

CALL TO THE SPECIAL MEETING

The Synod of Lincoln Trails of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) convened a Special Meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Hoopeston, Illinois on Friday, August 25, 2017. The purpose of the Special Meeting was to take action on a recommendation from the Standing Committee on Personnel to elect the Reverend Sara Dingman as Synod Executive for a five-year term, commencing October 12, 2017.

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 11:00 A.M. Central Daylight Time (CDT) by the Synod Moderator, the Reverend Beau Brown, with prayer. The 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
	Ruling Elder William Pittenger	2018	Present
Presbytery of Chicago	The Reverend Laura Reason	2018	Present
	Ruling Elder David Myles	2018	Present
	The Reverend Jana Blazek	2019	Present
Presbytery of Great Rivers	Ruling Elder Penny Frame, CP	2018	Present
	The Reverend Lonna Chang-Ren Lee	2019	Present
Presbytery of Midwest Hanmi	The Reverend Eun Sung Cho	2018	Present
Presbytery of Ohio Valley	The Reverend David Lee	2017	Present
	Ruling Elder Jayne Williams	2017	Present
	The Reverend Andrew Kort	2018	Present
Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois	The Reverend Beau Brown	2018	Present
	Ruling Elder Loren Prest	2018	Present
	The Reverend Ann Schwartz	2019	Present
Presbytery of Wabash Valley	The Reverend Kevin Bowers	2017	Present
Presbytery of Whitewater Valley	Ruling Elder Beth Bedwell	2017	Present
	Ruling Elder Lynne Tobin	2019	Present
	The Reverend Richard Smith	2019	Present

CP = Commissioned Pastor

Ex-Officio Ministry or Staff	Role	Status
Ruling Elder Gary Davis	Standing Committee on Personnel	Present
The Reverend Sara Dingman	Transitional Synod Executive	Present
Judy Johnson	Executive Assistant	Present
The Reverend William McLean	Presbyter for Congregational Care, Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois	Present
Ruling Elder Blake Wood	Stated Clerk	Present

SUMMARY OF THE ROLL

Commissioners
Present: 18

Ex-officio Ministry & Staff
Present: 5

Total Attendance: 23

WORSHIP

The Synod entered a time of worship, led by the Reverend Kim Hulén.

The Synod recessed for lunch.

The Synod reconvened at 12:15 P.M.

STATED CLERK'S REPORT

Moderator Brown 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.

MODERATOR'S REPORT

Moderator Brown thanked everyone for being available to attend the Special Meeting. He then read the Call to the Meeting, which defined the purpose of the Special Meeting and listed the members of the Standing Committee on Personnel who had requested it.

For background, Moderator Brown reported that a Special Synod Meeting was convened on July 26, 2017 in which the Standing Committee on Personnel presented its recommendation and answered questions about the proposal.

The Moderator explained that the Synod would hear again from the Standing Committee on Personnel, answer questions, discuss the proposal, and take action on the recommendation to elect the Reverend Sara Dingman as Synod Executive for a five-year term.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL REPORT

The standing committee moderator, Ruling Elder David Myles, reported on the standing committee's recommendation and outlined the terms of the Synod Executive Contract and Covenant:

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.

DUTIES OF THE NEW SYNOD EXECUTIVE

- Work with the Synod Council in exploring, discovering, and guiding the Synod into its future.
- Encourage networks, partnerships, and other connections across the Synod to strengthen relationships and engage in mutually beneficial ministries.
- Provide leadership for collaboration and conversation with other councils and judicatories.
- Help the Synod experiment.
- Serve as Head of Staff, and work with the Standing Committee on Personnel to discern and implement staffing patterns that support the Synod's current and emerging mission.

- Attend all stated and called meetings of the Synod.
- Serve as an ex-officio member, without vote, of the Synod, Synod Council, Synod committees, and Board of Directors.
- Pray with and for the Synod, its Presbyteries, and their Congregations.

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)

The Synod discussed the recommendation, with members of the Standing Committee on Personnel answering questions. Members of the standing committee noted the following:

- In the past, the election of the Synod's executives, co-executives, and associate executives had been for indefinite periods of employment. In recognizing the Synod's transition, the election of the new executive would be for a five-year term.
- Other mid-councils across the denomination had also been blessed with effective transitional leaders who were later elected to regular executive roles.

A motion to elect the Reverend Sara Dingman as Synod Executive and to approve the Synod Executive Contract and Covenant was adopted.

Moderator Brown announced that the Synod would install Reverend Dingman as Synod Executive during the 105th Stated Meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Chicago Heights, Illinois on October 20-21, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was seconded and adopted. Reverend Dingman was invited to come forward, after which the Synod assembled around her to offer a prayer of thanksgiving for her service as Transitional Synod Executive, and blessings for her new role.

The Synod adjourned at 1:15 P.M. CDT.

Respectfully submitted,

Blake Wood
Stated Clerk

APPENDIX

SYNOD OF LINCOLN TRAILS

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Synod Executive Contract and Covenant with The Reverend Sara Dingman

The Synod of Lincoln Trails contracts and covenants with the Reverend Sara Dingman to serve as Synod Executive for a term beginning October 12, 2017 and concluding October 11, 2022. This term may be extended upon recommendation of the Standing Committee on Personnel and approval by the Synod.

Purpose: To provide faithful and innovative leadership and consultation to the Synod of Lincoln Trails as it seeks to be faithful to its present mission, and to discern God's vision and call for its future.

Duties of the position shall include but are not limited to:

- Work with the Synod Council in exploring, discovering, and guiding the Synod into its future.
- Encourage networks, partnerships, and other connections across the Synod to strengthen relationships and engage in mutually beneficial ministries.
- Provide leadership for collaboration and conversation with other councils and judicatories.
- Help the Synod experiment.
- Serve as Head of Staff, and work with the Standing Committee on Personnel to discern and implement staffing patterns that support the Synod's current and emerging mission.
- Attend all stated and called meetings of the Synod.
- Serve as an ex-officio member, without vote, of the Synod, Synod Council, Synod committees, and Board of Directors.
- Pray with and for the Synod, its Presbyteries, and their Congregations.

Annual Compensation, Vacation, and Study Leave:

- 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: Five weeks
- Study Leave: Two Weeks

Reimbursable Expenses (by voucher):

- Continuing Education: \$2,000 (may be accumulated up to three years)
- Travel and Professional Expenses: \$25,000 (includes mileage @ IRS rate and travel for continuing education)
- Professional Coaching: up to 18 sessions per year

Termination of Executive Contract and Covenant:

The Synod Executive may terminate this agreement with 60 days notice. In this event, she shall forfeit all claim to compensation beyond the effective date of termination except for accrued vacation and study leave allowance. The Synod may terminate this agreement with a minimum of 60 days notice. At the end of the 60-day period, effective salary and Board of Pensions membership shall continue for a period of 90 days, or until the Synod Executive secures full-time employment, whichever comes first.

Synod Executive

Date

Moderator, Synod of Lincoln Trails

Date

Stated Clerk, Synod of Lincoln Trails

Date