

Minutes from the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
of the Central States Synod
August 15, 2025
via Zoom

Present: Bishop Susan Candea, Bishop-Elect Donna Simon, Nancy Nagel (Vice President), Scott Schulte (Treasurer), Rev. Chad Langdon (Secretary), Julie Barstow, Tullia Hamilton

Absent:

CALL TO ORDER

Nancy called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and led us in this Land Acknowledgement:

- *We respectfully acknowledge that we are on the traditional, ancestral lands of the Osage, Kickapoo, and Kaskaskia Nations. The process of knowing and acknowledging the land we stand on is a way of honoring and expressing gratitude for the ancestral people who were on this land before us."*
- Bishop Candea led us in a devotion & prayer based on the Truth of God written by Walter Brueggeman.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chad presented the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on June 5, 2025 and the 2025 Central States Synod Assembly.

- **SEC 25.08.15.A53** **It was MSC to approve the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on June 5, 2025.** *(Motion notation explained at the end of these minutes)*
- **SEC 25.08.15.A54** **It was MSC to approve the minutes from the 2025 Central States Synod Assembly minutes.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Scott presented a written treasurer's report:

Financial Status as of 7/31/2025, after 6 months of the fiscal year, ending January 31, 2026.

Income from congregations

- \$599,165 received
- The amount received is \$11,665 less than what was anticipated in our revised spending budget, a -1.9% variance
- The amount received is \$22,240 less than received last year, a -3.7% variance

ELCA Churchwide Contribution

- \$246,973 contributed to Churchwide
- This is \$46,777 less than anticipated in the revised spending budget, an -18.9% variance
- The amount contributed is \$63,729 less than last year, a -25.8% variance
- Contribution to Churchwide for July has not been sent yet, approximately \$51,000.

Synod Expenditures

- \$313,164 spent
- The amount spent is \$45,636 less than budgeted, a -14.6% variance
- This is also \$14,630 less than spent last year, an -4.7% variance

Total Support & Revenue vs. Total Expenditures

- \$647,169 received in Total Support & Revenue, \$5,381 less than anticipated and \$16,222 less than last year
- \$560,137 in Total Expenditures, \$92,413 less than anticipated, and \$78,359 less than last year
- Net surplus of \$87,032 as compared to a \$24,895 surplus last year

Analysis of Financial Status

- We're running almost \$12,000 ahead of our expected pace for giving from the congregations. It is easy to see why. Aside from the disastrous month in February, the contributions have been remarkably consistent. Giving in June was especially good. We are still running behind last year's pace but not by a huge amount.
- Synod expenses were lower than budgeted and below last year. This is driven by a greater than expected off-set for the campus ministry pastoral salaries and lower than expected travel expenses. Our Accounting expenses are also lower than budgeted and much lower than last year. The campus ministry off-set is primarily a timing issue in that the two sites with pastors have caught up with the amounts need to support the pastor compensation.
- Total Support and Income is a bit lower than expected, but that is due to several items being slightly lower to this point. Total Expenses are lower because of the decreased synod expenses and the timing issue for the Mission Support payment for Churchwide. Having a surplus of \$87,000 is tremendous halfway through the year! I will also point out that the budget calls for releasing \$90,000 of temporarily restricted funds for the year, which would equal \$45,000 for the year to date. We have released none of these funds thus far.
- Discussion included:
 - How do we make our contributions to Churchwide? Scott answered that we make those contributions monthly.
- Pass Through Funds – Rich Gates has been working hard to clean up the Pass Through Funds from the last several years. He has identified where all of these funds were designated, except for a final \$1,863. Despite spending many hours on this project, he cannot identify what these funds were originally designated for.
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A55 It was MSC to distribute the remaining \$1,863 to Global Refuge.**
- Campus Ministry – At the June 2025 Synod Council meeting, we discussed how to pay our portion of the salaries for the campus ministry pastors. They were listed in our accounts and on payroll as Synod employees. The amounts we have been paying for campus ministry have been significantly decreased over the years. At the June Synod Council meeting we decided to structure those grants in a different way so that in 2026, the campus pastors would no longer be considered Synod employees. We would simply give the money to the campus ministry in grant form, and the campus ministry would then be responsible for figuring out their own payroll & forms.
 - K-State Campus Ministry has asked us to reconsider the change in this arrangement because it increases their costs for Workers' Compensation and Payroll expenses.
 - We questioned why they need to have a payroll service for one employee. Most of our congregations manage payroll with volunteers and we think that their Campus Ministry Board can handle this.
 - We recommended that they connect with a local congregation (like Peace, Manhattan) to help with the logistics of payroll if they are struggling with it.
 - We discussed the possibility of the Synod covering the cost of Workers' Compensation for 2026 while they make this transition, with the idea of the Campus Ministry assuming the full burden of the costs in 2027.

- **SEC 25.08.15.A56** It was MSC that we continue with the arrangement that we had already decided upon, that in 2026, we just give KSU Campus Ministry a grant for the amount in the budget and let them assume full responsibility for the distribution and management of these funds.
- **SEC 25.08.15.A57** It was MSC that we give each Campus Ministry a grant of \$800 in 2026 to help in the transition to managing their own funds (Worker's Compensation, payroll, etc.). It was intended that this is a one-time grant for 2026 and will not be offered in 2027.
- Healthcare Changes – Portico is changing the way and the processes that people will be enrolled in Portico each year. This will affect how we enroll employees next year.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Candea presented a written report. There were no questions or discussion.

SYNOD COUNCIL

There have been some changes to the composition of the Synod Council that need to be addressed.

- Rev. Zac Sturm has declined to serve on the Executive Committee for 2027. It was recommended that we ask Alesia Roccia to serve on the Executive Committee.
- Logan Simon has resigned from the Synod Council. Bishop-Elect Simon & Nancy will work to fill this opening for a representative from Western Kansas, which should be a Lay Male.
- Rev. Chad Langdon has been called to serve at the Associate to the Bishop and will need to step down as Secretary. The Synod Staff will work to provide some possible names as a replacement.
- Sarah Paul has been nominated to serve as the Youth representative on the Synod Council. She is a member of Bethel Lutheran (St. Louis, MO)
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A58** It was MSC to appoint Sarah Paul as the Youth Representative. This is a 2-year term, which will end at the 2027 Synod Assembly.

INSURANCE

The Synod's current insurance is through Church Mutual. Our total annual cost for insurance has been \$12,231. Rich Gates & Bishop Candea have been reviewing our insurance to make sure we have the proper coverages. Our new total costs with changes in coverage (which actually puts us more in line with ELCA recommendations) will now be \$11,592.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIM

There has been an ongoing dispute with Rev. Ann Rundquist and the Synod. After many months, Church Mutual has agreed to a workers' compensation settlement with her of \$4,000 and the Central States Synod is not listed on that settlement.

ROSTER REPORT

Bishop Candea presented a written roster report.

- On Leave From Call
 - Rev. Matt Helfrich
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A59** It was MSC to grant Rev. Matt Helfrich On Leave from Call status, effective June 5, 2025. This is his 1st year of On Leave from Call.
 - Rev. Callista Isabelle
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A60** It was MSC to grant Rev. Callista Isabelle On Leave from Call status, effective August 5, 2025. This is her 1st year of On Leave from Call.

- Rev. Dean Apel
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A61** It was MSC to renew Rev. Dean Apel's On Leave from Call status, effective August 25, 2025. This is his 2nd year of On Leave from Call.
- Retirements
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A62** It was MSC to grant Rev. Susan Candea retirement status, effective September 1, 2025. She has been serving as the Bishop of the Central States Synod.
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A63** It was MSC to grant Rev. Dave Whetter retirement status, effective September 1, 2025. He has been serving as the Associate to the Bishop of the Central States Synod.
- Synod Council Calls
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A64** It was MSC to grant a Synod Council call to Rev. Ashley Huber, effective August 11, 2025. She will be serving as the Manager of Patient Experience (which includes oversight of the Spiritual Care Department) at KU Med in Kansas City. This call is co-terminus with her position.
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A65** It was MSC to grant a Synod Council call to Deacon Rachel Helton, effective August 23, 2025. She is serving as a chaplain at Cardinal Glennon Hospital in St. Louis. This call is co-terminus with her position.
 - **SEC 25.08.15.A66** It was MSC to grant a Synod Council call to Rev. Chad Langdon, effective September 1, 2025. He will be serving as the Associate to the Bishop.

CONGREGATIONS

Hope Lutheran (Rolla, MO) will take their 2nd vote to disaffiliate on August 31, 2025. Because they were started by the ELCA, they require Synod Council approval to disaffiliate. They are currently served part-time by Rev. Richard Krenning. He will need to decide if he will remain on the roster.

- **SEC 25.08.15.A67** It was MSC to allow Hope Lutheran (Rolla, MO) to disaffiliate pending the decision of their vote on August 31, 2025.

CONGREGATION CONSTITUTIONS

St. John (Russell, KS) has recently updated their constitution and everything is in order.

- **SEC 25.08.15.A68** It was MSC to approve the updated constitution for St. John (Russell, KS).

Trinity (Kirkwood, MO) updated their constitution last year, but all the procedures were not quite finalized yet.

- **SEC 25.08.15.A69** It was MSC to approve the updated constitution for Trinity (Kirkwood, MO).

Bishop Candea is going through her files and there will likely be more constitutional changes coming.

STAFF TRANSITION

Bishop-Elect Donna Simon has been working on her transition into the role.

- **SEC 25.08.15.A70** It was MSC to begin paying Bishop-Elect Donna Simon half-time beginning August 25, 2025, with her Portico benefits and full-time payroll beginning September 1. It was also moved to begin paying Rev. Chad Langdon full-time on August 25, 2025.
- Director of Evangelical Mission – Bishop-Elect Donna has received a couple Rostered Ministry Profiles as possible people to fill that position. She will be conducting interviews in the near future.

- Installation Service – Bishop-Elect Donna Simon’s Installation Service will be on September 28th.

UPCOMING DATES

Future Synod Assembly Dates

- **SEC 25.08.15.A71** **It was MSC to hold the 2026 Synod Assembly virtually on June 5-6, 2026. It was also moved to hold the 2027 Synod Assembly in Kansas City from June 3-5, 2027.**

Synod Council

- The next full Synod Council meeting will be on October 10 – 11, 2025 in Kansas City. We will gather for fellowship & prayer on Friday evening, with a full day of meetings on Saturday.
- The full Synod Council will meet again on March 13-14, 2026 via Zoom.

Executive Committee

- The Budget Committee will meet on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 6:00pm via Zoom.
- The Executive Committee will meet on Friday, January 16, 2026, from 1:00 – 4:00pm via Zoom.
- The Executive Committee will meet again on Friday, May 15, 2026, from 1:00 – 4:00pm via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

Bishop-elect Donna Simon closed us in prayer and we adjourned at 3:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Chad Langdon
Central States Synod Secretary

Explanation of Motion Notation:

- **SEC 25.08.15.A53** **It was MSC to approve the minutes from the Synod Council meeting on June 5, 2025.** The motions are in **bold** so they are easier to spot in the minutes.
 - **SEC** stands for “Synod Executive Committee”
 - **25** the year: 2025
 - **08** the month: August
 - **15** the day: 15th
 - **A** stands for “Action”
 - **53** means that this is the 53rd action of the year by the organization
 - **MSC** stands for “moved, seconded, and carried” which means that the motion passed