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November 9, 2024

Subject: Response to “Congregation Meeting” of Resurrection Lutheran Church (RLC)
on November 10, 2024

We, the majority of the RLC Council, and congregation members who refuse attend or participate in the proposed “Congregation Meeting,” as attending would imply acceptance of an invalid process and outcome, declare the meeting inappropriate, invalid, and without effect.

Reasons for Refusal to Attend

1. Improper Notice of Meeting

At least five voting members have reported not receiving notice of the meeting, as required by C10.03 of the RLC Constitution. Since June, no distribution lists have been verified, so it remains unclear who is being included and on what basis.

Additionally, required announcements during Sunday services have been limited to in-person attendees only. There have been deliberate actions to disrupt online access, including cutting off internet services and tampering with TV production equipment. As a result, online broadcasts and services have been unavailable for more than a month. This, combined with a hostile worship environment, has driven away many congregation members.

2. Complication of an Interim Pastor

Pastor Karen Perkins was removed unconstitutionally. The former Alaska Synod bishop called for an invalid vote using a 51% threshold instead of the required two-thirds majority, without any concerns about misconduct or questions regarding Pastor Perkins’ fitness for ministry.

Since June 30, 2024, the RLC Council has repeatedly passed resolutions rejecting the illegitimate termination of Pastor Perkins and the outcomes of the illegitimate June 9, 2024, meeting. The council continues to oppose any actions that support this unconstitutional decision and strongly objects to Pastor Perkins’ removal from the Alaska Synod roster.

3. Insufficient Information Available

No financial reports have been made available to the council or congregation since May. The May reports were incomplete and did not include any budget numbers. There are significant concerns about missing funds that have not been accounted for. Many invoices remain unpaid, impacting church operations and ministries. Without regular financial updates, the congregation cannot make informed decisions about additional commitments.

Moreover, there is no way to verify the accuracy of the current list of voting members. We have observed discrepancies, such as the number of votes counted at the illegitimate June 9 meeting exceeding the known voting members. This group has also resisted the inclusion of certain

voting members who disagreed with them. After overhearing negative remarks about certain people and groups, we have serious concerns about the transparency of this process.

4. **Council Member Brendle Lacks Authority**

Council member Brendle is not the legitimate president of RLC and has no authority to call a congregation meeting. The prior bishop unlawfully intervened to overturn the council's correction of an officer election tainted by bullying. Brendle was improperly appointed as president specifically to facilitate the unconstitutional vote to end Pastor Perkins' call.

Furthermore, Brendle has grossly overstepped her role, ignored the church constitution, bypassed or reversed the work of existing committees, selectively communicated with certain members, held secret meetings, and damaged or removed church property. Given that she has a pending lawsuit related to these matters, she has a vested interest in the outcome of any decisions made. Council and congregation members believe that, if Brendle presides over this meeting, other voices, motions, and votes will be disregarded or overruled, just as when she was appointed to preside over the illegitimate June 9, 2024, meeting. Finally, she has yet to call a council meeting but has attended or asked to be excused from regular council meetings presided by President Lawfer.

5. **Ongoing Disruption on RLC, Supported by Synod Bishops**

Each time the RLC Council stands against unconstitutional and unethical actions targeting RLC, new retaliatory attacks follow. This "Congregation Meeting" appears to be yet another such attempt.

The council refused to participate in Bishop Oslovich's C15.11 adjudication, which was based solely on parliamentary technicalities, ignoring the real and pressing issues faced by RLC. That adjudication seemed like an effort to retroactively legitimize the prior bishop's unconstitutional actions, undermining the church's constitution and principles of fair governance.

The removal of Pastor Perkins from the roster was another tactic aimed at weakening the RLC Council's resistance. This action was timed inconsistently with the bishop's C15.11 process and provided no ethical pathway for compliance. It was based on false and misleading claims and is now being followed by an inappropriate push for an interim pastor, despite Pastor Perkins never having been lawfully terminated.

6. **Contrived Meeting Purpose**

In an email to council member Brendle, Bishop Oslovich stated that the meeting was intended to determine whether RLC would request an interim pastor. The bishop claimed, "Since the council has been unable to address this question, it is only fair that the congregation be given a voice." However, the RLC Council, with Brendle present and voting, had already passed a resolution (excerpt below):

...
Whereas, council member Brendle indicated that Bishop Oslovich is pressing to propose an interim pastor, despite the fact that an interim pastor is typically requested by the congregation or council (not the bishop), the council believes that those carrying out the agenda of the prior Alaska Synod bishop (if not she herself) are secretly pushing for an interim pastor as a *fait accompli* to prevent the restoration of growing ministries, if Pastor Karen Perkins' unconstitutional termination is resolved;
...

Further resolved, the council, believing that Pastor Perkins was never lawfully removed as pastor, respectfully requests Bishop Oslovich to cease any efforts to propose an interim pastor for RLC;

...

7. **Pastor Vance's Involvement**

The Rev. Laurin Vance initially worked with Pastor Perkins to address bullying and conflict within the congregation. He continued supporting both Pastor Perkins and President Lawfer as they guided the congregation through its discernment process. The 2023 council had arranged for Rev. Vance to help narrow congregation priorities and align them with available resources.

However, when it was time for follow-up visit to present the discernment survey results, council member Brendle (before the discovery of officer election violations) bypassed Pastor Perkins and made alternate arrangements with Rev. Vance. Despite Pastor Perkins informing him of the council's honest expectations, Rev. Vance altered the gatherings to advance the prior bishop's agenda for a half-time pastor, contravening his commitments.

Rev. Vance's subsequent actions, his breach of trust, and apparent bias makes his involvement tainted. He shared private communications without permission, further exacerbating the difficulties faced by Pastor Perkins. His failure to address the breach of trust and consult with the legitimate leadership of RLC makes his current involvement ethically questionable.

8. **Appointment of an Interim Pastor Should Await the Outcome of the Brendle Lawsuit**

The resolution of the ongoing Brendle lawsuit may also address the unconstitutional termination of Pastor Karen Perkins. Therefore, any interim appointment would be premature and would further complicate the situation.

For, at least the above reasons, we decline to attend or participate in the "Congregation Meeting:"

Council Officers

President Karen Lawfer
Vice President Delores Graver
Secretary Clarice Bethers
Treasurer Lynda Stover (non-council)

Council Members

Connor Blackwell
Lucy Merrell
Nelson Merrell

With Over 20 Other Voting Members