Allegheny Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
916 Hickory Street, 1st Fl., Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
814-942-1042

MISSION: *Inviting people to love each other.*
VISION: *All creation living in harmony with Christ.*
SYNOD COUNCIL Actions via email 01/17/2026-03/10/2026

Synod Council Secretary Rev. Rebecca Horn sent email communications to the Allegheny Synod Council regarding time sensitive actions that could not wait for the next Synod Council meeting. A copy of the emails are below, listed by date initiated, with the outcomes of votes on motions.

Email Exchange beginning February 13, 2026 email sent at 11:39 am:
Good Morning Synod Council Members and Synod Staff,

We have two motions to vote upon that relate to the positions of Assistants to the Bishop. Council members, please reply all with your vote to both motions, SC26.02.01 and SC26.02.02.
If you have any questions, please let me know. The motions are as follows:

SC26.02.01 – Motion to adopt the titles and job descriptions of the four Assistants to the Bishop as follows. Motion made by Bishop Kevin Shock, seconded by Rev. Rebecca Horn, _____

1. Assistant to the Bishop for Formation
    a. Staff liaison to Candidacy Committee
        i. Consult with Candidacy Chair, as they shape an agenda for each meeting
        ii. Serve as administrator of the ELCA database for our candidates
        iii. Serve as Contact for ELCA Candidacy and Seminaries
        iv. Secure mentors and supervisors in cooperation with Bishop and other staff
        v. Plan annual Candidacy retreat with Candidacy Chair
    b. Work with inquirers for professional ministry and, as appropriate, Authorized Lay Worship Leader (ALWL) ministry
        i. Conduct initial interviews with inquirers
        ii. Compile and develop discernment tools
        iii. Develop and lead discernment programs, as appropriate
    c. Plan educational events for laity and rostered leaders, in cooperation with Bishop and other staff
    d. Compile continuing education opportunities for rostered leaders and ALWLs
        i. Boundaries and Anti-Racism Training
        ii. Bishop's Convocation
    e. Represent the Bishop and their Office at meetings, visits, and events
    f. Attend meetings of the Synod, as requested, with voice and no vote.
2. Assistant to the Bishop for Life Together
    a. Staff liaison to Finance Committee
        i. Consult with Finance Chair, as they shape an agenda for each meeting
        ii. Communicate information to Synod Treasurer and Synod Office Manager
    b. Staff liaison to Stewardship Team
        i. Rebuild Team with interested and gifted people

ii. Produce and deliver annual Mission Support reports to congregations, in cooperation with Team and Synod Office Manager
iii. Develop and utilize ongoing plan to promote Mission Support to congregations, in cooperation with Team and Assistant for Communications
iv. Encourage planned giving throughout the Synod, in cooperation with Team and ELCA Foundation Representative

c. Staff liaison to Nominations Committee
i. Rebuild Committee with interested and gifted people
ii. Revisit Committee and Team structure and descriptions, in cooperation with Synod Secretary and Committee
iii. Compile a list of willing people for Committee and Team ministry
iv. Utilize gift assessments to engage people according to their skills and passion

d. Represent the Bishop and their Office at meetings, visits, and events
e. Attend meetings of the Synod, as requested, with voice and no vote.

3. Assistant to the Bishop for Transition
a. Administer Synod Mobility Database
i. Review and activate Rostered Minister Profiles (RMP)
ii. Review and activate Ministry Site Profiles (MSP)
iii. Search for potential candidates, in cooperation with Bishop

b. Oversee transitions with congregations
i. Meet with Call Committees and Councils, as requested
ii. Guide development of MSPs and covenants
iii. Secure interim and vacancy pastors, in cooperation with Deans and Synod staff
iv. Make regular contact to congregations in transition

c. Oversee transitions with rostered leaders
i. Conduct exit interviews, in cooperation with Deans
ii. Coordinate matching with vacant congregations
iii. Assist with coordinating installations and farewell services

d. Consult with Synod staff on supply preaching needs
e. Coordinate strategic ministry discussions with Director of Evangelical Mission (DEM)
f. Represent the Bishop and their Office at meetings, visits, and events
g. Attend meetings of the Synod, as requested, with voice and no vote.

4. Assistant to the Bishop for Communications
a. Oversee official Synod Communications
i. Write, edit, and produce the synod's electronic newsletter
ii. Update information on the synod's website and social media and continue to upload new resources
1. Train others, if necessary, to upload resources to the Synod website, when appropriate and consistent with Synod policy
iii. Monitor Social Media interactions

b. Serve as Communications liaison
i. Encourage congregations, rostered leaders and synodical ministries to provide information to be included in synodical publications, including e-newsletters and The Lutheran Letter
ii. Act as spokesperson for Bishop's Office to news media representatives
1. Arrange interviews with the Bishop as desired and needed
2. Discern newsworthy events occurring on Synod territory and prepare press releases

iii. Interpret ELCA Communications for Synod use

c. Maintain email and mailing distribution lists for Synod publications, in consultation with Synod Office Manager

d. May provide consultation on educational opportunities to congregations and others in the use of communications and technologies

e. Represent the Bishop and their Office at meetings, visits, and events

f. Attend meetings of the Synod, as requested, with voice and no vote.

SC26.02.02 – Motion to approve the following appointments for Assistants to the Bishop. Motion made by Bishop Kevin Shock, seconded by Rev. Rebecca Horn, _____

- Assistant to the Bishop for Formation: The Rev. Deacon Alicia Anderson
- Assistant to the Bishop for Transition: The Rev. Tyler Graham
- Assistant to the Bishop for Communications: The Rev. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte
- Assistant to the Bishop for Life Together: The Rev. Traci Marriott

Again, council members please reply all when voting. Thank you and thank you for your ministry!

A follow-up email was sent February 24, 2026 at 9:01 am stating that both motions, SC26.02.01 and SC26.02.02, carried.

Email exchange beginning February 27, 2026 at 2:08 pm

Blessings Synod Council Members and Staff,

Hopefully you received the first e-newsletter, Synod Connections, in February. Pr. MJ had used the free version of MailChimp, but due to the growing number of subscribers, we have outgrown the free version. Pr. MJ and Bp. Kevin discussed this and would like to purchase a recurring monthly subscription to MailChimp. The proposed cost is no more than $20 per month. Given the low cost and the ability to have reliable email communication, the Office of the Bishop fully supports this recurring expense.

SC26.02.03 – Motion to approve the purchase of a recurring month subscription to MailChimp to better facilitate communication with subscribers and publish the monthly newsletter, Synod Connections. Motion made by Bishop Kevin Shock, seconded by Rev. Rebecca Horn, _____

Please use "Reply All" with any questions, discussions, and/or your vote. With March around the corner, we would appreciate an answer as soon as possible. Thank you for your diligence and ministry.

A follow-up email was sent March 2, 2026 at 11:13 am stating that the motion SC26.02.03 carried.

Next Meeting: March 21, 2026; Devotions by Bishop Kevin Shock
Tentative dates for 2026 May 16, July 17-18, Sept 19, Nov 21

Synod Council members contacted:

- Executive Committee *(3-ordained, 2-lay)* (election year)
  - Bishop Kevin Shock (2025)
  - VP Ann Ferry (2025)
  - Secretary Rev. Becky Horn (2024)
  - Treasurer Paula Nihoff (2024)
  - Member at Large Rev. Nancy Hoover (2024)
- Council Members *(4-ordained, 5-lay)*
  - Timothy Albright (2023)
  - Rev. Ralph Hamer (2023)
  - Manetta Horn (2025, Youth)

    - Gretel Kaltenbaugh (2025)
    - Terry Koch (2024)
    - Burton Peese (2025, Young Adult)
    - Michele Peese (2023)
    - Rev. Nathan Pile (2025)
    - Margaret (Peggy) Thatcher (2024)
    - Kenneth Weschler (2025)
- Synod Staff
    - Assistant to the Bishop for Communication – Rev. Marty Jo Irvin-Stellabotte
    - Assistant to the Bishop for Formation – Rev. Deacon Alicia Anderson
    - Assistant to the Bishop for Life Together – Rev. Traci Marriot
    - Assistant to the Bishop for Transition – Rev. Tyler Graham
    - Director of Evangelical Mission Sue Ellen Spotts
- Guests

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Rebecca L. Horn
Allegheny Synod Council Secretary