

## INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Conference Room  
IK Synod Office, Indianapolis, IN

Friday, November 8, 2024: Meeting – 7:00-9:00pm EST  
Saturday, November 9, 2024: Meeting – 9:30am – 2:30pm EST

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**PRESENT:** Bishop Tim Graham, Vice President Ted Miller, Secretary Julie Slavens, Treasurer Harry Albers, Pastor Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar, Pastor Ryan Bailey, Pastor Emmanuel Penumaka (Saturday), Pastor Vicki Garber, Pastor Bimen Limbong, Pastor Grace Pardun, Pastor Ladona Webb (online), Pastor Kristin Rice, Deacon Jody Winter, Larry Ahlersmeyer, Mike Hoover, Debbie Zehr, Greg Platt, Dee Ann Daniels, Chris Walda, Dianna Hunsinger, Laura Nicholson, and Tina Smith, WELCA Representative. Staff Present: Dan Forehand (Saturday afternoon); Karl Biermann (Saturday morning).

**ABSENT:** Nancy Bennett, Nicole Lee, Ella Engela, Noah Smith.

**GUESTS:** Josh Tatum, Synod Attorney, Pastor Priscilla Geerdes

Meeting Chaplains: Pr. Vicki Garber and Laura Nicholson, SAM  
Mission Monitor: Jody Winter

### **Friday, November 3**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. The meeting began with the Gathering Prayer led by the Meeting Chaplains. Bishop Tim welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves and answer the question: Where has God been at work in your life?

After everyone had shared, Bishop Tim divided the group into six small groups to take some time to discuss feelings about the election and how can you respond to a divided world. After group discussions, the group gathered into the large group and individuals shared their group's important points of their discussion of the questions.

At 9 pm the group shared Evening Prayer led by the Meeting Chaplains. The meeting was adjourned until the following morning.

### **Saturday, November 4**

After a service, including Holy Communion led by the Meeting Chaplains, the meeting was called to order at 10:20 am. Officer Reports were given as follows:

#### **Vice President – Ted Miller**

Ted stated his VP Report was in the Dropbox. He reported on the ELCA attorneys conference which he attended as well as Josh Tatum. Josh provided a summary of the conference and the topics discussed, mostly dealing with insurance issues for synods. Josh stated the conference provided a network for attorneys who represent synods and congregations.

Ted also reported that Larry Ahlersmeyer has agreed to be the CWA representative for the East Central Indiana Conference. Ted stated the Council needed to appoint Larry as the representative since it was not done at the Synod Assembly.

**SC2024/64: Mike Hoover made the motion to appoint Larry Ahlersmeyer as the Churchwide Assembly Representative of the East Central Indiana Conference of the IK Synod. Pastor Emmanuel Penumaka seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Ted provided information on the Vice President election. The nominations would come from the Nominations Committee. No task force is required as we did for the Bishop. Discussion ensued as to how to recruit or receive potential candidates for the positions. Ted reported the Executive Committee had met prior to the Council meeting on Friday afternoon and

this issue was also discussed. Consensus of the council was to tell the Deans of the opening and ask for names of people to consider. Julie Slavens would also ask the Nomination Committee if it would like an announcement to go in the IK Synod e-Newsletter.

### **Secretary Report – Julie Slavens**

Julie reported the Executive Committee met prior to the meeting on Friday afternoon. The Committee discussed many topics including revamping the Synod website, the planning for the Synod Assembly, and the election of the Synod Vice President. Julie also reported she attended the Region 6 Archive meeting in October which was held at Trinity Seminary. She got to tour the Archives and was impressed with the organization of materials from Region 6 congregations and Synods. She encouraged the pastors to review the website to determine what documents the Archives needed to be sent to it.

She reported that all previous members of the Nominations Committee agreed to continue on the committee. At least one lay person was needed to be appointed to the committee. She would begin to set up meetings for the winter to fill the slate of vacancies on the Council and committees.

Julie presented the minutes for the last three Synod Council meetings: August 3, September 13 and 14, and October 23, 2024. She stated the minutes of all three meetings were in the Dropbox. It was decided to approve the minutes of these meetings separately.

**SC2024/65: Ryan Bailey made the motion to accept the minutes of the August 3, 2024, Synod Council meeting and Jody Winter seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.**

**SC2024/66: Dee Ann Daniels made the motion to accept the minutes of the September 13 and 14, 2024 Synod Council meeting and Mike Hoover seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.**

**SC2024/67: Vicki Garber made the motion to approve the October 23, 2024, Synod Council meeting minutes and Jody Winter seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.**

### **Treasurer Report – Treasurer Harry Albers**

Harry provided financial information about receipts and expenses for the last few months. He shared a graph showing the giving and expenses. Things were tracking as expected. Harry stated more detailed information is in the Dropbox. He also reported that Kemper has completed the audits for January 2023 and January 2024 and the finances of the Synod are in great shape.

### **Bishop Report -- Tim Graham and Staff**

Bishop Tim asked Karl to report on the endowment funds. Karl reported the Disaster Recovery Endowment account has been set up. The Gafkjen leadership fund has enough money to begin distribution in the spring. The total amount given to date is over \$40,000. He also reported he is working on an endowment fund for the Region 6 Archives as it has extra money to invest for future projects. Funds for the individual endowments will be moved to a ministry growth fund for distribution of eligible funds.

Bishop Tim gave staffing updates. He introduced the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry Transition, Pastor Pricilla Geerdes. He asked her to say a few words about her and her background. She comes to the Synod from Central Illinois where she has ministered for 21 years but has roots in the IK Synod. She will begin her position on December 1, 2024. Bishop Tim reported the ELCA is in the process of appointing an Interim DEM, Dave Daubert. He will serve as DEM until a new one is selected. Bishop Tim explained the process. The ELCA has to approve the job description before it can be posted and before applications are accepted. This is an appointment made by the ELCA church wide office in consultation with the Synod office. He also reported he would like to add an administrative assistant on a part-time basis of about 15 hours per week to work on the database and to provide support for the assistants to the Bishop.

Bishop Tim reported the Chrism Liturgies Plan has not yet been completed and hopes to have more details at the January meeting.

Synod Assembly Update: Bishop Tim reported the Assembly will take place in Indianapolis at the Crowne Plaza hotel in downtown Indianapolis from June 5 to June 7. The staff is working on fees and a theme. There will not be keynote speakers other

than the Bishop. The Assembly will begin at noon on Thursday and end at noon on Saturday.

Roster Concerns -- On Leave from Call: Bishop Tim reported there were two requests for On Leave from Call -- one an extension and one a new leave. The extension was from Pastor Gretchen Freese, who requested her family leave be extended for another year. Pastor Dom Guido requested a one-year leave from call beginning October 24, 2024. Bishop Tim recommended the Council approve these leaves requests.

**SC2024/68: Bishop Tim recommends the Council approve the extension of Leave from Call – family leave of one year to Pastor Gretchen Freese. The Council unanimously approved the Bishop’s recommendation.**

**SC2024/69: Bishop Tim recommends the Council approve a one-year Leave from Call beginning October 2024 for Pastor Don Guido. The Council unanimously approved the Bishop’s recommendation.**

#### Other Staff Reports:

Pastor Dan Forehand reported his report was in Dropbox. He stated he was not able to be with the Council on Friday or Saturday morning as he was meeting with the Candidacy Committee.

#### Social Justice Ministries:

WELCA: Tina Smith provided a report there was a concern at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix of a lack of volunteers to help even after the board reached out to conferences to help. The board is looking at what to do in 2025 and beyond given this issue.

Racial Justice Task Force: Bishop Tim reported he is meeting with this group on November 12, 2024, and will report to the Council at the January meeting of any significant developments.

LOMIK: Bishop Tim reported the board will soon be naming an interim director while the process of hiring a director continues.

Bishop Tim led the council in a discussion of the Synod’s Mission and Vision statements. He asked council members to share what they have heard about what the Synod is doing and/or should be doing. Common themes were growth in the Synod and supporting each other, pastors, and Synod staff members and how do we connect with those who feel disconnected from the body of Christ.

#### **Mission Monitor Reflections:**

Jody Winter provided she felt the meeting went well and on time and a warm and supportive environment was created by Bishop Tim and the council members. She felt members did a good job during the mission discussion to wait to be acknowledged by Bishop Tim. She stated we need to remember to state our names for those online.

Bishop Tim and Ted Miller reminded the Council of the following future meetings:

- Saturday January 11, 2025 (via Zoom)
- April 4-5, 2025: Synod Office -- Chaplains Grace Pardun, Kristin Rice, and Mike Hoover. Mission Monitor: Evangeline Anderson- Rajkumar
- June 5, 2025 (9:00am – noon): Crowne Plaza Indianapolis Downtown Union Station
- **Synod Assembly, Thursday, June 5 – Saturday, June 7, 2025**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm after a Sending Prayer by the Meeting Chaplains.