association at Valparaiso University. Pastor Grace Pardun abstained from this discussion and vote.

ACTION SC 2025/19: The Synod Council appointed Pastor Grace Pardun as a Synod Authorized Call to be pastor of the Seamen's Church Institute, an Episcopal Church associated ministry per the recommendation of the Bishop.

ACTION SC 2025/20: The Synod Council appointed Deacon Adrainne Gray as Executive Director of the Lutheran Diaconal Association per the recommendation of the Bishop.

Bishop Tim also requested and recommended the Council accept the retirement request of Pastor Jerri DeWitt. The effective date of her retirement is May 31, 2025.

ACTION SC 2025/21: The Synod Council approved the recommendation of the Bishop to place Pastor Jerri DeWitt on Retired status as of May 31, 2025.

Bishop Tim recommended to the Council the reappointment of conference dean of the Northeast Conference who is Pastor John Roberts of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in LaOtto, Indiana. This is a 3-year term beginning at the conclusion of the 2025 Synod Assembly.

ACTION SC 2025/22: The Synod Council approved the recommendation of the Bishop to reappoint Pastor John Roberts as Dean of the Northeast Conference for a 3-year term beginning upon the conclusion of the 2025 Synod Assembly.

Bishop Tim stated there are two other conferences that do not have appointed Deans. They are the Lafayette Conference and the South Central Conference (SCC). He is working on finding pastors to fill these vacancies.

Staff Updates

Bishop Tim reported on the following staffing updates: the interim DEM is Dave Daubert until May 31, 2025, or a permanent one is hired. There were DEM Interviews on April 4, 2025, and two more are scheduled for April 7. Bishop Tim announced a new position of IK Synod Social Advocacy and Justice Director which will replace the Director for Stewardship. The stewardship duties will be assumed by new DEM. A new position will combine the storyteller and administrative support

positions and will be one person to manage the database, support the Assistants to the Bishop, and oversee storytelling and social media.

Bishop Tim reported the Employee Handbook needs to be updated and is asking for volunteers to do help with that task. Julie Slavens and Pastor Grace Pardun volunteered.

Other Synod Staff Reports

Pastor Dan Forehand reported on his new roles as Campus Ministry staff liaison and Constitution Committee staff liaison. He announced that the Region 6 bishops will soon be helping with the video weekly sermons. This will provide some relief schedule-wise for Bishop Tim, Priscilla, and himself. He also reported on two Lily grants to be used to help pastors live out their calling as pastors through programming and professional development.

Committees and Task Force Reports

Constitution Committee – Josh Tatum reported the committee has finished reviewing constitutions that have come in to date. It also reviewed the resolution on resolutions at remote assemblies. It must be reviewed by the Committee after some edits and will be ready for the Council to review at the June meeting. Josh also stated a more detailed report is in the Dropbox.

WELCA – Tina Smith reported the national WELCA has an endowment fund of two million dollars and it will be used for grants relating to women leadership with respect to leadership, making global connection and living your Lutheran faith. The grant application is this summer. The Indiana WELCA chapter has some grant applications as well with a July 1 deadline. There will be a gathering in Evansville on April 26, 2025. One is also being planned in October 2025 in Northern Ohio. The chapter is focusing on supporting the summer reading camps and outreach to congregations.

Racial Justice Task Force – The task force is planning to have a breakout session at the Assembly on advocacy and/or Christian Nationalism.

Gafkjen Endowment Fund – Enough money for three \$1000 grants. The application process is now open and hope is to announce the recipients at the Assembly.

Mission Monitor Report – Rev. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar

The mission monitor reported the meeting was well attended and kept on schedule if not ahead of schedule. The monitor felt the leadership of the church was in very good hands from the Bishop to the staff to members of the Council as all are willing to follow the mission of the church and are committed to it.

Future Meetings

- Thursday, June 5 – 9:00am to 12:00 PM, Crowne Plaza Union Station, Indianapolis, IN
- Proposed 2025-2026 IK Synod Schedule
 1. August 16: Zoom at 9:30 to 11:30 am
 2. September 19-20: Location TBD
 3. November 14-15: Synod Office
 4. January 10: Zoom at 9:30 am EDT (8:30 am CDT)
 5. March 20-21 OR April 17-18 (Easter is April 5): Synod Office
 6. May 16 OR May 30: Zoom at 9:30 am EDT (8:30 am CDT)
 7. Synod Assembly Zoom, Saturday, June 6, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm EDT

Sending Prayer was led by the Meeting Chaplains and the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie M. Slavens
IK Synod Secretary