



Challenge to Act Justly, Seek Truth and Fulfill Fiduciary Duty

*Position Statement in the Conflict with the Alaska Synod Bishops
of the Congregation Council of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau, Alaska*

Facing a Painful Reality and Its Personal Consequences

In the last year, Resurrection Lutheran Church (RLC) has been devastated in ways that will never be repaired. Other damage, though, can be prevented from inflicting further harm and can be addressed with a hopeful faith. Depending on your role(s) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), each of you have a fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the ELCA, synod, its congregations, and those the church serves. It is likely that we all wish we weren't still dealing with what has and continues to happen at RLC. But it has already gone too far and only righteous action on your part and that of others can affect a just resolution.

It is profoundly difficult to confront the possibility that those entrusted with our church's leadership may have betrayed that trust. Unfortunately, the trust we have placed in these leaders has been exploited by former and current Bishop Wickstrom and Bishop Oslovich to shield their actions under a façade of credibility. However, prior commendable deeds and strong reputations do not excuse or exempt individuals from accountability for wrongdoing. The conflict at RLC can be summarized as follows:

*A small group of detractors at RLC, having failed to secure a council majority at the 2024 annual meeting, resorted to bullying tactics to install themselves as council officers. Although they were later removed from office, Bishop Wickstrom, acting without constitutional authority, reappointed the ousted president to facilitate an unconstitutional congregational vote aimed at ending Pastor Perkins' call and prematurely halting the congregation's discernment process. Following Bishop Wickstrom's retirement, the RLC Council continued to reject the unlawful attempt to remove Pastor Perkins, prompting Bishop Oslovich to allow Bishop Wickstrom to covertly continue pursuing the pastor's removal through a flawed *C15.11 / †S17.11 adjudication process. This culminated in the wrongful removal of Pastor Perkins from the roster, the appointment of a part-time interim pastor, and the staging of exclusive, non-transparent events at RLC. These include an unconstitutional and hastily called annual meeting designed to install a new council loyal to the detractors, undermining constitutional governance, congregational unity, and justice.*

The actions of Bishop Wickstrom and Bishop Oslovich (and Vice-President Leslie Swenson and Synod Attorney Zach Manzella, who were also made complicit by the actions of Bishop Wickstrom) risk exposing themselves and the Alaska Synod to both legal and ecclesiastical liabilities, including allegations of fraud, gross misrepresentation, and misconduct. These liabilities extend to their role in enabling others' improper behavior, thus eroding the ethical foundations upon which our church governance is built.

Members of the RLC congregation, including its council, officers, and Pastor Perkins have faced this painful reality. The unconstitutional, unjust, and contentious actions of the former and current bishops and some long-time congregation members have strained relationships and tested friendships. We are now asking those with fiduciary obligations, including the non-complicit members of the synod council and the presiding bishop, to also face this reality by seeking the truth and act according to their fiduciary duty.

Fiduciary duty, particularly for members of the synod council, is defined by one's role(s) in the ELCA, and is discussed below. What is clear, is that one cannot be true to their fiduciary while turning a blind eye or covering up for a colleague's missteps to preserve that person's reputation, protect an office (theirs or yours), safeguard the reputation of the organization, or simply to avoid personal discomfort.

Act Justly and Seek Truth

Since confronting the reality that trusted church leaders may have betrayed their fiduciary and ecclesiastical responsibilities is deeply unsettling, some members continue to trust in these leaders uncritically. This trust has been strategically exploited to shield improper actions. Evidence suggests a troubling pattern of complicity, starting in Winter 2023, involving former Bishop Wickstrom, a faction within the RLC congregation, Bishop Oslovich, Vice-President Leslie Swenson, and Synod Council Attorney Pastor Zach Manzella:

Covert Operations by Bishop Wickstrom

Bishop Wickstrom is alleged to have covertly influenced decisions, potentially drafting correspondence and emails under others' names in Pastor Perkins' S17.02 action, in direct contravention of its procedural terms (requiring the bishop's recusal).

Undisclosed Influence Post-Retirement

Following her retirement, Bishop Wickstrom apparently continued to exert influence over RLC matters, including preparations for RLC's C15.11 adjudication. Evidence suggests she maintained communications and provided advice and support directly to individuals within RLC, further entangling herself in the congregation's affairs.

Concealed Support by Current Leadership

Bishop Oslovich, Vice-President Swenson, and possibly Attorney Manzella have been implicated in clandestinely supporting Bishop Wickstrom's ongoing involvement. This misuse of their official capacities appears to have perpetuated her influence and further compromised the integrity of church governance.

Should these allegations be substantiated, the actions of these individuals could expose them—and the Alaska Synod—to significant legal and ecclesiastical liabilities, including fraud, gross misrepresentation, and misconduct. Such liabilities are compounded by their facilitation of improper behavior, which undermines the ethical foundations of church governance.

This is a critical moment for the synod council (along with the presiding bishop) to take a stand for truth and justice. As we face these troubling revelations, the synod council must reaffirm its commitment to the principles of transparency, integrity, and accountability. Only by acting courageously and justly can we hope to address the harm inflicted on RLC, the synod council, and the wider church community. Through these efforts, we can begin to restore faith in our leadership and the values we are called to uphold.

The Flawed *C15.11 / †S17.11 Adjudication

After Bishop Wickstrom's retirement, Bishop Oslovich initiated a *C15.11 / †S17.11 adjudication process. This process, ostensibly designed to address "disagreements between or among factions within the congregation," instead focused on marginally relevant parliamentary issues, aiming to retroactively validate the unconstitutional actions of the prior bishop. See RLC Council Position Statements *Understanding Constitutional Violations* and *Authoritarianism, Secrecy and Complicity*.

The flawed approach, biased in favor of prior decisions, ignored established constitutional precedents and undermined principles of transparency and fair governance. On these grounds, the RLC Council refused to participate – a fact which was withheld from the synod council by the bishop and synod vice-president. The issues with the adjudication include:

Flawed Process and Partiality

The adjudication lacked clear procedural guidelines, allowing room for manipulation. Ideally, the process should have included impartial presentations of the substantive disagreements. However, in this case, the synod officers and representatives leading the process were neither impartial nor adequately informed. It appears that former Bishop Wickstrom prejudiced the proceedings, leveraging her influence to frame the narrative. Where *C15.11 / †S17.11 adjudication fits in the overall timeline is detailed in the Addendum *Highlights in Conflict with Synod Bishops*.

Manipulation of the Synod Council's Adjudication

A review of the selected documents, agenda, and minutes for the synod council's adjudication reveals a "kangaroo court" atmosphere, where due process was disregarded. Bishop Oslovich, Vice-President Swenson, and Synod Attorney Manzella lacked firsthand knowledge of the situation, and failed to conduct necessary investigations, relying solely on biased communications from Bishop Wickstrom and undisclosed, but undermining and misleading, sources at RLC. This failure to critically assess the information presented constitutes a severe breach of fiduciary and ethical responsibilities. This flawed process is detailed in Addendum *Revised Annotated Alaska Synod Council RLC C15.11 Adjudication Documents*.

Implications of the Adjudication

The culmination of this flawed process was the unjust manipulation of the synod council to retroactively legitimize the unconstitutional actions of former Bishop Wickstrom. Worse, this distorted adjudication is now being presented in the ongoing lawsuit by RLC council member Brendle as conclusive "evidence" that the Alaska Synod of the ELCA has definitively resolved the question of RLC's legitimate officers.

In Other Words, "the Bishop Said So."

Then the bishop told the next bishop, so the next bishop said so. The new bishop (and the synod council vice president) told the synod council, so they said so. A lie, repeated enough, begins to sound like the truth. Both bishops, and the small group at RLC have counted on this maxim. However, Bishop Wickstrom's initial action was unconstitutional, as well as inappropriate, justified by shifting and dubious reasoning. We rely upon prayer and critical thinking to develop solutions, not a mechanical forwarding then defending errors.

Critical Questions for Synod Council Members

Are you comfortable with being used in this manner, as a tool to validate another's unconstitutional actions?

Are you willing to risk the synod's integrity and the broader church's credibility by failing to address the serious flaws in this process?

*The synod council's flawed and manipulated *C15.11 / †S17.111 adjudication decision is being presented in RLC council member Brendle's Alaska court lawsuit as the official and final position of the "church" – Alaska Synod of ELCA – on the issue of who the officers of RLC are. Are you okay with your part in this flawed decision?*

Are you willing to risk having decisions made for your own congregation in this way?

By participating in or tacitly endorsing such a process, the synod council risks becoming complicit in undermining the very governance principles it is meant to uphold. This is a crucial moment to ensure that the church's commitment to justice, transparency, and accountability is more than mere rhetoric.

Fiduciary Duty and Potential Complicity

While no one who has accepted a position of leadership (e.g., on synod council or as presiding bishop) should need be reminded, or endure being lectured, about fiduciary duty, Synod Council Member Bradley Perkins' experience, as a legal advisor to bishops, synods and dioceses (in the Episcopal Church), as well as general counsel to a number of non-profit and publicly-traded corporations, demonstrates that circumstances often catch leaders unaware. This is especially true where leaders are put in such circumstances by other leaders who have disregarded or violated their own fiduciary duty.

Fiduciary duty as a member of the synod council is defined by the foundational expectation to act in good faith and in the best interest of the synod and the wider church community. This responsibility entails a commitment to uphold the church's mission, adhere to the Alaska Synod Constitution, and manage its resources responsibly and ethically.

Failure to meet that duty, potentially leading to complicity, occurs when council members, through action or inaction, allow wrongful acts, or practices, to continue unchecked or uncorrected, particularly when they have knowledge of such misconduct or are in a position to stop or correct it.

In the present case, the synod council not only has knowledge of the unconstitutional acts of Bishop Wickstrom, but actively participated (perhaps, at the time, unwittingly) in a flawed attempt to validate them). This possible complicity not only exposes the synod to potential legal and ecclesiastical liabilities but also erodes trust within our community and diminishes the church's ability to serve its mission effectively.

Fiduciary obligations are owed to the organization to which you were elected and sworn to serve. Personal loyalties, fatigue, gut feelings, or “not wanting to get involved” or “make trouble” cannot be the basis for inaction. Covering up or turning a blind eye for the sake of a friend’s reputation, to protect the office, the synod, or the ELCA, is not incarnate faith, nor is shying away from involvement or stepping up in challenging times. Those who cannot accept such responsibility often resign when faced with significant malfeasance by their leadership because knowing failure to act can lead to complicity.

The Risks of “Turning a Blind Eye”

Synod Council Member Perkins also offers this insight based on his church legal counsel and corporate general counsel experience: that the potential exposure is substantial, and such matters rarely resolve themselves without active intervention. Efforts to suppress or overpower these issues often exacerbate them, creating greater damage in the long run, for everyone involved.

In an email response to Synod Council Member Perkins’ of October 29, 2024 (which was similar to responses sent to requests for assistance from Council President Karen Lawfer and Music Director, Council Member Lucy Merrell) Bishop Eaton repeated a statement regarding her inability to get involved in the matters at RLC, citing the existence of a formal process for such appeals. However, this response may not satisfy the bishop’s fiduciary obligations.

Bishop Oslovich, as a new bishop, was likely initially mislead by Bishop Wickstrom into letting her “handle the mess at RLC” when he started. Eventually, he probably realized that there had been a coverup of unconstitutional actions by Bishop Wickstrom and he had also become complicit. Hoping that (and probably being assured) by supporting Bishop Wickstrom in her continued unconstitutional actions would succeed in the burying over two years of wrongs against RLC, its congregation, its officers, its council and its innocent pastor. However, regardless of the potential success of this shameful, immoral and unchristian plan, this is not proper behavior of an ELCA bishop!

The presiding bishop and synod council members can, and actually have a fiduciary duty, to reach out to Bishop Oslovich and support him in not covering up the wrongs of the last two years. He can stop supporting Bishop Wickstrom’s secret, pursuit ending Pastor Perkins’ call by announcing that upon review, Bishop Wickstrom lacked constitutional authority for her actions at the meeting she called on June 9, 2024, the *C15.11 / †S17.11 adjudication is moot, the appointment of the interim pastor at RLC is rescinded, Pastor Perkins is not removed from RLC or the Alaska Synod roster.

There are already troubling patterns within the Alaska Synod (and across the ELCA). Similar cases have surfaced in which small groups, often with tacit or overt episcopal support, have attempted to remove pastors without meeting the required two-thirds majority threshold. These incidents have left congregations fractured and ministries weakened, with lasting harm to the church’s mission and reputation. The spiritual wounds to the many affected people cannot be measured.

Ultimately Facing Judgement in the Courts of Justice and of Public Opinion

The fact pattern in the RLC conflict highlights a deeply unfavorable position for the bishops and synod, both in the courts of justice and of public opinion. At a time when the ELCA is struggling for its place in among other denominations, especially in urban, downtown ministries, reaching those in minority, native and marginalized populations, can we afford to lose RLC and its pastor?

Former and current Bishop Wickstrom and Bishop Oslovich, and their small group of financially secure to affluent, white, longtime members at RLC, are accountable for at least the following:

Harassment, Bullying, and Vandalism

The small group at RLC has engaged in documented harassment and vandalism while actively dismantling programs serving Alaska Native and minority populations.

Falsehoods and Misrepresentation

The prior bishop and the group at RLC have made false statements, directly contradicting the ELCA's foundational emphasis on truthfulness and transparency.

Misuse of Synod Council

The synod council has been manipulated to legitimize unconstitutional actions, as detailed in the attached *Addendum Revised Annotated Alaska Synod Council RLC C15.11 Adjudication Documents*.

Conversely, RLC's contributions to the Juneau community stand in stark contrast:

Respected Leadership

RLC's pastor and council have been recognized leaders in religious, social service, educational, and arts sectors, consistently serving the community with distinction.

Innovative Community Programs

The congregation has managed essential services like low-barrier shelters and food programs while pioneering initiatives such as Juneau Live! Studio for youth engagement.

Congregational Growth

Before the interference of the prior bishop, RLC was beginning to thrive, growing its membership and expanding its ministries. Hundreds of Juneau residents considered RLC their spiritual home.

Fresh Leadership

This growth has included the cultivation of emerging leaders, intentionally inviting younger voices, those new to church, active participants from outside of Juneau, Native Alaskan people, and those with lived experience in poverty, homelessness and neurodiversity.

Discernment and Reflection

RLC was thoroughly engaged in a discernment process to evaluate its calling as it approached its centennial, with broad participation from its membership. This process included faithful consideration of the congregation's financial reality, anticipating making some difficult, but informed decisions.

Both the Juneau and Anchorage press have been following the controversy at RLC. And while the RLC Council was not the one to bring it initially to their attention (that was counsel member Brendle's attorney), the RLC Council will not hesitate to publicize news in the matter, as necessary to distinguish bad acts from the faith. The Juneau press was early disposed to RLC Council's position of serving the community. This position may have led the small group at RLC to changing (at least publicly) their stated goal of closing community social service programs, to, in the case of the RLC Food Pantry and Meal Service (largest in Juneau), scaling it back and limiting services. Their actions have demonstrated intentional and aggressive disrupting or dismantling of almost all outreach.

The Time to Accept the Challenge and to Act is Now

The actions initiated by Bishop Wickstrom and perpetuated by Bishop Oslovich have inflicted significant harm on RLC's governance and mission. These violations have eroded trust, compromised the church's integrity, and undermined its confessional identity. Those entrusted with fiduciary responsibility must confront these issues with transparency, accountability, and an unwavering commitment to constitutional principles to mitigate further damage. Those so entrusted are called upon to intervene, to address these injustices with honesty and urgency, and to ensure that the synod and ELCA operates with justice, transparency, and faithfulness to its mission. Only through forthright action can all of us foster healing, reconciliation, and a restoration of trust within the church and its community.

Prepared by Congregation Counsel of Resurrection Lutheran Church Council and reaffirmed as an official position statement by the Council on September 18, 2025, on information and belief, subject to reasonable amendment by Counsel, with concurrence of the Congregation President.

Addendums

Revised Annotated Alaska Synod Council RLC C15.11 Adjudication Documents
Timeline Highlights in Conflict with Synod Bishops

Addendum

Revised Annotated Alaska Synod Council RLC C15.11 Adjudication Documents

The following is a REVISED annotated version of the minutes from the AK Synod Council Special meeting regarding a decision about Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau, Alaska. The notes in red are intended to demonstrate how much of the information shared with the Synod Council was biased, false, misleading or incomplete. The RLC Council, Pastor Perkins and Synod Council Member Bradley Perkins (recused) was excluded from this meeting, being told that it wouldn't be "fair" for only their perspective to be argued. The minutes reflect that only one, damning perspective WAS presented—the other one—and none of us could observe or provide facts that contradict the charade. This is just ONE example of the many documents related to Resurrection that include errors, opinions posing as facts, or opinions based on unchecked claims from unidentified sources. These notes were prepared on information and belief on behalf of the RLC Council as of January 16, 2025.

Alaska Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

September 11, 2024

To: The Council Members of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau,
AK and Rev. Karen Perkins

From: Alaska Synod Council

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We continue to pray for Rev. Karen Perkins and all the members of Resurrection Lutheran Church. This is a very sad situation.

The Alaska Synod Council met on September 10, 2024, to adjudicate disagreements among members of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau (and the biased interference of the preceding bishop). This adjudication resulted from the invitation by the bishop for a petition on the parliamentary details and subsequent petition of two married members of Resurrection Lutheran Church (one of whom was the original instigator, and the other who would be president if bullying were not revealed and who had filed a lawsuit making similar claims) under *C15.11 of the Constitution of Resurrection Lutheran Church. The (vague and opaque) process of *C15.11 was followed (despite council objection to the applicability and appropriateness of this process to the specific questions framed, related constitutional issues, and pending lawsuit by an interested party). Bishop Tim Oslovich proposed a resolution ("ruling," not "resolution") to the disagreements, and that resolution was rejected by some members of the congregation (**FALSE** – the earlier council resolution was simply quoted). The Consultation Committee was also not able to resolve the disagreements (though their involvement was documented to be seriously problematic—having started then abandoning a conversation with the correct president; interviewing ONLY those invited by the person filing the lawsuit and "petitioning" under *C15.11; then rendering a report that included both a false claim about a leader discouraging participation, and many gratuitous comments that had no relevance beyond biasing the report). The matter was referred to the Alaska Synod Council for arbitration (**NONE** occurred) and a decision. According to the Constitution of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau, "The Synod Council's decision shall be final." (conveniently invoking the heretofore disregarded constitution)

The Council has rendered these decisions:

The Alaska Synod Council found that the officers of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau, are the people who were elected at the March 7, 2024, Resurrection Lutheran Church Council meeting:

Lisa Brendle, President

Delores Graver,

Secretary

Kristin Cadigan-McAdoo,

Treasurer Ken Koelsch, Secretary

The Alaska Synod Council also found that the Congregation Meeting held on June 9, 2024 was legally called and conducted and that the decisions made at that meeting are valid. The congregation voted to make the pastoral call at Resurrection “part-time, no more than half-time.” The congregation also voted not to call Rev. Perkins to this part- time call (2 in favor of calling Rev. Perkins, 24 opposed to calling Rev. Perkins – **more than could have been legally voting members**). Finally, the congregation voted to make June 30, 2024, Rev. Perkins’ last day of service at Resurrection Lutheran Church. This means that the Rev. Karen Perkins’ call to serve Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau, ended on June 30, 2024. **No draft minutes documenting these votes were provided to Rev. Perkins, the Congregation Council, nor the Congregation.**

The members of the Alaska Synod Council call on Rev. Perkins and all members of Resurrection Lutheran Church to abide by these decisions.

Peace,

Leslie Swenson, Vice President

On behalf of the Alaska Synod Council

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ALASKA SYNOD COUNCIL

September 10,

2024 Zoom

Draft Minutes

Members Present

Rev. Timothy Oslovich	Bishop
Leslie Swenson	Vice
President Rev. Amanda Van Vliet-Snyder	Secretary
Jan Dodds	Treasurer
Rev. Ollie Bergh	Interior Cluster Rostered Member
Sue Camasi	Interior Cluster Lay Member
Rev. Sean Avery	Knik Cluster Rostered Member
Deborah Gelerter	Southeast cluster Rostered Member
Marilyn Rosene	South Central Cluster Lay Member
Karen Voris	ASWO President
Rev. Meredith Harber	Multicultural Representative
Shannon Klescewski	Member at Large

Guests

Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel—DEM
Zack Manzalla—Synod Parliamentarian
Rev. Karen Perkins - Resurrection Lutheran Juneau
Jeffery Troutt - Attorney for Pastor Karen (in attendance only when Rev. Perkins spoke)

Members Absent:

Ed Mjolsnes	South Central Cluster Lay Member
Joanne Keyes	Seward Peninsula Cluster Lay Member (excused)
Brad Perkins	Southeast Cluster Lay Member
(recused under heavy pressure to be excluded – the email exchange attached)	
John Christensen	Youth and Young Adult Member
(excused) Mona Mitton	Member at Large (excused)
Rev. Sandy Van Zyl	South Central Cluster Rostered Member
(excused) John Copenhaver	Knik Cluster Lay Member (excused)

SC 24.09.27 Call to order and opening prayer - (DEM Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel) - (6:05pm)

Quorum Established with 12 members at 6:08pm

SC 24.09.28 Approval of the Agenda - Moved: Bergh & 2nd Rosene: 11 in favor, passed unanimously.

SC 24.09.29 Special Rules of the Session: Rule to Limit Debate to 2 minutes. Moved:
Avery & 2nd Camasi: 11 in favor, passed unanimously.

Reminder of Robert's Rules given by VP Leslie Swenson

The Rev. Karen Perkins

1. Introduction by VP Swenson
2. Rev. Perkins' statement of her point of view: despite pervasive bullying throughout the congregation, there was a (re)commitment by the congregation to discern its ministry after Bishop Wickstrom's report in 2023 (resuming a process started before COVID), she found Bishop Wickstrom's advice to put in mobility papers (in response to being personally bullied and harassed) as "unfair (and irresponsible) to my calling (as defined in the constitution and letter of call)", she (with the Congregation Council) didn't recognize the actions of Bishop Wickstrom in calling the Congregational meeting of June 9, 2024 (for the stated purpose and for implied reasons) as constitutional (and contrary to the wishes of the congregation per the Annual Meeting, Discernment Survey; and to decisions of the Council Meeting on April 18 and 25), so has not abided by its actions/votes (as she was asked by the Congregation Council, and in light of the pending lawsuit),
(spoke for about 20 minutes – emphasizing the limited/misleading "information" provided, begging for an investigation of claims and documentation before further decision making; as well as highlighting the ongoing damage to the congregation and describing negative impact of this synodical disruption of growing ministry to the Juneau community more broadly).
3. Questions of the Council for Rev. Perkins:
 - a. Has she received copies of the Bishop's or Consultation Committee's reports? A: Acknowledged receiving a copy of the 2024 Consultation Report from Karen Lawfer. She has discussed "other issues" with Bishop Oslovich but did not discuss the 15.11 process with Bishop or his recent report to the Congregation (per legal counsel regarding Brendle's lawsuit).
 - b. What is the average attendance of RLC-J and baptized members? A: average 20-25 in person, 30-40 views (participation) online mostly after service; 91 baptized members.
 - c. What made the election of officers unconstitutional in her opinion?
 - i. Election wasn't the unconstitutional issue. Election count was not valid; it was inaccurate due to bullying;
 - ii. Bishop Wickstrom's decision on who would be officers was unconstitutional as the authority rests within the

congregation and this decision meant her preferred officers would allow Bishop Wickstrom's to hold an unconstitutional vote.

- d. What would be the healthiest outcome for her and Resurrection-Juneau?
 - i. Short term: complete a proper investigation, including external review of and clear reporting of finances; take on the harassment and bullying issues; wait for lawsuit to be settled (addressed)
 - ii. Long term: complete the discernment process that was previously interrupted when Bishop Wickstrom forced a Congregational vote and follow informed congregational decisions about ministry and pastoral needs.
4. Prayer led by Rev. Lis Smith Fiegel

Brief History of recent conflict at Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau - Bishop Oslovich (perhaps the person LEAST familiar with the situation, and – with VP Swenson – not remotely neutral, as shown below) gave a brief Congregational Constitution Review, specifically section C15.11, under which this work is undertaken (at the request of members of the congregation, **in response to the bishop's invitation with questions specified**). The key points in this recent conflict:

1. Two ordained leaders and a layperson appointed in February of 2023 to the “Listening Team” (**MISLEADING** – putting “Listening Team” in quotation marks implies a dubious title. That is what Bishop Wickstrom, and the Listening Team called it. In multiple phone conversations, she actually distinguished it from “Bishop’s Committee” as described in *C9.05 regarding the termination of a pastoral call and emphasized there was NO disciplinary process. The “Consultation Committee” as described in the *C15.11 process may have been used synonymously with “Bishop’s Committee,” but the “Listening Team” was defined differently. It was not until just days before Bishop Wickstrom’s June 9 meeting over a year later that she tried to change the definition of the “Listening Team.” In any case, none of the requirements of recommendations of any committee were met for the termination of a pastoral call by a simple majority vote. Also important to note: the Listening Team was created in response to a phone call from to the bishop from then-president Randy Sutak. This immediately followed a meeting between the pastor and Sutak to address communication challenges between the two. Rather than deal with the pastor more respectfully, Sutak became adamant and relentless about undermining the pastor. At this point, Pastor Perkins began reporting and providing documentation about regular bullying and requesting help from the bishop to deal with harassment.)
2. Serious conflict was discovered.
3. Recommendations were issued by Bishop Wickstrom and the “Listening Team” (**MISLEADING** – the Listening Team report specifically states that its responsibility excluded making “judgements or recommendations”) in March, 2023 including the need for Congregational votes (**FALSE** – the document stated, and Bishop Wickstrom verbally emphasized, that “a PART time call should be CONSIDERED,” which was part of the Discernment Process the congregation was following. She described the process that could be followed for such a vote when we had considered options, though no voting thresholds were noted.) on:
 - a. Whether or not to go to a half (**INCORRECT**. It stated a vote on a PART time compensation AND responsibilities) time call for their pastor?
 - b. If they do decide to change the call, do they want to offer a half (**INCORRECT** as noted above, and several options were included that could only happen AFTER discerning the congregation’s needs and resources) time call to Rev. Perkins?

There is a HUGE gap in information here that conflates the Listening Team and Bishop's Assessment and Recommendations from the preceding year. Despite the constant efforts of a small group of approximately eight people to undermine the process for the whole congregation to participate in conversation and discernment, RLC did make significant progress.

- **April 2023:** We launched task forces grouped roughly based on the bishop's recommendations to address those areas requiring consideration and options for change. Each task force had a council liaison (not leader) to keep council informed about work, expectations, etc. A process was provided to pray and reflect on the bishop's comments, listen to divergent views from others, get input from the pastor, discuss overlap with other task forces and make recommendations to be addressed by the congregation. There was a wide range of effectiveness between different task forces. One of these task forces deviated completely from the expected process.
- **June 2023:** We initiated work with the Rev. Laurin Vance, of Consultation to Clergy to help address congregational conflict and help us shape the work we would ask of an independent consulting firm. This was at the invitation of the pastor and council, NOT Bishop Wickstrom, as she later claimed.
- **June 2023:** We began to add new members who had been involved in various ministries, though not necessarily worshipping in-person on Sunday mornings.
- **June 2023:** The congregation did not pass (tie vote) a resolution to bid on hosting the city's Cold Weather Emergency Shelter (CWES) for a third year. The contract had subsidized the pastor's salary and provided funding for property improvements that would benefit the congregation beyond the period of the contract.
- **July-August 2023:** When the city did not receive any bid's, they approached RLC to consider whether there were terms under which we could bid on contract, as there were no other viable options. When another option was brought to the congregation, former mayor Ken Koelsch, an author of the deviating work of the above-mentioned task force, solicited negative comments from a neighbor and recruited otherwise uninvolved family and friends to outvote the active congregation.
- **August 2023:** We had independent conversations with Rev. Vance (with all members provided an opportunity to participate) and a gathering for whole congregation. Rev. Vance prepared a draft report, which he repeatedly stated was for the pastor and president to consider and comment.
- **June-September 2023:** Two task force members (Ken Koelsch and Dan Weatherall) worked on their own agenda, excluding the pastor (fully REFUSING to meet) and engagement with other task forces, asking selected congregants slanted questions, and basing results on inaccurate financial information. When attempting to present an unsigned report that did not have the consensus of the task force, they were asked to reconvene and do the work of engaging or turn the work over to others who would. They refrained from doing so yet developed a misleading budget that suited their agenda. They also misrepresented themselves beyond the congregation as a committee authorized to speak for the congregation. Their budget predetermined a cut to half-time or "shared" pastor (without regard to pastoral needs, responsibilities or alternate funding). Opposed to bishop's

recommendations, a secretarial or office administration position would be eliminated, Christian education would be eliminated, and stewardship would be almost eliminated. Almost 1/3 of the budget would go to property, though it's 2023 funding sources would be eliminated. The food pantry and other benevolence would be reduced. Other documents implied a merge with Shepherd of the Valley, though it is unclear whether there was any conversation with that congregation. At one council meeting, Mr. Koelsch stated that "if we have the warming shelter, we would have the budget to support a full time pastor." (This was used as an argument against the warming shelter—to create an apparent financial crisis.)

- **September 2023:** We added more new members, bringing us to a total of 5 adult baptisms and 5 affirmations of baptism. This included a number of Native Alaskan people, included younger adults (lowering the average age of membership), and included a few people who identify as neurodiverse and/or were experiencing challenges with mental health and housing stability.
- **October 2023:** When the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) made it clear that they had no better choices than putting people on a running bus on freezing nights, we returned to conversations with them about other changes we could present to the congregation about hosting a safer, more informed and less environmentally offensive version of the shelter. We brought it back to a third congregation vote, with all the details in place to sign a contract and begin immediately, if the congregation approved the agreement. Hours after this vote passed (though barely), the Deputy City Manager (with whom former mayor Ken Koelsch had an existing political rapport) announced an agreement with another organization, whose Executive Director had been solicited and pressured by Mr. Koelsch to "come up with something else." The agreement moved the shelter to a less accessible, city owned warehouse without basic utilities. It had been previously rejected for location and safety reasons but was suddenly preferred, bypassing all planning and city ordinances. This decision was made secretly, with no recognized standards, by people lacking expertise in low-barrier shelters. It did get the shelter out of RLC and out of the way of the "half-time only, we can't afford it" lobbyists. That it severely undermined the care of this vulnerable population was downplayed or completely ignored.
- **October 2023:** After this extended meeting, at what was supposed to be a quick Council meeting to authorize signers for the contract, a group of four previously unwilling to serve members swarmed the council, surprising us into adding them to the council, as it was under the maximum number. By that evening, I was called by a newspaper reporter who had "heard" that, despite the vote, a new majority would stop the shelter. When the president recognized the next day that the addition of new council members at this time was unconstitutional, she immediately informed council and apologized for the mistake. I could overhear at least two other council members yelling and swearing at her on the telephone, because they believed her to be wrong and rejected the constitutional wording.
- **October-December 2023:** For months, this group argued with the president, the existing council, the constitution and our internal expert, demanding to be added to council 2/3 of the way through the year, when there was a decision they didn't like. They also swarmed the bishop, who waffled but tried to make

them correct. They then demanded to speak with synod counsel, who eventually had to tell them he couldn't help further. This behavior disrupted regular meetings and limited the amount of work accomplished.

- **October-November 2023:** After this, the bishop reminded the council that the decision about the call was independent of the decision about the shelter contract. This is when she said she wanted to come take a vote on whether to move to a half-time pastor. Presumably, this was in response to the misleading budget, created by the rogue task force. She declared that she would preside at the meeting, bring her own parliamentarian, and the decision would be a 51% vote (no reasoning given, nor any attempt to appear neutral).
- **October-November 2023:** Fourteen members participated in the process of contributing to the synod's value statement to be used in preparation for electing a new bishop. Much of what was discussed in those meetings overlapped and influenced the congregation's discernment process.
- **November 2023:** The bishop made statements to both the president and the pastor that can only be called "gossip," as there were no sources provided, nor fact checking involved. She ignored documented conversations and actions (I sent her links to at least six meetings) that demonstrated bullying, hostility and abuse. She continued to undermine the pastor and officers, allowing other congregants to bypass the elected leadership and lobby her directly. She issued statements or decisions to the entire council that were directly opposed to conversations she DID have with the pastor, president, and a prior president.
- **November 2023:** When the congregation's discernment process and progress was reviewed with the bishop, (and the Pastor Perkins was already scheduled for vacation), she postponed her visit.
- **January 2024:** Rev. Vance returned to Juneau for a second visit. This time the focus was on naming what we valued as a congregation and what resources we had as a congregation. A few of those items were reiterations of complaints listed with the Listening Team, though mostly they were standalone comments that were no longer applicable.
- **January-April:** two more new members joined RLC.
- **January-February 2024:** The items listed on the chart pads from Rev. Vance's visits were prepared for a congregation-wide survey to narrow the priorities. The survey clearly stated that the purpose was to narrow our focus for the year, so that Rev. Vance could return and help us to prioritize the top items and match them with existing resources and/or plans to supplement resources.
- **February 2024:** at RLC's Annual Meeting a budget including support for a full-time pastor was easily passed. One member had a list of motions, corrections, and complaints he wanted to discuss, but the congregation voted to end discussion. For the first year in quite some time, we had more candidates for council than positions available. There was debate about constitutional parameters for council elections (as, it seems, we had developed a custom of alternate requirements and expectations), but President Lawfer ruled out-of-order deviation from, or overriding, the constitution. The results of the election were surprisingly balanced. Lisa Brendle was not initially reelected to council. The next day Treasurer Kristin

Cadigan-McAdoo notified President Lawfer of an error she (Cadigan-McAdoo) had made counting, which determined Lisa Brendle had, in fact, been reelected. Fortunately, one of the two lowest vote receivers offered to step down, so that correction was accepted without any difficulty.

4. At the March 7, 2024 Council meeting, new officers were elected; in the April 2024 Council meeting, minutes for March 7, 2024 (including these elections) were approved.
- **March-April 2024:** we believed council officers elected were Lisa Brendle as President, Delores Graver as Vice President, Ken Koelsch as Secretary, and Kristin Cadigan-McAdoo as Treasurer. (Then) President Brendle immediately began dictating changes she planned to make in council, worship, discernment, property, and activities. She appeared to be taking direction from Secretary Koelsch and would not meet Pastor Perkins without him. When Pastor Perkins privately pointed out inconsistencies between their plans and constitutional norms, she simply repeated her assertions over and over publicly, began moving resources or disrupting activities and gathering support for her way. Despite multiple requests in multiple ways, she refused to work WITH Rev. Perkins. It became clear she was committed to her husband's and former president Randy Sutak's agenda of undermining ministry and getting rid of Rev. Perkins.
- **April 2024,** the results of the congregation-wide discernment survey were distributed to the congregation, as we said they would be. Some of the small group of detractors indicated that they had intended to discuss the results and decide how to move forward, but only in council. By far, the survey indicated an emphasis on finding partnerships, grants and contracts that would support outreach ministries and expand educational opportunities in the congregation (care for elderly, Christian education). Fiscal responsibility was also extremely important, though the process was interrupted before we could tease out what this meant to various people.
5. A "corrected" report on May 16, 2024 stated that people were bullied and wanted to change their votes via affidavit (**INCORRECT**, inappropriate trivialization of well documented bullying concerns reported to Bishop Wickstrom, and affidavits from the majority of council that resulted in different totals were never reviewed, acknowledged or inspected by the bishop), therefore March elections were "invalidated" (**FALSE** – they were "incorrect" and the word "invalid" applied only to the officers, not the election. This point was made every time "invalid" was used by synod folk.) a new slate of officers elected (**FALSE** – the count after corrections indicated that three of the four officers elected were different.). There have been 2 sets of officers and 2 factions (**FALSE** – there are two groups, but one is the minority supported by Bishop Wickstrom) who are in conflict over who is leading the church council ever since. (Using approved minutes or delayed discovery to justify an election involving alleged bullying is

embarrassingly convoluted, unprofessional, and – at least – questionable conduct. The fact that the timeframe was rushed by the bishop’s imminent retirement exacerbated, rather than excusing, the failure.)

6. May 2024 Bishop Wickstrom requested the Council call a Congregational meeting for June 9, 2024, to vote on the issues raised in 2023 (see 3a and 3b above). **[MISLEADING** – Those issues (corrected above) were two points on a three-page document with interrelated recommendations requiring conversation and consideration. The bishop’s initial call for a meeting came before the correction of officers and just days after the council had passed several resolutions that determined NOT to gut or abandon the discernment process and return to the year-old report. At the end of that council meeting then-president Brendle (who had voted with the minority) said, “we’ll have to go to the bishop.” In the request, the bishop made several **FALSE** statements; including: that her previous request for a meeting had been rescinded when we started working with Laurin Vance (the request being in November 2023, and the work with Rev. Vance had begun, with bishop awareness in June of 2023); that for the last five years each president asked about raising the question (it had been raised by one previous president and his wife in her two months as president); and that survey had been Rev. Vance’s, with the purpose of determining the priorities for a half-time pastor (the introduction on the survey itself and the cover email both said exactly what it was for and nothing about a half-time pastor). The bishop then directed us to work through those questions in preparation for her unwelcome meeting. In a separate email Bishop Wickstrom stated that the issue was finances, though she knew we were unable to get accurate financials, and the Treasurer fought the recommendations of the CPA and bookkeepers that consulted with us. Subsequent emails contained numerous additional FALSEHOODS, IRRELEVANCIES, and MISUNDERSTANDINGS that can be easily documented.)
- **May 2024:** Rev. Perkins sent a Letter of Concern in accordance with S17.02 to make the Executive Committee of the AK Synod aware and request relief from the problems with Bishop Wickstrom’s failure to provide pastoral support; exceeding authority, inaction against bullying; harassment and other destructive conduct; untimely and inappropriate interference by calling a congregation meeting; and obvious bias toward a small group with loud, but undisclosed and unofficial communication. Rev. Perkins expected the synod vice president and executive committee to handle this privately, since it was involving the bishop. The letter was accompanied by examples of bullying and harassing communications that had been shared with bishop Wickstrom, as well as copies of some petitions for assistance. These were a

small number of the erroneous documents and statements that the bishop had used as justification for her actions.

- **May-June 2024:** Rev. Perkins continued to follow through with the proper protocols while awaiting relief. There was an eventual response that appeared to involved Bishop Wickstrom's direction – in violation of the express provisions of S17.02 when the concerns involve the bishop. The executive committee declined to help, as there was no direct financial interest of the bishop in the situation. This, of course, bypassed acknowledgement or responsibility for any of the other concerns. There were statements that were somewhat balanced and confirmed constitutional authority that rests within the congregation.
- **June 2024:** Rev. Perkins wrote to Synod Vice President Swenson to correct a few mistaken assumptions and correlations about the Listening Team and Bishop's Assessment and Recommendations from March 2023 – errors that have been corrected and documented several times, though still **MISREPRESENTED** at this very presentation (September 10, 2024) to the Synod Council – and incorrect conclusions drawn from them. When responding to these corrections, Synod Vice President Swenson awkwardly reversed herself on certain points, further justifying Bishop Wickstrom's behavior. She included all the original attachments in this second response, which was subsequently forwarded by Rev. Vance (kept informed as a courtesy) to both Lisa Brendle and Karen Lawfer. Besides being inappropriate for Rev. Vance to forward communications between the Synod Vice President Swenson and Pastor Perkins, this (likely accidentally) put many confidential complaints and petitions between Pastor Perkins and her bishop in the hands of the wife of the February 2023 instigator and primary abuser of Pastor Perkins (thereby increasing the risk of further retaliation towards Pastor Perkins and reducing or eliminating her confidence in any professional judgement about confidentiality).
- **June 2024:** When Synod VP subsequently responded to a later communication that quoted councilmember Kristin Cadigan-McAdoo quoting Karen Lawfer quoting a specific point made by Rev. Perkins regarding Synod VP Swensen's initial response to Rev. Perkins S17.02 letter (confused yet?) the Synod VP determined that the conclusions were out of context, and that Rev. Perkins claimed to be quoting (she wasn't — later communications quoted Rev. Perkins' point) something not explicitly stated in Synod Vice President Swenson's (confused now?) response. Synod Vice President Swenson determined that Rev. Perkins had therefore shared enough of Synod Vice President Swenson's response to the original S17.02 expression that Pastor Perkins forfeited the privacy of the response, and authorized Synod Vice President Swenson's response to be shared generally with the congregation. **Basically, the constitutional process Pastor Perkins availed herself of was used against her and broadcast.**

Pause for Questions: The following questions were asked by the council and answered by the Bishop

How often does a change occur to a slate of elected council officers? A: This is the only time Bishop Oslovich has ever seen an election result changed or challenged. This is not the way it's addressed in Robert's Rules or the Constitution. **(INSUFFICIENT – this is the way bullying and harassment concerns are investigated while protecting those who are vulnerable. It is not addressed in the constitution nor Robert's Rules.)**

\$205,000 is missing according to Rev. Perkins. Who was/is the treasurer? How did that go missing? A: Those assets are secured - the elected treasurer does have access to those assets but Rev. Perkins does not, that may be what she is referring to. **(FALSE – Rev. Perkins didn't ever have access to any of the assets. Lisa Brendle and Kristin Cadigan-McAdoo withdrew the funds by draft and NEVER REPORTED to the council or congregation, as Bishop Oslovich was clearly told. The correctly elected treasurer Lynda "LZ" Stover does not have access to, nor information about the assets. The council has an obligation to review the status of the finances. Here Bishop Oslovich calls them secured but there was no documentation provided and direct questions to Brendle and Cadigan-McAdoo were unanswered with, "you don't need to worry about it." If Bishop Oslovich has seen documentation that the "assets are secured," it should be shared with the whole council. The money belongs to the congregation, not Brendle and Cadigan-McAdoo, nor any exclusive group. Lisa Brendle's lawsuit addressing her desire to protect assts is still pending.)**

Who authored the May 16th "correction" document and did Lisa Brendle resign? A: It's unknown who the author is, even the name of council members who "signed affidavits" **(TRIVIALIZING – the quotation marks suggest they aren't real, though neither bishop has asked about them)** are not listed (even though the minutes of this meeting were approved at the 6/30/24 Council meeting). Lisa Brendle never resigned. **(MISLEADING – Bishop Wickstrom declared – lacking any authority to do so -- Lisa Brendle President, without investigating the claims, asking to see the affidavits, or apparently considering consequences. Of course, the signers could not be listed as that would be inappropriate in the case of bullying. People do not report bullying when it makes them less safe. The names could have been revealed to Bishop Wickstrom or a person who did not present a risk. As noted above, misunderstandings and poor judgement have proven to fail to protect those reporting bullying in this synod. The MAJORITY of the council authorized the correction.)**

What is Synod Council member, Bradley Perkins', relationship to the church? A: He is a member of the congregation and Rev. Perkins' husband. He was an employee at the cold winter shelter when it was held at Resurrection. At the present time, the nonprofit (**FALSE – it is not a nonprofit, it is a ministry of the congregation**) "Juneau Live Studio" is run by Mr. Perkins at Resurrection. (**MISLEADING – he is the lead volunteer, primary contact, and system expert, but Juneau Live! Studio is regularly run by six congregation volunteers with various professionals and learners participating occasionally.**)

When the Bishop requests a Congregational meeting, must the President call one? A: Yes, and it appears both Presidents did call/announce it correctly.

Was the May 16, 2024 meeting that attempted to invalidate (**FALSE – as previously addressed**) and "correct" the March 7th elections a constitutionally correct meeting? A: The May 16 meeting did have quorum (**and was a regularly called meeting**) but did not include the officers elected in March 2024 (**FALSE – Lisa Brendle, Ken Koelsch and Kristin Cadigan-McAdoo were all there. I am unsure about Delores Graver**). The process by which they claimed to invalidate (**FALSE – as previously addressed**) the election is not in the Congregational Constitution or Robert's Rules of Order.

Resumption of the History

7. Both presidents, Lisa Brindle and Karen Lawfer, called for the June 9th Congregational meeting and it was announced as required.
 - a. Karen Lawfer attempted to cancel it the day before, claiming the right to call and cancel any Congregational meeting as part of the President's office. (**FALSE – she cancelled it because Bishop Wickstrom kept claiming the authority to hold this 51% vote without proper processes and documentation but would not address what gave her such authority. Karen Lawfer asked repeatedly, for weeks, for an explanation, justification or citation of the bishop's authority. Karen Lawfer explained each time that the chair could not allow a meeting called for an unconstitutional vote. The congregation does not have the right to override its own constitution by a simple vote – as later suggested by Bishop Oslovich's C15.11 process, nor does the bishop. After receiving vague or shifting reasoning from the bishop, Karen Lawfer informed the bishop she would have to cancel the meeting. Two days before the meeting, Bishop Wickstrom made FALSE claims about the Listening Team**

(claiming, for the first time, it was a Consultation Committee) and her 2023 Assessment and Recommendations and suggesting that a conversation with the ELCA Secretary equated items that clearly define themselves differently.)

- b. Bishop Wickstrom and Zack Manzella were present and the Congregational meeting was held;
 - i. Quorum was established (though no attendance list was made available to determine who was allowed to vote, and not all voting members had clear, informed access).
 - ii. A vote was called to move the Call to half time and not to call Rev. Perkins (vote: 2-24). (These numbers exceed the possible number of voting members present.)
 - iii. A second motion passed to make June 30th Rev. Perkins' last day as pastor.
 - c. Rev. Karen Perkins (at the request/direction of the majority congregation council) has refused to step down as pastor and has continued to preside at services. She has not asked for "on leave from call" status on the roster.
8. A lawsuit has been filed by Lisa Brendle and other officers (**FALSE – just Lisa Brendle's name is on the lawsuit, though she claims it is "on behalf of RLC." No congregation, council or group from RLC authorized her to do so.**) to pursue the removal of Rev. Perkins and to establish their legal rights as officers of the Congregation.

Recess from 7:52-7:55

Findings and Recommendations of Bishop - see report

Both factions received a copy of this report. Rev. Perkins has not spoken to the Bishop about the findings. She has been encouraged by her attorney not to discuss the recommendations with the Bishop (as it overlaps with Brendle's lawsuit and could have legal implications).

The Council reviewed the document.

Findings and Recommendations of the Consultation Committee - see report

Both factions and Bishop Oslovich received a copy of the Recommendations of the Consultation committee.

The Council reviewed the document. (but not the documentation that shows conversation was abandoned by the Consultation Committee, President Lawfer was misled, and the report includes false claims and superfluous but prejudicial comments)

The Council decides on process to adjudicate this matter - VP Swenson

The VP invited the council to first determine the process by which to adjudicate this issue. Her proposal was to either render a decision now, based on (**FALSE, MISLEADING, and ONE SIDED**) “evidence” already before the council; call for a small group to further investigate the matter and bring a recommended solution to the council at a later date; or come up with a different method.

Many members of the council made statements in favor of making a decision tonight and to not further investigate. This would allow the congregation to heal and move forward.

It was pointed out by several members that regardless of the outcome of the vote tonight, we need to be attentive to the pastoral care of Rev. Karen Perkins and the congregation of Resurrection.

Prayer for vote taken (Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel).

SC 24.09.30 It is the decision of the Alaska Synod Council to adjudicate this matter immediately as it concerns Resurrection. Lutheran Church - Juneau: (Moved: Harber & 2nd: Camasi - 11 in favor/0 opposed) Passed unanimously.

Question 1: Who are the officers of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau?

Prayer before vote taken (Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel).

SC 24.09.31 The Alaska Synod Council affirms Lisa Brendle - President; Delores Graver - Vice President; Ken Koelsch - Secretary; Kristen Cadigan-McAdoo - Treasurer as the legal officers of Resurrection Lutheran Church - Juneau. (Moved: Avery & 2nd: Harber - 11 votes in favor/0 opposed) Passed unanimously.

~~**Question 2:**~~ Was the Congregational meeting of June 9th called and conducted correctly and it's results valid?

Prayer before vote taken (Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel).

SC 24.09.32 The Alaska Synod Council rules that the Congregational meeting of Resurrection Lutheran Church - Juneau held on June 9th was called and conducted correctly according to the Congregational Constitution and therefore, its results are valid. (Moved: Bergh & 2nd: Camasi - 11 votes in favor/0 opposed): Passed unanimously.

Vice President Swenson will share these results with Rev. Perkins and the Council of Resurrection - Juneau.

Next meeting: **October 11 & 12, 2024 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in**

Anchorage SC 24.09.33 Closing Prayer by Rev. Lisa Smith Fiegel and

Adjournment @ 8:49pm.

Subject: Re: Special (Ad Hoc) Synod Council Meeting (via Zoom) on Tuesday, Sept. 10th at 6:00pm
Date: Tuesday, September 10, 2024 at 4:42:31 PM Alaska Daylight Time
From: Leslie Swenson
To: Rev. Timothy Oslovich, Rev. Amanda Van Vliet Snyder, Jan Dodds, "Rev. Oliver 'Ollie' Bergh", Sue (Dunlap) Camasi, Johnny Copenhaver, Rev. Sean Avery, Joanne Keyes, Edward Mjolsnes, Rev. Sandy Van Zyl, Marilyn Rosene, Bradley Perkins, The Rev. Deborah Gelerter, Mona Mitton, Shannon Klescewski, The Rev. Meredith Harber, John Christensen, Karen Voris
CC: Alaska Synod of the ELCA, Zach Manzella, Chris Aquino

Dear Council Members,

Here is the agenda for tonight's Special Meeting of the Alaska Synod Council (at 6:00 pm).

Special Alaska Synod Council Meeting, 6:00pm September 10, 2024

Alaska Synod is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Topic: Alaska Synod Council Meeting

Time: Sep 10, 2024 06:00 PM

Alaska Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89855367382?pwd=pZLiraqbFcM4wSNvExyGPL>

ljbuFJZR.1 Meeting ID: 898 5536 7382

Passcode: 926059

ALASKA SYNOD GUIDING PRINCIPLES

When we are at our best, you will find us:

- Listening to the Spirit and following Jesus
- Engaging each other with humility, honesty, respect, courage, and grace
- Celebrating our diversity through full participation, decision-making, and leadership
- Sharing our resources across the Alaska Synod so that ministries thrive
- Taking risks and being open to working in new ways for the sake of the Gospel
- Equipping and supporting resilient, creative lay and ordained leaders
- Working for justice and serving God's creation across the Alaska synod and beyond
- Living out and sharing the love of Jesus wherever we are

Agenda

(Pastor Perkins asked some synod council members for a copy of this agenda before the meeting because she didn't want to get it from her husband, synod council member Brad Perkins. They declined to share it. Is it the custom that synod council agendas are confidential? Why wouldn't an agenda be available to any member of the synod who requested it? Is it so that we can't see how "information" is curated and potentially comment on it?)

1. 6:00pm Call to Order and Opening Prayer - Leslie and DEM Rev. Lisa Smith-Fiegel
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Special Rules of the session - Leslie
4. The Rev. Karen Perkins
 - A. Introduction
 - B. Rev. Perkins' Statement
 - C. Questions of the Council.
5. Brief History of recent conflict at Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau - Bishop Tim
 - A. Congregational Constitution Review, specifically section C15.11, under which this work is undertaken (at the request of members of the congregation in response to the bishop's invitation with questions specified by bishop).

- B. Questions:
 - 1) Who are the officers of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau?
 - a) Time line of events/meetings/ballots
 - b) Were the changes (corrections) led (**FALSE – announced after investigation**) by Karen Lawfer valid?
 - 2) Was the Congregational meeting of June 9th called and conducted correctly and it's results valid?
 - C. Findings and Recommendations of Bishop
 - D. Findings and Recommendations of the Consultation Committee
- 6. The Council decides on process to adjudicate this matter - Leslie
 - 7. Next meeting: **October 11&12, 2024 in Anchorage**
 - 8. Adjourn

If you have questions about the agenda, please let me know. If you have trouble joining the Zoom call, feel free to call, email or text me - I'll keep my phone close at hand.

I'm attaching section 15.10&11 of the Model Congregational Constitution which is the basis on which we engage in this work. You'll see it duplicates the wording of our Synod Constitution section 17, but from the perspective of the Congregation (Resurrection, Juneau in this case), and I just want to be sure everyone has access to this as a resource for tonight.

I also want to add a quick note about emails shared today with the Synod Council by Brad Perkins and Karen Lawfer of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Juneau. While members may, of course, read these documents, you are not expected to have read them and will not be asked to rely on them while adjudicating the matters before the Synod Council tonight. Neither Brad Perkins nor Karen Lawfer asked my permission (nor that of anyone on the Exec. Committee) (**Are synod council members required or expected to ask permission from the Exec. Committee before sharing information with the synod council? Why are synod council members chosen by cluster if local knowledge isn't important?**) to share these documents with the Council and did not receive your email addresses from me or the Exec. Comm. (**Karen Lawfer did not receive email addresses at all – synod council member Brad Perkins forwarded her email**), so I want to be clear that these are not official documents of the Synod Council.

You are expected to have read and be very familiar with the documents which Bishop Tim shared with you on the Google Drive (with his email of yesterday). Please review them if you haven't already.

Finally, you should note that Pastor Karen Perkins has been offered (**after expressing astonishment that she wasn't asked about the situation, and it STILL hadn't been investigated**) and has accepted a brief time to make a statement to the full Council before we begin our deliberations. (Item 4 on the agenda). If you have questions for her specifically, you may ask them following her statement.

I'll see you all soon. Thank you for your time, attention and prayers on this important matter, Leslie

Leslie Swenson (she/her)
Vice President, Synod
Council Alaska Synod of the
ELCA

aksynodvp@gmail.com

My home is located on the
lands of the Dena people of
the Lower Tanana River.

Do you know who the Indigenous people
were and are [on the land you inhabit](#)?

***C15.10. Adjudication**

***C15.11.** When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president [vice president] of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

On Sep 8, 2024, at 12:51 PM, Leslie Swenson <aksynodvp@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Council Members,

I appreciate your patience with me in regards to setting the meeting date & time for our Special Synod Council Meeting. I've wanted to give the parties concerned the longest possible time to accept the recommendation of the Consultation Committee (which was submitted on Sept. 3rd), in hopes that our work on this matter would not be necessary. We have finally heard that the leader of one of the factions involved has rejected the Consultation Committee's recommendation (**FALSE – "final report" was a surprise, as previously addressed, and it offered no recommendation**), so I'm calling for a Special meeting of the Synod Council on Tuesday, Sept. 10th at 6:00pm (via Zoom). There were a few members who had difficulty with a Wednesday meeting, so Tuesday seems the better choice. If you can't make the meeting or may need to join late, please notify me immediately so I may plan accordingly.

Now that we are required to resolve this dispute, we will be acting under the Synod's Constitution section S17.11 *"...If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final."* (the Model Congregational Constitution carries the same directive in section 15). I will send a full agenda to you all, but just so it's clear, we will be meeting to address the following:

In regards to the congregation of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Juneau (a member congregation of the Alaska Synod):

- (1) Who are the officers of Resurrection Lutheran Church?**
(2) Was the meeting held on June 9, 2024, a legal congregation meeting (was it legally called and conducted and the decision made valid?)

Bishop Tim is gathering the (selected) documents (potentially) pertinent to our discussions and placing them on a shared Google Drive for us now. The synod office will share that link with each of you as soon as possible (tomorrow), so you should have at least 24 hours to read and review them. We will also share a Zoom link with you soon to join the meeting.

I ask that you include Pastor Karen Perkins, her family, and the whole congregation of Resurrection Lutheran Church - Juneau in your prayers.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, though I would urge you to refrain from discussing anything which would be part of our deliberations, as that all needs to play out in the presence of the full Council.

Thank

you,

Leslie

Leslie Swenson (she/her)
Vice President, Synod
Council Alaska Synod of the
ELCA aksynodvp@gmail.com

My home is located on the
lands of the Dena people of
the Lower Tanana River.
Do you know who the Indigenous people
were and are [on the land you inhabit](#)?

On Aug 20, 2024, at 5:00 PM, Leslie Swenson
<aksynodvp@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Synod Council Members,

I hope these last days of summer are finding you all well, I'm sure many of us are busy picking/hunting/fishing/gathering/enjoying the bounty of God's creation.

In the midst of all this activity I wanted to give you as much notice as I could of a possible ad hoc meeting of the Council (via Zoom) that is likely to be called during the second week of September: the evening of Tuesday, 9/10 or Wednesday 9/11, for about 1-2 hours. Please "pencil" these dates onto your calendar and let me know your availability. I will, of course, be in contact on the final date and time as soon as I've heard from you.

As a brief background: there is a congregation of the synod which is currently in the Consultation Process with Bishop Tim Oslovich (as defined by their Congregational Constitution section 15.11 and mirrored in the Synod's Constitution section 17.11 - copied below). The resolution proposed by Bishop Tim to the congregation has been rejected by one of the factions involved (**INCORRECT – as addressed above**), so there is currently a Consultation Committee team gathering information for its recommended resolution. If both factions accept this resolution, the matter is settled and the Council need not act. But, if the proposed resolution of the Consultation Committee is also rejected, the matter will then move to us on the Synod Council. In light of busy-ness of this season, I'd like for the Council to be prepared to address this matter by setting a date for us to meet and begin the adjudication process if need.

As I requested earlier, please let me know (via email) which of these dates would or would not work for you.

On a personal note, I'll be on a trip overseas for the next few weeks. I will have internet access, so if you need to contact me on any other matter or have questions this issue, please use email only (and not via text or call) from 8/20 till 9/4. Thank you.

Leslie

From the AK Synod Constitution (2022)

†S17.11. *When there is disagreement between or among factions within a congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of the congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president of the Congregation Council of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in †S14.18.d. In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.*

Leslie Swenson (she/her)

Vice President, Synod
Council Alaska Synod of the
ELCA aksynodvp@gmail.com

My home is located on the
lands of the Dena people of
the Lower Tanana River.

Do you know who the Indigenous people
were and are [on the land you inhabit](#)?

Subject: Re: Special (Ad Hoc) Synod Council Meeting (via Zoom) on Tuesday, Sept. 10th at

6:00pm **Date:** Monday, September 9, 2024 at 10:47:58 AM Alaska Daylight Time

From: Alaska

Synod To:

Leslie

Swenson

CC: Rev. Timothy Oslovich, Rev. Amanda Van Vliet Snyder, Jan Dodds, Rev. Oliver 'Ollie' Bergh, Sue (Dunlap) Camasi, Johnny Copenhaver, Rev. Sean Avery, Joanne Keyes, Edward Mjolsnes, Rev. Sandy Van Zyl, Marilyn Rosene, Bradley Perkins, The Rev. Deborah Gelerter, Mona Mitton, Shannon Klescewski, The Rev. Meredith Harber, John Christensen, Karen Voris, Alaska Synod of the ELCA, Zach Manzella

Dear Synod Council members,

Please find the following documents for tomorrow's Synod Council meeting

at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1tvR35CGcJGPCZU1uJxCU3YkJ8-c1irLY?usp=sharing>:

- Listening Team Report 2023 -- this is the report of the Listening Team (three members of the Consultation Committee) who traveled to Juneau and listened to many people from the congregation.
- Bishop Wickstrom's Assessment and Recommendations 2023 -- this is the list of retired Bishop Wickstrom's recommendations, including her recommendation that the congregation vote on whether the pastoral call at Resurrection should be half- time **[FALSE – look at the document, this isn't there]** and whether Pastor Perkins (the pastor) should continue in that call.
- March 7, 2024 Council Minutes -- the relevant portion is the section on page 2 which lists the results of the elections.
- RLC Council April 18th 2024 Minutes -- the relevant portion is the section on page 2 which notes that the March 7, 2024 minutes were unanimously approved.
- Correction Report March 7, 2024 -- this is the argument for overturning **[FALSE – as previously addressed]** the results of the elections held by the council on March 7, 2024. It was presented at a meeting on May 16, 2024.
- The congregational meeting of RLC June 9, 2024 -- these are the draft minutes of the congregation meeting held on June 9, 2024. **[These haven't been shared with the congregation, nor has the list of voting members been verified.]** Former Bishop Shelley Wickstrom and Zach Manzella **[unfortunately vulnerable to the bishop and not an expert in constitutional/organizational law]**, the Synod Parliamentarian, were at this meeting and affirm that it was legally called and conducted.
- RLC Special Council Meeting 6-30-24 -- these are minutes from the faction of the council that supports Pastor Perkins. **[FALSE – Pastor Perkins agrees with them in following the constitution. Former Bishop Wickstrom has repeatedly tried to make this a Pastor Perkins issue, although it is clearly a congregation majority issue.]** Note that since this meeting happened on June 30, the day Pastor Perkins's call ended, it was a legal meeting. The people at that meeting (six lay members of the council and Pastor Perkins) argue that they had the power to overturn **[FALSE – as previously addressed]** the decision of the congregation **[FALSE – the process for making this decision is clearly defined in the constitution and was not followed]** meeting held on June 9. That is one of the arguments to be considered in attempting to resolve this conflict.
- Bishop Oslovich Proposed Resolution of Disputed Issues at Resurrection Lutheran Church -- After being requested **[at his invitation and with his wording]** to help resolve the disputes over who the officers at RLC are and whether the June 9, 2024 congregation meeting was legally called and conducted, Bishop Oslovich issued this proposed resolution (**verdict**).

- Consultation Committee Final Report on RLC-Juneau -- this is the report of the Consultation Committee that interviewed people (selected by Lisa Brendle) from RLC in August 2024. The Consultation Committee was unable to resolve the conflict.

Addendum

Timeline Highlights in Conflict with Synod Bishops

Timeline of highlights in conflict based on information and belief of the RLC Council.

02/2023 Outgoing council President Satak—claiming RLC council authorization he did not have—contacted then-Alaska Bishop Shelley Wickstrom after a “failed” meeting with Pastor Perkins. At this meeting, arranged to discuss communication challenges, between the two, President Satak decided to review Pastor Perkins’ performance (unknownst to Pastor Perkins), and demand (not discuss) Pastor Perkins adjust some pet ministry priorities. This took place on the eve of the 2023 annual congregation meeting and appeared to be part of a poorly conceived plan involving the former treasurer, current treasurer, and president. Their goal was to convince the congregation to reduce Pastor Perkins’ call to half-time and eventually dismiss her. However, Pastor Perkins had recently received a favorable review from the Mutual Ministry Committee, and the exaggerated deficit budget was sent back for revision. (The 2023 annual congregation meeting can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/Q639Y1ucqys>).

Based on this call with President Satak, but without further investigation or any identified corroboration, Bishop Wickstrom immediately initiated a consultation committee presumably under C9.05a.2. Both President Satak and Bishop Wickstrom suggested to a perplexed Pastor Perkins that she should consider immediate resignation and negotiate a severance package before facing a 51% congregational vote for termination. It was eventually revealed that Satak had no authority to question Pastor Perkins’ ability to conduct the pastoral office effectively, whether in view of local conditions or suggest any “incapacity.”

Just one minute before the February council meeting, President Satak called Pastor Perkins (attending via Zoom) to again threaten her job and encourage her to negotiate a resignation before losing benefits. He had declined to run for another turn on council, but attempted to hold a “part-time” vote while he was still chair by recessing the congregation meeting, rather than adjourning and following the constitutional process for attempting to end the call. When that meeting didn’t have a quorum, he attempted to recess again, as the new president would be chosen before the next meeting. If he were no longer the chair of a congregation meeting, he would be unable to allow an unconstitutional vote. Next, he unilaterally postponed the March council meeting, claiming there wouldn’t be a quorum, and thus postponing the election of new officers until after a “recessed” congregation meeting so he could continue as chair. By the time Pastor Perkins checked on the quorum, some council members had made other plans. Ultimately, Pastor Perkins called a special meeting to elect officers so that President Satak would relinquish the office. Mr. Satak and the congregation were informed at this time, and subsequently, about the constitutional process they could follow to try to terminate the call. Neither he, nor any other congregation member ever started the constitutional process, likely realizing they could not be legitimately successful.

03/2023

Bishop Wickstrom claimed that prior RLC presidents had also expressed concerns about the church's ability to support a full-time pastor. However, when those claims were contradicted by the past presidents, Wickstrom inexplicably clarified she was sending a "listening team" rather than canceling the process — that took on only vague comparison with C9.05a.2 — with no implication regarding Pastor Perkins' abilities or fitness for call. In fact, she repeatedly emphasized that this was not a disciplinary action, nor was the listening team expected to make any recommendations. The council leadership decided to use the information from the listening team as groundwork for the congregation's discernment process (which had been suspended during COVID).

A small group overwhelmed the "listening team" with similar complaints, despite the fact that most of them had not attended the church for over four years while RLC's ministry and connections were expanding (yes, RLC grew during COVID). These individuals had refused to participate in group conversation, exploration or compromise. Their rally cry was, "When do we vote?" or "Why can't we vote?" or "We want to vote." Meanwhile, active RLC members were bewildered as to why a "listening team" was even needed.

The failed attempt to reduce Pastor Perkins' call to part-time against the congregation's will, and the erroneous lure of doing it with 51% congregational vote at a regular meeting, enticed a small group of members who had previously stopped attending after Pastor Perkins was called. Their return coincided with the quick substitution of a C9.05a.2 process with the "listening team." Some of this returning group became singularly focused on the goal of reducing the pastoral call and terminating Pastor Perkins. They joined in common cause with the original, vehement three mentioned above. This alliance of individuals with different underlying agendas was sometimes referred to by the RLC Council and congregation as the "small group of eight." They did manage to rally an additional 10–12 family members and friends who maintained voting status by meeting minimal requirements (often only attending Christmas or Easter services) to challenge the voting of the rest of the congregation.

While discussing President Sutak's call and subsequent interactions with the bishop, Pastor Perkins began sharing concerns about the way President Sutak interacted with her that felt domineering, condescending and dismissive. This is why Pastor Perkins had scheduled a meeting with President Sutak to address communication challenges in the first place. Unfortunately, the conversation about behaviors led to his immediate call to the bishop (discussed above) and subsequent personal criticisms, sniping and power plays. From that time, President Sutak treated Pastor Perkins as a personal enemy. Just one minute before the March council meeting (again), President Sutak called Pastor Perkins (attending via Zoom) to again threaten her job and encourage her to negotiate a resignation before losing benefits.

Pastor Perkins also told Bishop Wickstrom that she was both hearing about and witnessing some pressuring, dominating and criticizing that was making it difficult for some in the community to be at ease around the church. A few people would only speak up if Pastor Perkins or another strong leader was present. While President Sutak had tried to insist that meetings revert from Zoom to all in-person, this was impractical for some council members and others found it easier not to be in the same room. Bishop Wickstrom did not acknowledge the concern.

04/2023 As the bishop is theoretically the pastor of the clergy in the synod, Pastor Perkins shared with Bishop Wickstrom about these escalating bullying behaviors regularly, forwarding or copying her on emails that were causing problems, telling her in person, or texting about some of the incidents. Bishop Wickstrom suggested that the meetings be recorded, and that Pastor Perkins and former-President Sutak never meet without another council member present, “so it wouldn’t just he said, she said.” Unfortunately, of the dozens of hours of videos sent the bishop, she only addressed one minute during one meeting at which Pastor Perkins said something incorrect. Whether seen as a pastor or a manager, Bishop Wickstrom was oddly impassive about the complaints, even as it became harassment or abuse. Later, the bishop suggested Pastor Perkins put in her mobility papers, as though that was a solution to patterns of bullying in a congregation. Eventually, Bishop Wickstrom claimed that Pastor Perkins was “miserable” at RLC, based on Perkins’ repeated reports and requests for help.

From this point on, the council leadership became increasingly concerned that Bishop Wickstrom was in regular contact with undisclosed parties at RLC and in the cluster regarding RLC matters. Without appropriately involving Pastor Perkins or council leadership in conversations or even verifying this secret input (gossip) and checking facts, the bishop appeared to be making decisions for and about the congregation. She normalized bypassing the congregation’s pastor and elected leadership for any complaint. Although the RLC Council had multiple conversations with the bishop, she ignored those discussions and proceeded based on misleading or fabricated information.

05/2023 Based on the team’s report, Bishop Wickstrom issued her recommendations, including the parochial implication that RLC could not support a full-time pastor. She stated (not based on actual evidence) in her recommendations based on the Listening Team Report:

“RLC’s financial giving does not support an experienced full-time pastor’s compensation and benefits. With the decline in membership, the likelihood of that changing is slim. A part-time call **should be considered**. That change from a full-time to a part-time call ends the current call to Pastor Perkins. The congregation votes on this change from full-time to part-time compensation and responsibilities. Clarity of pastoral and congregational responsibilities should be determined before a part-time call is offered. The congregation then votes to offer a part-time call to Pastor Perkins or votes to seek a new part-time pastor. Another option would be to become an internship site with the intern supervised by a pastor who serves another congregation.” [emphasis added].

This recommendation lacks any constitutional basis and lacks any “recommendation the congregation vote on going to a half-time pastor,” as was later claimed and then repeated by Synod VP Swenson, new Bishop Oslovich, and several others attempting to defend Bishop Wickstrom’s eventual decision to force an unconstitutional vote. It was one big item in three pages worth of recommendations, grouped into five interrelated categories. Nevertheless, the group of eight successfully sold some version of “the bishop said we could vote” mixed with a manufactured (but scary) budget emergency. RLC was genuinely struggling and had challenging decisions to make, but had work to do in order to make the choices authentically in light of RLC’s mission.

The council leadership invited congregational participation, launching task forces to address the various items in the bishop’s recommendations document, and to help shepherd the recommendations into information that would be provided to the discernment consultant the congregation expected to hire. Task force work ranged from no action to thorough exploration and analysis. Two of the “group of eight” signed up for the Financial Reality task force, using it for a vehicle to forward the “financial crisis, vote first, end Pastor Perkins’ call” agenda. They skipped the work asked of the task force but broadened the reach of their message and developed a separate budget, independent of the congregation’s approved budget, the council, and verified, accurate financial reports. When this departure from expectations and cooperation was identified by council leadership, these participants began to contact other pastors and the synod office, purporting to speak as representatives of the congregation, generating confusion and muddying communication with the bishop.

06/2023 During the 2023 Spring Collegium prior to the Synod Assembly, Pastor Perkins approached Rev. Lauren Vance of Consultation to Clergy to request help dealing with the conflict in the congregation, bullying and what she perceived as an effort to stall the discernment process. At the request of the RLC council and pastor, Rev. Vance agreed to come work with the congregation and help integrate the task force work into the congregation’s discernment process. He began with individual interviews with members willing to meet. It appears that the group of eight and friends vehemently reiterated what they had communicated to the “listening team” from five months earlier, regardless of any work that had or had not happened in the interim. This became part of a coordination-and-repetition pattern that masqueraded as quantity or pervasiveness of concerns. Rev. Vance also held a half day, “two-four-all” session for the congregation, attempting to work together on the issue of diminishing or missing age groups. At this meeting, Randy Sutak stated in his group, “I don’t care what happens to the church. I just want her [Pastor Perkins] gone.” Departing the meeting early, he left a list of the same criticisms he ultimately repeated through June of 2024. Referencing the volatility at meetings that some people noted in his interviews, Rev. Vance recommended that RLC develop a meeting code of conduct. It took four months for council members to debate and pass the Meeting Code of Conduct. Council member Brendle and then Treasurer Kristin Cadigan-McAdoo weren’t supportive developing this at all, but especially resisted any general principles about rudeness and common church bullying behaviors.

- 08/2023 After Rev. Vance's first visit, council leadership was focused on conversations with the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ), trying to make arrangements for a safe, appropriate, low-barrier emergency shelter. RLC was divided about hosting the shelter again, which exacerbated existing conflict in the congregation. Bishop Wickstrom and the group of eight used Pastor Perkins' and Brad Perkins' ability and experience in the area of low-barrier shelters to reinforce the idea that the shelter was Perkins' cause, rather than a passion of most of the council and the congregation. The shelter contract would have minimized the anticipated deficit in the congregational budget, including subsidizing a portion of the pastor's compensation. Therefore, defeating the emergency shelter became essential to the agenda of reducing the call. Ken Koelsch, as the leader of the Financial Reality task force, made multiple contacts in the community to push for alternative arrangements, solicit exaggerated complaints, push the narrative that "the congregation didn't want it, and work political connections to ensure RLC would not host the emergency shelter. Just before the temperature neared freezing, the congregation narrowly approved hosting the shelter. At a special council meeting immediately following the congregation meeting, four of opponents of the emergency shelter (including the two members of the Financial Reality Task Force and one of their spouses) suddenly tried to join the council. It became clear by the next day that the process was flawed and there was no mechanism for adding council members at that time. The four, with council members Brendle and Cadigan-McAdoo, fought the determination for months.
- 09/2023 Despite the congregation vote to host the shelter, the city abruptly had another organization with very little expertise in low-barrier shelters, and a previously rejected city warehouse in a high-risk avalanche zone that they preferred to use. Pastor Perkins (and several others from RLC) spoke publicly about risks of the city's new plan and tried to illuminate the illegitimate, secret process involved in making the last-minute change after four months of working with RLC to develop and appropriate plan that might be acceptable to RLC. Again, this was presented as an attempt of the pastor to force her agenda upon the congregation, rather than her support and leadership with a ministry most of the congregation was proud to share.
- 11/2023 Despite being fully aware that the church was well into its own discernment process, Bishop Wickstrom—without explanation and in direct contradiction of conversations with RLC Council leadership — proposed to call a congregational meeting to hold a vote about the part vs full-time call in November 2023, and again January 2024, stating she would chair the meeting and would bring her own parliamentarian. (President Lawfer had engaged an outside, professional parliamentarian for a special congregation meeting, after a particularly contentious previous meeting.) This should have made it apparent that Bishop Wickstrom could not risk having a parliamentarian who would acknowledge that her proposed chairing of the meeting was without constitutional basis, or that the 51% threshold for a vote that terminated a pastoral call was unconstitutional. She ostensibly to drop her efforts after learning about the trajectory of the churches' ongoing discernment and consultation process in January 2024.
- 01/2024 Rev. Vance returned to Juneau to continue working with RLC, focused on identifying immediate congregation priorities for 2024. He met with council, with some individuals, then with a congregation gathering of 25 to 30 people. The group

generated a list of the priorities that came out of the meeting. Pastor Perkins and council member Lucy Merrell agreed to turn the list into a congregation-wide survey to narrow the focus for further discussion. They transferred the list directly from the gathering notes to minimize the addition of their own biases to the survey. The survey was distributed electronically and on paper, with a clear explanation that the limited purpose. RLC had a high rate of participation, with almost half of the membership responding.

02/2024 At the 2024 Annual Meeting, the results the election resulted in an apparently balanced council that was had all positions filled for the first time in years. There was debate about a return to constitutional term lengths, as RLC had developed a habit of electing people for different term lengths in order to keep the turnover staggered. An annual budget with a full-time pastor passed easily.

The results of the discernment survey surprised some when it reflected a strong commitment to pursuing other partnerships and funding, before cutting ministries. There was also an emphasis on Christian education, as well as a high priority indicated for outreach, service and innovation. These were not the results advocated by the "small group of eight," and some did not want the results shared with the congregation. Nevertheless, existing leadership felt it was necessary to share the results in accordance with its introduction and as part of the discernment process.

03/2024 At the first council meeting after the annual meeting, officers were elected, including Lisa Brendle as President. Almost immediately, people were privately expressing that they had been pressured to elect certain officers, though not saying so directly. The new officers immediately started trying to operate in a directive, autocratic manner. There were instances of demanding information from certain members regardless of role and refusing to work with others. They demanded passcodes for all electronic tools, without understanding the tools, and despite years the years of expertise other members had.

The group of eight began work without learning what had already been done. President Brendle suddenly tried to shift to a directive rapport with Pastor Perkins. General rudeness increased enough for members to mention it to Pastor Perkins and various council members. As time went on, revelations about pressure and bullying became more direct. Eventually, council members told a few people privately about being pressured to elect certain leaders or vote a particular way.

04/2024 Just days after the April RLC Council meeting where a vote effectively to scrap the work of the current discernment process was defeated, Bishop Wickstrom announced that the president should call a special congregational meeting on June 9, to hold a vote about cutting the pastoral call to half-time and ending the current call of Pastor Perkins. It was odd that the bishop specified the date, squeezing it in just weeks before her own retirement. This had not been discussed at the council meeting, and it essentially contradicted what the council had decided. However, after this meeting had ended, council member Brendle can be heard on the meeting recording stating that it was time to call the bishop. It appears that not getting their way at the meeting, the group of eight solicited the bishop to oppose the council's decision, oppose the budget passed at the annual meeting, and oppose the congregation's priorities as indicated in the survey.

Also, during this meeting, it was decided that President Brendle and Pastor Perkins would work with Rev. Vance to come follow-up with setting immediate priorities and considering what resources would be needed. Pastor Perkins discovered the following week that President Brendle, who had refused to work on discernment the preceding year, bypassed working with Pastor Perkins or anyone experienced with the discernment process longer than she had. Brendle contacted Rev. Vance independently, arranging dates for his visit, and giving him direction that the purpose would be defining the congregation's needs of a half-time pastor in preparation for the bishop's proposed vote, and developing a new Meeting Code of Conduct. This was instead of the previously agreed upon agenda of clarifying the survey results and determining what resources would be needed. This was the first Pastor Perkins heard about an intention of developing a new meeting code of conduct or changing the existing one, which President Brendle had previously opposed (see #9) and wasn't insisting all follow.

05/2024 Following the RLC council meeting, an investigation led to the Corrections Report issued on May 16, 2024, to Karen Lawfer, the presider of the March 7, 2024, council meeting, where the violation of RLC Meeting Code of Conduct occurred during the election of officers. Based on the Corrections Report, Karen Lawfer was compelled at the start of the May 16, 2024, council meeting to announce the correction of officers. Unfortunately, the May 16, 2024, council meeting where the officers were corrected was the same night then-President Brendle had arranged for Rev. Vance to be present. Corrected and re-elected President Lawfer informed Rev. Vance the day before that the correction would be announced before Brendle could call the meeting to order. President Lawfer read a written statement explaining the situation and the reason a meeting could not immediately continue. Safety (or the perception of safety) of bullied individuals must take priority over others' desire to know who said what about whom, and when.

Rev. Vance did work with the RLC council on perceptions of bullying, before its regular council meeting. The congregation was given five days' notice about a gathering where they could discuss needs for a half-time pastor. Of course, attendance was heavily slanted in favor of those who supported this deviation from the legitimate indications of the congregation's preferences. As Rev. Vance had informed Pastor Perkins and President Lawfer the year before that he was accountable to them and did not report to the bishop, Pastor Perkins was shocked when the agenda was changed based on the bishop's incorrect assertion about the discernment survey and then-President Brendle's underhanded arrangements. Pastor Perkins experienced this as a betrayal of the neutrality commitment he had made when they began working together at the clergy collegium in 2023. This was especially true as Pastor Perkins had explained and provided documentation of the contradictions and erroneous information he had been given.

After the correction of officers, without investigation or concern for the bullied council members, Bishop Wickstrom, lacking any constitutional authority under either RLC or Alaska Synod constitutions, attempted to re-appoint Brendle as president. The RLC Council believes this move came in response to President Lawfer's repeated challenges to the bishop about her constitutional basis for the proposed 51% vote to end Pastor Perkins' call—a vote that council member Brendle and spouse and member Sutak; both wanted or would allow to happen without regard to the RLC constitution.

On May 23, 2024, Pastor Perkins submitted a Letter of Expression of Concern to the Executive Committee of Synod Council S17.02 regarding Bishop Wickstrom's failure to address year-long complaints of bullying and harassment by a congregation member, exceeding her authority regarding matters at RLC, and matters regarding the proposed June 9 meeting. Despite the clear recusal requirements in S17.02 when the matter involves the bishop, the RLC Council believes that Bishop Wickstrom was heavily involved in the process, as language and references in the response are unlikely to come from another source. When Pastor Perkins sent further clarification and correction of some details used in their determination, synod VP Swenson's response reversed herself on one point and muddled others. Further actions of Bishop Wickstrom appeared retributive. Rev. Vance received a copy of synod VP Swenson's second letter to keep him informed as a courtesy). He forwarded this to both "Presidents" Brendle and Lawfer. Unfortunately, this included a number of the attachments Pastor Perkins had included documenting the bullying and harassment by "President" Brendle's husband, Randy Sutak. Forwarding the email was inappropriate; and accidentally including the attachments was unsafe. Rev. Vance was returning to facilitate another unrighteous meeting in November was reckless and cruel, as trust was already broken.

Leading up to the June 9 meeting, President Lawfer repeatedly requested Bishop Wickstrom's explanation, constitution citation or justification for Bishop Wickstrom's 51% threshold vote which would end the pastoral call (rather than the constitutionally required 2/3 vote). Pastor Perkins pressed for an explanation as to why this was being rushed suddenly and in opposition to the congregation and council decisions. Both independently cautioned Bishop Wickstrom that forcing such a vote at this time would be damaging, regardless of the outcome. No response was offered to either Lawfer or Perkins, though Bishop Wickstrom insisted Brendle was president, and it was within the bishop's authority to ask the congregation president to call a meeting at any time, regardless of who was president. That point wasn't being disputed.

06/2024

President Lawfer grew increasingly alarmed as it became clear that Bishop Wickstrom intended to proceed with the meeting, with council member Brendle presiding as president and Synod Council Attorney Pastor Manzella acting as parliamentarian. In a conversation with synod council member Bradley Perkins, Pastor Manzella appeared unwilling to address the false claims made in an open email by Wickstrom, in which she tried to justify the 51% threshold vote by stating (for the first time and in direct contradiction to all documentation) that her “listening team” was actually the Consultation Committee for the C9.05a.2 process (even though it did not meet the requirements and their report states its purpose was different). On Friday, June 7, she claimed she had received confirmation (without providing details) from the ELCA General Counsel they were “the same,” and providing a phone number when it was too late to expect to reach him before the meeting. Faced with these developments, President Lawfer, believing that any motion to prevent the unconstitutional vote would not be heard, and determining she had no other recourse, canceled the meeting on June 8 in an email to all congregation members, explaining her reasoning. Later that day, council member Brendle, acting as the re-appointed president by the bishop, attempted to re-call the meeting for the library (instead of the sanctuary) in an email from her personal email that did not reach all congregation members, and did not include an electronic method to attend).

While the June 9 meeting has been used as a justification for ending the call and other questionable actions, no minutes or sign-in list were provided, and the numbers appear to include individuals who are not voting members of the congregation. Those minutes were reviewed by members of the RLC Council after they were presented to the Synod Council in September, though no list of attendees was attached. Shepherd Staff records, which were controlled entirely by members of the small group, show that there were 52 voting members as of June 9. Since the council knows that 30 members did not attend, at most, only 22 of the 52 voting members were present. Directly after the meeting, Bishop Wickstrom met with Pastor Perkins to inform her of the supposed results. When Pastor Perkins reiterated the unconstitutionality of the meeting or the officer appointment, together with the various documented inconsistencies used to try to justify the meeting, she was told to “Take it up with the next bishop.”

On June 12, council members Lisa Brendle and Kristin Cadigan-McAdoo withdrew by bank draft \$205K from one of the church bank accounts. They refused to tell other council members where the money went, including two that had signing authority on the accounts. When asked this or other financial status information, council members were told, “it’s safe” or “you don’t need to know.” “Treasurer” Kristin Cadigan-McAdoo has refused to provide any financial information or reports to the council or congregation since May of 2024. This was brought to Bishop Oslovich’s attention multiple times. At the September 7 special Synod Council meeting, the minutes reflect Bishop Oslovich explaining Pastor Perkins’ concern about the money as possibly being related to her lack of access to the money, though she, of course, never had signing authority or any access to the money. The congregation has not been told where their money is for over six months! Additionally, council members Brendle, Cadigan-McAdoo, and (possibly) Ken Koelsch and Kelly Magee changed the mailing address for multiple bank accounts and attempted to change the address for the church.

President Lawfer and Pastor Perkins received email from council member Brendle on Friday 6/14/24 at 5: 42 pm demanding from President Lawfer and Pastor Perkins: “You both must respond, in written form only, signed and received by me and my Counsel by 0900 Monday June 17, 2024, acknowledging the legitimacy of the properly elected Council officers on March 7, 2024.” or Brendle would file a lawsuit. Even though this excluded any business hours to contact an attorney, had they wished, neither Lawfer nor Perkins responded. Brendle sent an email to some RLC members on June 17, notifying them that the suit had been filed. While she claimed it was on behalf of Resurrection Lutheran Church, only her signature is on the document, and she had absolutely no authority to file on behalf of the congregation. Even if she were the congregation president, the presidents in ELCA congregations have no such authority. She certainly didn’t have any congregation, council or even executive committee support, as there were no notices, meetings, quorums or votes.

On June 27, 2024, just three days before her retirement, Bishop Wickstrom attempted, in vain, to have “President” Brendle hold a council meeting, during which Pastor Perkins was expected to negotiate a severance package. This package would have likely included a release of all claims (such as not challenging the constitutionality of the vote), as well as non-disclosure and non-disparagement agreements. The severance might have also covered the cost of relocating from Alaska, which typically ranges between \$10K to \$15K. Most pastors, when faced with the financial and logistical challenge of moving out of Alaska without support, would accept the deal, effectively discouraging them from contesting the unconstitutional vote. However, “President” Brendle was unable to arrange a council meeting, but held what they called an executive committee meeting, though the undisputed vice president was not properly noticed. Pastor Perkins, acting on advice from legal counsel due to the pending lawsuit brought by “President” Brendle, did not attend.

At its regular (rescheduled) meeting on June 30, 2024, the RLC Council declared the June 9 meeting void and without effect. They ratified President Lawfer’s actions and affirmed that Pastor Perkins remained the pastor of RLC. The RLC Council also rejected any claim that Brendle’s lawsuit was on behalf of the congregation and decided to retain an attorney to defend the congregation and the named defendants who were acting with their roles in the congregation.

07/2024 Pastor Perkins was handed a “termination” letter by council member Brendle during the closing hymn of a Sunday service. The severance terms would not have even covered Pastor Perkins pending vacation time, yet included the threat that the cost to ship any items remaining after July 6 would be deducted from the severance. It was signed by Lisa Brendle and Kristin Cadigan-McAdoo. Synod Council Member Brad Perkins (Pastor Perkins’ spouse) was handed a very similar letter, signed by Lisa Brendle and Ken Koelsch.

The RLC council continued to meet and take action, as they are elected and installed to do. Unable to secure a severance agreement from Pastor Perkins, retired Bishop Wickstrom needed to involve others—perhaps initially with innocent intentions—who are now compromised by the process. This includes the new Alaska Synod Bishop Oslovich, Vice-President Swenson (already compromised by the mishandling of the S17.02 concern), and Synod Council Attorney Pastor Manzella, all who continued efforts to end Pastor Perkins' call.

08/2024 Faced with the RLC council's defiance in disregarding the illegitimate June 9 meeting, Bishop Oslovich invited (though sounding very much like retired Bishop Wickstrom) and specified the wording for members of RLC to use a C15.11 action to validate (and, in effect, "make constitutional") Bishop Wickstrom's unconstitutional acts. Spouses council member Brendle and former President Sutak were the two RLC members that responded to the bishop's invitation for a C15.11 action. The council believes that Bishop Wickstrom may have continued, clandestinely, to communicate, coach, and influence members RLC, Bishop Oslovich, Vice-President Swenson, Pastor Manzella, and members of the Consultation Committee (two of whom were members of her "listening team" 1.5 years earlier). This may continue, even now.

The RLC council objected to and refused to participate in what they deemed an improper invocation of a C15.11 action by Bishop Oslovich. A bishop, any consultation committee and the synod council may not override a congregation's constitution. The council also made clear their intention not to be bound by its results.

The bishop's chose to suggest two parliamentary issues as "substantive issue(s)" for the C15.11 action. Ironically, despite the efforts to prevent any parliamentary challenge to the unconstitutional vote at the June 9 meeting (which led to President Lawfer's preemptive cancellation of the meeting), the response to one of C15.11 issues included the claim that any challenge to the vote to end Pastor Perkins' call could only have been made at that meeting.

09/2024 A C15.11 synod council adjudicatory hearing has no prescribed form or process under either RLC's or the synod's constitutions. This could include a presentation of "the disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue" impartially made by synod officers or representatives from each faction. However, in this case, those who made the presentation were far from impartial. This included the preemptive action taken by Vice-President Swenson to ensure synod council member Brad Perkins did not participate in the hearing, so could not hear any of what was presented. The RLC Council believes retired Bishop Wickstrom may even have influenced or been involved in the C15.11 synod council adjudicatory hearing, as she was the most obvious source for some of the "information" presented.

A review of the selected documents (and their slanted descriptions), the agenda, and the draft minutes (none of which were shared until published) for the C15.11 synod council adjudicatory hearing reveals a glaring example of what can only be described as a “kangaroo court.” To be fair, Bishop Oslovich, Vice-President Swenson, and Pastor Manzella had no firsthand knowledge of the facts presented. However, none of them conducted any investigations or inquiries, depending entirely on Bishop Wickstrom, her reports, or gossip from the same unidentified sources she relied on.

The new member of the Consultation Committee (who was not a member of the “listening team”) had begun to engage with President Lawfer regarding a thorough investigation of the issues surrounding the entire controversy at RLC (not just the C15.11 items). That member assured President Lawfer that nothing would proceed until he returned from a trip in two weeks, but she was never contacted again. She was later surprised by a “final report” that revealed interviews had already begun with members (nine people) selected by Brendle’s group (the group of eight), despite warnings Lawfer had given to the Consultation Committee chair. The report was issued falsely claiming the leader of one of the factions prevented others from participating and included numerous gratuitous (coordination-and-repetition) complaints that had nothing to do with the C15.11 items. In fact, if the C15.11 action were actually about the parliamentary issues identified by the bishop, talking with congregants would have been superfluous.

Even before the Consultation Committee began its work, and after a failed attempt by President Lawfer and Brad Perkins to warn Bishop Oslovich of potential exposure during discovery in the Brendle lawsuit, Bishop Oslovich sent Pastor Perkins notice that, since her call had ended, she had 45 days to apply for On-Leave-From-Call (OLFC) status or be removed from the Alaska Synod roster. This notice was sent without waiting for the consultation committee nor conclusion of the C15.11 process, which indicates how seriously and “impartially” the bishop was taking the whole process. The RLC council is concerned that retired Bishop Wickstrom’s influence was rushing or “railroading” the process as the timing of the pressure coincides with the deadline for our attorney to file a response to council member Brendle’s lawsuit. When Pastor Perkins objected to what she felt was a premature start to the 45-day notice period, the bishop remained resolute.

Despite facing progressive neglect, harassment, ostracism, and a mishandled S17.02 request by Vice-President Swenson (along with what the RLC Council believes was Bishop Wickstrom’s failure to recuse herself as required under S17.02), the ongoing lawsuit, the contrived C15.11 process, and threats to Pastor Perkins’ position and roster status, most of the church council, congregation, and broader community urged her to stay. Pastor Perkins followed through with the congregation’s process, continuing to speak out against deceitful actions that built on misinformation, illuminating bullying, and refusing to abandon the most vulnerable.

After requesting and being denied, again, that the Synod Council's decision be the start for the 45 days, Pastor Perkins submitted an extended explanation to Bishop Oslovich as to why she could not apply for OLFC status at the time. It was complicated by the pending lawsuit, urging from parishioners, patrons, and conscience, and the demands of justice and integrity. She was forced to decide between her baptismal and ordination commitments and rostered status.

On the 46th day, Karen Perkins was removed from the roster in a letter attributed to Bishop Oslovich. Pastor Perkins believed this was pushed through, despite the truncated Consultation Committee inquiry and lopsided material prepared for the Synod Council decision in the C15.11 process, so that it could be included in the upcoming Synod Council meeting. Importantly, at no point was Pastor Perkins accused of any misconduct.

10/2024 Less than 24 hours after Brad Perkins requested the executive session at the October Synod Council meeting without Bishop Oslovich, Vice-President Swenson, and Pastor Manzella (which was met with a flurry of parliamentary challenges—some correct, some not—Mr. Perkins has served as a parliamentarian for other synods/dioceses, organizations), the church's legal counsel received a call from "president" Brendle's attorney regarding:

an intent to immediately file a restraining order to keep both Karen and Brad Perkins off church property (this was unlikely to succeed, as both are still members, and Karen Perkins has purportedly been removed from the ELCA roster, and as layperson is not subject to the direction of church);

an intent to file a motion for summary judgment that Lisa Brendle is president based on the C15.11 adjudication (this is unlikely to succeed, as RLC has raised ancillary issues that the court must address); and

a request to meet with our attorney in person to discuss which church obligations the RLC Council wants paid (without addressing or disclosing to the congregation or council the whereabouts of the missing \$205,000—the RLC attorney said that issue should remain between the parties claimed treasurers).

11/2024 An interim pastor has been appointed, though "President" Brendle was unable to get a quorum at a council meeting to approve the agreement. Of course, an interim pastor is generally requested by the congregation or council (not the bishop) and would require a majority vote. Without Pastor Perkins, the council is tied six-six with one side determined to rule without compromise or input from others, and the other side having no trust in the small group, which has worked secretly with Bishop Wickstrom for over a year and a half, using misinformation to achieve their goals. It is not clear that either side wants an interim pastor at this time. The group of eight want pulpit supply and a seventh vote. The majority of the congregation and the six council members insisting upon justice and Karen Perkins' leadership are waiting for her reinstatement to the Alaska Synod roster. Some of the other six members (part of the small group of eight) have expressed an intention to close the church and preserve its assets for a merger with SOV. The RLC Council believes Bishop Wickstrom pushed for an interim pastor as another *fait accompli* to prevent Karen Perkins' return.

- 12/2024 Actions to undermine accessibility, accountability and any disagreement continue several times a week. “President” Brendle’s continues to act autocratically, and her group continues to make unilateral decisions that disrupt any ministry beyond themselves. The constitution is violated so frequently, it has become a joke whenever anyone points out, “That’s not how things are handled in the ELCA!”
- 01/2025 As the RLC Council prepares for the annual meeting on February 9, 2025, the small group, along with the bishops have scheduled an imminent, rushed and an unconstitutional annual meeting for January 26th intended to elect a new, exclusive council of their followers—all undermining constitutional governance and justice.