

CALL TO THE SPECIAL MEETING

The Synod of Lincoln Trails of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) convened a Special Meeting via Zoom, an online/conference call meeting service, on Wednesday, July 26, 2017. The purpose of the Special Meeting was for the Standing Committee on Personnel to present a recommendation to elect the Reverend Sara Dingman as Synod Executive for a five-year term, commencing October 12, 2017. The standing committee would answer questions and the Synod would discuss the recommendation, with final action to be undertaken at a subsequent meeting.

The Special Meeting was requested by the following members of the Standing Committee on Personnel:

Ruling Elder Beth Bedwell, Presbytery of Whitewater Valley
 Ruling Elder Gary Davis, Presbytery of Great Rivers
 The Reverend Andrew Kort, Presbytery of Ohio Valley
 Ruling Elder David Myles, Presbytery of Chicago
 The Reverend Alan Thames, Presbytery of Whitewater Valley
 The Reverend Ann Schwartz, Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois
 The Reverend Laurie Williams, Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois.

GATHERING THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Meeting was called to order at 3:00 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) by the Synod Vice Moderator, the Reverend Kim Hulen, with prayer. The Vice Moderator welcomed all those in attendance.

In accordance with the Standing Rules of the Synod, a quorum for the Synod shall be eight commissioners, at least four of whom shall be ruling elders, and at least four of whom shall be ministers of the Word and Sacrament, representing at least three presbyteries. The following were present for the special meeting:

Presbytery	Commissioner	Class	Status
Presbytery of Blackhawk	The Reverend Kim Hulen	2017	Present
Presbytery of Chicago	Ruling Elder David Myles	2018	Present
	The Reverend Jana Blazek	2019	Present
Presbytery of Great Rivers	The Reverend Maura C. McGrath Nagle	2017	Present
Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi	The Reverend Eun Sung Cho	2018	Present
Presbytery of Ohio Valley	The Reverend David Lee	2017	Present
	The Reverend Andrew Kort	2018	Present
	Ruling Elder Cheryl Moles	2019	Present
Presbytery of Wabash Valley	Ruling Elder Donna Enersen, CP	2017	Present
	Ruling Elder Jeffrey Brown, CP	2019	Present
Presbytery of Whitewater Valley	Ruling Elder Beth Bedwell	2017	Present
	The Reverend John Koppitch	2018	Present

CP = Commissioned Pastor

Corresponding Member or Staff	Ministry	Status
Ruling Elder Gary Davis	Standing Committee on Personnel	Present
Judy Johnson	Executive Assistant	Present
The Reverend Jennifer Burns Lewis	Visioning & Connecting Leader, Presbytery of Wabash Valley	Present

Ruling Elder Linda Long	Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Wabash Valley	Present
The Reverend Susan McGhee	Executive Presbyter, Presbytery of Ohio Valley	Present
Ruling Elder Kristy Quinn	Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Whitewater Valley	Present
The Reverend Laurie Williams	Standing Committee on Personnel	Present
Ruling Elder Blake Wood	Stated Clerk	Present

SUMMARY OF THE ROLL

Commissioners

Present: 12

Corresponding Members & Staff

Present: 8

Total Attendance: 20

WORSHIP

The Synod entered a time of worship, led by Vice Moderator Hulen.

STATED CLERK'S REPORT

Vice Moderator Hulen recognized the Stated Clerk, Ruling Elder Blake Wood.

The Stated Clerk reported that a quorum was established for the Special Meeting.

A motion to approve the Proposed Docket was seconded and adopted.

VICE MODERATOR'S REPORT

Vice Moderator Hulen thanked everyone for being available to attend the Special Meeting.

She then read the Call to the Meeting, which defined its purpose to be for the Standing Committee on Personnel to present its recommendation to elect the Reverend Sara Dingman as Synod Executive for a five-year term, commencing October 12, 2017. She explained that the Synod would have a conversation in which the standing committee would answer questions and the Synod would discuss the proposal. Commissioners, corresponding members, and Synod officers would have the privilege of the floor. Further discussion and a vote on the committee's recommendation would take place at a later Synod meeting.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL REPORT

The standing committee moderator, Ruling Elder David Myles, reported the following:

BACKGROUND

- The Standing Committee on Personnel recommends that the Transitional Synod Executive, the Reverend Sara Dingman, be elected Synod Executive with a five-year contract, effective October 12, 2017 – October 11, 2022 to continue leading the Synod of Lincoln Trails.
- In October 2014, Sara Dingman was hired to a 3-year term as Transitional Synod Executive. In October 2016, the Synod voted to extend her contract one year, expiring in 2018. That decision was made based on what had been successfully accomplished, but what still needed to be done.
- In the first half of Reverend Dingman's term, there were 5 presbytery leadership changes. Half of the presbyteries were relying on the Transitional Synod Executive to function in an executive/general presbyter role.
- In June 2017, the Standing Committee on Personnel asked Reverend Dingman to forgo the extended year of her transitional contract, and commit to a limited five-year contract as Synod Executive.

- In 2017, the Synod voted to establish a Synod Council.
- The Standing Committee on Personnel has concluded that electing Reverend Dingman as Synod Executive will positively contribute to assisting the Council in developing a vision for the future. This move will further help in the transition to a commissioner-driven Synod that better serves the 8 presbyteries.

RATIONALE

- Under Reverend Dingman's leadership, Synod staff positions have been rightsized/downsized.
- The Board of Directors has been redeveloped, including an investment team.
- Reverend Dingman facilitated conversations with other synods in response to the General Assembly's mandate that pertained to reducing the number of synods within the denomination.
- The Synod has moved from three stated meetings per year to two, high-energy stated meetings each year. A leadership team shifted the focus of stated meetings from being staff-driven to commissioner-driven and world-focused.
- A blueprint team was formed to visualize the future commissioner-driven focus of the Synod.
- The Standing Committee on Personnel is quite satisfied with the transitions that Reverend Dingman has led.
- She has a broad vision for the future of the Synod and how it can take advantage of emerging opportunities. Sara is poised and eager to lead the Synod into the future.

TERMS OF CALL

Item	Information
Term	5 years (October 12, 2017 – October 11, 2022)
Annual Compensation	\$108,000 (includes housing allowance); normal cost of living increase
Social Security off-set	7.65% of effective salary
Board of Pensions	Full membership
Vacation	5 weeks
Study Leave	2 weeks
Continuing Education	\$2,000 annually
Travel & Professional Expenses	By voucher based on IRS travel allowance for continuing education (up to \$25,000)

Following the presentation, questions and discussion were on the following topics:

- Discernment process to reach recommendation
- Electing a transitional leader versus conducting a nationwide search process
- Actions by other mid-councils within the denomination to elect their transitional leaders to permanent roles
- Comparison of terms of call with other mid-councils in the denomination

- Request for Reverend Dingman's resume/curriculum vitae
- Reverend Dingman's accomplishments as Transitional Synod Executive
- Reverend Dingman's visits to presbyteries and attendance at presbytery meetings.

Please note: the Appendix to these Minutes contains further questions and responses.

With questions and discussion concluded, Vice Moderator Hulen reiterated that the Standing Committee on Personnel would request a subsequent Special Synod Meeting to continue discussion of the proposal and take action. Scheduling for that meeting would be coordinated by the Synod Leadership Team.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was seconded and adopted. Vice Moderator Hulen closed the special meeting with prayer and the Synod adjourned at 4:00 P.M. EDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Blake Wood
Stated Clerk

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS & RESPONSES

July 25, 2017

*Description: The following questions/comments were submitted by Eun Sung Cho, Synod Commissioner for the Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi. The questions/comments were addressed to Stated Clerk Blake Wood and Synod Moderator Beau Brown, along with a request for responses to be distributed to Synod commissioners. Please note that responses are in **bold**.*

1. I think it would be helpful if you would send the guidelines for Transitional Executive set forth from the Vision Committee (Search and Accountability formed by the Synod for Transitional Executive)

Please see the Attachment, which contains extracts of minutes from Synod stated meetings that were convened in 2013 and 2014. The Synod established a Transition Team to conduct the search for a Transitional Synod Executive, as well as to provide support during the Synod's time of transition.

2. The purpose of the Vision Committee was to guide and support the Transitional Executive. Is there a report from the Vision Committee, now that its three year term has ended?

The Transition Team has not been asked to submit a final report.

3. Is there a reason why the Personnel Committee is making the appointment for the Transitional Executive position rather than at the recommendation from the Vision Committee?

The Standing Committee on Personnel has jurisdiction in designing and managing the Synod's processes for employing and supervising staff.

4. Is there a discussion on this process during the Synod's Assembly?

There was not a discussion of this process at the 104th Stated Meeting on March 24-25, 2017.

5. Do you know if there is a discussion on this topic in the Dream Committee? if so, do you know if members from each Presbytery present in that meeting? No-one from the Midwest Hanmi Presbytery were present.

There was not a discussion of this topic at the Dream Team meeting on November 11-12, 2016.

6. I asked Transitional Executive and the Stated Clerk to notify and invite representative from each of the Presbytery but I did not receive any response.

Each presbytery is notified about stated meetings. To our knowledge, each presbytery was notified about the Dream Team meeting.

7. Midwest Hanmi Presbytery did not receive any information about the formation of the Synod Counsel and appointment of Synod Executive.

Commissioners from each presbytery were notified and present at the 104th Stated Meeting on March 24-25, 2017 when the proposal to establish the Synod Council was first presented. Each commissioner was also notified of the Special Synod Meeting to be convened on June 14, 2017. The Synod Council proposal was approved at the special meeting.

A call to a Special Synod Meeting was posted on July 12, 2017. This announced that the Standing Committee on Personnel was recommending that Transitional Synod Executive Sara Dingman be elected as the new Synod Executive for a five-year term. The special meeting was scheduled for July 26, 2017.

A second communication was posted on July 19, 2017. This stated that the special meeting called for July 26 would be for informational purposes. A subsequent meeting will be called to continue discussion and act on the recommendation.

8. When discussing recommendations for the bylaws for Synod's counsel, is there a reason why there were only two executives present, rather than including representatives from the rest of presbyteries?

The concept for a Synod Council emerged from the Dream Team Meeting in November 2016. At that meeting, a Council Proposal Team was formed to draft a proposal which would be submitted to the Synod for consideration. The Council Proposal Team consisted of volunteers.

9. Before Personnel Committee actually makes the decision on the Executive Position, shouldn't the Synod discuss the terms of that position, such as his/her salary, especially as the total budget for Synod was reduced to 50% since five years ago and Presbyteries' are struggling with their budget.

The Standing Committee on Personnel will propose the salary, housing allowance, and benefits for the Synod Executive. In addition, the committee will propose a five-year term to commence in October 2017.

10. What is the budget (both percentage and actual amount, including benefits) for staff, particularly for the Synod's Executive?

Here is a chart showing amounts for 2016 and 2017:

Item	2016	2017
Transitional Executive - Salary	\$72,000.00	\$72,000.00
Transitional Executive - Housing	36,000.00	36,000.00
Transitional Executive – BOP & SECA	46,062.00	47,682.00
Stated Clerk - Salary	12,000.00	12,000.00
Totals	\$166,062.00	\$167,682.00

The total amount for 2017 comprises 27.98% of the General Fund Budget.

11. Do you think the current budget for the Synod's Executive is sustainable in the next five years? It seems unduly burdensome for Synod if money is being borrowed from the Saving's Account to sustain the Executive's Salary.

The current amounts allocated for the Synod Executive are sustainable for the next five years.

12. The General Assembly essentially operates by the Stated Clerk. Most Presbyteries also follow the same operational structure. Wouldn't it better for the Synod to follow the same pattern?

In addition to having a stated clerk, most mid-councils employ an individual to serve in an executive role, or something similar with job titles that vary across the denomination. Some mid-councils combine the role of executive and stated clerk. The Synod of Lincoln Trails uses the former.

13. I would appreciate if we can reframe from bring up that the Stated Clerk's only function in Midwest Hanmi Presbytery's past experience is to settle legal issues. It is not helpful for healing past wounds.

These lawsuits took place before our tenure with the Synod and it was very unfortunate that they occurred. The Synod is grateful for its partnership with the Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi and looks forward to continuing our walk together in Christ.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS & RESPONSE, PART 2

July 26, 2017

Description: This is a follow-up e-mail inquiry from Eun Sung Cho, Synod Commissioner for the Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi. His questions are listed first, followed by a response from Stated Clerk Blake Wood.

From: Eun Sung Cho [<mailto:eunsungcho@gmail.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2017 8:28 AM

To: Blake Wood <blakewood@cfu.net>

Cc: bbrown1@gmail.com

Subject: Re: Dear Stated Clerk and Moderator

According to your answer and the email of call to a special synod meeting, the Standing Committee of Personnel **elected new synod executive** for a five year term.

When I checked the minutes, the initial term for the position of synod transitional executive will be three years with the possibility of **extension**.

According to the synod's standing rule, The Standing Committee on Personnel **shall design and manage** all of the Synod's **processes** for employing and supervising staff.

1. Do you think "shall design and manage all of the Synod's processes" includes elect new synod executive?
2. I think "with the possibility of **extension**" and "**elect new syond executive**" are totally different. Are you sure it is the right procedure?

G-3.0111 Nominating Process

All councils higher than the session shall have a process for nominating persons to serve in positions requiring election by the council. The process shall ensure that nominations are made by an **entity broadly representative of the constituency of the council**, and in conformity with the church's commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403).

Before meeting, would you send your response to the Commissioners after you read this letter also?

In Christ,
Eun Sung Cho

2017. 7. 26. 오전 8:31 Blake Wood <blakewood@cfu.net> 작성:

Thank you very much for your questions. Here's the text from the Call to the Special Synod Meeting:

After prayerful discernment and reflection on the Synod's transition period, the Committee is pleased to recommend that the Reverend Sara Dingman be elected Synod Executive for a five-year term. Reverend Dingman has been serving as our Transitional Synod Executive since October 2014. If elected, she would move from a transitional role to become our new Synod Executive.

The committee does not have authority to elect individuals to positions, but can make recommendations.

In October 2016, the Synod took action on the committee's recommendation to extend the Transitional Executive's contract. At the 103rd Stated Meeting, the Synod approved this recommendation. The Synod's action, not the committee's, extended the contract.

In regard to the recommendation to elect Reverend Dingman as the new Executive, this is a recommendation from the same committee. The committee's recommendation does not elect Reverend Dingman as the new Executive. That action will be taken by Synod commissioners when convened at a later date for a vote.

Per your request, this response will also be distributed to Synod commissioners.

Have a good day,

--Blake

From: Eun Sung Cho [mailto:eunsungcho@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2017 9:42 AM

To: Blake Wood <blakewood@cfu.net>

Subject: Re: Dear Stated Clerk and Moderator

Thanks

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시카고한인연합장로교회

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