

South Dakota Synod, ELCA
Synod Council
Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls
May 31, 2025, following the close of the Synod Assembly

Present: Bishop Constanze Hagmaier, Jill Beers, Terry Johnson, Kristie Anderson, Rev. Michael DeKraai, John Rasmussen, Rev. Karl Breddin, Marlee Braun, Gary Kaufmann, Kristen Peterson, Cristy Harkness, Jake Hoffner, Rev. Jeff Otterman, Kelly Nelson, Chad Nilson, Rev. Justin Van Orman, Jeff Clark, Bonny Hansen, Rev. Becky Senner, Rev. Wilbur Holz, Jody Johnson, Craig Pfeifle, Juan Angel, Wyatt Lesmeister, Crystal Brakke, Lois Borchardt, Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, Rev. Jonathan Vehar, Kathy McHenry, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Bonny Hansen called the meeting to order.

Bonny Hansen read the Land Acknowledgement

Land Acknowledgement

South Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America recognizes that the Oceti Sakowin (the Seven Council Fires of the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota), the Arikara, the Ponca and the Cheyenne, are the historic inhabitants of South Dakota; and South Dakota is the current home of the Cheyenne River Tribe, Crow Creek Tribe, Flandreau Santee Tribe, Lower Brule Tribe, Oglala Tribe, Rosebud Tribe, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Standing Rock Tribe, and Yankton Tribe.

We recognize that we are called to be in good relationship with our neighbors, that the tribes are sovereign nations, that there is a history of broken treaties and broken trust, and that there is lots of work to be done. And we also recognize that as Christians, we have faith in new life, in hope for mending what is broken, and in our calling through the Holy Spirit to do this work.

Opening Prayer

Bishop Constanze gave the Opening Prayer from the Book of Awakening.

Roll Call and Introductions

Forward any corrections to Lois at lborchardt@sdsynod.org

Approve Agenda

The agenda were in the Google Drive.

MSC to approve the agenda in the order as the chair deems most appropriate.
SC.2025.05.01

Approve Minutes

The minutes of the March 14, 2025 and May 13, 2025 were in the Google Drive.

MSC to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2025 and May 13, 2025 synod council meetings.

SC.2025.05.02

Synod Assembly

Evaluation-

- More youth were in attendance
- There were several negative comments on V-poll. Aaron will contact V-poll about the problems.
- The Bishop election on the 1st ballot was a huge affirmation
- The discussion between the bishops was very informational.
- The associates discussion was very valuable
- Suggest having a tech desk available for help
- Could there be a tv or audio available in the dining room
- Suggest using upstairs and basement dining areas for both lunches

Bishop Report

Bishop Eaton loved the spirit of the assembly. She also thanked us for reelecting Bishop Constanze

Bishop Constanze thanked the council for their service to the Synod. Bishop Constanze is going to Germany following the assembly. She appreciates the prayers for her parents. Jonathan Vehar will serve as acting bishop during her travel.

Old Business

The audit report and related letters from Paceline Accounting Group and the Audit Committee Report were found in the Google Drive. The Audit Committee report was presented to the council by Terry Johnson.

MSC to receive the report of the Audit Committee.

SC.2025.05.03

Roster Matters

A. Inform Only

- Rev. Keith Garness - Transferred to Northwest Intermountain Synod effective 3/17/25
- Rev. Debra Hippen Schultz - Transferred to Grand Canyon Synod effective 4/07/25
- Rev. David Strommen - Transferred into SD from Central States Synod effective 5/16/25
- Rev. Janna Bader - Transferred into SD from Southwestern Minnesota Synod effective 5/18/25
- Rev. Heidi Binstock - Transferred to Nebraska Synod effective 5/19/25
- Rev. Anita Strommen - Transferred into SD from Central States Synod effective 5/28/25

- Rev. Josh Schunk - Transferred into SD from Northeastern Iowa Synod effective 6/01/25
- Rev. Ronald Strobel - Transferred into SD from Southeast Michigan Synod effective 6/01/25

Other roster matters will be addressed in Executive Session.

MSC to enter executive session for roster matters
SC.2025.05.04

Synod Council met in executive session.

MSC to come out of executive session and report all actions taken in the minutes
SC.2025.05.08

**** Actions taken while in executive session****

Rev. Arlyn Rusche is requesting On-Leave-from-Call effective 7/01/25.

MSC to grant Rev. Arlyn Rusche On-Leave-from-Call effective 7/01/25.
SC.2025.05.05

Rev. Stephen Palo is requesting Renewal of On-Leave-from-Call effective 7/07/24.

MSC to grant Rev. Stephen Palo Renewal of On-Leave-from-Call effective 7/07/24.
SC.2025.05.06

Rev. Brian Wasmoen is requesting Retirement effective 8/01/25.

MSC to grant Rev. Brian Wasmoen Retirement effective 8/01/25.
SC.2025.05.07

Congregational Matters

Inform Only:

Resurrection in Pierre held the 1st Vote to Leave ELCA on 4/23/25.

Retire Outgoing members

The Synod Council thanked the following retiring members for their service to the synod:

Anne Rieck McFarland - Crossroads
 Kelly Nelson - Northern Plains
 Bonny Hansen - Prairie River
 Juan Angel - Youth

Seat incoming members

The Synod Council welcomes the following new members to the council:

Kristen Peterson - Crossroads

Anne Fortin - Northern Plains
Crystal Brakke - Prairie Rivers
Wyatt Lesmeister - Youth

Brief New Member Orientation - Bishop Hagmaier

A brief new member orientation was given by Bishop Hagmaier.

- A. Board Book in Google Drive - new members are encouraged to read the board book
- B. Confidentiality - Members were reminded that actions taken in Executive Session are to remain confidential.
- C. SD Synod Ethics Policy, found in Google Drive - Members were reminded to look over the Ethics Policy
- D. Disclosure Form, found in the Google Drive - Each Member signed the Disclosure Form

New Business

No new business was presented

Future Meetings

- A. Exec: August 7, 2025, 6:00 pm, Synod Office, Sioux Falls
- B. Synod Council Retreat: August 8-9, 2025, Gloria Dei Lutheran, Sioux Falls
- C. Exec: October 9, 2025, 6:00, Synod Office, Sioux Falls
- D. Synod Council: October 10, 2025, 8:30 am, TBD

Closing Prayer

Rev. Wilbur Holz led the group in the closing prayer.

Adjourn

MSC to adjourn the meeting.

SC.2025.05.09

Respectfully submitted

Jill Beers, Secretary