



Resurrection Lutheran Church  
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## **RLC Music Director Lucy Merrell**

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

### **This Is What I Know**

When Bishop Wickstrom called a congregational meeting in June 2024 to slash Pastor Karen Perkins' call to half-time (a move that would end her tenure), there wasn't even a basic record of who was there—no attendance list has been made available. The vote failed to reach the two-thirds majority required, yet the bishop declared the call over anyway.

Later, amid serious breaches in how new officers were elected—including blatant bullying in defiance of our Meeting Code of Conduct—Bishop Wickstrom intervened again and unilaterally “recognized” a faction as the council. No investigation. No legitimate process. No constitutional authority. It appears designed to ram through that June vote.

The council that was lawfully elected—with support from the majority of the congregation—has not wavered. We meet regularly, document our work, continue ministry, and keep the church running. But the bishop's favored group dug in. One individual, already well past term limits, proclaimed herself president again—and filed a lawsuit without council or congregational approval. She named Pastor Perkins, Synod Council member Bradley Perkins, and our elected council president, Karen Lawfer. The state will hear the case in August as it's not ecclesiastical.

In June, two members of that group withdrew \$205,000 from RLC's savings. Since then, they've selectively paid bills, refused to release financial reports, and ignored repeated calls for transparency. We've personally covered some utility bills to keep the church functioning.

Meanwhile, personal and confidential materials were stolen from Pastor Karen's office—including the parish register. A new lock was installed. But one night, several people entered the adjoining office and cut a hole through the wall to break in. Who does this?

As music director and co-occupant of that office, I've been locked out for months. During my husband's long illness, I couldn't organize the music. Now that he's gone, I'm ready to get it in order—but I've been told I can only file if I'm supervised. That is not only senseless—it's insulting.

In the sanctuary, things disappear—cameras, microphones, cables, even one of my organ shoes. Equipment is unplugged or rearranged. We arrive an hour early before every service or concert just to assess the damage. It's petty. It's relentless. And it's the opposite of everything our faith stands for.

The police were called twice. One of our Alaska Native food pantry volunteers was shoved to the floor and told, “You get out. You don’t belong here.” A tech team member asking to keep the livestream running for Christmas services was thrown down and held with a knee on his back for 17 minutes. It took police two hours to get them to agree to leave the router alone.

Bishop Oslovich knows all this. He’s been told. He’s seen the evidence. Yet he continues to shield, support, and at times even align with those inflicting harm. I don’t know if he’s indifferent, paralyzed, or doesn’t know what to do.

But here’s what I do know: the damage being done to Resurrection Lutheran Church is real—and it must end. The secrecy, the bullying, the vandalism, the theft, the cruelty—none of it reflects who we are or who we are called to be.

*Prepared on information and belief, subject to reasonable amendment.*

Links to RLC Council Position Statements

[Understanding Constitutional Violations](#)

[Authoritarianism, Secrecy and Complicity](#)

[Challenge to Act Justly, Seek Truth and Fulfill Fiduciary Duty](#)

[What Happens Next and Your Involvement](#)

[Synod Assembly 2025 Resolutions and Reports](#)

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