

Minutes from the  
**SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**

**October 11, 2025**

Central States Synod Office  
420 W 14<sup>th</sup> St Ste B  
Kansas City, MO 64105  
(some joined via Zoom)

*Present: Bishop Donna Simon, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Alesia Roccia (Secretary), Rev. David Frerichs, Rev. Tina Reyes, Sarah Paul*

*Virtual: Julie Barstow, Tullia Hamilton, Richard Jensen, Robert Corrothers, Joanne Hickey, Bethany Hill (present 10:30am to 11:45am)*

*Absent: Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Richard Ashley, Rev. Zac Sturm, Vickie Donnell*

*Also present: Rev. Chad Langdon (Associate to the Bishop) and Rich Gates (Synod Administrator)*

*The Synod Council gathered on Friday, October 10, at Old Chicago. They shared a meal and conversation, but no official business was conducted.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Nancy Nagle, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 8:34 am and followed a land acknowledgment.

Nancy welcomed everyone, especially new members: Robert Carrothers, Vickie Donnell, Joanne Hickey, Bethany Hill, Richard Jensen, and Sarah Paul

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Bishop Donna led us in devotion and prayer.

**Arrangement for care of the responsibilities of Synod Secretary**

Nancy Nagel presented the direction for the successor according to the constitution. Rev. Chad Langdon has assumed the role of Associate to the Bishop. Alesia Roccia has been appointed to fill the vacancy of Secretary of the Synod.

“Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be four years.”

### **Appointment of new synod council members**

- **SC 25.10.11.A72. It was MSC to appoint Richard Jensen and Vickie Donnell as members to the synod council**

Lay Male: Richard Jensen

Lay Female/NB: Vickie Donnell

### **BISHOP'S REPORT**

Bishop Donna shared the importance of Bishop and Chad visiting congregations across the synod.

Bishop's full report can be found in the meeting documents.

### **ASSOCIATE TO THE BISHOP'S REPORT**

Rev. Chad Langdon presented the Synod pulse report and priorities for the position of Associate to the Bishop.

Chad's full report can be found in the meeting documents.

### **VICE PRESIDENT REMARKS**

Nancy shared that the Bishop election has been the highlight. Appointed a Bishop's election committee, a year of discernment grounded in scripture. The election was held at Synod Assembly. Nancy expressed her appreciation for Synod staff for Synod Assembly preparations and to Sarah Thomas for leading a fair and accurate election.

Nancy expressed her gratitude for the Synod staff members, especially Tim Anderson and Rich Gates.

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Alesia presented the minutes from the Synod Executive Committee meeting on August 15, 2025.

- **SC 25.10.11.A73. It was MSC to approve the minutes from the August 15, 2025, Synod Executive Committee meeting.**
- **SC 25.10.11.A74. It was MSC to appoint Tullia Hamilton, Julie Barstow, and Rev David Frerichs to the 2025-26 Synod Executive Committee.**

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

**Financial Status as of 8/31/2025, after 7 months of the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2026.**

#### **Income from congregations**

- \$714,170 received

- The amount received is \$28,753 more than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a 4.0% variance
- The amount received is \$9,099 more than received last year, a 1.3% variance

#### ELCA Churchwide Contribution

- \$355,890 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$13,182 more than anticipated in the revised spending budget, a 3.7% variance
- The amount contributed is \$3,355 more than last year, a 0.9% variance

#### Synod Expenditures

- \$360,272 spent
- The amount spent is \$58,328 less than budgeted, a -16.2% variance
- This is also \$26,843 less than spent last year, a -7.5% variance

#### Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures

- \$737,757 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$23,551 less than anticipated and \$186 less than last year
- \$716,162 in Total Expenditures, \$45,146 less than anticipated, and \$23,488 less than last year
- Net surplus of \$21,595 as compared to a \$1,707 deficit last year

#### Analysis of Financial Status

- August was a very solid month for giving from the congregations. As a result, we have widened the gap between our actual giving and the amount we expected to receive at this point in the year. We're not \$28,753 ahead of budget. This giving has also pushed us slightly ahead of last year's pace, because we have now \$9,000 more than last year after 7 months of the year. We have been remarkable consistent from month to month in giving, but fell off the pace in September. Hopefully, this is not the start of a trend for the remainder of the year.
- Synod expenses were significantly lower than budgeted and below last year. This is driven by a greater than expected offset for the campus ministry pastoral salaries. I believe this will decrease over the remainder of the year. We also have seen lower than expected travel expenses and accounting expenses. Both are lower than budgeted and lower than last year. Our Audit expenses are much lower than expected (\$16,000) because we are behind schedule for completing the audits planned for this year and have spent less as a result.
- Total Support and Income is lower than expected. This is primarily because we are no longer receiving a grant from Churchwide to cover administrative costs for Aimee Appel as a part-time DEM. As mentioned above, this is offset by the fact that our Travel expenses are lower as well. The other contributing factor is we have received lower than expected

reimbursement for Candidacy process expenses, but these do vary from year to year. We have a net surplus at this point and have released none of the temporarily restricted funds called for in the budget.

### **SYNOD STAFF HEALTH INSURANCE**

Nancy called for a motion to add Staff Insurance decisions to the agenda.

- **SC 25.10.11.A75. It was MSC to add a discussion of staff insurance options to the agenda.**

Bishop Donna reviewed the insurance options provided by Portico. The plan suggested is HDHP2000, at a cost of \$150,944, which includes \$500 per person, maximum of \$1,000 contributed to the HSA.

- **SC 25.10.11.A76. It was MSC to approve the selection of the suggested health plan HDHP2000 for synod staff.**

### **BISHOP'S TRANSITION**

Need new authorization for Bishop Donna Simon and removal of Susan Cande. Current authorization is as follows:

- SEC 24.08.16.A43. It was MSC to authorize as signatories on all of the financial accounts of the Central States Synod the following people: Bishop Susan Cande, Treasurer Scott Schulte & Bookkeeper Michelle Goodwin. It was further approved to remove Barbara Beadle as an authorized signatory.
- **SC 25.10.11.A77. It was MSC to authorize as signatories on all of the financial accounts of the Central States Synod the following people: Bishop Donna Simon, Treasurer Scott Schulte & Bookkeeper Michelle Goodwin. It was further approved to remove Susan Cande as an authorized signatory.**

### **AUTHORIZED VIEW-ONLY STATUS**

Authorization for the synod administrator to receive view-only access to bank accounts (or at least the primary UMB checking account) for the purpose of verifying receipts of ACH direct deposits, answering questions regarding the status of outstanding checks, and various reporting needs as required.

- **SC 25.10.11.A78. It was MSC to authorize Rich Gates view-only access to bank accounts for the purpose of verifying receipts of ACH direct deposits, answering questions regarding the status of outstanding checks, and various reporting needs as required.**

#### **REPORTS FROM SYNOD STAFF, TEAMS & COMMITTEES**

Ministry of CSS (Central States Synod) is carried out through Teams and Committees. Please review the listing of committees and rosters. Nancy encourages council members to support the committees and teams.

Bishop Donna will review the list of Teams and Committees and note those required by ELCA constitution.

It is recommended that the Roster of Teams and Committees be included in Council resources.

#### **SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES AND SYNOD AUTHORIZED OUTREACH MINISTRY RE-AUTHORIZATIONS**

- **SC 25.10.11.A79.** It was MSC to renew Mision San Juan de Dios, Iglesia Luterana Sagrado Corazón de Jesus, and South Sudanese Congregation as Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities of the CSS for one year.
- **SC 25.10.11.A80.** It was MSC to renew Oasis on the Boulevard as a Synod Authorized Outreach Ministry of the CSS for one year.

#### **ROSTER REPORT**

Bishop Donna presented a written roster report.

##### **On Leave**

- **SC 25.10.11.A81.** It was MSC to grant a sixth year of on-leave status, effective September 10, 2025 to Bethany Ann Rutten-Kempees.

##### **Retirements**

- **SC 25.10.11.A82.** It was MSC to grant retirement status to Bradford Bray, effective January 1, 2026.
- **SC 25.10.11.A83.** It was MSC to grant retirement status to Richard Krenning, effective November 1, 2026.

##### **Synod Council Calls – Mission Developers**

- **SC 25.10.11.A84.** It was MSC to grant *en bloc* one-year term Synod Council calls as mission developers to Odil Flores-Canales, Sagrado Corazon; Ivan Gonzalez, Partners (San Juan); and Philip Deng, Southern Sudanese Worshipping Community effective January 1, 2026.

##### **Interim Ministry**

- **SC 25.10.11.A85.** It was MSC to grant *en bloc* one-year term Synod Council calls to interim ministry to Rev. Larry Lempke, Rev. Jealaine Marple, Rev. Peter Rehwaldt, and Rev. Matthew (Matt) Schlake effective January 1, 2026.

#### **Information**

- Gerhard Kraus, retired pastor, died September 3, 2025. His funeral is not yet scheduled but is anticipated to be held at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Creve Coeur, Missouri, where he last served as an interim pastor.
- Susan Anderson (Word and Sacrament) accepted a call to St. Martin Lutheran Church in Kansas City, Kansas, effective September 14, 2025. She transferred from Eastern North Dakota Synod.

#### Congregations/Synod-Authorized Worship and Outreach Communities

- Hope Lutheran Church, Rolla, Missouri: has disaffiliated from the ELCA
- Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Lucas, Kansas: The Congregation has taken one vote to disaffiliate from the ELCA
- Oasis on the Boulevard Outreach Community: Bishop Donna shared that the developer for Oasis is moving out of the country. There is a search underway for a new developer.

#### **HOUSING ALLOWANCES**

- **SC 24.10.26.A86. It was MSC to designate the following requested amounts of salary as Housing Allowances for 2026:**
  - **\$23,000 of Bishop Donna Simon's salary as Housing Allowance for 2026;**
  - **\$40,000 of Rev. Chad Langdon's salary as Housing Allowance for 2026.**

#### **CONGREGATION CONSTITUTIONS**

The following congregations have updated and/or amended their constitution: Our Savior Lutheran Church (Topeka, Kansas) First Lutheran Church, (Saint Joseph, Missouri), All Saints Lutheran Church, (Blue Springs, Missouri). Thank you to Rich Gates for reviewing and recommending approval.

- **SC 25.10.11.A87. It was MSC to approve the updated constitutions of Our Savior Lutheran Church (Topeka, Kansas), First Lutheran Church (Saint Joseph, Missouri), and All Saints Lutheran Church (Blue Springs, Missouri) /**

#### **Synod Constitution and Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions Amended May 5, 2024**

The council will make recommendations to Synod Assembly to be published by December 6, 2025.

New Required Provision in Synod Constitution

**†S6.04.02.** It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be members of historically underrepresented groups, in addition to the 10 percent representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English in †S6.04. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

- **SC 25.10.11.A87. It was MSC that the Synod Council will form a task force to define “historically under-represented groups” in S6.04.02 of the constitution for the context of CSS.**

The recommendation of Synod Council for the Task Force will be to address the synod's plan for implementing the 10 percent goal at a later time.

- **SC 25.10.11.A88. It was MSC that the Synod Council will recommend to Synod Assembly the update the synod seal and its description to correspond to the new ELCA seal.**
- **SC 25.10.11.A89. It was MSC that the Synod Council will follow the recommendations regarding non-required provisions to amend and adopt provisions with the understanding that we will work to clarify language to make it inclusive in 10.06:**

**S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit persons currently serving as synod-authorized ministers and/or lay representatives of congregations under development and authorized worshiping communities and/or outreach ministries of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.**

**S7.26.01. A Synod-Authorized Minister serving under a covenant by authority of the Bishop of the Central States Synod shall have the privilege of serving as a voting member of the Central States Synod Assembly.**

**S7.26.02 Synod-Authorized worshiping communities and outreach ministries of the Synod may elect two lay members to serve as their representative and voting members at the Synod Assembly.**

**S9.04 Amend the provision that the bishop be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot as noted.**

**S10.05 Amend provision of elected members of the Synod Council shall not receive compensation solely for their service as council members.**

**S10.06 No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council or the following synod committees: Executive Committee, Consultation Committee, Committee on Discipline, Audit Committee. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding**

**members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).**

**S10.07.01 Revoke bylaw S10.07.01**

**S10.09 Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern the parliamentary procedure of all meetings of the Synod Council**

**S11.04 A Mutual Ministry Committee may be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the Bishop.**

**S13.40 and S13.41 Worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod and acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.**

- **SC 25.10.11.A88. It was MSC to accept the recommendations in Chapter 4, S10.01.01 as presented.**
- **SC 25.10.11.A89. It was MSC to adopt the changes to the continuing resolutions in Section 5 of the recommendations, with the removal of Rolla, MO (Hope) S12.01.A.18**

#### **YEAR-END APPEAL**

Year-end appeal will be created and organized by Bishop Donna, Julie Barstow, and Tim Anderson.

#### **RESERVED FUNDS**

The reserved funds result from the sale of two properties. The suggestion is for reserved funds to be directed to new ministries and \$100,000 was earmarked from Synod Assembly resolution for this purpose.

The Executive Committee will begin working on a process for use of funds to be presented to Synod Council in March 2026.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Bishop Donna closed in prayer and the Council Meeting adjourned at 1:46pm

#### **Upcoming meeting dates:**

- **Budget Committee - January 15, 6:00 pm (Zoom)**
- **Executive Committee – January 16 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm (Zoom)**
- **Synod Council - March 13-14 Fri eve-Sat morning (Zoom)**
- **Executive Committee – May 16 1:00 pm (Zoom)**
- **Synod Council – June 4, 2026**

- **Synod Assembly – June 5-6, 2026 virtual**

Respectfully submitted,

Alesia Roccia  
Central States Synod Secretary

*Explanation of Motion Notation:*

**SC 24.10.26.A52      It was MSC to go into Executive Session.**

The motions are in **bold** so they are easier to spot in the minutes.

- **SC**      stands for “Synod Council”
- **24**      the year: 2024
- **10**      the month: October
- **26**      the day: 26
- **A**      stands for “Action”
- **52**      means that this is the 52<sup>nd</sup> action of the year by the Synod Council
- **MSC**      stands for “moved, seconded, and carried” which means that the motion passed