Resurrection Lutheran Church
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Addendum
Helpful Summaries to the RLC Council Position Statements

The Congregational Council of Resurrection Lutheran Church (RLC), Juneau, Alaska, conflict can be summarized:

> *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, former Bishop Wickstrom, acting without constitutional authority, reappointed the ousted president (herself unconstitutionally past her term limits to be on council) to facilitate an unconstitutional congregational vote aimed at ending Pastor Perkins' call and prematurely halting the congregation's discernment process. While Bishop Wickstrom retired weeks later, the RLC Council rejected the unlawful attempt to remove Pastor Perkins. This apparently prompted current Bishop Oslovich to allow former Bishop Wickstrom to covertly continue pursuing the pastor's removal through a distorted *C15.11 / †S17.11 adjudication process. This culminated in the wrongful removal of Pastor Perkins from the roster. The unconstitutionally reappointed and term-limited president filed suit in the Alaska Superior Court without church authority in the name of RLC against RLC Council President Karen Lawfer, Pastor Karen Perkins and programs manager Bradley Perkins, asking the court, among other things, to declare that she was the rightful president under the RLC constitution. In 2025, the court dismissed the suit deciding that the issues raised were a matter of ecclesiastical law, rather than non-profit law, but also declaring that the reappointed president was president. The RLC Council has appealed this dismissal to the Alaska Supreme Court.*

All throughout this controversy, President Karen Lawfer and the RLC council have continued to hold all regularly scheduled meetings, shared all agendas, reports and minutes with the congregation, and provided simple and consistent access to all council members and congregants. Any decisions about restricted access to space, finances or tools at RLC have been in direct response to unacceptable, destructive behavior in an attempt to prevent further damage to the congregation and its ministry. All actions have been addressed at least in council reports and often documented elsewhere. President Lawfer, Karen Perkins and Bradley Perkins have not refused to talk to or work with anyone who maintains a reasonably polite, rational and respectful demeaner. We are making every effort to be one church, despite some wildly divergent perspectives. Would that it was reciprocated.

To help those interested in learning more about this conflict, the RCL Council has broken out the issues and explanations in separate "positions statements." This addendum has what are intended to be "helpful summaries" of these position statements. As to where to start:

- If you are most motivated by our call to work for justice with humility and integrity, the position statement *Challenge to Act Justly, Seek Truth and Fulfill Fiduciary Duty* may speak to you.
- If your highest priority is commitment to the covenants of baptism, ordination and election to other offices, position statement *Authoritarianism, Secrecy and Complicity* is where you may want to start.

- If you are most concerned about the "financial crisis" and believe RLC can't afford to focus on mission right now, or if you want to know what is happening with the congregation's money and why the budget the congregation passed for 2024 was neither followed nor reported, see the addendum *Money Over Mission* to the position statement *Authoritarianism, Secrecy and Complicity*.
- If you care about the constitutional norms, we agree to share in the ELCA, or if you want this to go away, you would have to go back in time and prevent Bishop Wickstrom from violating our constitutions, allowing personal connections to substitute for complete and accurate information, and involving more people in the wrongs with subsequent smokescreens, please look at position statement *Understanding Constitutional Violations*.
- If you want to know why we are bothering you, please look at the daily reality at our church and its mission and programs that affect the most vulnerable people in Juneau, or if you care about legal exposure, and the associated costly risks to the image of RLC, please start with position statement *What Happens Next and Your Involvement.*

It is profoundly challenging to confront the possibility that those we have entrusted with our church's leadership may have betrayed that trust. Many within RLC's congregation, including its council, officers, and Pastor Karen, have grappled with this painful realization. Some members still place their trust in these leaders, despite the unconstitutional, unjust, and at times shameful actions of former and current bishops, as well as long-time congregation members—some of whom were once friends. These leaders have exploited such trust to shield their actions. However, past righteous deeds and reputations do not provide immunity to commit wrongs.

The actions of Bishop Wickstrom, Bishop Oslovich, Vice-President Swenson, and Attorney Manzella could expose them and the Alaska Synod to legal and ecclesiastical liabilities for fraud, gross misrepresentation, and misconduct. This includes facilitating others' improper behavior, which significantly undermines the ethical foundations of our church governance.

Fiduciary duty for members of the synod council is defined by an expectation to act in good faith and in the best interests of the synod and the wider church community. Similarly, fiduciary duty for a Presiding Bishop entail acting in good faith and in the best interests of the ELCA. This shared responsibility includes a commitment to uphold the church's mission, adhere to its constitutions, and manage its resources responsibly and ethically.

Such fiduciary obligations leave no quarter for covering for, nor turning a blind eye to malfeasance for the sake of a friend's reputation, to protect the office, the synod, or the ELCA, nor does it allow shying away from involvement or not stepping up in challenging times. Those who cannot accept such responsibility often resort to resignation when faced with significant malfeasance by their leadership because failure to act may lead to complicity.

The unjust actions of both bishops, the small group at RLC, your fiduciary obligations, and the risks of turning a blind eye are detailed in RLC Council's Position Statement *Challenge to Act Justly, Seek Truth and Fulfill Fiduciary Duty*.

What Happens Next and Your Involvement

The bishops' support for a dissenting faction has included:

- the improper appointment of interim pastors are an attempt to manipulate governance through unconstitutional meetings;
- the deliberate exclusion of loyal congregation members from decision-making;
- the unlawful and unconstitutional trespass of members from the church;
- the refusal the allow members access to remove personal property; and
- the refusal to reimburse under for grant expenses.

The dissenting faction uses tactics such as gerrymandering membership lists, scheduling a rushed and unprepared annual meeting, and undermining the legitimate RLC Council.

The RLC Council has initiate extensive outreach, engaging all Alaska Synod congregations and councils, other ELCA churches beyond the synod, and the wider community of partners who rely on RLC's ministries and programs. Many have repeatedly asked, "What can we do?" We have diligently pursued every possible avenue that would be more discrete. RLC now has the focus of the state on our church body. RLC has prepared draft letters and petitions, ready to circulate, which highlight the ongoing harm caused by the degradation within.

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, which was been done on September 7, 2026.