



Southeastern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 God's work. Our hands.

Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council
Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2024

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod Council met on November 9, 2024, at the Synod Office in Northfield, MN.

Members present: Joellen Barak, Rev. Jessica Bakken Busch, Rev. Shelley Cunningham, Jennifer Levison, Rev. Sam Mailleue, Deacon Amanda Sabelko, Mona Skare, Ed Taylor, Dr. Joyce Thompson, Rev. Dr. Kristen Venne, Rev. John Weisenburger, Treasurer Tammy Dahlvang, Secretary Rev. Josh Enderson, Vice President Lisa Dierks, and Bishop Regina Hassanally.

Absent: Matthew Huggenvik, Marshall Laidlaw, Karen Myers, Sam Pollack, Brian Scott, and Carolyn Solberg.

Staff: Rev. Emily Carson, Rev. Barb Streed, Rev. Matt Larson, Kathy Chatelaine, and Cheryse Brenno.

GENERATIVE WORK

- The council meeting began with introductions of council members and staff, a tour of the new synod office space, and staff introductions. This included a time for questions and dialogue between the council and staff.

BUSINESS MEETING

CALL TO ORDER & OVERVIEW OF AGENDA

- Vice President Lisa Dierks called the meeting to order at 12:33 am.
- She then presented the agenda.
- Dr. Joyce Thompson motioned to approve the agenda.

SC24.11.50 Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion approved.

DEVOTIONS

- The meeting then continued with devotions.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Minutes from May 11, 2024 Synod Assembly, September 7, 2024 Synod Council Meeting, October 8 Synod Council Meeting.
- Reports from Staff, Committees, and Tables
- John Weisenburger motioned to approve the consent agenda.

SC24.11.51 Motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion approved.

VICE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

- Vice President Dierks then gave the following comments:
 - The nominations workbook is completed and ready to go. This was ready for the Fall Theological Conference so that rostered leaders may begin to think about these positions.
 - The Committee on the Election of a Bishop is in the midst of its work, and a further update is to be given later in the meeting.

BISHOP'S COMMENTS

- Bishop Regina Hassanally gave the following comments to the council:
 - She and her staff have been navigating some end-of-call situations.
 - The staff is working on a new Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community, the Noor Community Congregation, which will be presented for approval later in the meeting.
 - Three ordinations are coming up in the near future.
 - The First Call Retreat will be happening soon.
 - The Fall Theological Conference was held in October and overall responses have been positive.
 - The SEMN Synod will host Region 3 Bishops and Assistants in Alexandria, MN.
 - The Synod will hold a Chrism Mass, which is a time to recommit to ordination/baptismal vows for rostered and lay leaders in Advent. This will be open to all rostered and lay leaders in the synod.

- Councils as Leaders will be held in March. The planners are aiming to offer practical skills for leaders.
- Conference Assemblies are set for February 16th. All will be held on the same day.
- Bishop Hassanally noted that she is on the executive board for MN Council of Churches and that they have just hired on a new CEO.
- CGP has been invited to apply for another Lilly Grant, which was granted, called Prairie Fire Preaching. This will involve inviting people from all types of fields (preaching, auditory, etc.) having them instruct preachers on how those fields can impact their preaching.
- She continues to serve on the Committee for a Renewed Lutheran Church and updated the council on the work being done here.

FINANCE 101

- Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission Rev. Emily Carson and Synod Treasurer Tammy Dahlvang walked through the various financial reports that are presented to the council and instructed council members on how the synod finances function.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

- Treasurer Dahlvang then reviewed the synod's financial reports.
 - Treasurer Dahlvang walked through a new layout within the budget so that income better reflects actual dollars.
 - The council was able to discuss and ask questions about the financial documents.
- Joellen Barack motioned to receive the financial reports.

SC24.11.52 Motion to receive the financial reports.

Motion approved.

STAFF HOUSING ALLOWANCES

- Bishop Hassanally presented staff housing allowances for 2025 for Bishop Regina Hassanally, Rev. Matt Larson, and Rev. Barb Streed at the following amounts:
 - Bishop Hassanally: \$40,000

- Rev. Matt Larson: \$23,500
- Rev. Barb Streed: \$19,200
- Bishop Regina Hassanally motioned to approve the housing allowances for Bishop Regina Hassanally at \$40,000, Rev. Matt Larson at \$23,500, and Rev. Barb Streed at \$19,200 for the calendar year 2025 and all future years unless otherwise provided.

SC24.11.53 Motion to approve the housing allowances for Bishop Regina Hassanally at \$40,000, Rev. Matt Larson at \$23,500, and Rev. Barb Streed at \$19,200 for the calendar year 2025 and all future years unless otherwise provided.

Motion approved.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY

- Bishop Hassanally then discussed the proposed update to the synod's Sexual Misconduct policy. This update had been presented to the council for review prior to the meeting.
- This has been sent to the synod attorney for review and a committee has worked on updating this policy this policy.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve the updated SEMN Synod Sexual Misconduct Policy.

SC24.11.54 Motion to approve the updated SEMN Synod Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Motion approved.

UPDATE FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTION OF A BISHOP

- Dr. Joyce Thompson then gave an update from the Committee on the Election of a Bishop.
- Representatives from the Churchwide expression are scheduled to have a meeting with several synods who are going through the election of the bishop on Nov. 19.
- The committee is working with Rev. Barb Streed make sure the election process is aligned with the synod assembly agenda.
- She then walked through other items with the timeline for the process.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Rev. Sam Mailleue motioned to enter executive session.

SC24.11.55 Motion to enter executive session.

Motion approved.

- at 2:07pm, the council moved into executive session to discuss changes to the roster.
- The following action items were taken during this time:

Call to Interim Ministry/Bridge Ministry Through Synod Council (Needs Approval)

- Rev. Cheryl Indehear, Interim at Grace, Fairmont to Interim at Grace, Albert Lea. Effective: 10/17/2024. Approved at synod council meeting on 11/09/2024.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve the call to interim ministry/bridge ministry through synod council roster change.

ES(SC.24.11.56) Motion to approve the call to interim ministry/bridge ministry through synod council roster change.

Motion approved.

Call to Specialized Ministry Through Synod Council (Needs Approval)

- Rev. Kelly Heide, Southwestern Minnesota Synod to Chaplain at St. John's Lutheran Community on Fountain Lake, Albert Lea. Effective: 10/02/2024. Approved at synod council meeting on 11/09/2024.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve the call to specialized ministry through synod council roster change.

ES(SC.24.11.57) Motion to approve the call to specialized ministry through synod council roster change.

Motion approved.

Death

- Rev. G. Neil Christopherson. 09/06/2024
- Rev. Paul Baker. 11/03/2024

On Leave From Call (Needs Approval)

- Rev. Peter Johnson. Start Date: 11/27/2024. Approved at synod council meeting on 11/09/2024.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve the on leave from call (new) roster change.

ES(SC.24.11.58) Motion to approve the on leave from call (new) roster change.

Motion approved.

On Leave from Call (Yearly Renewal)

- Deacon Cindy Cordes-Eversole. 2nd Request. Approved at synod council meeting on 11/09/2024.
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve the on leave from call (yearly renewal) roster change.

ES(SC.24.11.59) Motion to approve the on leave from call (yearly renewal) roster change.

Motion approved.

Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community

- A new Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community was presented for approval:
 - Nuer Community Congregation, Owatonna
- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve the Nuer Community Congregation as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

ES(SC.24.11.60) Motion approve the Nuer Community Congregation as a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

Motion approved.

- Bishop Hassanally motioned to approve a Call to Specialized Ministry through Synod Council to Yang Tut, pending approval on November 15, 2024, to the Nuer Community Congregation.

ES(SC.24.11.61) Motion to approve a Call to Specialized Ministry through Synod Council to Yang Tut pending approval on Nov. 15 to the Nuer Community Congregation.

Motion approved.

- Rev. Sam Mailleue motioned to leave executive session.

ES(SC.24.11.62) Motion to leave executive session.

Motion approved.

- The council left executive session at 2:13pm.

ADJOURNMENT

- AT 2:14pm, Vice President Dierks declared the meeting adjourned.
- The next meeting of the Synod Council will be on February 15, 2025 at 9:00am via Zoom.

Submitted,
Rev. Josh Enderson
Synod Council Secretary

APPROVED 02/15/2025 JE