

**INDIANA-KENTUCKY SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Crown Plaza Union Station -- Wabash Room**  
**Indianapolis, IN**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, June 5, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. EDT**

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Synod Council Members Present: Bishop Tim; Ted Miller, Vice President, Julie Slavens, Secretary; Harry Albers, Treasurer; Rev. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar; Rev. Ryan Bailey; Rev. Emmanuel Penumaka; Rev. Vicki Garber; Rev. Bimen Limbong; Rev. Grace Pardun; Rev. Kristin Rice; Deacon Jody Winter; Larry Ahlersmeyer; Mike Hoover; Debbie Zehr; Dee Ann Daniels; Chris Walda; Laura Nicholson. Rev. LaDona Webb; Greg Platt; and Dianna Hunsinger.

Synod Council Members Absent: Nicole Lee; Nancy Bennett; Noah Smith; Ella Engela.

Staff Members Present: Rev. Dan Forehand; Rev. Priscilla Gerdes; Missy Schroeder, DEM

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

The meeting began at approximately 9:05 am. Bishop Tim led a devotion on I Cor. 13 using the Message version and led us in prayer.

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

**ACTION SC 2025/23: The Synod Council approved the minutes of the April 2025 meeting unanimously.**

Vice President's Report

Ted Miller provided a summary of his report which he reported was in Dropbox for the June meeting. He expressed his gratitude for the Council members and stated he has enjoyed his service as secretary and vice president of the Synod and serving with the current council. He also reported on the progress of the Gafkjen Endowment fund. There were no applicants this round and there will be a matching fund drive in the Fall 2025.

Secretary's Report

Julie Slavens provided an Executive Committee report. She stated the Executive Committee had approved the appointment of Pastor Dom Guido as a Synod Authorized Call to UMC Vine and Branches Campus Ministry at Northern Kentucky

University. This is not a shared ministry with the UMC and his role is within the purview of the UMC. This vote was conducted via email with the executive committee. The executive committee recommends the Synod Council approve this action and appointment. This is a recommendation of the committee and does not need a second.

**ACTION SC 2025/24: The Synod Council approved the recommendation of the executive committee to appoint Pastor Dom Guido to the Vine and Branches UMC Campus Ministry at Northern Kentucky University as a Synod Authorized Call.**

Julie Slavens also gave a Nominating Committee report reflecting most vacancies had been filled and the full report of the committee was in the Bulletin of Reports for the Synod Assembly.

#### Treasurer Report

Harry Albers reported the Audit reports have been completed and the financial position of the Synod was in very good space. He reported as of the end of April 2025 giving was at 25% of the budget. This includes endowment draws and income from the Synod Assembly registrations. Further information was in the Dropbox. He also noted Paul Trickel would be completing his term on the Finance Committee so Harry would be looking for someone to replace him. Harry also went over the budget that would be presented at the Assembly.

#### Constitution Committee

Josh Tatum presented a draft resolution on resolutions at Remote Synod Assemblies. He asked for feedback on it. The committee will review the resolution per any feedback and ask the Council to approve it at the September or November meeting. Josh reported the committee is also working on rules for remote assemblies.

#### Bishop Report

Bishop Tim asked the Council to approve an agreement between Word of Hope Lutheran Church in Lexington, Kentucky and Saint Martha's Episcopal church in Lexington, Kentucky to unite these churches. Both of the congregations support the campus ministry at the University of Kentucky and will benefit from the union. The new congregation will be called Grace United. This has been in the works for a few years and the initial plan and agreement was signed by Bishop Bill Gafkjen last year. Mike Hoover made the motion to approve the union of these two congregations and Pastor Vicki Garder second.

**ACTION SC 2025/25: The Synod Council approved the agreement for the union agreement between Word of Hope and Saint Martha's unanimously.**

Bishop Tim recommended the appointment of Deans for conferences as follows:  
Lafayette Conference: Pastor Derek Nelson – 1 year remaining on term (2026)  
South Central Conference: Pastor Clair Ackleow – new 3-year term (2028)  
East Kentucky Conference: Pastor Vicki Garber – new 3-year term (2028)

**ACTION SC 2025/26: The Synod Council approved the recommendation of Bishop Tim for the appointment of Conference Deans as presented unanimously. Lafayette Conference: Pastor Derek Nelson – 1 year remaining on term (2026), South Central Conference: Pastor Clair Ackleow – new 3 year term (2028), and East Kentucky Conference: Pastor Vicki Garber – new 3 year term (2028).**

Bishop Tim also recommended the Council approve the hiring of Melissa (Missy) Schroeder as the DEM, Director of Evangelical Mission, for the Indiana-Kentucky Synod.

**ACTION SC 2025/27: The Synod Council approved the recommendation of Bishop Tim for the hiring of Melissa Schroeder as the Director of Evangelical Mission unanimously.**

*Congregational Concerns:* Bishop Tim shared updates about some of our congregation in rural areas that are closing due to low membership, which he shared is a nationwide issue for our church. He shared St. Peter, Milton, KY, has a final disaffiliation vote scheduled for Sunday, June 15, 2025. St. John, Napoleon, IN, has a first disaffiliation vote scheduled for July 13, 2025. Prior to the vote Bishop Tim consulted with the congregation on the various issues one of which is the sexuality statement of the ELCA. Bishop Tim shared St. Paul's Smyrna Lutheran Church also attended this consultation.

Bishop Tim reported Grace & Peace, Evansville, is still under Synod Administration but they have an offer on one of their church buildings. Josh Tatum and Pastor Dan Forehand are helping to lead this process. Bishop Tim also gave a summary of the issues with respect to the LOMIK board. It is a complex situation and since there is little synodical oversight, it will be tough for the Synod to intervene and help resolve the situation.

*Other Synod Staff Concerns:* Pastor Dan shared the Synod received a Lily grant for help in strengthening the work and structure of the synod, specifically the conference structure. There will be six listening meetings this summer around the Synod. The results of those meetings will be used to apply for the second phase of the grant in the fall to use to carry out the plans resulting from the listening meetings. The Synod also received a grant for SAM training, coaching and mentoring programs.

Pastor Priscilla Geerdes reported her report was in Dropbox and she welcomed Missy Schroeder to the staff and was looking forward to working with her.

Tina Smith the WELCA representative to the council shared that in the synod 1000 quilts were made by 13 congregations.

*Election of Executive Committee Members:* Ted and Bishop Tim explained the makeup of the committee – officers, one rostered and a lay male and lay female members of the council. The members of the council vote on the members and it is a one year term. The results of the vote for the roster member occurred on the first ballot and Jody Winter was selected. Mike Hoover was elected on the second ballot as the lay male representative and Laura Nicholson was elected on the fourth ballot as the lay female representative.

*Synod Assembly:* Bishop Tim reviewed the agenda for the Assembly and reminded the council to attend the orientation meeting at 1 pm to be introduced to the voting members.

Bishop Tim and Ted Miller thanked the outgoing members of the council for their service and asked them to share any parting remarks. Pastor Ryan Bailey shared he was blessed to serve on the council as he saw the bigger picture of the church. He asked the council to remember the larger church we are serving and to embrace our gift and responsibility of being Lutheran and creating a space and place for all.

Bishop Tim reminded the council of the upcoming meetings for 2025-2026 as follows:

1. August 16: Zoom at 9:30 to 11:30 am EDT
2. September 19-20: Synod Office
3. November 14-15: Synod Office
4. January 10, 2026: Zoom at 9:30 am EDT (8:30 am CDT)
5. Spring Retreat April 17-18 (Easter is April 5): Location TBD
6. May 16: Zoom at 9:30 am EDT (8:30 am CDT) (May 30 is the backup date)
7. Synod Assembly Zoom, Saturday, June 6, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm EDT

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am upon motion by Mike Hoover and seconded by Laura Nicholson and a unanimous approval of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie M. Slavens  
IK Synod Secretary