

**MINUTES OF THE SYNOD COUNCIL
SOUTHWESTERN TEXAS SYNOD, ELCA
ZOOM MEETING
April 27, 2026**

Vice President Carol Semper called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and Secretary Monica Buie called roll and established a quorum.

Members Present

Bishop Sue Briner	Carol Semper	Leslie Blalock
Monica Buie	Greb Althaus	Bianca Blaney
Tim Clark	Rev. Gabriela Conklin	Graciela Conklin
Rev. Ryan Dockery	Cody Jones	Johnnie Jordan
Rudy Losoya	Rhyker Love	Mike Saulnier
Michelle Schlinke	Denise Schultz	Ann Schwartz
Mike Stallings	Rev. Adam Varner	

Advisory Members Present

Elva Villalpondo-Cope	Rebecca Guengerich	Rev. Cecilia Suknaic
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Staff Present

Brother Chris Markert	Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt	Rev. Ricardo Jimenez-Reyes
Hilda Santiago	Deanna Zitelman	

Guests Present

Rev. Norma Malfatti

Members Absent

Deacon Brianna Morris-Brock	Deacon Lisa Diana	Jason Miranda
Rev. Hephzibah Penumaka		

Advisory Members Absent

Rev. Candice Combs

Staff Absent

None

The meeting commenced with Pastor Ricardo Jimenez-Reyes sharing a faith practice based on the Examen Prayer.

VOTED

SC26.04.01 To adopt the Agenda.

Consent Agenda

Approve Synod Council minutes of February 21, 2026

Exhibit A-1

Approve Synod Council minutes of March 23, 2026

Exhibit A-2

Approve Roster Report

Exhibit A-3

- Approve Synod Call for Rev. Bethany Hull Somers, Co-Field Director, San Antonio Mission Lab

Approve Synod Assembly Agenda for May 1-2, 2026

Exhibit A-4

Ratify board members for St. Luke's Lutheran Health Ministries

Exhibit B-1

- Amy Buechler-Steubing **
- Jan Schubert Norris **
- Marisa Bono
- Alyssa Brodbeck +
- Gwendolyn Goldlock
- Pat Jasso +
- Leni Kirkman
- Micah Salinas
- Marcia Warmath

* Second four-year term

+ ELCA member

Approve \$40,000 housing allowance for Brother Chris Markert

Approve \$65,000 housing allowance for Pastor Bethany Hull Somers

VOTED

SC26.04.02 To adopt the Consent Agenda removing Exhibit B-1.

VOTED

SC26.04.03 To ratify board members for St. Luke's Lutheran Health Ministries with correction noting Leni Kirkman is an ELCA member.

VOTED

SC26.04.04 To approve Christ the Victor Lutheran Church, Victoria, constitution changes as recommended by the Legal, Constitution, and Roster Review Committee.

VOTED

SC26.04.05 To approve Synod Council call to Deacon Nicholas Wilkens, Licensed Therapist.

VOTED

SC26.04.06 To approve On Leave status for Rev. Hephzibah Penumaka.

VOTED

SC26.04.07 To approve \$20,000 matching grant for Assembly offering from Lord of Life, Austin, fund.

Bishop Briner shared information related to Just Move Learning and the Intercultural Development Inventory.

Rev. Norma Malfatti, Senior Director, Director of Evangelical Mission Relationships at ELCA churchwide, and the ELCA churchwide representative for Synod Assembly, joined the Synod Council Zoom meeting and shared remarks regarding her Assembly participation.

Final details for Synod Assembly and upcoming calendar items were discussed and Deanna Zitelman conducted a test vote using VPoll.

Bishop Briner shared a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.