

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
November 14-17, 2024
Chicago, Illinois
AGENDA

Participants

Voting Members

Pr. Lisa Ahlness	Ms. Cherrish Holland
Mr. Kevin Anderson	Mr. Rindra Josoa
Ms. Tracey Beasley	Pr. Gwendolyn King
Pr. Benjamin Bergren	Mr. David Lenz
Pr. Marcus Bigott	Pr. Tara Lynn
Pr. Nick Billardello	Ms. Olivia Martin-Call
Ms. Susan Boxberger	Mr. Mitch McCartney
Pr. Heather Brown	Mr. Joel Miller
Ms. Jamie Bruesehoff	Mr. Ethan Miller-Perez (<i>excused</i>)
Pr. Bill Callister	Mr. Keoni Newman
Pr. Leroy Cannon	Deacon Kari Olsen
Bp. Yehiel Curry	Mr. Iván Perez
Ms. Divine	Ms. Linda Rivera (<i>excused</i>)
Bp. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop	Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, Secretary
Pr. Joanne Engquist	Mr. Noah Roux
Ms. Lori Fedyk, Treasurer	Ms. Valerie Shaw
Ms. Kerry Fehrman	Mr. Imran Siddiqui, Vice President
Ms. Sheena Foster	Ms. Andraine Sinaga
Mr. Hans Giller	Mr. Loren Solberg
Pr. Emily Hartner	Pr. Kjersten Sullivan
Ms. Kristy Henriksen	Ms. Loni Taylor
Pr. Pamela Hoh	Ms. Jennifer Trom

Liaison Bishops

Bp. Laurie Jungling, Region 1	Bp. Suzanne Dillahunt, Region 6
Bp. Brenda Bos, Region 2 (<i>excused</i>)	Bp. Christopher deForest, Region 7
Bp. Craig Schweitzer, Region 3	Bp. James Dunlop, Region 8
Bp. Scott Johnson, Region 4	Bp. Pedro Suárez, Region 9
Bp. Amy Current, Region 5	

Resource People

Operations: Office of the Presiding Bishop

Ms. Jackie Baumhover, director for strategy
Pr. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration
Mr. Aaron Cooper, senior director, strategic communications
Ms. Jennifer DeLeon, director for racial justice
Ms. Victoria Flood, senior director, Mission Support
Pr. Ernie Hinojosa, associate executive for vision
Pr. Louise Johnson, executive for vision
Ms. Rhondean Johnson, executive for People and diversity, equity, and inclusion
Ms. Kathryn Lohre, executive, ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment
Ms. Judith Roberts, senior director, diversity, equity, and inclusion
Ms. Mary Streufert, director for gender justice and women's empowerment & director for Quality of Call Initiative
Deacon John Weit, executive, worship
Pr. Roger Willer, director, theological ethics
Ms. Rachel Wind, executive, development

Operations: Office of the Secretary

Mr. Thomas Cunniff, general counsel
Mr. Dan Eppley, manager for official documentation
Pr. Keith Fry, executive, Office of the Secretary administration
Mr. Paul Irwin, associate general counsel
Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe, executive, synod relations
Ms. Jodi Slattery, executive, governance

Christian Community and Leadership (CCL)

Pr. Philip Hirsch, executive director
Pr. Sara Cutter, senior director, operational effectiveness

Service and Justice (SJ)

Pr. Khader El-Yateem, executive director
Pr. Barbara Lund, senior director, operations and innovation

Innovation (INO)

Mr. Iain Chester, executive director

Press

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, public relations manager

Separately Incorporated Ministries

Mr. Tim Blevins, president and CEO, Augsburg Fortress Publishers
Ms. Jennifer Hockenbery, interim executive director, Women of the ELCA
Mr. Christopher Johnson, president and CEO, Portico Benefit Services
Ms. Eva Roby, president and CEO, Mission Investment Fund (*excused*)
Ms. Annette Shoemaker, interim president and CEO, ELCA Foundation

Ecumenical Guests

Pr. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, The United Methodist Church (*excused*)
Pr. Dale Buettner, The Reformed Church in America (*excused*)
Pr. Dave Bennett, The Moravian Church (*excused*)
Ms. Elona Street Stewart, Presbyterian Church in America (*excused*)

Advisory Members

Pr. Alejandro Mejia, president, Latino Ministries Association
Pr. Joann Conroy, president, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association
Mr. Ryan Lahurd, president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
Pr. Michael Wilker, representative, Association of White Lutherans for Racial Justice
Pr. Bimen Limbong, vice president, Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders
Pr. Jesse W Brown Jr, president, African Descent Lutheran Association
Ms. Aubrey Thonvold, executive director, ReconcilingWorks

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

2:00 p.m. Audit Committee, Pentecost

Thursday, November 14, 2024

12:00 p.m. Lunch available for Executive Committee, outside Epiphany

12:30 p.m. Executive Committee, Epiphany I and II

3:00 p.m. **HOLY COMMUNION**, 1st Floor Chapel
Presider: Pr. Heather Brown
Preacher: Bp. Jim Dunlop
Assisting Minister: Imran Siddiqui
Lector: David Lenz

PLENARY SESSION ONE

Council Room
November 14, 2024
4:15 – 6:20 p.m.

I.A Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda items have been distributed electronically. Additional items will be distributed at the meeting to the members of the Church Council and invited resource people. The times noted in the agenda are estimates and provided for information only.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

I.B Report from the Presiding Bishop

I.C Update on God's Love Made Real

I.D Q&A on Vice President, Secretary, and Chair of Conference of Bishops reports

This is an opportunity to ask questions on the written reports provided by the [vice president](#), [secretary](#), and [chair of the Conference of Bishops](#), approximately 20 minutes is allotted for this time.

10-minute Recess

I.E Update on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) will provide an update on its work. A summary of their meetings can be found at www.ELCA.org/CRLC.

CRLC co-chairs, Pr. Carla Christopher and Leon Schwartz, will be present to share. This hour-long agenda time will include an overview of the proposed constitutional amendments related to the CRLC work, an introduction to the concepts and proposals that the commission seeks consultation from Church Council, and a response to the Church Council action regarding the “ELCA Name Change” resolution. [CC22.11.34.bb.]

An optional conversation on CRLC matters is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 16 at 8:30-9:45 a.m. in the Council Room.

A second update on CRLC for continued plenary discussion is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 16 at 3:15-3:45 p.m.

Within the CRLC folder, there is an [overview memo](#) from the co-chairs, [CRLC proposals for action](#), [CRLC “in consultation” proposals](#), [CRLC report on ELCA name change](#), [historical reflections on the name, ELCA](#), and [feedback from the Conference of Bishops](#) on the proposals.

6:30 p.m. Welcome Dinner, Augsburg Room
Assorted sodas (complimentary); Wine and beer available (\$5 suggested donation)

Friday, November 15, 2024

- 6:30 a.m. Breakfast, Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 a.m.)
- 8:00 a.m. Board Development Committee, Epiphany I and II (*working breakfast*)

PLENARY SESSION TWO

Augsburg Room
November 15, 2024
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

II.A Bible Study

II.B Racial Justice and Gender Justice Education

II.C Announcements

- 12:15 p.m. Mid-Day Prayer, 1st Floor Chapel
Led by Pr. Pamela Hoh
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch, Augsburg Room
Ecumenical Liaison Lunch, reserved seating in Augsburg Room
- 2:00 p.m. Committees meet
Budget and Finance, Epiphany I and II
Christian Community and Leadership, 5th Floor Screening Room
Faith, Society, and Innovation, Pentecost
Legal and Constitutional Review, 10th Floor HR Training Room
Service and Justice, 6th Floor Planning Room
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner, Augsburg Room

Saturday, November 16, 2024

6:30 a.m. Breakfast, Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 a.m.)

PLENARY SESSION THREE

Council Room
November 16, 2024
8:30 – 9:45 a.m.

III.A Report of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

The following report is provided by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee (LCRC). Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee’s meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee section of Microsoft Teams.

III.A.1 Proposed continuing resolution amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

The Office of the Secretary recommends proposed amendments to various continuing resolutions in the ELCA Constitution. The proposed amendments will be found in “[Proposed Amendments-Continuing Resolutions](#)” in the Public Current Meeting channel under the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee folder. The document will be posted after the LCRC meets on Nov. 15.

The process for continuing resolutions is specified in Chapter 22 of the ELCA Constitution. A two-thirds vote of the Church Council is required for adoption.

CC ACTION [Two-thirds approval required]

Recommended:

To adopt the amendments to Chapter 5 in the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as described in “Proposed Amendments – Continuing Resolutions.”

CC ACTION [Two-thirds approval required]

Recommended:

To adopt the **remaining amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as described in “Proposed Amendments – Continuing Resolutions.”**

III.A.2 Proposed Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church in America amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

The Churchwide Assembly adopts amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

These proposed amendments were offered by the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) in alignment with its mandate by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly [CA22.01.06]. The most recent proposed amendments will be found in “[Proposed Amendments-CRLC](#)” in the Public Current Meeting channel under the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee folder. The document will be posted after the LCRC meets on Nov. 15.

A two-thirds vote of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly is required for adoption.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

To adopt, *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make appropriate changes in the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations* congruent with the ELCA Constitution as amended.

III.A.3 Proposed general amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

The Churchwide Assembly adopts amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The process for amending the governing documents is specified in Chapter 22 of the ELCA Constitution. Proposed constitutional amendments for consideration at the Churchwide Assembly in 2025 must be considered at the Church Council meeting in November 2024. Although the process for adopting bylaw amendments at a Churchwide Assembly does not require similar notice, the historic practice of the Office of the Secretary has been to seek to provide as complete a set as possible of proposed governing document amendments at the fall Church Council meeting in the year before the Churchwide Assembly.

The proposed amendments represent an ongoing commitment of the Office of the Secretary and this church to continue to evaluate the efficacy of its governing documents and their alignment with its mission and ministry. The most recent proposed amendments will be found in “[Proposed Amendments-General](#)” in the Public Current Meeting channel under the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee folder. The document will be posted after the LCRC meets on Nov. 15.

A two-thirds vote of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly is required for adoption.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

To adopt, *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, the amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make appropriate changes in the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations* congruent with the ELCA Constitution as amended.

III.B Conversation on Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

9:45 a.m. Break

10:00 a.m. *Deadline for Removal of Items from En Bloc*
Deadline for New Business

PLENARY SESSION FOUR

Council Room
November 16, 2024
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

IV.A Update on Portico’s Benefits reExamined Project Team

Rising health care costs nationwide and a changing church landscape have prompted calls for greater affordability and flexibility. A team of Portico Benefit Services and ELCA leaders has been formed to lead the initiative to reexamine the ELCA benefit program, rooted in principles expressed through the [ELCA Philosophy of Benefits](#) and [Portico’s Wholeness Wheel](#). Visit PorticoBenefits.org/benefits-reexamined to learn more about the Benefits reExamined initiative.

Portico Chief Operating and Financial Officer, Stacy Kruse, and Portico Senior Director for Head of Products, Lindsey Holman, will provide an update on the initiative.

IV.B [Report from the Treasurer](#)

IV.C Report of the Budget and Finance Committee

The following report is provided by the Budget and Finance Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee’s meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the Budget and Finance Committee section of Microsoft Teams.

III.C.1 Revision to FY25 Current Fund Spending Authorization and ELCA World Hunger

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To approve a 2025 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$67,875,000.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To approve the 2025 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$21,500,000.

III.C.2 Development of a [Financial Compliance Policy](#)

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To approve the financial compliance policy for separately incorporated ministries and other affiliated organizations.

IV.D Personal Reflection on Faith, Andraine Sinaga

12:15 p.m. **SEPARATELY INCORPORATED MINISTRY LUNCH PRESENTATIONS**
(see assignments)
Portico Benefit Services, Pentecost
ELCA Foundation, 5th Floor Screening Room
Augsburg Fortress Publishers, Epiphany I and II
Mission Investment Fund, 4th Floor Conference Room
Women of the ELCA, 10th Floor HR Training Room

PLENARY SESSION FIVE

Council Room
November 16, 2024
2:00 – 3:45 p.m.

V.A Legal Briefing (*executive session for Church Council, Liaison Bishops, Administrative Team, Minutes Team, and Legal Counsel*)

V.B Report of the Executive Committee

V.C Update: Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (*continued*)

3:45 p.m. Break

PLENARY SESSION SIX

Council Room
November 16, 2024
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

VI.A Update from ELCA Vision Team

The ELCA Vision Team, led by Pr. Louise Johnson, executive for vision, and Pr. Ernie Hinojosa, associate executive for vision, will present a 15-minute update. There will be an additional 15 minutes for Church Council members to share their thoughts and insights and ask questions.

VI.B Report from the Administrative Team

The Administrative Team will engage in conversation with Church Council for this approximately 30-minute agenda time. The following questions will be discussed in small groups with five minutes devoted to each question. The remaining 10 minutes will be for the small groups to report to the whole group.

1. What are the potential benefits you see for the churchwide organization with the upcoming transition?
2. What are the potential risks?
3. What do you advise to mitigate the risks?
4. What communication patterns, and with whom, would you like to see from the churchwide organization following the Churchwide Assembly and into 2025?

VI.C Personal Reflection on Faith, Pr. Nick Billardello

5:30 p.m. Dinner (on your own)

Sunday, November 17, 2024

- 6:30 a.m. Breakfast, Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 am)
- 9:00 a.m. **HOLY COMMUNION**, 1st Floor Chapel
Presider: Pr. Tara Lynn
Preacher: Pr. Marcus Bigott
Assisting Minister: Kristy Henriksen
Lector: Rindra Josoa

Offering: ELCA World Hunger
- 10:15 a.m. [College Corporation Meeting for Luther College](#), Council Room
Church Council members to be present in Council Room
Luther College Board of Regents to be present online ([Zoom link](#))

PLENARY SESSION SEVEN

Council Room
November 17, 2024
10:25 – 11:30 a.m.

VII.A Personal Reflection on Faith, Loren Solberg

VII.B Brief reports from other committees

During this 30-minute agenda time, the following reports will be provided by the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee, Christian Community and Leadership Committee, Service and Justice Committee, and the Board Development Committee.

Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following committee meetings. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in this plenary session. Background information can be located in the relevant committee section of Microsoft Teams.

VII.C New Business

VII.D Consideration of Items Removed from *En Bloc*

VII.E *En Bloc* Approval of Certain Items

The following *en bloc* resolution includes agenda items that will be considered on the last day of the Church Council meeting. Inclusion of these items in the *en bloc* action reflects a judgment that these items are relatively non-controversial in nature and may not require plenary discussion and a separate vote.

Each of the items is noted as [*En Bloc*] in [En Bloc Items](#), [Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions](#), [Responses to Synod Actions](#), and [Responses to Previous Church Council Actions](#). On the first day of the Council meeting, the chair will remind members of the deadline to remove items from *en bloc* consideration in order to discuss separately any of the items listed in the *en bloc* resolution;

any such item will be removed from the *en bloc* resolution and discussed at the appropriate point in the agenda.

The chair will not call for a discussion or separate vote on those items that are not removed from the *en bloc* resolution. The items remaining in the *en bloc* resolution normally will be considered as one of the last items of council business.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To take action *En Bloc* on the items listed in *En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions, Responses to Synod Actions, and Responses to Previous Church Council Actions.

VII.F Unfinished Business

VII.G Greetings from the Rev. Mark Goodman

The Rev. Mark Goodman has completed his term on the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church and therefore his appointment has subsequently ended as the ecumenical liaison to the ELCA Church Council. This is an opportunity to hear from Pr. Goodman and thank him for his service.

VII.H Evaluation and Debriefing

VII.I Announcements and Adjournment

11:45 a.m. Lunch, Brown bag lunch available outside Council Room (*upon request*)