



*“Church Council will enable and support the work of the ELCA in a way that is consistent with the ELCA's vision and purpose by utilizing equitable decision-making processes to realize our three priority areas of being a welcoming church, a thriving church, and a connected and sustainable church.” – Vision for ELCA Church Council Meetings*

October 2024

Dear Church Council members,

Grace and peace to you.

As you prepare for the November 2024 Church Council meeting, this is a brief overview of the meeting highlights.

What can you anticipate for this meeting?

- Receive an update from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) co-chairs
- Receive an update from ELCA Vision Team (*you've already received 1 of 2 emails from the team*)
- Receive an update from Portico's reExamined Benefits Task Force
- Engage in racial justice and gender justice education; Please prepare yourself ahead of time by reviewing the [resources](#) previously shared in Church Council Teams.
- Receive an update on the progress of [current social writing projects](#)
- Consider constitutional amendments to be considered at the Churchwide Assembly

What else should be noted? Committees will meet in the afternoon of Friday, Nov. 15. An optional time will be held on Saturday morning, Nov. 16 for further generative conversation on the CRLC concepts and proposals. During the Saturday lunch, the separately incorporated ministries will be hosting lunch presentations about their ministry work.

We anticipate you will have read the leaders' written reports in advance of the meeting. Instead of hearing verbal reports from all the leaders, you will have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions about their written reports. In addition, the committees without significant actions will have an abbreviated opportunity to share their committee reports with you.

Some action items will be *en bloc*. As you know, this is to allow time for strategic and generative conversations on other topics. If there is any action you do wish to discuss that is in *en bloc*, please notify Secretary Sue Rothmeyer during the Church Council meeting by Saturday, Nov. 16 at 10 a.m. This is also the deadline for any new business you wish to add to the Church Council agenda.

You already received the updated provisional schedule. The full agenda will be posted about two weeks prior to the meeting. If you have questions about any of the matters above, please contact Jodi Slattery, [Jodi.Slattery@elca.org](mailto:Jodi.Slattery@elca.org). The documents for the meeting will be found in the Church Council Microsoft Teams within the Files section of the "Public Current Meeting" channel. Please contact Joseph Schmidt, [Joseph.Schmidt@elca.org](mailto:Joseph.Schmidt@elca.org), if you have problems accessing the Teams site.

I give thanks to God for all of you.

God's peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop

*Revised Nov. 15, 2024*

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
**CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**Nov. 14-17, 2024**  
**Proposed Schedule**

**Wednesday, November 13**

2:00 p.m. Audit Committee, Pentecost

**Thursday, November 14**

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**, 1<sup>st</sup> fl. Chapel

Presider: Pr. Heather Brown

Preacher: Bp. Jim Dunlop

Assisting Minister: Imran Siddiqui

Lector: David Lenz

4:15 p.m. **PLENARY SESSION ONE**, Council Room

Call to Order/Adoption of Agenda (4:15 – 4:25 p.m.)

Report from the Presiding Bishop (4:25 – 4:40)

Update on God's Love Made Real (4:40 – 4:55)

Q&A on leader reports (4:55 – 5:10)

- Vice President; Secretary; Chair of Conference of Bishops

*Recess* (5:10 – 5:20)

Update: CRLC (5:20 – 6:20)

Hymn and Prayer

6:30 p.m. **WELCOME DINNER**, Augsburg Room

*Assorted Sodas (complimentary); Wine and beer available (\$5.00 donation)*

**Friday, November 15**

6:30 a.m. **BREAKFAST**, O'Hare Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 a.m.)

8:00 a.m. Board Development Committee, Epiphany I and II (*working breakfast*)

10:00 a.m. **PLENARY SESSION TWO**, Augsburg Room

Bible Study

Racial Justice and Gender Justice Education

Announcements

12:15 p.m. Mid-Day Prayer, 1<sup>st</sup> fl. Chapel

Led by Pr. Pamela Hoh

12:30 p.m. **LUNCH**, Augsburg Room

Ecumenical Liaison Lunch, reserved tables in Augsburg Room

- 2:00 p.m. Committees meet (*various locations*)  
 Budget and Finance, Epiphany I and II  
 Christian Community and Leadership, 5<sup>th</sup> fl. Screening Room  
 Faith, Society, and Innovation, Pentecost  
 Legal and Constitutional Review, 10<sup>th</sup> fl. HR Training Room  
 Service and Justice, 6<sup>th</sup> fl. Planning Room
- 6:00 p.m. **DINNER**, Augsburg Room

**Saturday, November 16**

- 6:30 a.m. **BREAKFAST**, O'Hare Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 a.m.)
- 8:30 a.m. **PLENARY SESSION THREE**, Council Room  
 Report of the Legal and Constitutional Review (8:30 – 9:15)  
 Conversation on Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (9:15 – 9:45)
- 9:45 a.m. Break
- 10:00 a.m. *Deadline for Removal of Items from En Bloc*  
*Deadline for New Business*
- 10:00 a.m. **PLENARY SESSION FOUR**, Council Room  
 Update on Portico's Benefits reExamined Project Team (10:00 – 10:45)  
 Report from the Treasurer (10:45 – 11:15)  
 Report of the Budget and Finance Committee (11:15 – 11:50)  
 Personal Reflection on Faith (11:50-11:55)  
 Hymn and Prayer
- 12:15 p.m. **SEPARATELY INCORPORATED MINISTRIES LUNCH PRESENTATIONS**  
*Boxed lunches available outside Council Room*  
 Portico Benefit Services, Pentecost  
 ELCA Foundation, 5<sup>th</sup> fl. Screening Room  
 Augsburg Fortress Publishers, Epiphany I and II  
 Mission Investment Fund, 4<sup>th</sup> fl. Conference Room  
 Women of the ELCA, 10<sup>th</sup> fl. HR Training Room
- 2:00 p.m. **PLENARY SESSION FIVE**, Council Room  
 Legal Briefing (*executive session*) (2:00 – 2:15)  
 Report of the Executive Committee (2:15 – 2:30)  
 Update: CRLC (*continued*) (2:30 – 3:45)
- 3:45 p.m. Break
- 4:00 p.m. **PLENARY SESSION SIX**, Council Room  
 Update from Vision Team (4:00-4:30)  
 Report from the Administrative Team (4:30 – 5:00)  
 Personal Reflection on Faith (5:00 – 5:05)  
 Hymn and prayer
- 5:30 p.m. **DINNER**, Dinner on own

**Sunday, November 17**

6:30 a.m.      **BREAKFAST**, O'Hare Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 a.m.)

9:00 a.m.      **HOLY COMMUNION**, 1<sup>st</sup> fl. Chapel

*Offering: ELCA World Hunger*

Presider: Pr. Tara Lynn

Preacher: Pr. Marcus Bigott

Assisting Minister: Kristy Henricksen

Lector: Rindra Josoa

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

Personal Reflection on Faith (10:25 – 10:30)

Brief reports from other committees (10:30 – 11:10)

- CCLC; SJC; FSIC; BDC

New Business (11:10 – 11:25)

Consideration of Items Removed from *En Bloc* (11:25 – 11:35)

*En Bloc* Approval of Certain Items

Unfinished Business

Greeting from the Rev. Mark Goodman

Evaluation and Debriefing

Announcements

Hymn and Prayer

Adjournment

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

## **Report from the Presiding Bishop**

### **God's Love Made Real**

Building on previous work to organize the work of the churchwide organization, significant research conducted by the Barna Group and our own Research and Evaluation Team, learnings gleaned from experiments and Lilly funded projects, consultations with Christian Community and Leadership and Service and Justice home areas and supported by the work of the Innovation home area, I have drawn all of the work together under the umbrella God's Love Made Real (GLMR). Under the GLMR umbrella comes our vision, "A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation." To work to realize that vision we have one vision with two strategies: The Church That Is and the Church That Is Becoming. Our colleague, Jackie Baumhover, director for strategy, is leading the Church That Is, and our colleagues, Pr. Louise Johnson, Pr. Ernie Hinojosa, and Sonia Olsson are working on the Church That Is Becoming.

The ELCA is made up of nearly 9,000 congregations. Congregations have been, are, and ever shall be the living base where the Word is preached and the sacraments are administered, where Christian community is formed, where God's people are catechized, and out of which the baptized live their vocations in service to the neighbor. There have been congregations for two thousand years and there will be congregations until the Lord returns in glory. Using research developed by the Barna Group and collected from our congregations, the ELCA Research and Evaluation Team, rostered ministers, and those with no connection with the ELCA, and working with you and the Conference of Bishops, we can develop research-based experiments and strategies to walk alongside and strengthen congregations. Iain Chester and his Innovation Team have been and will continue to work with us to provide practical tools to help with new strategies. Here's the thing, God's Love Made Real is not another project coming from the churchwide organization, nor is it the property and responsibility of synods. It is all of us together. There are already solid and creative ways to support and strengthen our congregations and other ministries. We don't know what all of those are, and we don't know what is happening across the church. It would be a good thing if we knew- if only to encourage each other.

While congregations are our base, we know that other means than the traditional congregation have been and will need to be developed to reach people with the radical, liberating power of the Gospel. The Church That Is Becoming Team, sometimes known as the Vision Team, are concentrating their efforts on experiments to test ways to engage those who will not, are not, have stopped being involved in a traditional congregation. They, too, need to hear the Good News. They, too, need to know the God who means good for them, for humankind, for creation. Pr. Louise Johnson and Pr. Ernie Hinojosa will be with us to tell us about their work and hear from you about what would be helpful.

Rabbi Edwin Friedman, a leader in Family Systems Theory, said "good structure corrals anxiety." I believe that in creation, God gave humankind the gift of limits; setting boundaries that actually makes more freedom possible. Humankind rejected that in the Garden with dire and continuing consequences not just for us but for all of creation. I believe that ELCA constitutions are necessary and good. At the same time both the Church That Is and the Church That is Becoming are discovering ministries that do not fit into the definitions we now have. Soon after the ELCA came into being, The Task Force on the Study of Ministry was commissioned. The task force met from 1988-1993. Together for Ministry, the report of the task force's work, was adopted by the 1993 Churchwide Assembly. One of the recommendations was, "that we receive the adopted work as encouragement to continue the conversation." Gospel ministries already existing and being developed push us to find new ways (plural) recognize and support these emerging ministries. Pr. Hinojosa notes that these are "unconventional vehicles in which these sacred conversations can occur." How do we understand ordained ministry,

particularly Word and Sacrament ministry, specialized calls, on leave from call, retired status? How do we strengthen and support lay ministry and our Lutheran understanding of the priesthood of all believers?

What constitutes a recognized Gospel ministry? In my oral report I will give some examples of Church That Is and Church That is Becoming ministries that don't quite fit into our current definitions. I'll admit this raises my anxiety. Taking a deep breath, I am now seeing this time as an opportunity – without getting rid of good structure – to figure out how this all works together.

### **Church Property Resource Hub**

We have been involved with a donor who has a passion for equipping the ELCA to make smart real estate decisions as the landscape of the church and property ownership in our country continues to change. We've held listening and brainstorming sessions with bishops and synods, as well as experts in the field of church property and real estate realities, leading us at the churchwide organization to see that there may be a role for us to provide resources to synods and congregations as they approach complex real estate scenarios – scenarios such as exploring new partnerships that may result in increased revenue to the congregation, congregational mergers, management and utilization of property, and “Holy Closures.” We have heard from many of you that there is a need for contextualized expertise, support and guidance for synods and congregations as we steward our property. I'm pleased to announce that through the generosity of a donor, the churchwide organization will be launching a three-year pilot program called the ELCA Property Resource Hub. This project will utilize a three-pronged approach of 1) sharing resources to equip congregations and synods to make informed and mission-minded property decisions 2) reaching out to and resourcing congregations at transitional moments and 3) reconsidering churchwide policies around “Holy Closures” in light of program learnings. Through this pilot, we envision a church in which every congregation considering a property transition embraces our shared identity as Christ's whole church and the future ministry that God continues to call us into and makes financial and real estate decisions that benefit the whole ELCA and its mission. There will be more opportunities to learn about this project. Again, special thanks to the bishops and staff including Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations.

### **Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery**

At the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, we passed a memorial repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery. The Doctrine of Discovery was laid out by a series of papal bulls from the mid to late 1400s. The premise was that land not inhabited by Christians rightfully should be seized by Christian nations – at first the Portuguese and Spanish and later by other western countries including the United States. ***This had devastating impact on the culture, land, and language of Indigenous peoples.*** The horror of residential schools that tried to beat the Indigenous out of children is also part of the ELCA's history. The late Marlene White Rabbit Helgamo, former bishop Jessica Crist, and Pastor Manuel Retamoza lead our Repudiation task force. We, as the Church Council, begin meetings with land acknowledgements and that is a good start. The Montana, Rocky Mountain, and Northeastern Minnesota synods have all established relationships with Indigenous peoples on their territory and have returned land or made reparations. There is still more to do, and I don't want this work to get lost in the transitions that are coming.

### **Global Refuge**

We continue to work on an Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) with Global Refuge (LIRS). Global Refuge works with refugee resettlement and advocates for immigrants coming to the US. With the next administration there will be significant adjustments to how the ELCA is able to minister to this increasingly vulnerable population. We know that in the first Trump administration the number of people

allowed to enter the country and federal funds to support refugee resettlement work were drastically cut. The ELCA's AMMPARO program (Accompanying Migrants with Protection, Advocacy, and Opportunity) in the US and in countries of origin care for migrants here and those being deported back to their country of origin. Now, more than ever, Global Refuge and AMMPARO need to work together. On January 13, 2025, Global Refuge and churchwide staff will meet together to finalize an MOU.

### **ELCA Foundation**

In October 2017, the Church Council received and approved the Report of the Task Force on the Structure and Governance of The ELCA Foundation. The Church Council voted to approve and start a process of transferring the activities of the ELCA Foundation to be separately incorporated as the Endowment Fund of the ELCA (dba the Foundation). The Foundation has had remarkable growth with now over a billion dollars of assets under management in support of the ministries of the ELCA. We celebrate the work of the Foundation and the generosity of our members. As is normal there have been growing pains in this new relationship. At its October 29 meeting, the Executive Committee of the Church Council approved the formation of a joint committee, consisting of representation from The Endowment Fund of the ELCA (dba ELCA Foundation) and the ELCA churchwide organization to review compliance with the action taken by the ELCA Church Council [CC17.11.21], which states, "To approve the proposed governance structure and organizational structures as outlined in the "Report of the Task Force on the Structure and Governance of the ELCA Foundation"; To request a final report and recommendations from this joint committee to be presented to the Church Council no later than the April 2025 meeting; and To request the ELCA Foundation cease activity on the implementation of HubSpot, a customer relationship management system, until such time that the report and recommendations from the joint committee are received." We are working to find a date, sooner rather than later, to begin this work.

### **Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC)**

Please read the report sent from the CRLC, the accompanying materials, and the response of the Conference of Bishops. The members of the CRLC were appointed by the Church Council and report to the Church Council. The CRLC's mandate as adopted by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, is "To establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church comprised of leaders of diverse representation from all three expressions that, working in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, shall reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the three expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism, and will present its findings and recommendations to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a possible reconstituting convention to be called under the rules for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly."

The worst kept secret in the church is that I will not stand for reelection at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. I will announce this to the staff on Monday, November 18. There is a transition team in place who will work before, during and after the election. The leadership of the Church Council in seeing this transition as a time of great opportunity will be crucial. It has been a remarkable call, and it is time for fresh leadership. Besides, I want to spend time with my grandchildren.

In all things I give thanks for our partnership in the Gospel. This is hard, beautiful, sometimes lonely, often frustrating, but in the end, holy work.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

## **Report from the Vice President**

Greetings! I hope you have been well since we last met in April of this year. I have had an eventful summer filled with Synod Assemblies, gatherings, and various meetings (virtually as well as in person). At all these events, I got to do my favorite thing in this position, which is speak to people across the church about what they are doing and how they are spreading the Gospel in their neighborhoods and communities.

I was happy to attend three Synod Assemblies this summer: Southeastern Pennsylvania, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, and New England. Two of those assemblies were bishop elections, and I was able to shadow Secretary Sue Rothmeyer (at Southeastern Pennsylvania) and Treasurer Lori Fedyk (at New England) as Churchwide Representatives during bishop elections. I was able to learn quite a bit about all the work that goes into bishop elections and how to deal with the various issues involved. I was happy to be present at the election of two new synod bishops (Bishop Bryan Penman in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Bishop Nathan Pipho in New England), each having to go through five ballots before their election. There was a palpable atmosphere of hope in the room as people determined the future of their synods. It was energizing being in those spaces.

Speaking of being energized, I also attended the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July. It was an incredible experience to be among so many youth (and for the first time, young adults!) who love God and desperately wanted to share the Gospel. I began the week with MYLE and the tAble. I was uplifted by both of those communities and how they expressed God's love among groups that historically have been marginalized by the Church. I was also awed to see the numbers of youth, young adults, and adults who attended the Mass Gathering. It was my first time at a Youth Gathering, so I don't think I've ever been among so many Lutherans in one place before!

In August, I was honored to be invited to Chicago for the Latine Young Adult Gathering. Pastor Hector Carrasquillo, ELCA Program Director for Latine Ministries, wanted to create a program where Latine Young Adults could come for training to be leaders in their own communities. This was hopefully the first in an annual gathering. I was very grateful for translation services being provided, as my Spanish is rudimentary at best, and came away with a powerful desire to improve translation services in our church (and am currently working with Pastor Carmelo Santos, ELCA Director for Theological Diversity and Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Engagement, to figure out ways to make that a reality).

At the end of September, I joined the Conference of Bishops as they discussed many important items, including suggestions from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (more on that later), potential changes to On Leave from Call Status, and potential changes to Candidacy, among others.

I am writing this report on October 15, 2024, so by the time we have our meeting, I'll have co-hosted a World Food Day Zoom event with Bishop Amy Current, in recognition of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ELCA World Hunger later on the day I'm writing this! I will also be attending the ELCA Attorney's Association Meeting from October 25-27, which conveniently is located this year in Atlanta, Georgia (at a hotel roughly 20 minutes from where I live).

Throughout this entire summer, I have been continuing to open the lines of communications, in an attempt to break through the silos of our expressions. I continue to post on Facebook every week – asking a weekly question, prayer requests, and where did folks see God in their lives that week. I also sat down for a podcast (Main Street Lutherans) discussing the churchwide organization and our polity structure. To give you a bit of information as to how much I enjoy talking about this stuff, we had to make it a two-part podcast because I kept talking for two hours.

We have a lot of significant work ahead of us for this meeting. This is when we talk about constitutional changes to bring forward to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. This year will include suggestions from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC). I have gotten to know CRLC co-chairs Pastor Carla Christopher and Leon Schwartz quite a bit this year, from having lengthy discussions with them at the Vice President's Gathering and at Conference of Bishops. I am impressed by



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their diligence and the work they and their colleagues have done in the two (or so) years that we've empaneled them. I look forward to discussing what they have brought forward for us.

I look forward to seeing all of you and getting to spend time talking about our church and the work that we are doing in spreading the Gospel. I consider that time to be just as important, if not more so, than our business sessions. As I've traveled around our church, I've gotten to see some of you, and those were part of the highlights of my trips (including holding an alligator on a swamp tour!).

See you soon,

Imran Siddiqui

Vice President, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## **Report from the Secretary**

During these days leading up to November 5, we've heard on a regular basis the countdown to Election Day. We in the Office of the Secretary have begun our own countdown to a significant event in our lives: Churchwide Assembly. As of this typing, it's a mere 279 days until we gather in Phoenix, July 28, 2025! And with 23 days until the Church Council gathers in Chicago, we're hoping to provide you with updates and information that will be helpful to you as you prepare for that meeting and for your work in the days to come.

### **2024 Synod Assemblies**

The 2024 synod assembly season was surely a sign of the changing landscape of synod assemblies. The variety of length, focus, bishop election, business agenda, or no assembly at all, was very much in play this past season. The days of having a somewhat "standard" synod assembly appear to be in the rearview mirror.

Ten synods held bishop elections which resulted in eight new bishops:

Alaska Synod – Bishop Tim Oslovich  
Caribbean Synod – Bishop Vivian Dávila  
Indiana-Kentucky Synod – Bishop Tim Graham  
Minneapolis Area Synod – Bishop Jen Nagel  
New England Synod – Bishop Nathan Piphio  
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin – Bishop Martin Halom  
Rocky Mountain Synod – Bishop Meghan Johnston Aelabouni  
Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod – Bishop Bryan Penman

Two bishops were re-elected to serve another term:

Grand Canyon Synod – Bishop Deborah Hutterer  
Southwestern Texas Synod – Bishop Sue Briner

In 2025, 21 synods will hold bishop elections. It will be a phenomenally busy season, especially as the Churchwide Assembly follows soon after the synod assemblies conclude.

### **Conference of Bishop Term Realignment**

Mindful of the fact that we now operate in a three-year cycle rather than a two-year cycle for Churchwide Assembly, the Conference of Bishops at its fall meeting voted to ask the Church Council to amend the constitution to move the election of the COB chair and vice chair from quadrennially to triennially.

### **Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church**

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) has now met nine times. Summaries of the meetings can be found on [www.ELCA.org/CRLC](http://www.ELCA.org/CRLC).

The CRLC presented a draft of concepts and proposals to the Conference of Bishops at its fall meeting. Based on the COB feedback, the CRLC is preparing a few constitutional amendments for the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee to review for Church Council's consideration. Proposed constitutional amendments may be presented at this November Church Council meeting for consideration at the Churchwide Assembly.

CRLC also has some concepts for which they would like feedback from the Church Council. A full report with recommendations from the CRLC is anticipated for the spring 2025 meetings of the Conference of Bishops and Church Council.

### **Churchwide Assembly 2025**

We are looking forward to the Churchwide Assembly being held in Phoenix, Arizona, and hosted by Bishop Deborah Hutterer and the Grand Canyon Synod.

As a reminder, Church Council members are voting members of the Churchwide Assembly. You will receive information in the spring regarding registration. Assembly registration for Church Council and Conference of Bishops will open slightly earlier than the public registration, which is scheduled for April 2, 2025, so you can help us make sure everything runs smoothly with the online registration process.

The assembly starts with orientation on Monday, July 28, 2025, at 1:00 P.M. (Phoenix time) and concludes at the close of the plenary session on Saturday, August 2, 2025, at 12:30 P.M. (Phoenix time). The public schedule is posted on the Churchwide Assembly website ([www.ELCA.org/CWA](http://www.ELCA.org/CWA)), along with lots of helpful information about the assembly. A primer on the Churchwide Assembly will be held at the spring meeting.

### **Churchwide Nominating Committee**

Last month, in preparation for the Churchwide Assembly, we convened the first meeting of the Nominating Committee so they could begin their important work. The committee will be looking for youth members of the Church Council as well as nominees for the Committee on Appeals, the Committee on Discipline, and the Nominating Committee. Please give some thought to those individuals in your synod or in your network who have the gifts for this kind of service and encourage them to place their names into consideration. They can go to [www.ELCA.org/nominations](http://www.ELCA.org/nominations) to fill out the nomination biographical form. The deadline for submitting the forms is February 1, 2025. You may also contact Dan Eppley in OS at [Daniel.Eppley@elca.org](mailto:Daniel.Eppley@elca.org) with individuals' contact information, and he will send the submission form link to them. If you would like to review the open committee positions, Dan will provide the Nominations Workbook upon request.

### **CBCR Amendments for Churchwide Assembly 2025**

The Office of the Secretary has been busily meeting for months to fulfill its constitutional duty to prepare amendments for the Church Council to recommend to the next Churchwide Assembly. One challenge, of course, has been to propose changes that do not overlap with the responsibilities of the CRLC and any potential amendments the CRLC might be recommending. OS has kept careful track over the past two years of problems or improvements that have been identified by OS or that have been reported to us by bishops and other folks who have written us to point out issues.

Among the materials provided to you for this meeting of the Church Council is a compilation of amendments being proposed for action by the Churchwide Assembly next summer. In addition to "housekeeping" edits and amendments being proposed by the CRLC, these are some of the categories of amendments being brought forward by OS on behalf of the churchwide organization:

- Recommendations of the Candidacy Working Group (Chs. 7 and 9)
- Recommendations of the Task Force on OLFC and Specialized Ministry (Ch. 7)
- Membership in certain organizations (Ch. 7)
- Clarifying the process for recognition and reception of congregations (Ch. 9)
- Streamlining the reporting of synod boundary changes (Ch. 10)
- Allowing SAWC participants to be elected as voting members of assemblies and to other elected positions (multiple locations)

### **Task Force Reports**

The **Task Force on OLFC and Specialized Ministry**, mandated by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly to study and make recommendations concerning On Leave from Call and specialized ministry, has met a number of times over the past year. In addition to a survey of the Conference of Bishops last spring, the members conducted a series of listening sessions for rostered ministers who are either OLFC or who have recently been OLFC. A draft report was given to the COB in October, and the report and recommendations have been revised based on feedback received from the bishops. The task force's recommendations address a partial restructuring of OLFC, OLFC time limits, and a protocol for rostered ministers to be heard when decisions are being made about their roster status, as well as recommendations for helping better standardize interim ministry across synods. Some of these changes are being presented as constitutional amendments, while others will be made as policy revisions to the roster manual following the Churchwide Assembly. The task force will continue its work as it relates to specialized ministry and present an expanded report to the Church Council at the spring 2025 meeting.

The **Task Force on Synod Nominations and Elections**, also mandated by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, is made up of several key leaders who were involved in their synods' bishop elections. They met across the past months to share information with one another and to consider whether changes might need to be made to the constitutions. After discussion, it was determined that no such recommendations need to be made at this time. In its final report, the task force will offer a set of "best practices" for synods to consider in preparing for and running an election, with a recommendation that these be incorporated into the Bishop Election Toolkit.

### **Annual Congregation Report**

For the 2023 data year, the Annual Congregation Report and its supporting materials underwent several cosmetic and content changes. These included:

- Redesigning Form A to increase readability;
- Enhancing Form A instructions with better explanations and clearer definitions;
- Eliminating a separate Form C and replacing it with "pulse surveys" throughout the year; and
- Recording informational videos to explain the purpose of Form A and provide instruction on how to complete the report.

Due to these changes and the support of synod staff, the response rate to the Annual Congregation Report increased from 75% in 2022 to 78% in 2023, the highest response rate since 2011.

For the 2024 data year, the Annual Congregation Report will be delivered on a new electronic platform. This platform will allow us to:

- Translate Form A and its instructions into multiple languages;
- Embed pop-up instructions directly into the form;
- Display previous year's data provided by congregations;
- Allow congregations to update contact information directly through Form A; and
- Develop more dynamic and timely statistical reports.

Conversations with synod bishops and staff about the Annual Congregation Report are ongoing. The goal of these conversations is to continue to evaluate the changes already made and prioritize what comes next.

### **Research and Evaluation**

Research and Evaluation is excited to now be a complete team of three. Tim Snyder joined the team in April as Researcher/Evaluator, and Destiny Hisey came on board in June as Congregation Statistics Analyst.

As a team, one of the primary goals of Research and Evaluation is a commitment to providing high-quality data collection, analysis, and interpretation to enable stakeholders across the ELCA to make better-informed decisions around practice and policy.

In June, the Research and Evaluation team launched a new study, “The Future Need for Pastoral Leaders in the ELCA (2025-2030).” Drawing on previous internal research, the purpose is to better understand the mobility/call process and anticipate how many and what kinds of pastoral leaders the ELCA will need for its congregations. The study will include topics such as congregational vitality, rostered minister affordability, retirement projections, position types, and ministry needs. A full report will be available by January 2025.

### **Synod Secretaries Webinar**

OS held its annual webinar gathering for synod secretaries on the evening of Monday, October 28. This was a great opportunity for these officers to meet one another and to be brought up to date on a number of topics that are useful to them in fulfilling their duties.

### **New International Travel Agency**

The ELCA’s longtime international travel partner, Menno Travel, ceased operation on Sept. 30. Since learning of Menno’s closure, we’ve been searching for a replacement firm. We are happy to announce that we have selected AFC Travel of Burnsville, Minnesota, to handle our international travel needs. AFC Travel works with many churches, companies, and religious organizations around the world, and has been in business for over 40 years. They also have access to humanitarian and consolidator airfares that will benefit the ELCA. And, as a bonus, one of Menno’s key employees, Jim Kauffman, will be moving over to AFC Travel, so there will be continuity of service.

### **ELCA Attorneys Association**

The biennial ELCA Attorneys Association Meeting and Legal Forum was held in Atlanta from October 25-27. As usual, the synod attorneys and other attorneys who do work for the church gathered for continuing legal education and fellowship. Topics this year included sexual harassment in congregations, member discipline, repurposing endowments and designated funds, insurance, and legal issues related to campus ministries.

As always, I am abundantly grateful that I get to spend my days working with the staff of the Office of the Secretary. I’m particularly thankful for the OS Leadership Team of Adam, Dana, Jodi, Keith, MaryAnn, and Tom, who carry out their work with such a deep sense of vocation. It is wonderful to celebrate having the Research and Evaluation team back and to welcome Emma Volker, our new colleague in the Archives, which means that all positions in OS are now fully staffed. While I’m in a thanksgiving mood, I would like to add my appreciation for the ways in which Leon Schwartz and Pastor Carla Christopher Wilson, whom we will welcome to our Church Council meeting, have fulfilled their roles as chairs of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church.

I look forward to our days together in November.

Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, Secretary of the ELCA

**Report of the ELCA Treasurer  
For Church Council – November 2024 Meeting**

**Unrestricted Operating Results through September 30, 2024**

The financial statements for unrestricted results of operations and ELCA World Hunger are on the pages which follow this narrative.

Unrestricted results of operations for the eight months ending September 30, 2024, are relatively consistent to performance for the same period last year; however, the revenue streams are different as shown on the detailed revenue summary. This highlights part of the challenge in budgeting for CWO each year. Net revenues for the eight-month period exceeded expenses by \$340,000 compared to a loss of \$424,000 last year. The budgeted loss for the period was \$9.8 million compared to a budgeted loss of \$148,000 for the full year. The favorability to budget is attributable to two things: 1) favorable investment results and 2) underspending. At this time last year, operating performance was ahead of plan by \$8.0 million, of which \$6.3 million was due to underspending. Favorability to budget is projected to narrow heading into the last quarter of the year as a result of actual spending occurring later in the year than originally planned. Learnings from budget-to-actual trends for the past two consecutive years have resulted in a shift in budgeting methodology for FY25 which will be presented separately.

Total unrestricted revenues are \$40.6 million vs. a plan of \$35.6 million with the favorability almost entirely related to investment income, at \$4.8 million ahead of plan and \$3.9 million ahead of last year. Of the total \$6.6 million investment income, \$2.3 million represents unrealized gain (not actually spendable cash unless the asset is sold).

Mission Support is 2.7 percent or \$.6 million below the plan and 4.8 percent or \$1.1 million below the prior year. The continuation of higher interest rates and commodity prices, coupled with uncertainty in the political arena and ongoing declines in church attendance are likely all factors impacting giving and the ability to share with synods and churchwide. As an organization we are increasingly more dependent on other sources of unrestricted income including investment income, bequest income, endowment distributions, and fundraising. In addition, solicitation of grants from other organizations has increased – these monies are generally supporting restricted projects but have given the church the opportunity to pursue new ministries. Restricted fund commitments in FY24 for these types of projects total nearly \$5 million; many of the projects are multi-year.

Fundraising (direct) gifts received through September are just over 50% of the full year plan for FY24 and nearly \$0.8 million better than the same period last year. Increases both in terms of number of gifts and dollars per gift have been achieved and together contribute to the improvement.

Compared to FY23, bequest income is over 100 percent, or \$2.4 million less in FY24; however, slightly favorable to budget. Budgets are typically based on historical trends over multiple years which have proven to be a good indicator so far this year.

Churchwide organization spending is currently at 88.5% of the YTD approved spending authorization which is slightly higher than last year at 86.3%. While some of the savings, particularly related to staff vacancies, will not be spent later in the year, over the past 5 years, spending has increased on average 5.4 basis points between September and January. Another predictive model indicates an increase of 5.6 basis points, leading to a year-end estimated spending authorization of 93.9% – 94.1% or underspending of approximately \$4 million. This is important in consideration of the FY25 budget and some special expenses which may need to be accrued at year-end. Key areas of underspending through September are grants (\$1.1 million), compensation and benefits (\$1.7 million), and office operations (\$1.3 million).

### **ELCA World Hunger**

Through September 2024, total receipts (direct gifts, endowment distributions, and bequests) in support of ELCA World Hunger are \$9.3 million, or 96.5% of plan, compared to \$9.3 million at this time last year. Projections indicate year-end revenues should be close to budget; however, it is important to note that nearly 60% of the total World Hunger receipts will occur in the next four months. A widely attended webinar celebrating World Food Day was presented in October 2024, and we are optimistic about the response from that event.

Based on final World Hunger results for FY23, the Budget and Finance Committee and Executive Committee took an action during to reduce the spending authorization for FY24 by \$2.75 million. Reductions have been identified by the program team and will be presented as part of the FY25 budget discussion. Spending through September is \$1.4 million behind the original plan and on target with the reductions needed over FY24 and FY25.

### **Lutheran Disaster Response**

Robust spending to support those impacted by disasters has continued in FY24, having distributed over \$11.4 million through September, consistent with FY23. Receipts prior to the recent appeal following Hurricanes Helene and Milton were below prior year through September; however, the gap is expected to narrow in the upcoming months.

Overall results for FY24 are solid, and the organization is focused on planning for FY25 in new ways to reflect changing revenue streams and to ensure our mission and purpose can be delivered. We could not do this work without the faithful support of our constituency including synods, congregations, members, ministry partners, and the leadership support from the Church Council. To God be the Glory!



**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA**  
**SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES**  
 For the Period Ending September 30, 2024

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
 CHURCH COUNCIL  
 Nov. 14-17, 2024  
 Report from the Treasurer  
 Page 3 of 6

	Year-to-Date Variance			
	2024	2024	2023	
	Actual	Budget	ACTUAL	Favorable/(Unfavorable)
				Favorable/(Unfavorable)
				ACTUAL vs. BUDGET
				YEAR
				CURRENT YEAR vs. PRIOR
				YEAR
<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>				
Mission Support	\$ 21,927,001	\$ 22,545,940	\$ 23,032,091	\$ (618,939)
Other	18,445,769	12,895,902	16,196,868	5,549,868
<b>TOTAL UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>40,372,770</b>	<b>35,441,842</b>	<b>39,228,959</b>	<b>4,930,928</b>
TOTAL Designated and Restricted Funds Released	260,526	215,000	408,546	45,526
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>40,633,296</b>	<b>35,656,842</b>	<b>39,637,505</b>	<b>4,976,454</b>
<b>LESS TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>40,292,353</b>	<b>45,534,981</b>	<b>40,061,882</b>	<b>5,242,628</b>
<b>NET REVENUE OVER (UNDER) EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 340,943</b>	<b>\$ (9,878,139)</b>	<b>\$ (424,377)</b>	<b>\$ 10,219,083</b>
				<b>\$ 765,320</b>

PRELIMINARY AND UNAUDITED, INTERNAL STATEMENTS ONLY





## REVENUE SUMMARY

### For the Period Ending September 30, 2024

	2024		2023 ACTUAL	Year-to-Date Variance	
	Actual	Budget		ACTUAL vs. BUDGET	CURRENT YEAR vs. PRIOR YEAR
<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>					
Mission Support	\$ 21,927,001	\$ 22,545,940	\$ 23,032,091	(618,939)	\$ (1,105,091)
Direct Gifts	3,894,633	3,550,676	3,101,305	343,957	793,327
Investment Revenue	6,658,818	1,877,641	2,790,677	4,781,177	3,868,141
Bequests and Trusts	2,097,568	2,000,000	4,554,085	97,568	(2,456,517)
Endowment	2,992,229	2,662,500	2,702,765	329,729	289,464
Rent	691,355	698,870	849,601	(7,516)	(158,247)
Services and Other Revenue.	1,111,167	1,106,215	1,198,434	4,952	(87,267)
Mission Investment Fund	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	-	-
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 40,372,770</b>	<b>\$ 35,441,842</b>	<b>\$ 39,228,959</b>	<b>\$ 4,930,928</b>	<b>\$ 1,143,811</b>
<b>TOTAL Designated and Restricted Funds Released</b>	<b>260,526</b>	<b>215,000</b>	<b>408,546</b>	<b>45,526</b>	<b>(148,020)</b>
<b>Net Operating Revenue and Support</b>	<b>\$ 40,633,296</b>	<b>\$ 35,656,842</b>	<b>\$ 39,637,505</b>	<b>\$ 4,976,454</b>	<b>\$ 995,791</b>



## ACTUAL EXPENSES VS. SPENDING AUTHORIZATION

### For the Period Ending September 30, 2024

	Actual Expense	Spending Authorization	Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)	Percent of Budget
<b>Home Areas</b>				
Christian Community and Leadership	\$ 13,924,364	\$ 15,086,087	\$ 1,161,723	92%
Service and Justice	7,017,115	8,719,807	1,702,692	80%
Innovation	848,549	1,154,911	306,362	73%
Operations	15,701,070	17,810,828	2,109,758	88%
Presiding Bishop	6,340,905	7,641,745	1,300,840	83%
Secretary	3,498,269	3,732,473	234,204	94%
Treasurer	5,861,897	6,436,610	574,713	91%
<b>Other</b>				
General Treasury	1,502,485	1,464,799	(37,685)	103%
Depreciation	1,298,771	1,298,549	(222)	100%
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 40,292,353</b>	<b>\$ 45,534,981</b>	<b>\$ 5,242,628</b>	<b>88%</b>

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA ELCA WORLD HUNGER  
SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENSE  
For the Period Ending September 30, 2024**

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL VS. BUDGET	YTD % of Budget
<b>BEGINNING BALANCE</b>	<b>8,254,388</b>			
<b>Income</b>				
Direct Giving	7,633,409	7,851,960	(218,551)	97.22%
Endowments and Donor Requested Payments	806,769	750,000	56,769	107.57%
Bequests & Trusts/Misc *	822,753	1,000,000	(177,247)	82.28%
Release of Bequest Income	-	-	-	
Service and Other Revenue	-	-	-	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>9,262,931</b>	<b>9,601,960</b>	<b>(339,029)</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>				
Service and Justice:				
Domestic Program	3,247,674	3,994,151	(746,477)	81.31%
International Program	8,395,529	8,812,142	(416,613)	95.27%
Witnessing in Society	1,896,473	2,208,527	(312,054)	85.87%
Fundraising Allocation Expense	921,141	863,717	57,424	106.65%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>14,460,818</b>	<b>15,878,537</b>	<b>(1,417,720)</b>	
<b>NET</b>	<b>(5,197,887)</b>	<b>(6,276,578)</b>	<b>1,078,691</b>	
<b>ENDING BALANCE</b>	<b>3,056,501</b>			

\* Bequest and trusts income will be recognized as received; however, spending of Bequest and trusts income will be deferred until the following fiscal year, beginning with FY19.

PRELIMINARY AND UNAUDITED

## Report from the Conference of Bishops

It is said when the Conference of Bishops (COB) gathers every church basement, sanctuary, and budding community in the ELCA is represented. Our work together in assembly was rooted in worship and prayer each day. We were grateful to be lead in worship with John Weit, Executive for Worship, and Region 5 bishops along with a bishops' band. Worship this fall focused on prayers for the world, Christ's church, and the United States in an election season.

The COB gathers for the purposes of *Equipping, Connecting, and Informing*. We have brought a renewed pattern to the agenda providing more time in the fall gathering for "informing" including extended time with Churchwide staff and volunteer guests, and more time in the spring gathering for connecting and relationship building between colleague bishops through a retreat style format.

- **Equip:** The Conference of Bishops heard from the Research and Evaluation team reporting on the Pastoral Leadership Survey tracking the activity of Synod Authorized Ministers across our 65 Synods, received a report on the Hearing of the Civic Life and Faith Statement, spent time considering the public role of the Office of Bishop to lead with love in a polarized election season, and spent time in discernment around the gifts of a presiding bishop.
- **Inform:** The Conference of Bishops heard from, and spent time considering the work and reports of the: The Presiding Bishop, Secretary of the ELCA, and the Treasurer, The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, Portico Benefits reExamined Project, The Human Sexuality Social Statement Reconsiderations Task Force, ELCA Vision Team, On Leave From Call Working Group, the Boundaries Training Working Group, and Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group, in addition to COB committees including the Middle East Ready Bench and Bishop's Academy planning committee.
- **Connect:** Each day provided opportunities to pray together, eat together, and build relationships within the conference and with our guests and partners in ministry. We were reminded that everyone has a unique perspective, each person has gifts to share. We worked to model the value of each person's dignity and worth. Prayer and blessing accompanied the departure of Bishop Paula Lebo of the Alleghany Synod and Ms. Barbara Keller, long-time churchwide partner who concludes her current work in January 2025. The Conference joined in welcoming a delegation from our companion church in Malagasy. An architectural tour along the Chicago River provided for an extra special opportunity to connect for those who chose this Friday evening adventure during some time off.

A detailed list of actions steps will be provided by the Communications Team of the ELCA. They include a brief response to the CRLC thanking them for their continued work, time, and energy, and inviting them to be in continued communication with the COB through the Chair, and the approval of several roster items.

The Executive Committee expresses our thanks on behalf of the Conference for the many folks who gathered with us as guests and partners, in addition to the folks who served in hospitality and care for members and guests including churchwide staff and volunteers and hotel hospitality staff.

Bishop Yehiel Curry, Chair of the Conference of Bishops



# Campus Ministry Impact Report



ELCA Campus Ministry



2023 - 2024  
Academic Year

# Introduction & Contents

03

Campus  
Ministry by  
the Numbers

Welcome to the 2023-2024 Academic Year Impact Report for ELCA Campus Ministry. This year, our mission to transform the lives of college students and campus communities through God's abundant grace has impacted thousands of students all across the nation through 176 ELCA campus ministry agencies and cooperating congregations.

04

2024-2025  
Network  
Goals

ELCA Campus Ministry is carried out through the collaborative efforts of many organizations and individuals: local campus ministry agencies, led by over 200 staff people, synod staff members and campus ministry committees, the Program Director for Campus Ministry and the Young Adult Communities team at churchwide, and the LuMin Network, the association of campus ministry practitioners.

05

Campus  
Ministry  
Sites & Staff

This year, we reached several significant milestones, including:

- Updating the ELCA Campus Ministry Grant Process to utilize funds more strategically, build organizational capacity, provide more resources to agencies that support underrepresented students, and better leverage data and impact stories
- Introducing new strategic grants, which offer multi-year grant support to new campus ministry sites, sites in redevelopment, or sites with capacity-building projects such as hiring fundraising staff or begin part time campus ministers up to full time
- Launching the LuMinary, an online resource hub for campus ministry staff that provides access to interactive courses, templates, and curricula for student programming and organizational health

07

Student  
Participants  
& Programs

As you read through the following pages, we hope you are inspired by the stories of success and the tangible differences we have made together. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to ELCA Campus Ministry. Together, we are reaching students across the country with the transformative mercy of Christ.

10

Spotlight on  
Student  
Leadership

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Joshua Kestner  
President,  
LuMin Network



Rev. Emily Klock Tveite  
ELCA Program Director,  
Campus Ministry

11

Governance  
& Strategic  
Direction

12

Resources:  
Budgets &  
Buildings

# Campus Ministry by the Numbers

Each week during the academic year, more than

# 3300

students participate in ELCA Campus Ministry

On an average week, LuMin sites offer

# 199

small group bible studies or faith conversations

Last year over **11,000** students came to events



# 176

 local campus ministry agencies

# 159

 documented Ecumenical partnerships

More than **1,000**

students attended a Campus Ministry Retreat last year

# 25%

of ELCA campus ministries reported at least one student baptism last year

The data in this report comes from the ELCA Campus Ministry Annual Survey, conducted June-August 2024.

Of 176 organizations, 135 responded to the survey and shared extensive information on their ministry activities in the past year.

# 2024 - 2025

## Campus Ministry Goals

ELCA Campus Ministry is carried out through a partnership between the LuMin Network (the professional association of ELCA Campus Pastors and Ministers), the Churchwide expression of the ELCA, 62 synods, and nearly 200 local agencies (nonprofit organizations and congregations). Together, we work to inspire, connect, and equip campus ministry organizations to better serve students.

The LuMin network has identified the following goals for the 2024-2025 school year:

# 1

**Provide educational opportunities for campus ministry staff and boards to build fund-development programs.**

Beginning in August 2024, over thirty campus ministry organizations will be participating in a 15-month cohort-based fund development education course. This course will cover donor communication, appeals, gratitude, events, and legacy giving. Participants will have access to 1:1 coaching with a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE).

# 2

**Study the challenges that campus ministry organizations are experiencing with call processes and develop tools to aid ministries and synods.**

Staff transitions are especially disruptive in campus ministries because there is high turnover in student participants and little institutional memory. In 2025, ELCA Campus Ministry plans to intentionally listen to synod staff and local boards about how we can best assist in staff transitions and create written materials to aid ministry sites.

# 3

**Expand our online library of resources for campus ministry to include tools for campus ministry board members and synodical staff.**

In summer 2024, the LuMin network launched the LuMinary, an online resource library for ELCA Campus Ministry staff. During the 2024-2025 school year, ELCA Campus Ministry plans to launch a similar resource library for synods and agency boards. The library will feature resources on board development, fundraising, caring for buildings, staff transitions, and more.



# Campus Ministry Agencies

97

Campus ministries operating as independent nonprofits

31%

are ministries are ecumenical, carried out with one or more full-communion partners

4

Campus ministries are ELCA congregations made up primarily of students & young adults

28%

of campus ministries are programs within intergenerational congregations

## NEW MINISTRIES OFFER BELONGING

“If you had asked me my junior year of college if I had ever thought of being a Lutheran pastor, I would have said, ‘absolutely not.’” recalls Mariah Mills. Mariah attended an ELCA college but was deeply involved in an evangelical campus ministry. Later on in her junior year, though, her involvement with that ministry was disrupted. Mariah began to have questions about faith, and at the same time, she witnessed another student leader in the ministry being excluded after coming out as queer. “This was when I knew in my gut that I didn’t belong in that ministry anymore. I resigned from all my leadership positions in the ministry and I was left feeling lost and wayward.”

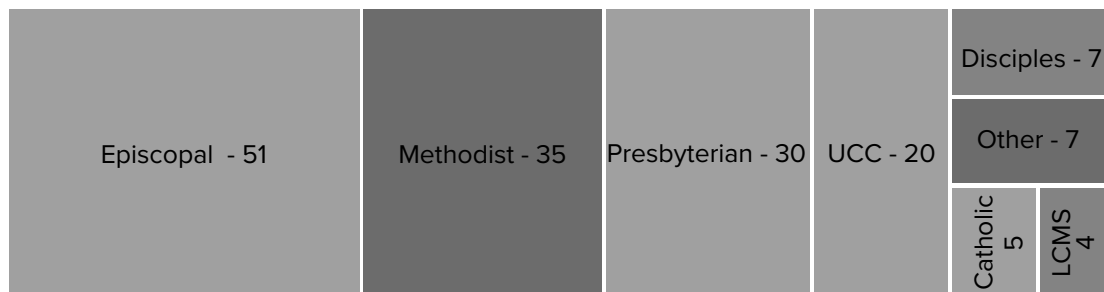
Mariah went to the ELCA chaplain at her college and began to talk to him about her faith. “I felt like I had the space to ask questions without judgment or without the risk of being cast aside. I was listened to and I was cared for. After all the uncertainty and pain that came from leaving a faith community, I started to learn again what belonging feels like and who God had truly created me to be.”

Mariah went on to attend seminary and become an ELCA Pastor. Now, along with the congregation she serves, she is part of an Ecumenical cooperative ministry at Boise State University, led by Campus Pastor Hannah Andres. “Because of my own personal experience I am deeply passionate about every college campus having a faith community that is a place of safety, welcome, and affirmation for all students.” Sophia’s Table, the ministry she supports is new, but already experiencing growth. “This is a true testament to the hunger present among students and young adults for a space to belong, to ask questions, and to feel God’s love without any exception,” says Mariah. “I want to continue the legacy of making room for college students everywhere to have a place of grace, a place to belong.”



Rev. Mariah Mills, Boise, Idaho

## HOW MANY ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS DO WE HAVE?



# Campus Pastors & Ministers

## GIFTED & CALLED BUT STRUGGLING WITH LIMITED RESOURCES

Campus Pastors and Ministers are called to demanding and multi-faceted work. They minister 1:1 with students, lead worship, bible studies, and other activities. They develop leaders, and perhaps most critically, they continually invite and engage new students in a ministry environment where at least one quarter of participants leave each year.

In addition to student-facing roles, many campus ministers are the primary caretakers of a non-profit organization. They work with a board of directors, run fundraising programs, and care for buildings and financial resources.

Despite the complexity of the work, only 37% of campus ministry agencies have full time campus ministry staff. The others have part time staff and/or staff carrying out multiple ministry roles. 5% of campus ministries have no paid staff at all. Of rostered leaders serving in campus ministry, nearly one third are paid below synod guidelines.

It's no surprise that Campus Ministry has experienced high staff turnover since Covid-19 hit in 2020. Nearly half of campus ministers were not serving in their current role at the beginning of the pandemic.

In spite of the challenges of our shared work, Campus Pastors love their work and believe that Campus Ministry has much to teach the rest of the church. Pastor Ethan Lowery, who serves University of Mary Washington in Virginia said, "Campus Ministry is hard and good and I wish the congregational pastors saw campus ministers as having something important and good to teach the rest of the church as we deal with aging congregations and decline."

# 49%

of primary staff have been serving in their role fewer than 5 years

# 85% 15%

of practitioners are rostered leaders in the ELCA or another denomination

of campus ministries served by lay leaders working closely with a rostered leader

# 37% 58%

of ministries have full time campus ministers

have staff in part time or shared roles

5% of ministries have no paid staff

# 21%

of Campus Ministers identify as LGBTQIA+



# Student Participants & Programs

## THE LUMIN FOUR CORE PRACTICES

ELCA Campus Ministries gather students around four core practices:

### Building Community

LuMin Communities are places where students experience belonging and safety. Communal meals, fellowship events, and open study space invite students to connect and be nourished.

### Deepening Faith

Worship and prayer are at the heart of ELCA Campus Ministry. Over two thirds of campus ministry agencies offer worship weekly or more during the academic term. Increasingly, LuMin communities are offering contemplative prayer practices as a means of fostering spiritual resilience and easing anxiety and stress.

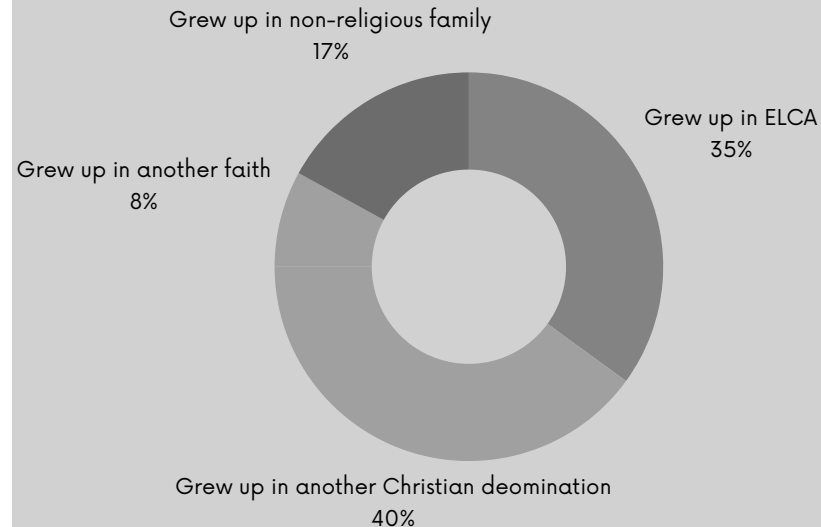
### Expanding Minds

Nearly every Campus Ministry reported offering faith formation activities. Over 60% of campus ministries offered at least one small group weekly. 80% report offering Bible study in the past academic year and about half of sites offered studies on theological issues and social justice issues. About a quarter of LuMin communities offered faith formation activities for university faculty and staff.

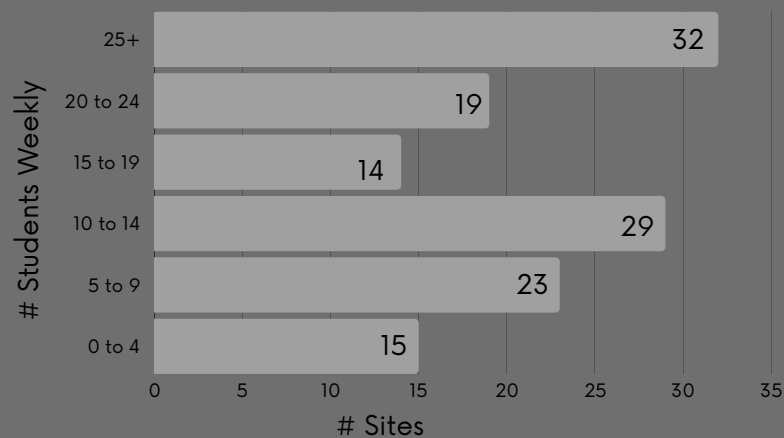
### Inspiring Service

Campus ministry raises up leaders for the church and for the world. As young adults take on leadership in the day to day life of their campus ministry, they are also inspired to become leaders wherever life takes them next: congregations, volunteer service programs, ELCA Seminaries, and their local communities.

## WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF PARTICIPANTS?



## HOW MANY STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN AN AVERAGE WEEK?



## HOW MANY UNDERGRADUATES PARTICIPATED AT LEAST ONCE?



# Student Participants & Programs



## CORRIE'S STORY

When Corrie arrived at the University of Texas-Austin her freshman year, she became a piccolo playing member of the UT marching band. "As someone who'd been involved in marching band since high school," Corrie said, "you might easily assume I'd find my people there. But I needed more."

"My growing edge is being outgoing." Corrie found LuMin Austin and participated in a program called LuMin Lunches, where students are paired up 1:1 and get lunch close to campus on the ministry's dime. The lunches are intended to foster deeper relationships among students who often get lost in the crowd of a 50,000+ student campus.

After getting to know other students at lunch, she began to attend Sunday evening worship. "The students at LuMin are very welcoming people," Corrie reported. "I feel that same closeness when we gather around the table for communion. I am thankful every day to be a part of campus ministry."

This year, Corrie is serving as an intern for LuMin Austin. Her work is related to helping her peers connect with donors and alumni to express gratitude.

## WORSHIP

About two thirds of campus ministries offer weekly worship for students during the academic year. Campus ministry worship includes elements found in all Christian worship including scripture, song, and holy communion. But campus pastors and ministers are also creative in connecting worship to daily life in a myriad of ways.

Rachel Young Binter, Campus Pastor at UW-Milwaukee shares that her students enjoy tactile rituals as a part of worship. "For example, I brought seed paper in the shape of hearts this year for Lent, and each week we wrote something on the paper we wanted to grow in ourselves, soaked the paper in the font as we remembered God's desire for our wholeness and blossoming, and then planted the paper in containers so that the new shoots greeted us on Easter."

Intercessory prayer is also a common element. At Luther House in Rapid City, SD, Rev. Carla Nelson shares that "there is a tradition of writing out prayer concerns on sticky notes and posting them. Each week, worship participants take a sticky note and pray that week for the special concern."

By facilitating meaningful worship experiences, campus ministers offer students a sense of respite and peace in the midst of their busy academic lives.

## PASTORAL CARE

A ministry of presence and 1:1 care is an important part of campus ministry. The most common topics that staff report discussing with students are:

1. Anxiety and stress management
2. Theological questions
3. Vocational / career discernment
4. Issues with parents or family of origin
5. Spirituality and discipleship

Two thirds of pastors have pastoral care conversations with more than 5 students per week, with 15% of pastors reporting 10 or more weekly.

# Student Participants & Programs

## FAITH FORMATION

Campus Ministries offer many types of faith formation events. Some of the most common include (in decreasing order):

- Bible study
- Studies about social justice issues
- Studies about theology
- Studies about vocational discernment
- Book discussions
- Spiritual direction
- Studies about ecumenism / interfaith work
- Film screenings
- Studies for LGBTQIA+ Students
- Lecture series
- Small groups for newcomers / first year students
- Catechumenate programs

## FOOD JUSTICE

LuMin sites are responding to the rise of food insecurity among college students.

26%

of ministries host a food pantry for students.

80%

of ministries host at least one meal per week for students who may or may not be involved in religious activities.



## REENARD'S STORY

When Reenard came to the University of North Florida, he was experiencing something so many students go through. He was grappling with his faith. He had just left the church he grew up in because he disagreed with the values they taught.

“I left that church, and I wrestled with that because those were the people who raised me in my faith,” Reenard said. Like so many students entering college, Reenard felt disconnected from the congregation that had raised him, but also conflicted about how to move forward. He did not want to leave Christianity, but he needed to experience it differently.

“I wanted change in the church. I wanted to see the church grow. I love to share my ideas, but it’s hard to share your ideas when people don’t see things the same way you do. Sometimes you have to say, ‘Maybe this isn’t the place for me.’”

Reenard found Jacksonville Campus Ministry like many students do: at Market Days. He met Pastor Sarah Locke on a Wednesday morning, and she invited him to join the ministry at Food for Thought the next Tuesday. He has been attending ever since.

In JCM, Reenard found something he was searching for even before he left his previous congregation. “I just really enjoy the community aspect. People are very welcoming and I think that’s what I love about campus ministry: a sense of community and fellowship.”

More than that, though, Reenard has found the campus ministry is helping transform his own relationship with God, himself, and others. “I have a better understanding of who I am, my values, and what I stand for because of my involvement.”

# Spotlight on Leadership Development

## WHY DOES PEER MINISTRY MATTER?

Engaging students as peer ministers is vital to the campus ministry organization, to the students who serve, and to the greater church.

### Fosters Culture of Invitation

Peer ministry helps to build an organizational culture that expects newcomers and is equipped to welcome those newcomers with generous hospitality. Peer ministers are equipped to invite, engage, and retain new participants. At ministry sites that have peer ministers and offer special training, 77% of campus pastors report student leaders who follow up 1:1 with newcomers.

### Equips Students to Minister in Daily Life

When students become peer ministers in their campus ministry site, they learn skills for listening, reflection, and responding to others' needs that they can use beyond campus ministry. One student participant said, "I have very little time to fit in one more program, but wherever I am at, doing whatever I am doing, in any setting, I can listen and care for people."

### Helps Leaders Go Deeper in Faith

Leadership groups help students who are more engaged in campus ministry and more mature in their faith development to go deeper. At Niner United in Charlotte, North Carolina, the student leaders cover a lot over the course of the year: "the art of hospitality, community building and belonging, speaking in public, talking to new students, making wise and ethical decisions, understanding key theological themes important to mainline traditions, conflict avoidance and management, empathetic practices, building spiritual disciplines, and caring for their own mental wellbeing."

### Allows Students to Explore Vocation

In most campus ministries, students are equipped to explore their own interests and skills. At the Pace Center at Virginia Commonwealth University, "fellows receive training in Asset-Based Community Development practices and learn how to uplift the strengths of others. They work with interested students to develop ministries that bring those gifts to life, including mindful art projects, serving at food pantries, and a student-run weekly cafe."

"Leaders have the tools necessary to build community in their churches, volunteer settings, and workplaces after college."

~ Rev. Russ Kerr, Richmond, VA

# 60%

of campus ministries have identified student leaders or peer ministers

# 2/3

of those sites offer special training for peer leaders

# 34%

of campus ministries have hosted seminary field education or interns in past 5 years

# 75

known recent campus ministry graduates entering ELCA candidacy process

## HOW THEY LEAD

We asked Campus Ministers how students are leading in their ministry sites. Here are common responses:

- Organizing events (72% of sites)
- Following up with newcomers (56% of sites)
- Leading worship (52% of sites)
- Cooking and serving food (51% of sites)
- Serving on the board of directors (51% of sites)

# Governance & Strategic Direction

## WHAT CHALLENGES DID CAMPUS MINISTRY FACE?

In our 2023-2024 staff survey, we asked campus pastors and ministers to reflect on challenges their ministry overcame this year. Some common themes included:

### Staff Transitions

Several ministries experienced leadership changes with staff leaving or retiring. They navigated these transitions by relying on strong student leaders, board members, and congregational support to keep operations running smoothly.

### Financial Resources

Financial constraints posed a major hurdle for numerous ministries. To address budget deficits and declining funding sources, they implemented fundraising campaigns and engaged boards in development efforts.

### Building Community Post Pandemic

In the wake of COVID, rebuilding a sense of community proved difficult with many groups. Persistent outreach, creative programming, and fostering an inclusive environment gradually helped re-engage students.

In spite of obstacles, campus ministries demonstrated resilience and motivation. They provided pastoral care, hosted thought-provoking discussions, and served as safe spaces for students navigating complex issues on campus and in the world.

“A primary threat facing all campus ministries is sustainability in the midst of paradoxical communication that the ELCA wants to ‘grow younger and more diverse’ while reducing support for campus ministry.

Across the entire ELCA, campus ministry serves the most new, young, and diverse adults! Which message should they believe?”

~ A Campus Pastor in CA

92%

of ministry sites have an active board

64%

have a mission statement in widespread use

71%

rate their synodical support as excellent or good

42%

of boards adopted strategic goals in last 5 years



Students bid farewell to Pastor Mark Coulter, who retired from UNC Chapel Hill in spring 2024 after 25 years of campus ministry.

# Budgets & Buildings - Ministry Resources

## STEWARDING LIMITED RESOURCES

Campus Ministry organizations continue to adapt to decreasing institutional funding, with more income coming from individual donations, partner congregations, and grants. These sources require stakeholder engagement on the part of the campus pastor or minister. Campus ministers reported giving up to 40 presentations per year in congregations or at synod events to invite funding for their ministry. Despite these efforts, budgets remain small, with only 20% of ministries reporting a budget of \$150,000 or more.

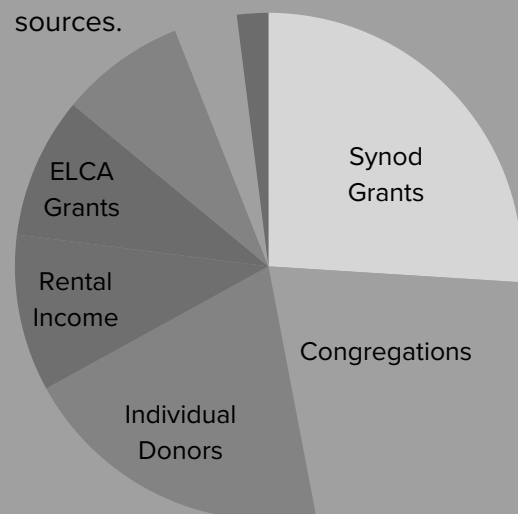
Land and buildings adjacent to university campuses are perhaps the most valuable resource being stewarded by campus ministry, but these buildings are aging. About a third are not ADA compliant or are unwelcoming in other ways. Some campus ministry organizations are looking to partner with housing developers to replace their aging buildings and obtain ministry space and, in some cases, monetary income through the sale or lease of their land.



Campus Pastor Jon Fry stands in front of St. Andrew's Lutheran Campus Center at Uiveristy of Illinois, which was demolished this year. St. Andrew's is working with a local housing developer to replace their building with for-profit student housing that will also provide a new permanent home to the ministry at no cost.

## OVERALL FUNDING SOURCES

Where does Campus Ministry funding come from? If all of the funds collected by individual sites were pooled into one budget, here is a snapshot of the sources.



- Synod Grants 26%
- Partner Congregations 21%
- Individual Donors 20%
- Rental Income 10%
- ELCA Grants 9%
- Ecumenical Partner Grants 8%
- Endowment Interest 4%
- Reserves 2%

## STEWARDING BUILDINGS WITH NLCM, INC.

National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Incorporated is an independent organization that offers matching grants for Campus Ministry facility improvements and emergency grants for sites with critical needs. in the last 5 years, NLCM supported 34 campus ministry organizations with over \$750,000 in grants for building repairs and improvements.

71  
82%  
40%

campus ministry organizations own or co-own their buildings

say their facility's location and visibility is excellent or good

say their building needs significant repair, renovation, or replacement

## MINISTRY BUDGET SIZE





"When we think of campus ministry we often focus on the programs and the numbers, but what I am most proud of this year is how being present on campus impacted the lives of particular students. In times of questioning, crisis, or isolation, I was there to minister to individuals in need because of Lutheran Campus Ministry."

~ A campus pastor in Minnesota

### **ELCA Campus Ministry Staff**

Rev. Emily Klock Tveite

Program Director, ELCA Campus Ministry

### **Campus Ministry Contract Staff**

Rev. Laura Sinche, Education Coordinator\*  
[Vacant], R1 & R2 Facilitator\*

Rev. Cassandra Lamb, R3 Facilitator\*

Rev. Brad Fuerst, R4 Facilitator\*

Rev. Jon Fry, R5 Facilitator\*

Rev. Robert Abner, R6 Facilitator\*

Rev. Alicia Anderson, R7 & R8 Facilitator\*

Rev. Andrew Rickel, R9 Facilitator\*

\*5 hours per week or fewer

### **LuMin Network Board of Directors**

Rev. JP Carlson, Bozeman, MT

Rev. Paul Judson, Fort Collins, CO

Rev. Corinne Haulotte, Winona, MN

Rev. Morgan Gates, Houston, TX

Rev. Lori Ruge Jones, Eau Claire, WI

Rev. Chad Huebner, Athens, OH

Rev. Kwame Pitts, Buffalo, NY

Rev. Ray Ranker, College Park, MD

Rev. Joshua Kestner, Clemson, SC

Our gratitude to Sarah Weaver, ELCA Innovation, for her assistance in producing the annual survey and this report.



Your partnership  
makes Campus  
Ministry possible.  
Thank you.

LuMin Network &  
ELCA Campus Ministry  
[www.luminelca.org](http://www.luminelca.org)  
[campus.ministry@elca.org](mailto:campus.ministry@elca.org)  
773-380-1481

## **2025 Budget Proposal Highlights**

### Unrestricted Budget

At the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, the revenue budget for FY2025 was approved. The ELCA constitution provides the Church Council with the authority, upon recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee, to approve modified spending authorizations subsequent to those that were approved at the last churchwide assembly.

Below are the recommended changes to the revenue budget that was approved along with a recommended spending authorization for the year ending January 31, 2025, which are coming to the Budget and Finance Committee for your consideration. Any action on budgets taken by BFC will be forwarded to CC for consideration and action.

The overall strategy around the development of the FY25 budget was reviewed by the Budget Prioritization Task Force in August 2024. In light of the potential for change resulting from work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, the election of a new presiding bishop and secretary, and continued learnings from the donor-funded, God's Love Made Real project, no significant changes to the core work of the churchwide organization have been proposed for FY25. Rather FY25 will be a time to finalize our operational plan, implement goals and metrics, and learn from externally funded projects.

### Mission Support

Mission Support is currently running at 97.3% of budget. Synods submit mission support intents annually based on action of their assemblies; however, since there is a direct relationship between congregational giving and support of synods, the impact on churchwide is more difficult to predict. For the years 2019 – 2023, on average, actual mission support shared with the churchwide organization was 4.7% below the total pledged on intents (see Exhibit 17). Projected FY24 mission support is 4.8% below the FY24 intents. Through September, mission support is 4.8% behind prior year actual. In consultation with the Sr. Director of Congregation and Synod Support and review of relevant data points, the FY25 budget is projected at \$34,355,650. This represents a 2.4% decline over projected FY24 and 96.4% of the accumulated 2025 mission support intents. This approximates a midpoint within a range of projections.

### Direct Gifts, Missionaries, YAGMs and Other Temp Restricted Gifts

The development team streamlined the number fundraising priorities in FY24; having fewer areas of focus seems to have generated favorable results for the development team this year. Based on results through September, the team is tracking just slightly ahead of budget. The development team also experienced significant turnover in recent years; the fundraising team is now fully staffed which should benefit the organization. Predictive modeling was used to project FY25 direct gifts and to set goals for the team. The team is projecting an increase of \$450K or 6% over projected FY24 actual results.

### Investment Income

This category includes investment income from all sources, including certificates of deposits, dividends, interest, and realized and unrealized gains/losses on managed investments, and mineral rights income. FY23 performance was especially strong in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and FY24 has been solid throughout. As shown in Exhibit 21, managed investments in the core and operating accounts (the majority of our investments) have outperformed the benchmark. We have taken a conservative approach in budgeting investment income given market volatility. In addition, through September, spending from restricted and

designated funds such as Lutheran Disaster Response, World Hunger, and Youth Gathering have reduced available free cash for investing (see Exhibit 21b). This trend is expected to continue through FY24. Investment income for FY25 is budgeted at \$4.0 million, compared to a 4-year average of \$4.7 million (the range is \$1.4 million to \$7.0 million). Given the likelihood of interest rate cuts, uncertainty which follows a presidential election, and reduced investment assets, this projection seems cautiously optimistic.

#### Bequest and Trust Income

While this category is very difficult to predict and can swing widely from year-to-year, based on a 4-year history, we are holding the budget flat at \$3.0 million. This may be slightly conservative; however, bequest income in excess of plan, after covering other revenue shortfalls is used to fund the Mission Development Fund (MDF) endowment supporting experimentation and new initiatives. Because withdrawals are made annually from the MDF endowment, replenishing the endowment needs to be balanced with funding current year ministries.

#### Endowment Income

This represents quarterly distributions of unrestricted endowments for which churchwide organization ministries are the beneficiary. The current distribution rate, as established by the ELCA Foundation, is 4% and the calculation is based on the average of the unit values for the preceding 5 years. The churchwide organization is not aware of any significant new endowments. Market value growth of endowment assets has been strong in FY23 and FY24. At the same time, withdrawal of endowment principal is necessary in some cases to fund current ministries. The organization has engaged in a detailed review of endowments to identify monies that may be used to offset reduced mission support income and therefore sustain existing ministries funded by our unrestricted budget. Since the unit value is based on a 5-year average, we have budgeted FY25 consistently with projected FY24 less the benefit of fully liquidated endowment in FY24.

Rent and Service Level Agreements/Other is based on leases with our current tenants as well as agreements with our separately incorporated ministries. The organization is currently aggressively marketing open tenant space; vacancies in the building increase the common area costs which must be funded by CWO. If you are aware of any nonprofits looking for reasonably priced space in our area, please send them our way.

Other sources of funds for the unrestricted budget include:

- 1) Utilization of a designated fund (\$5.3 million) – Budgeted Operations Support. This fund has grown over the past six years to support a budget shortfall. Fortunately, the combination of underspending and investment performance has negated the need to do so. If actual results match the FY24 projection and proposed FY25 budget, this fund would be fully utilized in FY25.
- 2) \$2.2 million from the liquidation of a Church Council Designated Fund, functioning as an endowment. This period of specified use for this endowment has long passed, therefore it is eligible for unrestricted support.
- 3) \$1 million will be taken from the Mission Development fund endowment to support new and innovative ministries funded by the current fund.
- 4) Finally, \$650K will be released from restricted funds related to unrestricted work in Asia – Japan.

### Basis for Spending Authorization

In conjunction with the Budget Prioritization work, an analysis of the past 10 years of actual spending vs the spending authorization was conducted. One conclusion drawn from this work was that over the past four years, as mission support has become less of the total unrestricted revenue streams, underspending versus the spending authorization has ranged from \$6.1 million to \$7.7 million. Rather than allocate resources that recent history has shown will not be spent due to staff vacancies, situations where grantees are not ready to receive the funds, reduced travel and events, etc., the FY25 allocation to each home areas/office was based on recent historical performance along with some reductions requested by the presiding bishop. The difference between the total requested proposed spending authorization and the allocation to home areas/offices based on historical performance is \$4 million. The organization is currently developing a methodology and rubric that will allow individual areas to request a portion of the \$4 million, should their budget not be able to support existing work that has strategic alignment or a new idea.

The FY24 budget allocation by home area/office was modified to reflect the following changes:

- 1) Bishop Eaton requests: this included a 10% reduction in travel, reduction in grants, and deferral of hiring certain open positions. A target reduction was provided, but each home area/office may reallocate these reductions so long as the target is achieved.
- 2) Compensation/benefits – the proposed budget includes a 2% increase in compensation, along with the related increase in benefit costs.
- 3) Adjustment to trends – each home area/office received a generic reduction in spending based on their individual, historical spending percentage. This generates the \$4 million that will be set aside in Treasury for allocation as needed, subject to an agreed upon methodology.
- 4) Other – this includes \$250K in support for the Youth Gathering to retain staff for planning the next gathering since the gathering operated at a loss in 2024, \$140K in insurance for new starts which was previously funded by Mission Investment Fund, \$200K in support of transition and bishop installation costs for the bishop/secretary/executive for administration transition that will occur in 2025, and \$350K to be allocated to the appropriate home areas/offices after the compensation study is concluded.

The total proposed spending authorization for FY25, which includes the unallocated \$4 million, is \$67,875,000. This is a \$3.7 million reduction of what was previously anticipated when the budget was presented at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly and \$200K, net, less than FY24.

### ELCA World Hunger Spending Authorization

The World Hunger revenue budget is consistent with FY24 at \$21.5 million. Due to an accumulated fund balance, in recent years, the organization was able to spend in excess of revenues generated. Since the fund balance is now back to the targeted balance of \$2.5 - \$3.0 million, spending in FY25 must be consistent with the revenue that will be raised. The Service and Justice home area has worked to reduce spending to ensure it is in line with the projected revenue streams. These reductions included reductions in grants, compensation and benefits, travel, events, and purchased services. Proposed FY25 spending of \$21.1 million, combined with a revised spending budget of \$24.7 million in FY24 totals \$45.8 million. Earlier in FY24, the Executive Committee approved an action to reduce World Hunger spending in FY24 to \$24,250,000. As noted in the numbers above, the team was not able to fully achieve the spending

reduction for FY24 but more than offset this differential in FY25. Budgeted World Hunger spending continues to align with the previous Church Council action of 30% domestic and 70% international.

### Summary

We are grateful that resources have allowed us to continue the work that the church asks of the churchwide organization. We are also looking forward to providing greater clarity to priorities as we build the operational plan. The organization continues to look for ways to work more collaboratively across the churchwide organization and to find efficiencies. At the same time, we are funding ministries based on less predictable revenues streams such as investment income. The budget plan put forward in FY25 should be helpful in better understanding the operating needs of each home area/office and create space for further conversation as we take on new work.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

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9 - 2025 Revised Income Estimate - Current Fund  
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	ELCA Churchwide Organization					
	Proposed Unrestricted Budget - FY25			CWA		
	2023	2024	2025	Approved	Proposed Budget	
Mission Support	\$ 37,080,134	\$ 36,053,152	\$ 35,198,939	\$ 37,450,000	\$ 34,355,650	
Direct Gifts, incl Missionaries, YAGM, and Temp Restricted	6,336,180	7,550,000	7,550,000	11,832,000	8,000,000	
Investment Income	7,005,992	2,500,000	7,000,000	2,151,000	4,000,000	
Bequests & Trusts	6,841,607	3,000,000	3,000,000	2,400,000	3,000,000	
Endowment	3,606,353	3,550,000	3,820,000	3,423,000	3,600,000	
Rent	1,041,369	1,050,000	1,050,000	1,091,000	1,050,000	
Service Level Agreements/Other	1,701,568	1,900,000	1,900,000	2,204,000	1,900,000	
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	
<b>Total Unrestricted and Temp Restr Funds</b>	<b>\$ 65,113,203</b>	<b>\$ 57,103,152</b>	<b>\$ 61,018,939</b>	<b>\$ 62,051,000</b>	<b>\$ 57,405,650</b>	
<b>Other Sources of Funds</b>						
Designated Funds Released	-	\$ 7,681,889	2,635,825	-	5,893,476	
Carlson Endowment	-	1,500,000	-	-	2,200,000	
Mission Development Fund Support	-	1,000,000	375,000	2,000,000	1,000,000	
Restricted Funds Released	749,983	650,000	650,000	933,000	650,000	
To be identified	-	-	-	6,610,000	-	
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>\$ 749,983</b>	<b>\$ 10,831,889</b>	<b>\$ 3,660,825</b>	<b>\$ 9,543,000</b>	<b>\$ 9,743,476</b>	
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$ 65,863,186</b>	<b>\$ 67,935,041</b>	<b>\$ 64,679,764</b>	<b>\$ 71,594,000</b>	<b>\$ 67,149,126</b>	
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>(62,309,000)</b>	<b>(68,083,962)</b>	<b>(64,679,764)</b>	<b>(71,594,000)</b>	<b>(67,875,000)</b>	
<b>Net Revenues over Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 3,554,186</b>	<b>\$ (148,921)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (725,874)</b>	

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
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10 - FY2025 Proposed Spending Authorization

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
2025 Spending Authorization Proposal

	CURRENT FUNDS					FY25 Spending Request
	2024 allocation	Bishop Eaton requests	2025 adjustments Comp & Benefits	Adjustment to trends	Other	
Christian Community & Leadership	\$ 22,385,585	\$ (900,000)	\$ 419,894	\$ (1,544,605)	\$ 390,000	\$ 20,750,874
Service & Justice	12,749,338	(300,000)	144,638	(1,810,406)		10,783,570
Innovation	1,695,751	(10,000)	18,889			1,704,640
						-
Office of the Presiding Bishop	11,011,046	(70,000)	221,277	(728,326)		10,433,997
Office of the Secretary	5,705,057	(50,000)	55,559	(262,433)	200,000	5,648,183
Office of the Treasurer	9,729,022	(3,000)	203,512	(87,561)		9,841,973
Overall staffing change		(500,000)			350,000	(150,000)
General Treasury	1,987,696		-		53,635	2,041,331
Depreciation	2,820,432					2,820,432
Unallocated Spending					4,000,000	4,000,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 68,083,927</b>	<b>\$ (1,833,000)</b>	<b>\$ 1,063,769</b>	<b>\$ (4,433,331)</b>	<b>\$ 4,993,635</b>	<b>\$ 67,875,000</b>

## **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Cash Management Policy**

### **Applicability**

This policy is applicable to cash administered by the Office of the Treasurer, including that in excess of ongoing daily operating needs of the churchwide organization. Such cash generally fluctuates due to the seasonality of receipts as well as the level of restricted and designated funds that are received and distributed over an extended period of time. This policy does not apply to the churchwide organization investments held on our behalf by the ELCA Foundation.

Investing of cash managed under this policy is subject to the Operating and Core Investment Policies.

### **Objective**

The objective of this policy is to provide the philosophy and general operating procedures necessary for the churchwide office to meet its cash disbursement and liquidity needs.

### **Monitoring cash flow**

The Office of the Treasurer is responsible for monitoring cash balances and needs on a daily, weekly, monthly and as-needed basis. Liquidity requirements will be communicated to the investment managers in writing from time to time by the ELCA.

The monthly calendarization of the annual operating and capital budgets prepared for the churchwide organization, as well as quarterly forecasts of spending for disaster relief, World Hunger, and other programs with variable spending schedules, provide input to the cash monitoring process.

### **Liquidity**

Cash and investments to approximate the balance of restricted and designated funds, plus an amount to support the average monthly (over previous 12 months) operating needs of the churchwide organization should be maintained. However, to avoid the costs of outside borrowing, the temporary<sup>1</sup> operating cash needs for approved churchwide office program and administrative activities may be met by allowing the level of cash and investments to decrease below the above target.

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23 - Cash Management Policy

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A balance of up to approximately 5% of the portfolio market value will be maintained as readily available. The amount in the operating investment account will vary based upon expected cash needs and the overall interest rate environment but should generally not exceed a peak level of expected monthly disbursements over an annual period. Additional excess cash will be transferred to a core investment account, as defined in the Core Investment Policy.

The sum of available committed lines of credit and cash subject to this policy will not decrease below two month's average (over previous 12 months) cash disbursements.

**Cash Reserves**

Segregated cash reserves will not be maintained for specific purposes. The need for such reserves may be satisfied by creating designated funds that will be subject to the liquidity policy above.

**Lines of Credit**

Lines of credit equal to at least \$10 million will be maintained and may be used to meet temporary cash flow needs.

**Investment Income**

Under the unified budget concept practiced by the churchwide organization, income received in the investment portfolios is recorded as unrestricted revenue of the churchwide organization and is used to support the programs and structure of the churchwide organization. Costs and fees related to cash and investment management and gains and losses from the portfolios are likewise absorbed and recorded in the general treasury of the ELCA churchwide organization.

Approved: March 24, 2009

Reviewed December 2010

Reviewed December 2011

Reviewed November 2014

Revised November 2019

Revised May 2020

Revised April 2024

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

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19-C03.00

24 - Operating Investment Policy

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**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Operating Investment Policy**

**Applicability**

The investments subject to this policy are those related to funds administered by the Office of the Treasurer in excess of ongoing daily operating needs of the churchwide organization and those defined as “core” investments under the Core Investment Policy. Such funds generally accumulate due to the seasonality of receipts as well as a portion of restricted and designated funds that are received and distributed over an extended period of time. This policy does not apply to the investments of the churchwide organization held on our behalf by the ELCA Foundation.

**Investment Objectives**

The objective of the portfolio is to generate moderate current income, while preserving capital. Due to the short term nature of the cash flow needs, the portfolio should pursue a total return consistent with broad short-term fixed income markets. Thus, the portfolio should be invested in a manner consistent with the Bloomberg Short Government/Corporate Index (I09388 on Bloomberg) (the “Index”). ~~BMO-STATIC benchmark, which is a custom benchmark consisting of 25% each of Bank of America Merrill Lynch 3-month Treasury Bill Index, Bank of America Merrill Lynch 6-month Treasury Bill Index, Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-year Treasury Note Index and Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-3-year Treasury Index.~~ The funds will be invested in ~~the an~~ operating investment account with the objective to outperform the ~~STATIC benchmark index (the “Index”)~~ over an average market cycle giving consideration to both income and capital appreciation, subject to the following guidelines and consistent with the safety of principal. This benchmark can be changed as dictated by changing liquidity needs.

**Independent Investment Managers & Custodian**

An Investment Manager not affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be appointed to manage the account subject to the guidelines herein. The Investment Manager will be reviewed periodically by the Budget and Finance Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to ensure adherence to this Investment Policy Statement. This investment account cannot be internally managed by affiliates of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America except for a money market account as approved by the Budget and Finance Committee. -

Similarly, a custodian bank not affiliated with the Investment Manager or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be appointed for the purposes of safekeeping of assets, trade

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
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24 - Operating Investment Policy

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processing and asset servicing of the portfolio. The independent custodian shall provide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with portfolio summary statements no less frequently than quarterly to show values for each asset and all transactions affecting assets within the portfolio, including additions and withdrawals.

This deliberate separation of duties the between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Investment Manager and the Custodian bank provides important protection of your investment portfolio against misappropriation, insolvency, misuse, theft, and/or loss.

**Investment Guidelines**

**I. Duration and Maturity:**

A. The operating investment account will have a weighted average duration

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EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
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24 - Operating Investment Policy

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that ranges between 75% and 120% of the average duration of the Index, over an average market cycle, as calculated by the investment manager.

- B. The maximum maturity of any specific holding is ~~37 months~~ years from the date of purchase (i.e., trade date) to put date, maturity, or average life.
  - i. For purposes of calculating the maturity of a floating rate instrument, the maturity will be measured to the next reset date, if the underlying index resets on a regular predetermined interval.
  - ii. For purposes of the above, securities with put rights exercisable within 3 years will be deemed to have a maturity equal to the put date.

**II. Quality:**

- A. Bonds and other fixed-income obligations will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to investment grade "Baa3/BBB rating category" or higher by at least two of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- B. Commercial paper and other short-term securities will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to second tier (A2, P2, F2) or higher by at least two of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- C. The average credit quality of the operating investment account on a weighted value basis will be equivalent to "AA" or higher based on the rating assigned to each security in the account at the time of purchase.
- D. The aggregate of second tier commercial paper and investment grade "Baa3/BBB rating category" securities will not exceed 20% of the total market value of the portfolio at the time of purchase.

**III. Sector and Security Diversification:**

- A. Except for the securities described in Sections IV A and IV H, which may be purchased without limits, no more than 5% of the portfolio market value, (10% for mutual funds due to their inherent diversification) at the time of purchase, will be invested in any specific issue.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

November 15, 2024

19-C03.00

24 - Operating Investment Policy

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- B. No more than 65% of the portfolio value, at the time of purchase, will be invested in the aggregate value of security types listed in the eligible security section below, other than those described in Sections IV A, C and H.
- C. Repurchase agreements with any one counterparty may not exceed 20% of the portfolio value.

**IV. Eligible Securities:**

Subject to any applicable restrictions set forth above, eligible securities will include:

- A. Direct obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government, its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises and repurchase agreements collateralized by such obligations.
- B. Domestic corporate obligations and dollar denominated foreign corporate, foreign government and supranational obligations.
- C. Short-term instruments, including but not limited to adjustable rate preferreds, time deposits, commercial paper, certificates of deposit, bankers acceptances and floating rate notes, provided they meet the above restrictions.
- D. Mortgage-backed securities, (including CMO's – Collateralized Mortgage Obligations – and CMBS – Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities) issued by agencies or sponsored enterprises of the U.S. Government.
- E. Mortgage-backed securities (including CMO's and CMBS) issued by non-agency, private label entities.
- F. Asset-backed securities.
- G. Taxable municipal bonds.
- H. Money market funds with daily liquidity

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EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

November 15, 2024

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Investments may be in the form of individual securities, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, or separately managed accounts.

**V. Constraints and Prohibited Investments.**

A. Socially Responsible Investing

The operating investment account is required to pursue its investment objectives subject to criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values of the ELCA. Each year the social criteria list will be provided to the investment manager for screening. The manager will be required to divest as soon as practical, consistent with prudent investment management, any portfolio securities issued by companies on the social criteria lists. Investments in commingled funds/Exchange Traded Funds/mutual funds are not subject to socially responsible investing.

B. Prohibited Investments

The operating investment account may not: invest in: non- U.S. dollar-denominated securities; ~~invest in~~ commodities or commodity contracts; ~~invest in~~ call or ~~ell~~ or put options of any kind, ~~or uncovered call options~~ cryptocurrencies or digital assets of any kind; ~~purchase~~ derivatives for speculative purposes - no margin or any speculative ~~derivatives~~; ~~short sales of~~ ~~sell~~ securities ~~short~~; or ~~invest directly in~~ real estate or other real assets.

**VI. Liquidity:**

Liquidity requirements for the operating investment account are reviewed quarterly with the investment manager. Any changes will be communicated to the investment managers in writing from time to time by the ELCA.

Approved: November 10, 2006  
Reviewed December 2010  
Reviewed December 2011  
Reviewed: November 2014  
Revised: November 2019  
Revised: November 2024

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## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Core Investment Policy

### Applicability

The investments subject to this policy are those related to funds administered by the Office of the Treasurer in Excess of short-term operating needs of the churchwide organization and defined as “core” investments. Core investments are defined as those generally not subject to the seasonality of receipts and that represent a level below which the balance of restricted and designated funds are not expected to decrease (approximately \$50 million on a long-term basis). This policy does not apply to the investments of churchwide organization held on our behalf by the ELCA Foundation.

### Investment Objectives

To outperform a benchmark index (“the Index”) consisting of ~~840.0% Bloomberg 1-5 Government/Credit Index (LD04STAT on Bloomberg) Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-5 Year US Corporate & Government Index (BBB rated and above), 40.0% Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-3 Year US Corporate & Government Index (BBB rated and above) and 20% Russell 1000 Index~~ over an average market cycle. This objective will give ~~ing~~ consideration to both income and capital appreciation, subject to the following guidelines and consistent with the safety of principal.

The ~~primary~~ performance benchmark for the individual equity allocation shall be ~~the e: 100% U.S. Large Cap~~ Russell 1000 Index, with a secondary performance and risk benchmark of ~~the MSCI USA Minimum Volatility (USD) Index to reflect ELCA’s desire to hold lower volatility stocks with the equity portion of the portfolio.~~

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### Independent Investment Manager & Custodians

An Investment Manager not affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be appointed to manage the account subject to the guidelines herein. The Investment Manager will be reviewed periodically by the Budget and Finance Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to ensure adherence to this Investment Policy Statement.

Similarly, a custodian bank not affiliated with the Investment Manager or the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be appointed for the purposes of safekeeping of assets, trade processing and asset servicing of the portfolio. The independent custodian shall provide the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with portfolio summary statements no less frequently than quarterly to show values for each asset and all transactions affecting assets within the portfolio, including additions and withdrawals.

This deliberate separation of duties the between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Investment Manager and the Custodian bank provides important protection of your investment portfolio against misappropriation, insolvency, misuse, theft, and/or loss. At least two investment managers and custodians shall be appointed to manage the portfolio in accordance with this Investment Policy when the total value of the investment portfolio is expected to be more than \$50 million over an extended

~~period of time. At least one investment manager and custodian are required when the portfolio averages less than \$50 million.~~

### **Investment Guidelines**

#### **I. Duration and Maturity:**

A. The core investment account will have a weighted average duration that normally ranges between 75% and 120% of the average duration of the Index, over an average market cycle, as calculated by the investment manager.

B. Maximum maturity of any specific holding will not exceed ~~7~~<sup>10</sup> years from the date of purchase (i.e., trade date) to put date, maturity, or average life.

i. For purposes of calculating the maturity of a floating rate instrument, the maturity will be measured to the next reset date, if the underlying index resets



on a regular predetermined interval.

ii. For purposes of the above, securities with put rights exercisable within 10 years will be deemed to have a maturity equal to the put date.

## II. Quality:

A. Bonds and other fixed-income obligations will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to investment grade “Baa3/BBB rating category” or higher by at least two of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.

B. Commercial paper and other short-term securities will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to second tier (A2, P2, F2) or higher by at least two of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.

C. The average credit quality of the core investment account on a weighted value basis will be equivalent to “AA rating category” or higher based on the rating assigned to each security in the account at the time of purchase.

D. The aggregate of second tier commercial paper and investment grade “Baa3/BBB rating category” securities will not exceed 20% of the total market value of the portfolio at the time of purchase.

## III. Sector and Security Diversification:

A. Except for the securities described in Sections IV A and IV I, which may be purchased without limits, no more than 5% of the portfolio market value (10% for mutual funds due to their inherent diversification) at the time of purchase, will be invested in any specific issue.

B. No more than 65% of the portfolio value, at the time of purchase, will be invested in the aggregate value of security types listed in the eligible security section below, other than those described in Sections IV B, D and I.

C. Repurchase agreements with any one counterparty may not exceed 20% of the portfolio value.

D. The Low Volatility equity (~~Appendix A~~) portion of the portfolio will not exceed 250% of the market value of the Portfolio at the time of purchase. The Portfolio will be rebalanced when prudent, but at least annually.

E. Target allocations for the Portfolio is as follows and shall be reviewed

quarterly and rebalanced within the relevant ranges when prudent, but at least annually.

	<u>Target</u>	<u>Range</u>	
Short Duration Bond	80%	70% - 100%	
U.S. Low Volatility	20 %	0 % - 30 %	

#### IV. Eligible Securities:

Subject to any applicable restrictions set forth above, eligible securities will include:

- A. Any security that, at the time of purchase, is a component of the Merrill Lynch 1-5 Government/Corporate (BBB rated and above) Index, the Merrill Lynch 1-3 Year US Corporate & Government Index (BBB rated and above) and the Russell 1000 Index.
- B. Direct obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government, its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises and repurchase agreements collateralized by such obligations.
- C. Domestic corporate obligations and dollar denominated foreign corporate, foreign government and supranational obligations.
- D. Short-term instruments, including but not limited to adjustable rate preferreds, time deposits, commercial paper, certificates of deposit, bankers acceptances and floating rate notes, provided they meet the above restrictions.
- E. Mortgage-backed securities, (including CMO's - Collateralized Mortgage Obligations - and CMBS - Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities) issued by agencies or sponsored enterprises of the U.S. Government.
- F. Mortgage-backed securities (including CMO's and CMBS) issued by non-agency, private label entities.
- G. Asset-backed securities.
- H. Taxable municipal bonds
- I. Money market funds with daily liquidity
- J. Any equity security that is listed on a United States national securities exchange or through a mutual fund or ETF.

Investments may be in the form of individual securities, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, or separately managed accounts.

**V. Constraints and Prohibited Investments.**

A. Socially Responsible Investing

The core investment account is required to pursue its investment objectives subject to criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values of the ELCA. Each year the social criteria list will be provided to the investment manager for screening. The manager will be required to divest as soon as practical, consistent with prudent investment management, any portfolio securities issued by companies on the social criteria lists. Investments in commingled funds/Exchange Traded Funds/mutual funds are not subject to socially responsible investing.

B. Prohibited Investments

The core investment account may not: invest in; non-U.S. dollar denominated securities; ~~invest in commodities or commodity contracts; call or invest in sell or put options of any kind or uncovered call options; cryptocurrencies or digital assets of any kind; purchase derivatives for speculative purposes~~ - no margin or any speculative derivatives; ~~short sales of sell securities-short; or invest directly in real estate or other real assets.~~

**VI. Liquidity:**

Liquidity requirements for the core investment account will be communicated to the investment managers in writing from time to time by the ELCA.

Approved: November 10, 2006  
Reviewed: December 2010  
Reviewed: December 2011  
Reviewed: November 7, 2014  
Reviewed: November 13, 2015  
Revised: November 9, 2018  
Revised: November 8, 2019  
Revised: November 15, 2024

## **Financial Compliance Policy**

The churchwide organization (CWO) may extend credit to separately incorporated ministries and other affiliated organizations (collectively, Affiliates), including those described in Chapter 17 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA for payment of compensation, benefits, and various operating expenses. The Office of the Treasurer will bill or charge electronically each Affiliate for their respective share on a monthly basis. Each Affiliate should settle the balance owed CWO on a monthly basis. Should a balance owed CWO be more 30 days past the billing date, CWO should notify the Affiliate of the outstanding balance, giving them 30 days to settle this obligation. Should the balance not be paid to the CWO within 60 days of the billing date, CWO, in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Church Council, reserves the right to discontinue extending credit to the Affiliate.

This policy is effective February 1, 2025, and should be included in any Service Level Agreement between CWO and the Affiliate.

A mutually agreed upon repayment plan for any existing intercompany receivable (from credit previously extended to the Affiliate) as of November 30, 2024, must be submitted to the Office of the Treasurer by January 15, 2025, in order for credit to be extended beginning February 1, 2025. Details of the repayment plan shall be included in the annual Service Level Agreement between the parties.

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
January 31, 2024 and 2023



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2024 and 2023

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## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Church Council  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Churchwide Organization

***Opinion***

We have audited the financial statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Organization (the Church), which comprise the statements of financial position as of January 31, 2024 and 2023, and the related statements of activities, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Church as of January 31, 2024 and 2023, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

***Basis for Opinion***

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Church and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audits. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

***Emphasis of Matter***

As discussed in Note 1, the financial statements being presented are only for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Organization and do not include the assets, liabilities and net assets, and the revenue and expenses of the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that are recorded in the accounts of the other organizations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Accordingly, the accompanying financial statements are not intended to present the financial position of the entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as of January 31, 2024 and 2023, or the change in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

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(Continued)

### ***Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements***

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Church's ability to continue as a going concern for one year from the date the financial statements are available to be issued.

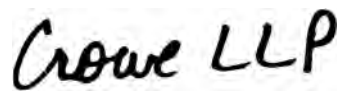
### ***Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Church's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Church's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.



Crowe LLP

Chicago, Illinois  
June 21, 2024



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
 CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
 STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
 January 31, 2024 and 2023

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 25,092,395	\$ 74,070,232
Accounts receivable (Note 2)	6,373,281	6,860,999
Loans receivable (Notes 4 and 5)	537,704	658,781
Due from related organizations, net (Note 8)	7,588,045	7,354,689
Investments (Note 3)	601,114,379	522,700,757
Prepaid expenses and other assets	7,239,358	7,140,162
Property, furniture, and equipment, net (Note 6)	15,750,911	17,609,986
Beneficial interest in irrevocable, split-interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation (Note 3)	10,778,491	12,089,038
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts (Note 3)	<u>19,763,485</u>	<u>18,326,340</u>
 Total assets	 <u>\$ 694,238,049</u>	 <u>\$ 666,810,984</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 542,334	\$ 234,123
Deferred revenue	3,637,445	848,681
Due to related organizations, net (Note 8)	1,290,278	1,283,291
Accrued liabilities	5,800,538	3,837,483
Annuities payable (Note 7)	4,948,896	2,643,865
Funds held for others (Note 1)	5,925,920	5,278,076
Funds held for others in perpetuity (Note 1)	<u>108,719,387</u>	<u>102,164,676</u>
Total liabilities	<u>130,864,798</u>	<u>116,290,195</u>
 Net assets		
Without donor restrictions (Note 15)	157,876,584	147,967,946
With donor restrictions (Note 16)	<u>405,496,667</u>	<u>402,552,843</u>
Total net assets	<u>563,373,251</u>	<u>550,520,789</u>
 Total liabilities and net assets	 <u>\$ 694,238,049</u>	 <u>\$ 666,810,984</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
 CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
 STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES  
 Year ended January 31, 2024, with comparative  
 totals for year ended January 31, 2023

	2024			2023 <u>Total</u>
	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Operating revenue and support				
Contributed support				
Synod mission support (Note 13)	\$ 37,080,134	\$ -	\$ 37,080,134	\$ 38,727,560
World Hunger Appeal	-	17,366,973	17,366,973	19,130,330
Disaster response	-	13,529,388	13,529,388	23,328,478
Endowment distributions	4,926,144	7,552,957	12,479,101	10,333,008
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	-	1,500,000	1,500,000
Bequests, trusts, and residuums	3,462,678	2,438,861	5,901,539	6,740,847
Grants—corporate and other	240,314	1,248,083	1,488,397	3,550,627
Other gifts	6,453,063	1,767,940	8,221,003	12,584,758
Total contributed revenue	<u>53,662,333</u>	<u>43,904,202</u>	<u>97,566,535</u>	<u>115,895,608</u>
Other revenue				
Net return on operating investments	4,151,998	-	4,151,998	(4,063,998)
SPPO offices	341,279	-	341,279	92,219
Services and other revenue	4,686,586	295,984	4,982,570	5,538,350
Lease income	1,041,369	-	1,041,369	1,225,553
Total other revenue	<u>10,221,232</u>	<u>295,984</u>	<u>10,517,216</u>	<u>2,792,124</u>
Net assets released from restrictions				
Satisfaction of restrictions (Note 14)	60,094,376	(60,094,376)	-	-
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity (Note 14)	3,456,320	(3,456,320)	-	-
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>63,550,696</u>	<u>(63,550,696)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total operating revenue and support	<u>127,434,261</u>	<u>(19,350,510)</u>	<u>108,083,751</u>	<u>118,687,732</u>
Operating expenses				
Program services				
Christian Community Leadership	31,237,398	-	31,237,398	28,696,177
Service and Justice	58,140,604	-	58,140,604	51,620,436
Church periodicals	1,003,007	-	1,003,007	1,365,826
Office of the Presiding Bishop	2,281,202	-	2,281,202	1,234,525
Innovation	1,353,525	-	1,353,525	801,143
SPPO offices	108,982	-	108,982	71,951
Total program services	<u>94,124,718</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>94,124,718</u>	<u>83,790,058</u>

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
 CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
 STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES  
 Year ended January 31, 2024, with comparative  
 totals for year ended January 31, 2023

	2024			2023 <u>Total</u>
	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Operating expenses (Continued)				
Management and general				
Office of the Presiding Bishop	\$ 6,087,627	\$ -	\$ 6,087,627	\$ 4,846,396
Office of the Treasurer	11,349,682	-	11,349,682	10,682,296
Office of the Secretary	4,903,165	-	4,903,165	6,061,669
Total management and general	<u>22,340,474</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>22,340,474</u>	<u>21,590,361</u>
Fundraising				
Office of the Presiding Bishop	3,877,801	-	3,877,801	3,227,608
Total fundraising	<u>3,877,801</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,877,801</u>	<u>3,227,608</u>
Total operating expenses	<u>120,342,993</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>120,342,993</u>	<u>108,608,027</u>
<b>Net operating revenue and support less operating expenses</b>	7,091,268	(19,350,510)	(12,259,242)	10,079,705
Non-operating transactions				
Endowment contributions	1,305,416	9,599,298	10,904,714	9,869,821
Net investment return on endowment and other deferred gifts	1,511,954	12,463,290	13,975,244	(34,729,089)
Change in value of beneficial interest in split interest agreements and outside trusts	-	231,746	231,746	(4,238,642)
Total non-operating transactions	<u>2,817,370</u>	<u>22,294,334</u>	<u>25,111,704</u>	<u>(29,097,910)</u>
<b>Changes in net assets</b>	9,908,638	2,943,824	12,852,462	(19,018,205)
Net assets at beginning of year	<u>147,967,946</u>	<u>402,552,843</u>	<u>550,520,789</u>	<u>569,538,994</u>
<b>Net assets at end of year</b>	<u>\$ 157,876,584</u>	<u>\$ 405,496,667</u>	<u>\$ 563,373,251</u>	<u>\$ 550,520,789</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
Year ended January 31, 2023

	2023		
	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>
Operating revenue and support			
Contributed support			
Synod mission support (Note 13)	\$ 38,727,560	\$ -	\$ 38,727,560
World Hunger Appeal	-	19,130,330	19,130,330
Disaster response	-	23,328,478	23,328,478
Endowment distributions	3,573,876	6,759,132	10,333,008
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	-	1,500,000
Bequests, trusts, and residuums	3,705,391	3,035,456	6,740,847
Grants—corporate and other	304,304	3,246,323	3,550,627
Other gifts	9,558,058	3,026,700	12,584,758
Total contributed revenue	<u>57,369,189</u>	<u>58,526,419</u>	<u>115,895,608</u>
Other revenue			
Net return on operating investments	(4,063,998)	-	(4,063,998)
SPPO offices' revenue	92,219	-	92,219
Services and other revenue	5,538,350	-	5,538,350
Lease income	1,225,553	-	1,225,553
Total other revenue	<u>2,792,124</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,792,124</u>
Net assets released from restrictions			
Satisfaction of restrictions (Note 14)	47,840,624	(47,840,624)	-
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity (Note 14)	3,619,781	(3,619,781)	-
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>51,460,405</u>	<u>(51,460,405)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total operating revenue and support	<u>111,621,718</u>	<u>7,066,014</u>	<u>118,687,732</u>
Operating expenses			
Program services			
Christian Community Leadership	28,696,177	-	28,696,177
Service and Justice	51,620,436	-	51,620,436
Church periodicals	1,365,826	-	1,365,826
Office of the Presiding Bishop	1,234,525	-	1,234,525
Innovation	801,143	-	801,143
SPPO offices' expense	71,951	-	71,951
Total program services	<u>83,790,058</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>83,790,058</u>

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
 CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
 STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
 Year ended January 31, 2023

	2023		
	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>
Operating expenses (Continued)			
Management and general			
Office of the Presiding Bishop	\$ 4,846,396	\$ -	\$ 4,846,396
Office of the Treasurer	10,682,296	-	10,682,296
Office of the Secretary	6,061,669	-	6,061,669
Total management and general	<u>21,590,361</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>21,590,361</u>
Fundraising			
Development	<u>3,227,608</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,227,608</u>
Total fundraising	<u>3,227,608</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,227,608</u>
Total operating expenses	<u>108,608,027</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>108,608,027</u>
<b>Net operating revenue and support less operating expenses</b>	3,013,691	7,066,014	10,079,705
Non-operating transactions			
Endowment contributions	4,477,398	5,392,423	9,869,821
Net investment return on endowment and other deferred gifts	(3,384,165)	(31,344,924)	(34,729,089)
Change in value of beneficial interest in split interest agreements and outside trusts	<u>-</u>	<u>(4,238,642)</u>	<u>(4,238,642)</u>
Total non-operating transactions	<u>1,093,233</u>	<u>(30,191,143)</u>	<u>(29,097,910)</u>
<b>Changes in net assets</b>	4,106,924	(23,125,129)	(19,018,205)
Net assets at beginning of year	<u>143,861,022</u>	<u>425,677,972</u>	<u>569,538,994</u>
<b>Net assets at end of year</b>	<u>\$ 147,967,946</u>	<u>402,552,843</u>	<u>\$ 550,520,789</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
 CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
 STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS  
 Years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Change in net assets	\$ 12,852,462	\$ (19,018,205)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	2,185,042	2,422,507
Change in fair value of investments	(16,930,344)	29,542,162
Contribution restricted for long-term investment	(10,904,714)	(9,869,821)
Loss (gain) on beneficial interest in perpetual trusts	(3,486,334)	4,238,642
Loss on change in value of deferred gifts	2,711,897	889,135
Changes in:		
Accounts receivable	487,718	1,442,216
Interest receivable	204,320	(69,246)
Prepaid expenses and other assets	(99,196)	560,757
Accounts payable	1,053,928	(1,956,563)
Deferred revenue	2,788,764	(2,750,460)
Due to/from related organizations	(226,369)	723,480
Accrued liabilities	<u>1,963,055</u>	<u>(3,702,919)</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	<u>(7,399,771)</u>	<u>2,451,685</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Purchase and acquisition of equipment	(325,967)	(1,099,379)
Net change on mortgage notes and construction loans	(83,243)	203,341
Purchase of investments	(64,338,605)	(3,891,550)
Investment in the Mission Development Fund Endowment	(1,305,391)	(3,265,203)
Proceeds from sale of investments	<u>13,787,827</u>	<u>4,683,191</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	<u>(52,265,379)</u>	<u>(3,369,600)</u>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
Annuities payable	(217,401)	(1,434,642)
Proceeds from contribution restricted for long-term investment	<u>10,904,714</u>	<u>9,869,821</u>
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities	<u>10,687,313</u>	<u>8,435,179</u>
<b>Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>(48,977,837)</b>	<b>7,517,264</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>74,070,232</u>	<u>66,552,968</u>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>	<b><u>\$ 25,092,395</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 74,070,232</u></b>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2024 and 2023

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**NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**Organization:** The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the ELCA) is a Minnesota nonprofit corporation that functions interdependently with the congregations and synods of the ELCA. The ELCA serves on behalf of and in support of the ELCA's members, congregations, and synods. To fulfill its purpose, the ELCA receives, establishes, and supports congregations and ministries necessary to carry out its mission. The ELCA has constituent Lutheran congregations in 65 synods throughout the United States and the Caribbean. The ELCA's principal source of revenue is contributions.

The accompanying financial statements include all administrative and program offices and units of the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (collectively, the Church). These financial statements do not include the accounts of organizations, such as the ELCA Foundation, Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services), Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Mission Investment Fund), Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1517 Media), Lutheran Men in Mission, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Federal Credit Union (Credit Union), congregations, synods, schools, cemeteries, homes, seminaries, or any other institution owned and operated by religious orders of men or women, except insofar as financial transactions have taken place between them and the Church (e.g., subsidies, loans, and deposits). These organizations may or may not be separate corporations under civil law and may or may not be under the control of the ELCA; however, each is an operating entity distinct from the Church, maintains separate accounts, carries on its own services and programs, and reports annually to its respective constituency.

Effective January 1, 2018, the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, doing business as the ELCA Foundation (ELCA Foundation), is a separately incorporated ministry/corporation of the ELCA. This corporation manages the endowments of the ELCA, the Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT), and the Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) programs. The Church's beneficial interest in CRTs and CGAs are included in the Church financial statements for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023. Trusteeship of the existing CRTs has been transferred from the Church to the ELCA Foundation, effective February 1, 2018.

**Basis of Presentation:** The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting.

To ensure the observance of limitations and restrictions placed on the use of resources available, the Church maintains its financial accounts in accordance with the principles and practices of fund accounting.

The financial statements focus on the organization as a whole and present balances and transactions classified based upon the existence or absence of donor-imposed restrictions. Net assets, revenue, contributed support, expenses, gains, and losses have been classified into two net asset classes based on these donor-imposed restrictions. A description of each net asset class follows:

*Without Donor Restrictions* – Net assets that are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions including the carrying value of all property, furniture, and equipment. Items that affect this category of net assets include contributions and bequests without donor restrictions, contributions with donor restrictions and bequests whose donor-imposed restrictions were met during the fiscal year and investment income whose use is without donor restrictions, as well as all expenses incurred in connection with the operations of the Church. Certain funds, generally set aside by Church Council action, function as endowments and are included in net assets without donor restrictions.

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(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2024 and 2023

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**NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

*With Donor Restrictions* – Net assets subject to donor-imposed restrictions that will be met either by actions of the Church or the passage of time. Items in this net asset category are contributions, bequests, and investment income whose use is limited to specific purposes by the donor. These amounts are reclassified when such restrictions are met or when time restrictions have expired.

Also included are net assets that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions which require them to be maintained permanently by the Church. Items in this net asset category include gifts wherein donors stipulate that the corpus be held in perpetuity and only the income be made available for purposes without donor restrictions or with donor restrictions (primarily gifts for endowments and gifts solicited by the Church that will fund perpetual endowments).

Cash and Cash Equivalents: Cash and cash equivalents include investments in money market accounts, commercial paper, and other short-term investments with original maturities of three months or less from the date of purchase. Cash and cash equivalents used by the Church in managing its investments are reported in investments. The Church maintains cash balances at several financial institutions in excess of the insurance limits provided by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Beneficial Interest in Irrevocable, Split-Interest Agreements, Held by ELCA Foundation: The Church holds a beneficial remainder interest in various charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts, commonly referred to as split-interest agreements. These agreements are administered by the ELCA Foundation on behalf of the Church and other beneficiaries. The Church records the fair value of the beneficial interest as a receivable and as revenue when documentation of the beneficial interest is received.

Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts Administrated by Outside Organizations: The Church has been granted a beneficial interest in various irrevocable trust accounts created under wills or deeds of trust. These trust accounts are administered and held by outside trustees. The Church records the fair value of the beneficial interest as a receivable and as revenue when documentation of the beneficial interest is received.

Investments and Related Income, Gains, and Losses: Investments are reported at fair value, except for certain equity and real estate investments, which are reported at cost. Investments carried at fair value consist primarily of equity mutual funds, corporate and government obligations, term deposit accounts and investments in pools. The cost of securities sold is based on either the specific-identification or average-cost method. Investment income, gains and losses, and any investment-related expenses are recorded net of investment fees as changes in net assets without donor restrictions in the statement of activities unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulations.

Property, Furniture, Equipment, and Depreciation: Property, furniture, and equipment are recorded at cost less accumulated depreciation to date. On an ongoing basis, the Church reviews long-lived assets for impairment whenever events or circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may be overstated. Depreciation is provided over the following useful lives on a straight-line basis:

Building	50 years
Building improvements	10-25 years
Hardware, software and related components	3-5 years
Furniture, fixtures and improvements	5-7 years
Tenant improvements	Lesser of length of lease or useful life
Transportation	5-7 years

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(Continued)



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2024 and 2023

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**NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

Funds Held for Others: Funds held for others consist of contributions received on behalf of and other resources held for other Lutheran organizations that are separate, nonconsolidated entities. The Church does not have variance power over these funds. In the case of funds held for others in perpetuity, the earnings are distributed per the donor's specifications, but the corpus or principal are held in perpetuity or intact and reflected as a liability of the Church.

Deferred Revenue: Deferred revenue consists of funds received relating to subsequent periods. Additionally, the Church also recognizes its remainder interest in the assets received from donors under pooled income fund agreements and life income fund agreements as contribution revenue in the period in which the assets are received from the donor. The difference between the assets recognized and the revenue recognized is recorded as deferred revenue, representing the amount of the discount for future interest.

Vacation Pay: The Church recognizes vacation pay expense when earned by its non-missionary personnel. The liability for vacation pay of missionary personnel cannot be reasonably estimated, and such amounts are recognized when paid.

Revenue and Expenses: Revenues are reported as increases in net assets without donor restrictions unless use of the related assets is limited by donor-imposed restrictions. Expenses are reported as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions. Gains and losses on investments and other assets or liabilities are reported as increases or decreases in net assets without donor restrictions unless their use is restricted by explicit donor stipulation. Expirations of net assets with donor restrictions (i.e., the donor-stipulated purpose has been fulfilled and/or the stipulated time period has elapsed) are reported as reclassifications between applicable classes of net assets.

Contributed Support: Contributions, including unconditional promises to give, are recognized in the period received. Conditional contributions are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend are met.

Contributions to be received after one year are discounted at an appropriate discount rate commensurate with the risk involved. Amortization of discount is recorded as additional contribution revenue in accordance with donor-imposed restrictions, if any, on the contributions.

Contributions received with donor-imposed restrictions are reported as revenue of the net asset class with donor restrictions, as appropriate. Contributions of land, buildings, and equipment without donor-imposed restrictions concerning the use of such long-lived assets are reported as revenue of net assets without donor restrictions.

Services and Other Revenue: Revenues from separately incorporated ministries and unincorporated self-supporting ministries for services provided by the Church (e.g., human resources, information technology, financial services, building management) relate to agreements to provide such services negotiated on an annual basis. These revenues are recognized throughout the year as these services are performed. Subscription revenue relates to publications and is recognized as the related publications are distributed. Registration revenue relates to events and is recognized as the events are held. Amounts paid for events that have not yet been held at January 31 are included in deferred revenues.

Income Tax: The Church has received a determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service indicating that it is exempt from Federal income taxes on income related to its exempt purpose under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. There were no significant unrelated business income activities during the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023.

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(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2024 and 2023

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**NOTE 1 – NATURE OF BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)**

Uncertainty in Income Taxes: The ELCA follows guidance issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) with respect to accounting for uncertainty in income taxes. A tax position is recognized as a benefit only if it is more likely than not that the tax position would be sustained in a tax examination, with a tax examination being presumed to occur. The amount recognized is the largest amount of tax benefit that is greater than 50% likely of being realized on examination. For tax positions not meeting the more likely than not test, no tax benefit is recorded.

The Church recognizes interest and penalties related to unrecognized tax benefits in interest and income tax expense, respectively. The Church has no amounts accrued for interest or penalties as of January 31, 2024 and 2023.

Due to its tax-exempt status, the Church is not subject to U.S. federal income tax or state income tax. The Church does not expect the total amount of unrecognized tax benefits to significantly change in the next 12 months.

Use of Estimates: The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from estimates.

Reclassifications: Certain amounts in the prior year financial statements have been reclassified for consistency of presentation with the current year. The reclassifications did not affect the net assets or the changes in net assets for all years presented.

Recently Adopted Accounting Pronouncements: In June 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (“FASB”) issued Accounting Standards Update (“ASU”) 2016-13, *Financial Instruments-Credit Losses Topic 326* (“Topic 326”), which requires entities to measure all expected credit losses for financial instruments held at the reporting date. The Church adopted this standard effective February 1, 2023. The new expected loss measurement model, known as the current expected credit loss (“CECL”), model is based on expected losses rather than incurred losses. Topic 326 is applicable to financial assets measured at amortized cost, such as accounts receivable. It requires historical loss data to be adjusted to reflect changes in asset-specific considerations, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts of future economic conditions. The expected credit losses are adjusted each financial reporting period for changes in expected lifetime credit losses. The Church adopted Topic 326 using the modified retrospective transition approach, which involves recognizing cumulative effect of the initial adoption of Topic 326 as an adjustment to its opening retained earnings at February 1, 2023. Therefore, comparative information prior to the adoption date has not been adjusted. As a result of adoption of Topic 326, the Church did not recognize an incremental allowance for credit losses on its accounts receivable for the year ended January 31, 2024. The adoption of this standard did not have a significant impact on the Church’s financial statements.

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(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2024 and 2023

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**NOTE 2 – ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE**

Included in accounts receivable at January 31, 2024 and 2023, were \$5,758,755 and \$5,975,214, respectively, relating to synods' contributions for mission support, world hunger appeal, global church sponsorship and other programs that have been collected subsequent to year end. Interest is not normally charged on receivables. Management reviews all of receivables on an individual basis for collectability and determines whether an allowance is necessary. No allowance for bad debts has been established because management considers all accounts receivable to be collectible.

**NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS**

Investments at January 31, 2024 and 2023, consist of the following:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)	\$ 11,469,954	\$ 10,531,870
Fixed income securities		
U.S. government obligations	31,797,740	16,036,253
Corporate bonds	55,210,283	27,972,804
Term investments	587,459	571,347
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost	1,204,546	1,354,825
Investments held in EFPT pools	497,307,731	465,218,792
Cash and cash equivalents	<u>3,536,666</u>	<u>1,014,866</u>
	<u>\$ 601,114,379</u>	<u>\$ 522,700,757</u>

The following schedule summarizes the investment return reported in the statement of activities for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Realized investment gains, net	\$ 81,418	\$ 8,204,027
Unrealized investment gains (losses)	20,821,061	(37,746,189)
Dividend and interest income	<u>3,111,963</u>	<u>1,082,083</u>
Investment return (loss), net	<u>\$ 24,014,442</u>	<u>\$ (28,460,079)</u>

Investments are reported at fair value except for certain equity securities and certain investments in real estate which are reported at cost. Investments carried at fair value consist primarily of corporate and government obligations, inflation-indexed and high-yield securities and investments in ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust.

Fair value is the price that would be received for an asset (an exit price) in the principal or most advantageous market for the asset in an orderly transaction between market participants on the measurement date. Investments that have readily determinable market values are determined using quoted market prices. Fair values of investments for which market prices are not readily available are determined based upon quoted market close prices for similar issues, dealer quotes, appraisals, or pricing models utilizing market-observable inputs from comparable securities.

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(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2024 and 2023

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**NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)**

The fair value hierarchy is based on maximizing observable inputs and minimizing unobservable inputs when measuring fair value. Three levels of inputs may be used to measure fair value.

Level 1: Quoted prices (unadjusted) for identical assets in active markets that the Church has the ability to access as of the measurement date.

Level 2: Significant other observable inputs other than Level 1 prices, such as quoted prices for similar assets, quoted prices in markets that are not active, or other inputs that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data.

Level 3: Significant unobservable inputs that reflect the Church's own assumptions that the market participants would use in pricing an asset.

In many cases, a valuation technique used to measure fair value includes inputs from multiple levels of the fair value hierarchy. Investments are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The Church's investments which are reported at fair value are valued using the following inputs and valuation techniques:

*Exchange Traded Fund and Equity Mutual Fund:* The fair values of exchange traded fund investments reflect quoted prices on nationally recognized securities exchanges (Level 1 inputs).

*Fixed Income Securities:* Fair values of U.S. Government securities reflect closing prices reported in the active markets in which the securities are traded (Level 1 inputs). Fair values of corporate bonds are determined based on quoted prices for similar instruments in active markets, quoted prices for identical or similar instruments in markets that are not active and other market-corroborated sources, such as indices, yield curves and matrix pricing (Level 2 inputs – market approach).

*Term Investments:* Demand accounts are estimated to approximate deposit-account balances. Term certificates are estimated to approximate principal amounts plus capitalized interest as of the reporting date. No discounts for credit quality or liquidity were determined to be applicable. Term certificates have varying maturity dates, may be redeemed prior to maturity at the discretion of the Mission Investment Fund, and are subject to an early redemption penalty. (Level 2 inputs – income approach).

*Investments Held in Pools:* The underlying investments within the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust, as well as certain other pooled investments held by the Church, have observable inputs and market activity that allow for fair values based on the underlying market prices of the securities in the pools. The Church has the ability to redeem their pooled investments at any time at the monthly per unit net asset value (NAV).

*Beneficial Interests in Trusts:* The fair value of beneficial interests in trusts is determined based upon the Church's proportional interest in the fair value of the underlying trust assets. The underlying trust assets are readily marketable and have fair values which are determined by obtaining quoted market prices in active markets. This valuation method has been estimated to represent the present value of future distributed income. The liquidation of these assets is contingent upon circumstances that are out of the Church's control and cannot be liquidated on a periodic basis (Level 3 inputs).

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(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2024 and 2023

**NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)**

*Beneficial Interest in Irrevocable, Split-interest Agreements, held by the Church:* The beneficial interest in these agreements is measured at the present value of future cash flows considering the fair value of invested assets, the present value of contractual payment obligations under the agreement and the Church's ownership interest in the split-interest agreement (Level 3 inputs – income approach).

The following table sets forth, by level within the fair value hierarchy, financial instruments owned, at fair value as of January 31, 2024 and 2023:

	2024			Total
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)	\$ 11,469,954	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,469,954
Fixed income securities				
U.S. government obligations	31,797,740	-	-	31,797,740
Corporate bonds	-	55,210,283	-	55,210,283
Term investments	-	587,459	-	587,459
Cash and cash equivalents	3,536,666	-	-	3,536,666
Investments held at fair value	<u>\$ 46,804,360</u>	<u>\$ 55,797,742</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>102,602,102</u>
Investments at net asset value per share				<u>497,307,731</u>
Total investments at fair value				599,909,833
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost*				<u>1,204,546</u>
Total investments				<u>\$ 601,114,379</u>
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts, fair value	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 19,763,485</u>	<u>\$ 19,763,485</u>
Beneficial interest in irrevocable split interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation, fair value	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 10,778,491</u>	<u>\$ 10,778,491</u>

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
January 31, 2024 and 2023

**NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)**

	2023			Total
	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>	
Equity mutual fund	\$ 10,531,870	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,531,870
Fixed income securities				
U.S. government obligations	16,036,253	-	-	16,036,253
Corporate bonds	-	27,972,804	-	27,972,804
Term investments	-	571,347	-	571,347
Cash and cash equivalents	1,014,866	-	-	1,014,866
Investments held at fair value	<u>\$ 27,582,989</u>	<u>\$ 28,544,151</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	56,127,140
Investments at net asset value per share				<u>465,218,792</u>
Total investments at fair value				521,345,932
Equity securities and physical real estate held at cost*				<u>1,354,825</u>
 Total investments				 <u>\$ 522,700,757</u>
 Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts, fair value	 <u>\$ -</u>	 <u>\$ -</u>	 <u>\$ 18,326,340</u>	 <u>\$ 18,326,340</u>
 Beneficial interest in irrevocable split interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation, fair value	 <u>\$ -</u>	 <u>\$ -</u>	 <u>\$ 12,089,038</u>	 <u>\$ 12,089,038</u>

\* Physical real estate investments, comprised of land and buildings held by the Church at cost of \$0 and \$150,297 at January 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively, were not included in the fair value tables above. Additionally, equity securities, comprised of closely held stock held by the Church at cost, of \$1,204,546 at January 31, 2024 and 2023 were not included in the fair value tables above.

The table below rolls forward balances for Level 3 beneficial interest in perpetual trusts from February 1, 2022 through January 31, 2024:

Balance as of February 1, 2022	\$ 21,700,986
Unrealized losses	<u>(3,374,646)</u>
 Balance as of January 31, 2023	 18,326,340
Unrealized gains	<u>1,437,145</u>
 Balance as of January 31, 2024	 <u>\$ 19,763,485</u>

(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
 CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION  
 NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
 January 31, 2024 and 2023

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**NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)**

The table below rolls forward balances for Level 3 beneficial interest in split-interest agreements from February 1, 2022 through January 31, 2024:

Balance as of February 1, 2022	\$ 18,671,091
Decrease in beneficial interest resulting from:	
New gifts	120,000
Unrealized losses	(1,839,932)
Terminations	(4,862,121)
Change in value of beneficial interest	(6,582,053)
 Balance as of January 31, 2023	 12,089,038
Decrease in beneficial interest resulting from:	
New gifts	130,795
Unrealized gains	2,049,189
Terminations	(3,490,531)
Change in value of beneficial interest	(1,310,547)
 Balance as of January 31, 2024	 \$ 10,778,491

Strategies Employed for Achieving Objectives of ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust: Investments held in endowment funds are stated at fair value. Certain endowment funds are classified by the Church as “Funds Held for Others” or “Funds Held for Others in Perpetuity” and are invested in the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust (“EFPT”) administered under the terms of that Trust by its Trustee.

The EFPT investment objective is to provide participants with a stable stream of distributable investment income with long-term capital appreciation, while assuming a moderate level of investment risk. The assets of the EFPT are invested in a diversified portfolio that places an emphasis on equity-based and fixed income investments selected in accordance with the criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values and programs of the ELCA.

The target asset allocation ranges are 22% to 32% in U.S. equity securities, 25% to 35% in Non-U.S. equity securities, 4% to 14% in investment grade fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in high yield fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in U.S. inflation-indexed fixed income securities, 0% to 10% in global real estate securities, 0% to 8% in hedge funds, 0% to 8% in private infrastructure, and 0% to 20% in private markets, with the balance in cash and cash equivalents.

Ownership interests in the EFPT are initially assigned through unitization of participants’ investment additions. The total value of the EFPT net assets at the end of each month is used to determine the number of units allocated to participants’ additions placed in the EFPT and to value withdrawals from the pool. Distributions from the pool are first made from dividend and interest income and net realized gains. If distributions exceed the actual dividends, interest, and net realized gains, the excess is distributed first from accumulated undistributed earnings and gains, then from capital.

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(Continued)

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
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**NOTE 3 – INVESTMENTS AND FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS (Continued)**

Quarterly distributions from the EFPT are made at a rate established annually by the Trustee of the EFPT that reflects the Trustee’s consideration of anticipated returns of the EFPT and anticipated changes in the purchasing power of the EFPT. The rate established for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022 was 4%. It was applied each year to the average unit value of the assets in the EFPT at December 31 of the five preceding years. The rate established for 2024 is 4%.

**NOTE 4 – MORTGAGES AND NOTES**

Mortgages, notes, and contracts for deed as of January 31, 2024 and 2023 are summarized as follows:

	<u>Interest Rate</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Partnership support loans to congregations	0%	\$ 135,736	\$ 167,021

There is one segment and one class in this portfolio.

Partnership support loans to congregations relate to Partnership Support grants, which are given for new starts, strategic renewal and transformation. Congregations that receive these grants sign a covenant where they agree to return the funds if the congregation leaves the Church.

Concentration of Credit Risk: There are no delinquencies with the mortgage notes as of January 31, 2024 and 2023. The Church does not believe that an allowance is necessary for these mortgage notes. If a Congregation decides to leave and is not able to pay the full amount received, the Church provides the opportunity for them to repay in installments.

**NOTE 5 – OVERSEAS CHURCH CONSTRUCTION LOANS**

Overseas church construction loans bear interest at rates ranging from 2% to 5% and mature at various dates through October 15, 2029. The balances of overseas church construction loans outstanding as of January 31, 2024 and 2023 is \$401,968 and \$287,440, respectively.

Concentration of Credit Risk: The loan portfolio consists of one segment and one class. The Church’s overseas lending activities are primarily conducted with companion churches. Notes receivable are generally not collateralized with real estate but are secured by the grants from the Church. The following is a summary of net notes by region for the years ended January 31:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Africa	\$ 20,297	\$ 36,772
Latin America/Caribbean	<u>381,671</u>	<u>250,668</u>
Total overseas construction loans	<u>\$ 401,968</u>	<u>\$ 287,440</u>

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**NOTE 6 – PROPERTY, FURNITURE, AND EQUIPMENT**

Property, furniture, and equipment are recorded at cost less accumulated depreciation. Details relating to these assets as of January 31, 2024 and 2023 is presented below:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Land	\$ 133,000	\$ 133,000
Buildings and improvements	52,553,895	52,564,361
Furniture and equipment	12,782,748	15,341,229
Work in progress	<u>117,622</u>	<u>154,424</u>
	65,587,265	68,193,014
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(49,836,354)</u>	<u>(50,583,028)</u>
 Totals	 <u>\$ 15,750,911</u>	 <u>\$ 17,609,986</u>

Depreciation expense for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023 was \$2,185,042 and \$2,422,507, respectively.

**NOTE 7 – SPLIT-INTEREST AGREEMENTS**

Charitable Gift Annuities: Charitable gift annuities are arrangements between a donor and the Church in which the donor contributes assets to the Church in exchange for a promise by the Church to pay a fixed amount for the life of the donor or other individuals designated by the donor. Due to state insurance regulations, the assets received are held as segregated assets. The annuity liability is a general obligation of the Church. Assets are recognized at fair value on the date of the contribution. An annuity payment liability is recognized for the present value of future cash flows expected to be paid to the donor or to the designated individual. The discount rate is the appropriate risk adjusted rate on the date of the contract. The 2012 IAR Tables are used to calculate the life expectancies of the annuity beneficiaries.

At the death of the donor or designated individual, the book value of the contract is distributed to the Church or related organization either with or without donor restricted use depending upon the donor restrictions.

Pooled Income Funds and Life Income Contracts: Donors contribute assets to an investment pool and are assigned a specific number of units based on the proportion of the fair value of their contribution to the total fair value of the pooled income fund on the date of the donor's entry to the pooled fund. Until a donor's death, the donor or designated beneficiary is paid the actual ordinary income earned on the donor's units. Realized gains or losses are added to each unit's principal. Upon the donor's death, the value of the units is released to the Church or a related organization to be used as specified by the donor.

The contributed assets are recorded at fair value. A contribution is recorded at the fair value of the assets discounted for the estimated time period until the donor's death. The appropriate risk adjusted rate at the date of the contribution is used for the discount rate, and the 2012 IAR Tables are used to calculate life expectancies. The difference between the fair value of the assets received and the revenue recognized is recorded as deferred revenue, representing the amount of the discount for future revenue.

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(Continued)

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**NOTE 7 – SPLIT-INTEREST AGREEMENTS (Continued)**

A summary of recorded amounts related to these arrangements as of January 31, 2024 and 2023, is as follows:

	2024		2023	
	<u>Deferred Revenue</u>	<u>Annuities Payable</u>	<u>Deferred Revenue</u>	<u>Annuities Payable</u>
Charitable gift annuities	\$ -	\$ 4,948,896	\$ -	\$ 2,643,865
Pooled income funds	604,579	-	608,802	-
Life income funds	961	-	972	-
	<u>\$ 605,540</u>	<u>\$ 4,948,896</u>	<u>\$ 609,774</u>	<u>\$ 2,643,865</u>

Adjustments to the liability, to reflect amortization of the discount and changes in actuarial assumptions are recognized in the statements of activities as a change in the value of split-interest agreements in net assets with donor restrictions.

**NOTE 8 – RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

The Church is the beneficiary of endowment, trust and annuity accounts with a fair value of \$508,773,065 and \$482,554,701 at January 31, 2024 and 2023. These are managed by the ELCA Foundation.

The Church had a net receivable due from related organizations in the amount of \$6,297,767 at January 31, 2024, and \$6,071,398 at January 31, 2023. The net receivable represents expenses related to service level agreements between the Church and certain affiliated organizations for building space, accounting and management services performed on their behalf.

**NOTE 9 – DEFINED-CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN**

Substantially all active employees of the Church are enrolled in the noncontributory defined-contribution pension plan administered by Portico Benefit Services. The employer contributions to the plan for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023 were \$3,587,852 and \$3,624,167, respectively. All contributions to the plan are funded on a current basis.

**NOTE 10 – PENSION AND POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS**

Post-Retirement Medical Benefits: Members with service in a predecessor organization may be eligible to receive a post-retirement health contribution subsidy from Portico Benefit Services and in some cases a monthly reimbursement of their SMI (Medicare Part B) premiums. These subsidies are expressed as a percentage of the monthly cost for coverage paid by eligible retirees under the Church Medical and Dental Benefits Plan. Subsidies are based on age or a combination of age and service. Approximately 5,060 active or retired members and spouses are eligible or potentially eligible for these subsidies.

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(Continued)

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**NOTE 10 – PENSION AND POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS (Continued)**

These post-retirement medical subsidies are funded through trust funds set aside for that purpose. The trust funds are held and reported by Portico. The full actuarial valuation of the obligation is reported on the financial statements of Portico. Portico financial statements include the trust assets of approximately \$78,790,000 and \$82,085,000, as well as Expected Post-Retirement Benefit Obligation (EPBO) as actuarial liabilities of approximately \$46,715,000 and \$58,600,000 at December 31, 2023 and 2022, respectively.

The Church contributed \$0 during the fiscal years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023 toward the funding of this post-retirement health care benefit. No additional funding in the future is expected based on current projections.

**NOTE 11 – COLLECTIONS**

The Church's art collections, which were acquired through purchases and contributions, are not recognized as assets on the statement of financial position. The collections represent a wide variety of art mediums: collagraph, etching, intaglio, dry-point engraving, katazome, linocut, oil, serigraph/silk-screen, stained glass, watercolor, and woodcut. The art is intended to share the Gospel visually with many of the pieces having biblical references. Purchases of collection items, if any, are recorded as decreases in net assets without donor restrictions in the year in which the items are acquired. Contributed collection items, if any, are not reflected on the financial statements. Proceeds from de-accessions or insurance recoveries, if any, are reflected as increases in the appropriate net asset classes and used according to the applicable restrictions.

**NOTE 12 – LINE OF CREDIT**

At January 31, 2024 and 2023, the Church had a \$10,000,000 unsecured and uncommitted line of credit with no termination date. Interest on outstanding borrowings is charged at the bank's prime commercial rate less .5%. If the loan is not paid when due, an additional 3.0% rate is charged. There were no borrowings outstanding under the line of credit at January 31, 2024 and 2023, or during the years then ended.

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**NOTE 13 – CONCENTRATIONS OF RISK**

The Church's primary sources of revenue are contributions from synods. The synod contributions are dependent upon contributions from the membership of congregations of the ELCA. There are 9 regions comprising a total of 65 synods. The following is a summary of the contributions by synods in each of the regions during the years ended January 31:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Region 1 – Northwest	\$ 2,013,853	\$ 2,022,072
Region 2 – Southwest	3,394,990	3,369,484
Region 3 – Northwest Midwest	6,276,470	6,581,281
Region 4 – Southwest Midwest	3,362,175	3,521,256
Region 5 – Northeast Midwest	7,594,578	8,060,168
Region 6 – Southeast Midwest	3,383,737	3,416,667
Region 7 – Northeast	3,637,634	3,810,412
Region 8 – East	3,368,752	3,564,949
Region 9 – Southeast	<u>4,047,945</u>	<u>4,381,271</u>
Total synod mission support	<u>\$ 37,080,134</u>	<u>\$ 38,727,560</u>

**NOTE 14 – NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS**

Net assets that were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of other events specified by donors were as follows during the years ended January 31:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Satisfaction of program restrictions:		
World Hunger	\$ 24,954,809	\$ 23,441,205
Disaster Relief	18,325,596	15,363,576
Christian Community Leadership	3,838,908	1,969,262
Service and Justice	5,529,772	2,145,995
Office of the Presiding Bishop	6,718,118	4,158,603
Other programs	<u>727,173</u>	<u>761,983</u>
Satisfaction of program restrictions	60,094,376	47,840,624
Income expended from investments held in perpetuity	<u>3,456,320</u>	<u>3,619,781</u>
Total releases from restriction	<u>\$ 63,550,696</u>	<u>\$ 51,460,405</u>

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**NOTE 15 – NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS**

Net assets without donor restrictions consist of the following at January 31:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
General	\$ 105,506,433	\$ 96,529,509
Funds functioning as endowment (Note 17)	36,619,240	33,828,451
Net investment in property, furniture, equipment and building (Note 6)	<u>15,750,911</u>	<u>17,609,986</u>
Ending balance	<u>\$ 157,876,584</u>	<u>\$ 147,967,946</u>

**NOTE 16 – NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTION**

Net assets with donor restrictions are available for the following purposes or periods at January 31:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Program-restricted:		
Disaster Relief	\$ 31,135,865	\$ 35,762,707
World Hunger	8,234,820	12,987,897
Office of the Presiding Bishop	2,617,688	1,236,281
Christian Community Leadership	3,930,954	5,530,220
Service and Justice	8,149,578	8,517,614
Mission Advancement	368,234	593,171
Other Programs	<u>529,144</u>	<u>2,080,000</u>
	54,966,283	66,707,890
Time-restricted, expendable in subsequent years	<u>100,931,451</u>	<u>106,810,354</u>
	155,897,734	173,518,244
Investments in perpetuity, the income from which is expendable	237,387,228	216,822,894
Deferred gifts that will provide proceeds upon death of annuitant for a permanent endowment	10,321,359	10,345,414
Paid-up life insurance policies that will provide proceeds upon death of insured for permanent endowments	<u>1,890,346</u>	<u>1,866,291</u>
	<u>249,598,933</u>	<u>229,034,599</u>
Total net assets with donor restriction	<u>\$ 405,496,667</u>	<u>\$ 402,552,843</u>

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(Continued)

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**NOTE 17 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS**

Interpretation of Relevant Law: The Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) modernizes the laws governing a not-for-profit organization's investment and management of donor-restricted endowment funds. The Board of Trustees of the ELCA Foundation, serving as the body delegated to manage the Church's endowments, has interpreted UPMIFA as allowing, but not requiring, the preservation of the historic dollar value of the original gift of donor-restricted endowment funds, absent explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. As a result of this interpretation, the Church has chosen to classify as net assets with donor restrictions (a) the original value of gifts donated to the permanent endowment, (b) the original value of subsequent gifts to the permanent endowment, and (c) accumulations to the permanent endowment made in accordance with the direction of the applicable donor gift instrument at the time the accumulation is added to the fund.

In accordance with accounting principles governing not-for-profit organizations subject to an enacted version of UPMIFA, the portions of donor-restricted endowments not classified as net assets with donor restrictions are classified as net assets with donor restrictions until appropriated for expenditure. Realized and unrealized gains and losses on all Church endowments with donor restrictions are being recognized in net assets with donor restrictions, except for unrealized gains and losses on deferred gifts that will provide proceeds upon death of the annuitant for a permanent endowment.

The Church classifies as net assets with donor restrictions all donor-restricted endowment funds where donor stipulation allows for the release of such funds according to an event or time restriction. In the absence of donor stipulations to the contrary, losses on the investment of such a donor-restricted endowment fund reduce net assets with donor restrictions to the extent that the donor-imposed temporary restrictions on net appreciation of the fund have not been met before the loss occurs.

There were no funds for which the fair value of the assets held was less than the level required by donor stipulation or law at January 31, 2024 and 2023. At January 31, 2024 and 2023, \$36,619,240 and \$33,828,451 was reported in net assets without donor restrictions. During the year, \$4,276,549 and \$3,740,502 has been released from net assets with donor restrictions to net assets without donor restrictions.

Endowment Spending Policies: Endowment pool distributions are made quarterly at a rate established annually by the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust ("the Trustee"). The distribution rate reflects the Trustee's consideration of the anticipated returns of the Church ("the Trust") and anticipated changes in the purchasing power of the Trust. The rates established for fiscal years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023 were 4%, respectively, and is normally less than the anticipated total return of the Trust. The distribution unit value is equal to the average of the unit values on December 31 of the five preceding years multiplied by the annual distribution rate.

Earnings in excess of the distribution rate are allocated among the endowment accounts in proportion to the number of units assigned to each account as undistributed earnings. If the quarterly distribution exceeds the actual dividend, interest, and net realized gains earned in the quarter, the excess is distributed from accumulated undistributed earnings or participant capital. At January 31, 2024, 32 of 1,272 accounts had accumulated undistributed earnings. At January 31, 2023, 31 of 1,252 accounts had accumulated undistributed earnings.

In consideration of donor request or intent, certain donor-restricted endowments are invested through instruments held outside of the Trust. Investment income is distributed or reinvested according to the donor-imposed restriction(s) for the usage of endowment distributions.

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**NOTE 17 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS** (Continued)

Endowment Investment Policies: The Trust's investment objective is to provide a stable stream of investment income with long-term capital appreciation, while assuming a moderate level of investment risk. In accordance with guidelines approved by the Trustee, the Trust's assets are invested in a manner that is intended to produce results that exceed the investment's benchmark by 40 basis points over rolling five-year time periods. Actual returns in any given year may vary from this objective.

Certain donor-restricted endowments that are held outside of the Trust are generally invested in term certificates intended to provide interest income and preserve principal amounts while assuming a low level of investment risk.

Net asset composition by type of endowment fund as of January 31, 2024 and 2023:

	2024		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds*	\$ -	\$ 342,979,162	\$ 342,979,162
Funds functioning as endowment	36,619,240	-	36,619,240
	\$ 36,619,240	\$ 342,979,162	\$ 379,598,402
	2023		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Donor-restricted funds*	\$ -	\$ 320,865,941	\$ 320,865,941
Funds functioning as endowment	33,828,451	-	33,828,451
	\$ 33,828,451	\$ 320,865,941	\$ 354,694,392

\* With the exception of certain investments held by outside trusts, Church net assets with donor restrictions are based on the historic dollar value of donor-stipulated net assets with donor restrictions.

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**NOTE 17 – ENDOWMENT FUNDS** (Continued)

	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total</u>
Net assets, February 1, 2022	\$ 32,506,694	\$ 355,314,847	\$ 387,821,541
Net investment return	(3,322,267)	(31,207,986)	(34,530,253)
New gifts	4,477,398	5,392,423	9,869,821
Net assets released from restriction	3,740,502	(3,740,502)	-
Other changes			
Endowment distribution of income	<u>(3,573,876)</u>	<u>(6,759,132)</u>	<u>(10,333,008)</u>
Total other changes	<u>(3,573,876)</u>	<u>(6,759,132)</u>	<u>(10,333,008)</u>
Net assets, February 1, 2023	33,828,451	318,999,650	352,828,101
Cash surrender value of life insurance	<u>-</u>	<u>1,866,291</u>	<u>1,866,291</u>
Adjusted net assets, February 1, 2023	33,828,451	320,865,941	354,694,392
Net investment return	2,134,968	24,319,374	26,454,342
New gifts	1,305,416	9,599,298	10,904,714
Net assets released from restriction	4,276,549	(4,276,549)	-
Other changes			
Endowment distribution of income	<u>(4,926,144)</u>	<u>(7,552,957)</u>	<u>(12,479,101)</u>
Total other changes	<u>(4,926,144)</u>	<u>(7,552,957)</u>	<u>(12,479,101)</u>
Net assets, January 31, 2024	36,619,240	342,955,107	379,574,347
Cash surrender value of life insurance	<u>-</u>	<u>24,055</u>	<u>24,055</u>
Adjusted net assets, January 31, 2024	<u>\$ 36,619,240</u>	<u>\$ 342,979,162</u>	<u>\$ 379,598,402</u>

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(Continued)



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**NOTE 18 – CONTINGENCIES**

The Church is a party to litigation in various matters arising in the ordinary course of operations. Typically, the Church's insurance carriers are defending these matters. Subsequent to January 31, 2024, Church management became aware of a court decision which could result in a change to an estimate of financial liability related to outstanding legal matters. At this time, management is unable to estimate the amount of the potential liability or the likelihood of an unfavorable outcome. Pending litigation will be vigorously defended and, in the opinion of management, is likely to be resolved without any material adverse effect upon the financial statements of the Church.

**NOTE 19 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES BY NATURE**

The statements of activities report certain categories of expenses attributable to the programs and supporting functions of the Church. The tables below present these functional expenses by their natural classification for the years ended January 31, 2024 and 2023.

	2024			
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Financial support and grants	\$ 57,752,301	\$ 61,952	\$ 22,012	\$ 57,836,265
Compensation and benefits	21,084,651	13,573,632	4,640,807	39,299,090
Travel	2,321,887	201,060	161,067	2,684,014
Events and conferences	2,674,156	253,853	19,043	2,947,052
Office operations	3,818,095	2,095,571	1,279,962	7,193,628
Depreciation	954,460	1,016,141	214,441	2,185,042
Occupancy	1,183,139	1,259,794	265,719	2,708,652
Transfers to restricted and designated funds	2,045,143	435,307	(2,480,450)	-
Miscellaneous and expense recovery	2,290,886	3,443,164	(244,800)	5,489,250
	<u>\$ 94,124,718</u>	<u>\$ 22,340,474</u>	<u>\$ 3,877,801</u>	<u>\$ 120,342,993</u>

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**NOTE 19 – FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES BY NATURE (Continued)**

	2023			
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Financial support and grants	\$ 50,444,198	\$ 385,642	\$ 2,500	\$ 50,832,340
Compensation and benefits	19,735,175	12,448,185	4,553,621	36,736,981
Travel	1,645,842	476,093	212,925	2,334,860
Events and conferences	3,100,947	2,303,614	74,688	5,479,249
Office operations	2,849,172	2,784,784	1,393,778	7,027,734
Depreciation	1,058,151	1,126,708	237,648	2,422,507
Occupancy	1,004,740	1,069,837	225,652	2,300,229
Transfers to restricted and designated funds	2,919,659	245,865	(3,165,524)	-
Miscellaneous and expense recovery	1,032,174	749,633	(307,680)	1,474,127
	<u>\$ 83,790,058</u>	<u>\$ 21,590,361</u>	<u>\$ 3,227,608</u>	<u>\$ 108,608,027</u>

Certain categories of expenses are allocated to more than one program or supporting function. The allocation is based on estimated full-time equivalents or square footage, as applicable.

**NOTE 20 – LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY**

The Church's financial assets available within one year of the statement of financial position date for general expenditure are as follows:

	2024	2023
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 25,092,395	\$ 74,070,232
Operating Investments	100,997,365	54,540,928
	<u>\$ 126,089,760</u>	<u>\$ 128,611,160</u>

As part of the Church's liquidity management, the Church invests a portion of its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities, and other obligations come due. The Church had \$36,619,240 and \$33,828,451 in board designated endowments without donor restriction at January 31, 2024 and 2023, respectively. While the Church does not have any intention of liquidating the board designated endowments, and they are not currently available for general expenditure, these funds could be made available with Church Council approval.

**NOTE 21 – SUBSEQUENT EVENTS**

Management has performed an analysis of the activities and transactions subsequent to January 31, 2024, to determine the need for any adjustments to and/or disclosures within the audited financial statements for the year ended January 31, 2024. See Note 18 for a contingency that resulted subsequent to year end. Management has performed their analysis through June 21, 2024, the date the financial statements were available to be issued. Activities subsequent to this date have not been evaluated by management.

# **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

## **Outdoor Ministry Affiliation**

Affiliation is the way the ELCA establishes and maintains its relationship with the outdoor ministries of this church. Through affiliation the outdoor ministry organization affirms a commitment to a relationship between itself and ELCA congregation(s), synod(s) and other affiliated outdoor ministries. Together, we seek deep partnerships to strengthen our work together for the sake of the gospel.

### **Benefits of Affiliation**

The chief benefits of affiliation rest in the trusted relationships that it represents. Outdoor ministry sites are centers for faith development and renewal for the whole church. Synods and congregations are strengthened in their witness to the gospel and ability to disciple people into the faith. Community is discovered, justice is pursued and love is lived out. These symbiotic relationships strengthen the whole church and enable people of all ages to find their way into a deeper relationship with God and the church.

Affiliated camps can participate in the ELCA's International Camp Counselor Program. They are also part of the network of young adults who can offer training, ongoing support and opportunities for staff like Young Adults in Global Mission, and other leadership training opportunities to serve as lay or ordained leaders. Outdoor ministries may work with directors for evangelical mission and other synod and churchwide staff to help establish new ministries and find ways for participants to continue in Christian community.

Outdoor ministry professionals who are rostered ministers in the ELCA may receive a letter of call through a synod council.

Affiliated outdoor ministries are eligible to sponsor employees through the ELCA's church benefit program administered by Portico.

Affiliation with the ELCA is one criteria for membership in Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM).

Affiliated outdoor ministries are listed and identified as ministries of the ELCA on its website and records.

ELCA-affiliated outdoor ministries are eligible to receive grants and other funding from the ELCA.

## **Requirements for Affiliation**

I. Church affiliation. Each affiliated outdoor ministry shall have:

- A. A mission, purpose or faith statement that is consistent with the ELCA constitution.
- B. At least 50% of its board members from ELCA congregations. However, if the ministry is a formal ecumenical relationship, the percentage of ELCA board members will be proportional to the ELCA's involvement.
- C. If there are corporate members, at least one must be an ELCA congregation, an ELCA synod or an ELCA-affiliated social ministry organization if there are corporate members.
- D. Incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation that does or will qualify as a tax-exempt organization under 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code. Such qualification may be through inclusion in the ELCA group ruling, another organization's group ruling or through its own ruling.

II. Accountability. Each affiliated outdoor ministry shall:

- A. Share financial statements and program reports with corporate members.
- B. Include in its organizing documents an acknowledgment that the organization is fully responsible for its own management and fiscal affairs, and that church affiliation shall not cause any Lutheran congregation, synod, affiliated social ministry organization or the

ELCA to incur or be subject to the organization's liabilities or debts (including any loan or bond prospectus).

### III. Interdenominational Outdoor Ministries

Outdoor ministries that otherwise qualify for affiliation may also relate to other Lutheran or full communion church bodies.

### IV. Accreditation and Compliance

- A. Each affiliated outdoor ministry shall comply with applicable federal, state and local laws.
- B. Each affiliated outdoor ministry shall officially express commitment to professional standards of health and safety in policy and in practice such as those codified by the American Camp Association (ACA).

### V. Professional Leadership

- A. Professional leaders who are rostered in the ELCA shall be hired in a manner consistent with the practices of the synod on whose territory the outdoor ministry resides and attend synod boundaries (and other) training at the intervals recommended by that synod.
- B. Professional leadership participates regularly in the activities of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM).
- C. Policies of each ministry shall be consistent with relevant ELCA social teachings.

### **Provisional Affiliation**

Upon recommendation of the appropriate program unit of the churchwide organization, ELCA affiliation will be granted for one year to outdoor ministries that comply with most of the requirements for affiliation but need time to make adjustments to meet all requirements. Provisional affiliation may be extended for an additional year upon the recommendation of the program unit.

## **Procedures for Affiliation**

- 1) The outdoor ministry will be provided a copy of this affiliation document, and the Confession of Faith, Nature of the Church, and Statement of Purpose of the ELCA found in the Constitution.
- 2) If, following the review of these documents, the governing board of the outdoor ministry desires to be affiliated with the ELCA, it will notify the appropriate program unit in writing and attach a copy of the board action making such a request.
- 3) A representative of the appropriate program unit will contact the synod bishop(s) on whose territory the outdoor ministry operates to inform the bishop of the outdoor ministry's request for ELCA affiliation.
- 4) A representative of the appropriate program unit will request that the following documents be submitted for review:
  - Mission Statement
  - Articles of Incorporation
  - Constitution and Bylaws
  - Copy of Tax Exemption letter (if not included in the ELCA Group Exemption)
- 5) If a portion of the corporation members are of a Lutheran church body other than the ELCA or a full communion partner, a statement of the relationship to the other church body and a photocopy of any official recognition received from that body will be requested.
- 6) An affiliated outdoor ministry, a majority of whose directors represent ELCA corporate members, will upon written request on the ELCA-prescribed form be included in the ELCA group exemption filing with the IRS. Any outdoor ministry that has applied for or has received a determination letter directly from the IRS is not eligible for inclusion in the ELCA group exemption.
- 7) In the course of granting ELCA affiliation, a site visit may be arranged.
- 8) If all of the requirements are met, a recommendation to grant affiliation status will be made by the appropriate program unit of the churchwide organization.

## VII. Exceptions

Application for exceptions to affiliation criteria must be made to the Christian Community and Leadership home area of the ELCA.

ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Staff Report to Church Council, Fall 2024

# Ecumenical Relations

## Ecumenical Dialogues

The third in-person meeting of the **US Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue** took place at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore this October. This meeting was a review of past rounds of dialogue and a further focus on the goal of the present round: a common exploration of episcopé.



In June, the Lutheran World Federation Council approved the appointment of Bp. Patricia Lull as co-chair of the **international Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue**. The LWF Council also affirmed the **Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on the Filioque**, which urges a refocus on the original wording. A second Lutheran-Orthodox “Common Statement on the Holy Spirit, the Church and the World” was also affirmed.

## Full Communion

Following the **UMC General Conference** in early May, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton offered a [pastoral letter](#) of support to the members of the United Methodist Church (UMC). The Conference, which had been postponed since 2020, included a number of significant outcomes, including adopting a plan for worldwide regionalization to restructure the UMC in more equitable ways, the lifting of a 40-year ban on the ordination of practicing homosexual clergy and the removal of harmful language related to the LGBTQIA+ community. The General Conference also adopted a proposal for full communion with The Episcopal Church, which now awaits action by The Episcopal Church's General Convention in 2027. You can read a full overview of the outcomes at [umc.org](http://umc.org).

The final in-person gathering of the current iteration of Heads of Churches of **Churches Beyond Borders** (ELCA, TEC, ELCIC, ACC) took place at **The Episcopal Church General Convention** in Louisville in June. They participated in the honoring of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the ecumenical guest program. Unfortunately, the CBB solidarity visit to the Holy Land that was rescheduled from October 2023 to May 2024 was postponed again because of the war.



As part of its consent calendar, the TEC General Convention **adopted “A Proposal for the Exchangeability of the Diaconate”** as an interpretation of Called to Common Mission. At its October meeting, the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee finalized updates to *the Orderly Exchange* document, which provides guidelines for implementing exchangeability under *Called to Common Mission*. The updates reflect growth in full communion over 25 years, as well as the possibility for the exchangeability of deacons. The revised *Orderly Exchange* is currently under review by legal counsel in both churches; it will then go for further final reviews within each church.



*Once all necessary reviews are completed on both sides, the exchangeability of deacons will be possible. We anticipate this to be no later than spring 2025.*

The **TEC House of Bishops adopted a resolution** assuring Bishop Eaton of their prayers and rejoicing “in our most recent agreement on the diaconate and the service of deacons in the ministry of our two Churches as yet another visible sign of deeper unity between us.”

The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe was elected the next presiding bishop of TEC during the General Convention. His scaled-down investiture will take place at the Chapel of Christ the Lord in The Episcopal Church Center in New York City (rather than the National Cathedral) in early November. Bishop Eaton will participate in this service, which will also be livestreamed.



The **RCA General Synod** met in Tucson in June. The ELCA was represented by Grand Canyon Synod Luther Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network Rep. Rev. Dr. Jonathan Linman. A multi-year discernment process culminated at this General Synod, as recommendations from the [RCA Restructuring Team](#) were considered.

These actions were approved:

- Condense regional synods and classes into a single assembly\*
- Update the name of the merged assembly: middle assembly\*
- Ensure equity in the new judicial bodies
- Hold General Synod in-person every three years
- Resize the delegation of General Synod
- Experiment with a consensus model for decision making
- Adjust the approval process for changes to the
- Pursue an equitable and just ordination and reception process (amended)
- Adjust the commissions’ sizes and requirements (amended)
- Allow gifted elders to serve as church supervisors\* (amended)

Two recommendations were rejected. Deacons will not serve as voting delegates to middle assemblies, and there will not be a 2% cap on General Synod covenant shares. The approved changes will be considered next by classes, and then approved by General Synod 2025. Rev. Dr. Carmelo Santos continues to accompany the RCA through their Theology Commission as they work on theological resources for their restructuring process.



The **226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA)** took place in Salt Lake City in late June/early July under the theme “Live into Hope.” The Rev. Jihyun Oh, Director of Mid Council Ministries and an Associate Stated Clerk in the Office of the General Assembly, was elected as the next Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

### **Multi-Lateral & Conciliar Ecumenism**

The **National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) Governing Board** met in mid-May at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC, under the Theme, “Navigating the Boundaries of Church and State.” The meeting included final preparations for the [NCC Freedom Summer campaign](#),

which ran from June 19 (Juneteenth) through August 17 to mobilize people against voter suppression and to encourage voter registration. On May 15, a worship service was held at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation on Capitol Hill to install Bishop Eaton as the Chair of the NCC Governing Board; her term will conclude October 2025 with the installation of HE Elpidophoros of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

The annual NCC Christian Unity Gathering took place in Nashville, Tenn. in mid-October under the



theme, “Equitable Futures: Paving the Way for Environmental and Economic Justice.” Plenary speakers and site visits explored theological foundations and practical steps churches can take. The latest Faith & Order publication, *Confronting Racism and White Supremacy in the US*, was launched during the event, with a chapter contributed by the Rev. Dr. Carmelo Santos. Church Council member Sheena Foster participated as a seminarian from Wartburg.

The 2024 **Christian Churches Together Forum** took place October 8-11

in Memphis, Tennessee under the theme *Come Holy Spirit: ReNew, Restore, and Reconcile*. In light of this year’s 30th anniversary of the Spirit-filled “Memphis Miracle” and first anniversary of the “Asbury Outpouring,” both of which included a concern for repentance and racial reconciliation, the Forum explored the call to justice in the life of the Spirit. Bishop Suzanne Dillahunt, who serves on the Steering Committee, represented the ELCA, and Bishop Kevin Strickland attended on behalf of the Southeastern Synod. They were joined by Kristen Opalinski and LEIRN President Rev. Mari Larson.



The **Global Christian Forum** (GCF) held its fourth global gathering marking its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in



April in Accra, Ghana in April. The forum is a unique gathering of global Christian churches and organizations from all the major streams of world Christianity. The message from the Fourth Global Gathering “[That the World May Know](#)” highlighted a gospel of unity and the GCF’s charism of sharing faith stories, personal and collective, in order to embrace diversity and foster mutual respect. The ELCA partnered with the LWF to ensure Lutheran participation from the global south.

An ecumenical group gathered in Seattle from August 12-15 for a week of discussions on “**AI and the Church.**” The event was co-sponsored by the ELCA’s Innovation Unit, the PCUSA and TEC. Virginia Theological Seminary was the convening institution. Kristen Opalinski and Rev. Dr. Carmelo Santos joined Iain Chester and other Innovation colleagues as the ELCA presence. They visited the headquarters of Microsoft Corporation to learn about their “AI for Good” initiatives and the ethical guardrails around the technology. Cohorts were formed that will continue investigating and working on the ethics of AI and applications of AI for ministry from an ecumenical perspective.

The biennial conference of the international **Anglican Lutheran Society** met September 13-17 in Edinburgh, Scotland under the theme, “Church in a State.” Kathryn Lohre was a keynote presenter. Her paper was titled, “On Earth as in Heaven: The Prophetic Church in the Polarized Public Space.”

Her primary sources included the 2016 LWF study document “[The Church in the Public Space](#),” ELCA social teaching, and the 2023 “[Lambeth Calls: God’s Church for God’s World](#).” Her presentation can be found on the society’s [website](#).

The following week, Kathryn Lohre attended the National Council of Churches in Korea’s centenary celebrations in Seoul, South Korea, representing the ELCA and the LWF. The global ecumenical movement’s leadership in the movement for the reunification of the Korean peninsula has been longstanding and sustained, and given current events is now focused on reconciliation.

# Inter-Religious Relations

## Inter-Religious Dialogues

The ELCA participates in the National Council of Churches’ inter-religious dialogues with Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs. During this period, the dialogues with Buddhists, Hindus, and Jews took place.

The **National Buddhist-Christian Dialogue** met during the last week of May at the University of the



West in Rosemead, California, the first university in the United States established to cultivate learning in the context of Buddhist precepts. Those gathered heard an intergenerational panel reflect on shared challenges and hopes and another panel focusing on how each tradition understands and engages in the process of peacebuilding. An important aspect of the dialogue has been the value placed on the whole and not allowing conflict to divide its

members into “sides.” A prominent theme was the call to empathy and the need to stand together to help the vulnerable in our midst.

The **National Hindu-Christian Dialogue** also met during the last week of May, at the Vedanta Center and Temple in Hollywood, Calif. The group took part in two exercises. The first invited each member to articulate their appreciation for and challenges with the other tradition. The second was an exercise to articulate a mission statement, which revealed common goals as well as differences. For example, the group explored how each tradition understands the concept and practice of justice. As in the National Buddhist-Christian Dialogue, a panel discussion reflected upon each tradition’s understanding of and engagement in peacebuilding. This included examples of how each tradition subverts violence toward peace.



The **National Jewish-Christian Dialogue** met in Philadelphia in June. This was the second meeting since the Hamas attacks on Oct. 7, 2023, and the subsequent war in Gaza. Members of the dialogue carefully examined texts, statements, and essays on topics that included waging war, Zionism in its various forms, and liberation theology in the context of Palestine. Participants shared

a sense that they were making progress in understanding each other’s perspectives despite the tensions of the current moment.

In late March during Ramadan, the **Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign** hosted an interfaith iftar in



Washington DC. The event acknowledged the difficulties facing the interfaith movement in the US in light of the war in Gaza, and the rising bigotry and violence experienced in the US as a result. In September the Campaign published a “**Faith-Rooted Primer for Understanding & Addressing Bigotry in the US Amid the Violence in Israel-Palestine**” as a resource to equip religious and interfaith leaders to respond effectively, thoughtfully, and responsibly to such bigotry. “This resource offers insights and recommendations for understanding and addressing bigotry targeting Muslims, Jews, and Arabs and Palestinians (who are often Christian), both in this moment and going forward.”

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “**A Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community.**” You are encouraged to uplift this in your synods, along with the more recently published resources from the ELCA, including “**Preaching and Teaching ‘With Love and Respect for The Jewish People,’**” and the LWF’s “**Hope for the Future: A Study Document for Renewing Jewish-Christian Relations.**” The Declaration anniversary will be uplifted during livestreamed events at LSTC on November 11.

Bishop Eaton published a [video](#) ahead of the one-year anniversary of October 7, 2023. She also wrote a letter to Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism. He shared the solidarity letter publicly on Facebook and included the following comments: “During the excruciating and uncertain past year many within our wider Jewish community have wondered where are our faith partners, but I have no doubt as to where Bishop Eaton and the ELCA stand. We are profoundly grateful for their love and solidarity...”

## Upcoming Events

**The National Workshop on Christian Unity**, an ecumenical formation event and the annual in-person meeting of the Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network (LEIRN) will be held November 18-21 at the Lutheran Center in Chicago. This year’s workshop will be themed “Hear what the Spirit is Saying to the Churches.” The program will focus on networking and practical ecumenism. See [National Workshop on Christian Unity](#)

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## Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Staff, Office of the Presiding Bishop

Kristen Opalinski, Manager, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

Carmelo Santos, Director, Theological Diversity and Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

Kathryn Lohre, Executive, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations & Theological Discernment

# Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust

## Specific Draft Edits and Explanations

Line Numbers and Proposed Edits	Explanation for the Edit
<p>Lines 7-9 Original: “Sexual intimacy, together with promises of fidelity and public accountability, nurtures bonds that allow people to thrive and provides a rich context for the care and support of children.”</p> <p>Draft edit: Sexual intimacy, together with promises of fidelity and public accountability, <u>is intended to nurture</u> bonds that allow people to thrive and <u>can provide</u> a rich context for the care and support of children.</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings of marriage and the “import that marriage legally is now a covenant between two individuals,” which may or may not involve having children. This edit proposes adding conditional language recognizing that marriage may not involve having or planning to have children.</p>
<p>Lines 11-22 and footnotes a, b, c, and d Original: “Marriage is a covenant of mutual promises, commitment, and hope authorized legally by the state and blessed by God. The historic Christian tradition and the Lutheran Confessions have recognized marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman, reflecting Mark 10: 6–9: ‘But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one put asunder.’ (Jesus here recalls Genesis 1:27; 2:23–24.) (see Addendum)”</p> <p>Draft edit: <u>Christian marriage is understood as</u> a covenant of mutual promises, commitment, and hope authorized legally by the state and blessed by God. The <u>predominant</u> historic Christian tradition has recognized marriage as a covenant between a man and a woman, reflecting Mark 10: 6–9. <u>The Lutheran Confessions assume and reflect this understanding of marriage. Ongoing</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization for reconsideration directs the church to consider edits that reflect “current church understanding, church policy, civil law, and public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender non-conforming couples...” In this specific section, the authorization directs consideration “that marriage legally is now a covenant between two individuals.” The draft edits reflect these directives. In addition, for clarity, text that refers to disagreement on complex issues has been moved from the end of this section (page 18 of the original social statement) to the front of the section, edited, and included here. In the draft edit, there are additional footnotes that 1) note the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Obergefell v. Hodges; 2) include the text of Mark 10:6-9; 3) reference more recent ELCA social teachings; and 4) cite recent data about public acceptance of marriage of same-sex couples. These footnotes reflect consideration of items as authorized by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.</p>

<p><u>interpretations of the Scriptures and the Confessions regarding sex, gender, and sexuality have introduced a complexity of considerations about which there is not universal agreement. At the time of this writing, within U.S. society and within the ELCA, many, but not all, have come to accept marriage as a covenant between two consenting adults that should be protected by law regardless of sex, gender, or sexuality.</u></p>	
<p>Lines 37-39 Original: “It is a binding relationship that provides conditions for personal well-being, the flourishing of the partner, and the possibility of procreation and the nurturing of children.”</p> <p>Draft edit: It is a binding relationship that provides conditions for personal well-being, the flourishing of <u>the partner, procreation</u> and the nurturing of children.</p>	<p>Explanation: This edit clarifies language in the original sentence without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence and thus is within the parameters approved for this reconsideration.</p>
<p>Line 39 – footnote e New footnote added: This church recognizes that there are multiple ways of nurturing children including but not limited to caring for one’s own biological or adopted children.</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings of marriage and the “import that marriage legally is now a covenant between two individuals,” which may or may not involve having children. This draft edit proposes adding conditional language that recognizes that marriage may not involve having or planning to have children.</p>
<p>Lines 41-42 Original: “...marriage provides a context of love, trust, honesty, and commitment...”</p> <p>Draft edit: ...marriage <u>is intended to provide</u> a context of trust, honest, and commitment...</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings of marriage. This includes growing awareness of marriages that may not foster trust, honesty, or commitment due to human sin. This draft edit proposes adding conditional language to reflect this, consistent with references to human sin in the social statement.</p>
<p>Lines 47-48 Original: “...the play and delight of physical love are crucial expressions...”</p> <p>Draft edit: “...the play and delight of physical love <u>are expressions...</u>”</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings of marriage and the “import that marriage legally is now a covenant between two individuals.” The draft edit acknowledges that this relationship may not</p>

	involve physical expressions of love, either by choice or circumstance.
<p>Line 56</p> <p>Original: “The public promises of marriage between a man and a woman, therefore, also protect the community...”</p> <p>Draft edit: “The public promises of marriage, therefore, also protect the community...”</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings of marriage and the “import that marriage legally is now a covenant between two individuals.”</p>
<p>Lines 86, 92, and 96-97</p> <p>Original: divorced</p> <p>Draft edit: <u>distressed, separated, or divorced</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings of marriage. This draft edit expands without changing the substantive meaning of the text to include spouses experiencing marital distress or separation as of special concern to the church.</p>
<p>Lines 101-102</p> <p>Original: “...marriage for a husband and wife.”</p> <p>Draft edit: ...marriage for <u>both spouses</u>...</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings of marriage and the “import that marriage legally is now a covenant between two individuals.”</p>
<p>Lines 111-114</p> <p>Original: “The legal contract creates a public arrangement within which a couple may safely and equitably share their assets and resources, arrive at joint decisions, anticipate children, protect and nurture them, and plan for a shared future.”</p> <p>Draft edit: The legal contract creates a public arrangement within which a couple <u>can</u> safely and equitably share their assets and resources; arrive at joint decisions; <u>plan for a shared future; and may anticipate children, protect, and nurture them.</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings of marriage and the “import that marriage legally is now a covenant between two individuals,” which may or may not involve having children. This draft edit clarifies the conditional language that was in the original social statement and adds clarifying punctuation.</p>
<p>Lines 117-118</p> <p>Original: “...God’s blessing on a man and a woman...”</p> <p>Draft edit: ...God’s blessing on <u>the couple</u>...</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings of marriage and the “import that marriage legally is now a covenant between two individuals.”</p>
<p>Deleted paragraph from end of section, line 124</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings and civil law. Much of the original text of this paragraph reflects pre-2015</p>

	<p>legal and social understandings of marriage in society and the church. Text referring to the diversity of beliefs within the church was moved to the opening paragraph of this section (page 15.)</p>
<p>Lines 126-127 Original: “Lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships”  Draft edit: “<u>A diversity of sex, gender, and sexuality in publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous relationships</u>”</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to “review wording” in this section “in light of public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender-non-conforming couples.” In addition, the general authorization directs the church to review wording in light of current church understanding. The draft edit here reflects updated wording.</p>
<p>Line 129 Original: “...in new ways the need of same-gender-oriented individuals to seek relationships...”  Draft edit: “...in new ways the needs <u>of individuals</u> to seek relationships...”</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to “review wording” in this section “in light of public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender-non-conforming couples.” In addition, the general authorization directs the church to review wording in light of current church understanding. The draft edit here reflects updated wording.</p>
<p>Lines 132-133  Original: “...understandings of human sexuality in medicine, social science, and corresponding public policy about same-gender relationships.”  Draft edit: “...understandings of <u>sex, gender, and sexuality</u> in medicine, social science, and corresponding <u>public policy</u>.”</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to “review wording” in this section “in light of public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender-non-conforming couples.” In addition, the general authorization directs the church to review wording in light of current church understanding. The draft edit here reflects updated wording based on more recent ELCA social teachings.</p>
<p>Lines 135-136  Original: “We in the ELCA recognize that many of our sisters and brothers in same-gender relationships...”  Draft edit: We in the ELCA recognize that many of our <u>siblings</u> in same-gender <u>or gender-diverse</u> relationships...</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit is consistent with recent social teaching, while not changing the substantive meaning of the sentence. Two footnotes were added in the draft edit, both of which are described below.</p>
<p>Line 135 – footnote f Footnote added: “As the ELCA’s social statement on <i>Faith, Sexism, and Justice</i> (2019) notes, terminology changes over time and may differ between communities. While here, the term ‘same-gender’ is used, we note that some prefer the use of the term ‘same-sex,’ while in</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit references recent social teaching, while not changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>



<p>some circumstances other terms may be more appropriate.”</p>	
<p>Line 136 – footnote g Footnote added: “The term ‘gender-diverse’ is similar to the term ‘gender non-conforming.’ However, ‘gender-diverse’ encompasses a wide diversity of identities and expressions in relationships between individuals, including gender non-conforming, non-binary, genderqueer, and transgender persons. Definitions for these terms can be found in the glossary of <i>Faith, Sexism, and Justice</i>, p. 75-80.</p>	<p>Explanation: This footnote offers a description of a term introduced in the previous draft edit. It also references current ELCA social teaching, which reflects “current church understanding” as noted in the authorization for reconsideration.</p>
<p>Lines 142-143  Original: “...lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships...”  Draft edit: ...lifelong, monogamous relationships of <u>same-gender or gender-diverse</u> couples...</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests more current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 146-147  Original: “...convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships...”  Draft edit: ...convictions regarding lifelong, monogamous <u>relationships between individuals of diverse sexes, genders, or sexualities...</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests more current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 148-150  Original: “It opposes all forms of verbal or physical harassment and assault based on sexual orientation.”  Draft edit: It opposes all forms of verbal or physical harassment and assault based on sexual orientation <u>or gender identity</u>.</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings and civil law. This draft edit reflects current understanding of vulnerability to threats of harassment and assault without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 152-153  Original: “...support same-gender couples...”  Draft edit: ...support same-gender <u>or gender-diverse</u> couples...</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 157-159</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests</p>

<p>Original: “This includes a pastoral responsibility to those who are same-gender in their orientation and to those who are seeking counsel about their sexual self-understanding.”</p> <p>Draft edit: This includes a pastoral responsibility to those <u>with diverse gender self-identities or sexualities</u> and to those who are seeking counsel about their <u>gender or sexual self-understanding</u>.</p>	<p>current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 163-164</p> <p>Original: “...how to regard same-gender committed relationships...”</p> <p>Draft edit: ...how to regard <u>the committed relationships of same-gender or gender-diverse couples...</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 181-182</p> <p>Original: “...some are convinced that same-gender sexual behavior is sinful...”</p> <p>Draft edit: ...some are convinced that <u>sexual behavior between individuals of the same gender is sinful...</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 184-185</p> <p>Original: “They believe same-gender sexual behavior carries...”</p> <p>Draft edit: They <u>believe sexual behavior between individuals of the same gender carries...</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 192-195</p> <p>Original: “...some are convinced that homosexuality and even lifelong, monogamous, homosexual relationships...”</p> <p>Draft edit: ...some convinced that <u>sexual behavior between individuals of the same gender and even lifelong, monogamous relationships between two individuals of the same gender ...</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests more current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>

<p>Lines 205-207</p> <p>Original: “They believe that the neighbor and community are best served when same-gender relationships...”</p> <p>Draft edit: They believe that the neighbor and community are best served when <u>relationships between individuals of the same gender...</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests more current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 216-217</p> <p>Original: “... best served when same-gender relationships are lived out...”</p> <p>Draft edit: ... best served when <u>relationships between two individuals of the same gender</u> are lived out...</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to consider current church understandings. This draft edit suggests more current language without changing the substantive meaning of the sentence.</p>
<p>Lines 238-242</p> <p>Original: “In contemporary society, the term ‘family’ includes a variety of forms, more akin to the older term of ‘household,’ exclusively employed by Luther to include immediate family members, relatives, and others.”</p> <p>Draft edit: In contemporary society, the term “family” <u>denotes a variety of forms, such as married couples, partners, children, extended relatives, and others who may be part of one’s chosen family. This contemporary understanding is</u> more akin to the older term of “household,” <u>employed</u> by Luther to include immediate family members, relatives, and others.</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to “consider references to diversity of family configurations” in this section. The draft edit suggests the breadth intended by the term “family” in the original text and in the authorization. The removal of the term “exclusively” reflects a more accurate description of Luther’s use of the term “household,” a clarification that is included in the parameters of editorial reconsiderations.</p>
<p>Line 252</p> <p>Original: “...dependence upon parents and others...”</p> <p>Draft edit: ...dependence upon parents, <u>caregivers,</u> and others...</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to “consider references to diversity of family configurations” in this section, which often include non-parental caregivers.</p>
<p>Lines 268-269</p> <p>Original: “As such, society properly both regulates and shelters families...”</p>	<p>This draft edit offers clarifying language about society’s role in relation to regulating and sheltering families.</p>

<p>Draft edit: As such, society <u>is responsible for both regulating and sheltering families...</u></p>	
<p>Lines 297-300</p> <p>Original: “In this country and throughout the twentieth century, the legally married, heterosexual ‘nuclear family’ has been supported by strong conventions.<sup>31</sup> The nuclear family is well-structured to foster the development of trust in children and youth. The experience of millions of people and recent social science findings demonstrate its ability to do so.<sup>32</sup> This does not mean, however, that it has always done so effectively.”</p> <p>Draft edit: <u>Throughout the twentieth century, the legally married, nuclear family has been supported by strong social conventions and is intended to foster trust in children and youth.<sup>32</sup> This does not mean, however, that it has always done so effectively.</u></p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to “consider references to diversity of family configurations” in this section. The draft edits here reflect awareness of the “diversity of family configurations” and recent research into diverse family configurations. Footnote 32 in the original social statement will remain in the draft edit.</p>
<p>Lines 300-306</p> <p>Original: “Families can shelter sexism or domestic violence, and, in such situations, the safety of children or others who are harmed is of utmost importance.<sup>33</sup>”</p> <p>Draft edit: Families can shelter sexism or domestic violence, and, in such situations, the safety of children or others who are harmed is of utmost importance.<sup>33</sup> <u>Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions assume and encourage households similar in some ways to the nuclear family model. However, historically and currently, there are wide variations in household structure as stated above, including extended family members and non-biologically related members.</u></p>	<p>Explanation: This draft edit moves text from footnote 31 in the original social statement into the main text. The language added here was adopted by the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as part of the original social statement.</p>
<p>Lines 309-313</p> <p>Original: “There are natural and adoptive families, foster families, blended families, families with a missing generation, and families where the parents are the same gender. Millions of households in the U.S., and many in our church, are headed by single parents—</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization directs the church to “consider references to diversity of family configurations” in this section. The draft edits reflect this authorization, noting families without children and the diversity of households with single or unmarried parents.</p>

<p>mostly women—whether widowed, divorced, or never married.”</p> <p>Draft edit: There are <u>biologically-related</u> and adoptive families, foster families, blended families, families with a missing generation, <u>families without children</u>, and families where the parents are the same gender, to name just a few. Millions of households in the U.S., and many in our church, are headed by <u>single or unmarried parents</u>, whether widowed, divorced, or never married.</p>	
<p>Line 322</p> <p>Original: “...regardless of family situation.”</p> <p>Draft edit: ...regardless of family situation <u>or household structure</u>.</p>	<p>Explanation: This draft edit reflects the authorization’s direction to “consider references to diversity of family configurations” in this section.</p>
<p>Lines 326-327</p> <p>Original: “...social and economic trends that counter the development of strong families.”</p> <p>Draft edit: “...social and economic trends that <u>inhibit</u> the development of strong families.”</p>	<p>Explanation: This draft edit is intended to clarify the meaning of the sentence without changing the substantive meaning of it and so falls within the parameters of reconsideration.</p>
<p>Line 331-333</p> <p>Original: “Family life also is supported when its members strive to meet reasonable expectations to forgive and to seek forgiveness and to bear each other’s burdens responsibly. These practices honor God and, when learned in the context of a loving and committed family, may lead to mature and healthy expressions of sexuality. When trust has been betrayed...”</p> <p>Draft edit: Family life also is supported when its members strive to meet reasonable expectations to forgive and to seek forgiveness and to bear each other’s burdens <u>responsibly</u>. <u>When trust has been betrayed...</u></p>	<p>Explanation: This draft edit is intended to clarify the meaning of the paragraph without changing the substantive meaning of it and so falls within the parameters of reconsideration.</p>
<p>Lines 334-335 and footnote h</p> <p>Original: “...forgiveness, loving correction, and reconciliation must be attempted.”</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization for reconsideration directs the church to consider “current church understanding” and “the diversity of family configurations.” The draft edit here reflects current church understanding of</p>

<p>Draft edit: ...forgiveness, loving correction, and reconciliation <u>should be encouraged when appropriate to the specific situation.</u></p> <p>Draft edit: Add footnote referencing the ELCA’s social message on “Gender-based Violence” (2015)</p>	<p>the complexity of forgiveness in situations of abuse. A footnote referring to the ELCA’s social message on “Gender-based Violence,” which discusses forgiveness, is included as a draft edit.</p>
<p>Lines 338-343</p> <p>Original: “...historical teachings concerning sexuality has harmed individuals, deepened suffering, or torn families apart. This includes actions that abandon or shun people for unwed pregnancy or for a same-gender orientation. Hate crimes and violence against those who are regarded as sexually different sometimes have been perpetrated publicly in the name of Christ.”</p> <p>Draft edit: ...historical teachings concerning <u>sex, gender, and sexual orientation</u> has harmed individuals, deepened suffering, or torn families apart. This includes actions that abandon or shun people for unwed pregnancy or for <u>sexual orientation</u>. Hate crimes and violence <u>based on the victim’s actual or perceived sex, gender or sexuality</u> sometimes have been perpetrated in the name of Christ.</p>	<p>Explanation: The authorization for reconsideration directs the church to consider “current church understanding.” This draft edit reflects current church understanding as found in more recent social teachings (see the ELCA’s social statement on Faith, Sexism, and Justice, 2019)</p>
<p>Line 346 – footnote i</p> <p>Footnote added: See <i>Faith, Sexism, and Justice</i>, p. 2-5, 12-14.</p>	<p>Explanation: This draft edit would reflect the authorization to consider “current church understanding” without altering the meaning of the text.</p>
<p>Line 359 – footnote j</p> <p>Footnote added: For more on domestic violence and gender-based violence, see <i>Faith, Sexism, and Justice</i>, p. 76. See also “Gender-based Violence” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2015.)</p>	<p>Explanation: This draft edit would reflect the authorization to consider “current church understanding” without altering the meaning of the text.</p>
<p>Lines 365-366</p> <p>Original: “...all who are dependent upon others in the family...”</p> <p>Draft edit: “...all who are dependent upon others in the <u>household</u>...”</p>	<p>Explanation: This draft edit reflects the authorization’s direction to “consider references to diversity of family configurations” in this section.</p>

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<p>Lines 375-376</p> <p>Original: "...discernment about changing family configurations..."</p> <p>Draft edit: ...discernment about <u>diverse</u> family configurations...</p>	<p>Explanation: This draft edit is intended to clarify the meaning of the sentence without changing the substantive meaning of it and so falls within the parameters of reconsideration.</p>
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Jubilee USA Network  
Social Policy Resolution Draft 2024

Whereas the ELCA affirms in its “Social Message on Human Rights” that this church is called to participate in social structures, such as the economy, with hope but “critically as a public institution...and as a financial institution” (pg. 9);

Whereas multiple international human rights bodies “have consistently observed that excessive debt service payments constitute an obstacle to development and the realization of human rights in many developing countries;”<sup>1</sup>

Whereas in its Social Statement on *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999) the ELCA recognizes that “programs to pay off debt typically divert funds from much needed educational, health, and environmental efforts, and from infrastructures for economic development,” often leaving the poorest people in developing countries “adversely affected” (pg. 6);

Whereas the ELCA is a founding member of the Jubilee USA Network, which is a coalition aimed at debt relief of under-resourced countries around the world and the redirection of resources to reduction of poverty and provision of health care and education for people living in poverty and with deep need;

Whereas Jubilee Network USA deepens and extends the advocacy work of the ELCA through providing expertise, capacity, and targeted work on debt, tax, and trade policies that help end poverty;

Whereas the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution in support of the Jubilee 2000: USA Campaign in 1999;

Whereas work through and with Jubilee Network USA continues through the ELCA’s Witness in Society ministry;

BE IT RESOLVED:

To receive with gratitude the request of the Upstate New York Synod to reaffirm the ELCA’s support of the Jubilee USA Network;

To reaffirm this church’s commitment to advocating for the “reduction of overwhelming international debt burdens in ways that do not impose further deprivations on the poor, and cancellation of some or all debt where severe indebtedness immobilizes a country’s economy”<sup>2</sup>;

To reaffirm this church’s support of and collaboration with Jubilee USA Network;

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, “Report of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights” (A/HRC/20/23), Anex, pg. 9.

<sup>2</sup> ELCA, *A Social Statement on Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1999), p. 7.



To commend staff of the ELCA's Witness in Society team for carrying forward the commitments of the ELCA's social teachings on international debt through ongoing collaboration with Jubilee USA Network;

To recognize the faithful work of congregations as advocates and supporters of economic justice through debt relief;

To encourage the churchwide organization of the ELCA to collaboratively draw attention to this commitment through publication of news releases or stories of Jubilee USA Network's success in reduction, cancellation, or restructuring of international debt;

To encourage ELCA-related colleges, universities, and seminaries to continue and increase education on the impact of international debt on development, poverty, and human rights; and

To call upon the churchwide organization, synods, congregations, and other worshipping communities to hold indebted countries in prayer.

## Amendments to Continuing Resolutions Recommended by the Office of the Secretary

### Chapter 5. PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

- 5.01.A16A24.** *This church commits itself to ethnic and racial diversity. Each expression of this church shall annually assess its ethnic and racial diversity when compared to the demographic data of its community or territory. The churchwide organization will work with synods as they assist congregations to reach out to persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.*
- 5.01.B19.** *Each synod shall submit its goals and strategies to the appropriate churchwide unit or office and shall annually submit a report on progress toward its goals to such unit or office.*
- ~~**5.01.C21.** *The term, “persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English,” shall be understood to mean African American, African Deseent, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native people. This definition, however, shall not be understood as limiting this church’s commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work.*~~
- ~~**5.01.D16C16.** *The Churchwide Assembly shall receive reports from the presiding bishop and the secretary that monitor this church’s progress toward meeting the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16A24.*~~
- ~~**5.01.E19D24.** *The Church Council shall establish triennial percentage goals for this church to meet the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16A24. The minimum goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.*~~
- ~~**5.01.F19E19.** *It is the goal of this church that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.*~~
- ~~**5.01.G19F19.** *To implement 5.01.g., those deacons elected as laypersons prior to the adoption of this provision may complete the term to which they were elected as a layperson. They would not be eligible for reelection as a layperson if such reelection were otherwise possible.*~~
- ~~**5.01.H21G24.** *For purposes of the representational principles set forth in 5.01.e. and f., the percentage of laypersons that is not allocated to women or men may be allocated to persons who identify as gender non-binary,*~~

*gender fluid, genderqueer, transgender, women, men, or other gender identities.*

**5.01.H24.** *This church is dedicated to fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment that honors the diversity of God's creation so that as many people as possible have the opportunity to participate fully in the life and work of this church. None of the definitions in Chapter 5 shall be construed as limiting this church's commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work. For all purposes in this church's governing documents, the terms diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility shall have the following meanings:*

*a. **Diversity** is a reality rooted in the variety found in the body of Christ: the wide range of communities and identities related to race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexuality, age, background, ability, socio-economic status, culture, and perspective.*

*b. **Equity** means fair treatment of people according to their needs. The principle of equity takes into account that due to poverty, sexism, racism, and other factors individuals or groups may require different resources and support to ensure that they have the same rights and abilities to make choices as others do.*

*c. **Inclusion** means the proactive and meaningful engagement of diverse individuals in all aspects of church life, especially in decision-making processes and leadership roles, creating a church culture of welcome, respect, and value for unique perspectives and abilities.*

*d. **Accessibility** means aspiring to develop and maintain this church's physical infrastructure, information, communication technology, programs, and services to maximize participation in the life of this church.*

**5.01.I24.** *This church commits to working to intentionally lift up voices from historically underrepresented groups in its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units. While specific identities are listed below, this church recognizes that humans have multiple aspects of their identities that are tied to systemic privilege and oppression that shape the lives of individuals and communities in distinct ways. For all purposes in this church's governing documents, historically underrepresented groups shall be understood to include the following:*

*a. Persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English;*

*b. Persons of diverse gender identities and persons of diverse sexual orientations;*

*c. Persons experiencing poverty or persons of lower income;*

*d. Persons living with disabilities;*

*e. Persons who are not natural-born United States citizens.*

**5.01.J24** For all purposes in this church's governing documents, the terms above shall have the following meanings:

**a. Persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English** means African American, African Caribbean, African Descent, African National, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Latin(-o, -a, -é, -x), Hispanic, American Indian, Indigenous, and Alaska Native people, as well as multi- and bi-racial people.

**b. Persons of diverse gender identities and persons of diverse sexual orientations** means individuals who identify beyond the sex and gender binary, individuals whose gender identity may be fluid, and individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or other sex, gender, and sexual identities that are more complex than sex, gender, and sexuality binaries.

**c. Persons experiencing poverty or persons of lower income** means individuals whose economic circumstances inhibit their ability to meet basic living needs according to their societal context and standards.

**d. Persons living with disabilities** means individuals who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may hinder their full participation in church life.

**e. Persons who are not natural-born United States citizens** needs no additional clarifying definition.

**5.01.K24.** It is the goal of this church that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be members of historically underrepresented groups in addition to the required 10 percent representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English in 5.01.e. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

**Chapter 7.  
MINISTRY**

**7.44.A19A24. Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament**

.....

*b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament*

Setting	Calling Body
1.0 Congregational ministry	
<u>1.7 Supply ministry</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>
10.0 Educational ministry	
10.1 ELCA-related seminary <u>(incorporated or unincorporated)</u> chaplain/faculty/ administrator	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit
10.2 Chaplain/faculty/ administrator of seminary unrelated to ELCA	Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit
10.3 ELCA-related college chaplain/ <u>non-seminary</u> faculty/ <u>non-seminary</u> administrator	Synod Council of the synod in which college is located

**7.74.A21A24. Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service**

.....

*b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service*

Setting	Calling Body
1.0 Congregational ministry	
<u>1.5 Interim congregation deacon</u>	<u>Synod Council</u>

**Chapter 10.  
SYNODS**

**10.31.A19A24.** *In special circumstances* ~~When authorized by the Synod Council to address special circumstances,~~ *the synod bishop may, when authorized by the Synod Council, be compensated as an employee or contractor for specified services to another expression of this church. Such an arrangement may be terminated by the Synod Assembly or Synod Council if determined to be detrimental to the function of the office or if the special circumstances no longer apply.*

**10.81.B14B24. Organization of the Conference of Bishops**

*The Conference of Bishops may establish committees as the members, from time to time, may determine to assist in fulfillment of assigned responsibilities. ~~Quadrennially~~Triennially, the Conference of Bishops shall elect a chair and vice chair to preside at meetings and serve as ex officio members of the executive committee of the conference with the presiding bishop and secretary. The Conference of Bishops shall establish criteria and terms for three synod bishops to be elected by the conference as members of the executive committee.*

**Chapter 12.  
CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY**

12.41.D24. *If the term of office of an ex-officio member of the Churchwide Assembly ends during a Churchwide Assembly, such person shall nevertheless remain an ex-officio member of the Churchwide Assembly, and shall not be replaced in that capacity, until the conclusion of the Churchwide Assembly.*

**Chapter 17.  
SEPARATELY INCORPORATED MINISTRIES**

**17.40.A19A24. Responsibilities of the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

*The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America— also known as ~~1517 Media~~Augsburg Fortress Publishers— shall:*

- .....*
- ~~j.~~ distribute the church periodical in accord with provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.*
- kj. determine its necessary financial reserves, appropriations, and publishing subsidies.*
- hk. make available resources to meet unique language and cultural needs, as feasible.*

**Chapter 19.  
NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION PROCESS**

**19.01.A24.** *In a year when the presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary shall be elected, those who will serve as voting members of the upcoming Churchwide Assembly shall be invited to identify the names of up to three persons per office who might be considered for election as presiding*

bishop, vice president, or secretary. Names shall be submitted to the Office of the Secretary at least four months prior to the assembly. The Office of the Secretary shall contact those persons identified and request biographical information. At least 30 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.

**19.01.D21D24. Election Procedures Utilizing the Ecclesiastical Ballot**

- ~~a.~~ For each election by ecclesiastical or nominating ballot, the exact number of appropriate ballot sets equal to the number of voting members from each synod will be given to the bishop of each synod. Unless an electronic or computerized voting system is being utilized, the bishops, or their designees, will be responsible for distributing the ballot sets to each of the voting members from their synods. The Elections Committee will be responsible for distributing the ballot sets to each officer and member of the Church Council serving as an ex officio voting member of the assembly.
- ~~b.a.~~ The chair will announce what type of voting system is to be used for the election. If ordered by the chair to use paper ballots, one of the numbered ballots from the appropriate ballot set is to be used on each ballot. The chair will announce the number of the ballot from the appropriate ballot set that is to be used for each ballot. Failure to use the correct numbered ballot will result in an illegal ballot.
- ~~b.b.~~ On the first ~~two~~ ballots for each office being selected by ecclesiastical or nominating ballot, both the first and last names of a nominee should be used. Members should endeavor to use correct spelling and should provide, on the first ballot, any additional accurate information identifying the nominee, such as title, position, synod, congregation, or residence.
- ~~d.~~ On the third and subsequent ballots conducted by written ballot, only the last name of the nominee need be used, provided there is no other nominee with the same or similar name.
- ~~e.c.~~ A member may vote for only one nominee on each ballot.
- ~~f.d.~~ Ballots should not be marked prior to the time the chair advises the voting members to do so.
- ~~g.~~ Written ballots should not be folded.
- ~~h.~~ Written ballots will be collected from the voting members in accordance with instructions from the Elections Committee or from the chair.
- ~~i.e.~~ When the results of the first ballot are presented, the chair of the assembly will announce when and how persons nominated may withdraw their names prior to the casting of the second ballot.
- ~~j.f.~~ On the second and subsequent ballots ~~When voting by electronic device,~~ the first position on each ballot shall be given to the nominee who received the greatest number of votes on the

immediately preceding ballot, with the remaining positions assigned to the other nominees in descending order of the number of votes received on the immediately preceding ballot. If two or more nominees were tied with the same number of votes on the immediately preceding ballot, their respective positions shall be in alphabetical order~~determined by draw by the chair of the Elections Committee.~~

kg. ~~On each ticket for which balloting is conducted by electronic device, the polls will remain open for a reasonable time, as determined by the chair, to permit voting members to record their votes.~~

**19.02.A21A24.** ~~On behalf of the Nominating Committee, the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—in the year preceding each regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly—shall solicit from eligible synods on a rotating basis the names of two persons in specified categories, in keeping with the representation principles of organization of this church as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, for possible election to the Church Council. Upon their ~~selection—nomination as~~ nominees by the assemblies of the respective synods, the names of the two persons shall be presented to the Nominating Committee for submission to the Churchwide Assembly. In the event that any nominee withdraws or is disqualified from possible service, the Nominating Committee shall request that the nominee’s synod provide a replacement name. In the event that the vacancy occurs subsequent to the preparation of the report of the Nominating Committee to the Churchwide Assembly, a floor nomination shall be provided from the same synod as the original nominee. Except as provided herein, no floor nominations for positions on the Church Council shall be permitted at the Churchwide Assembly.~~

**19.11.A21A24. Churchwide Assembly Nominations Desk and Nominations Form**

....  
c. ~~The required form to be used in making nominations from the floor shall include the nominee’s name, address, phone number, congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community membership, synod membership, information that enables compliance with the principles of organization as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, ~~lay or rostered status, white or person of color or primary language other than English status, congregational membership, synod membership, and affirmation of willingness to serve, if elected; the name, address, and synod membership of the voting member who is making the nomination; and such other information as the secretary of this church shall require.~~~~



- d. For purposes of nomination procedures, “synod membership” means ~~as defined in 19.04.02.:~~
- 1) ~~In the case of a layperson who is not on the roster of this church, the synod that includes the congregation in which such person holds membership; and~~
  - 2) ~~In the case of a rostered minister, the synod on whose roster such minister’s name is maintained.~~

**19.11.F21F24. Election Procedures Utilizing the Common Ballot**

- a. The common ballot is used in those elections when the ecclesiastical or nominating ballot is not used.
- b. ~~Unless an electronic or computerized voting system is being utilized, the exact number of ballot forms equal to the number of voting members from each synod will be given to the bishop of each synod. When instructed by the chair, the bishops, or their designees, will be responsible for distributing the ballot forms to each of the voting members from their synods. The vice president of this church will be responsible for distributing the ballot forms to each member of the Church Council serving as an ex officio voting member of the assembly. The Elections Committee will be responsible for distributing the ballot forms to each officer of this church.~~
- e. ~~Upon recommendation of the chair and with the consent of the assembly, the second common ballot may be conducted by electronic device. If the second common ballot is not conducted by electronic means, the distribution of ballot forms for the second common ballot will be in the same manner as the first common ballot.~~
- d. ~~Any discrepancy between the number of ballots given to a synod bishop and the number of voting members (including the synod bishop) from such synod must be reported by the synod bishop to the Elections Committee.~~
- eb. Each ticket for which an election is held will be considered a separate ballot.
- fc. A voting member may vote for only one nominee on each ticket.
- gd. Failure to vote for a nominee for every ticket does not invalidate a ballot for the tickets for which a nominee is marked.
- he. Ballots must be marked in accordance with the instructions presented in plenary session.
- i. ~~If a paper common ballot is utilized, ballot forms should not be folded.~~
- j. ~~Completed paper ballots must be deposited at the designated Ballot Stations at certain exits of the hall in which plenary sessions are held.~~

- ~~k.~~ *If a paper ballot is damaged so that it cannot be scanned, a replacement ballot may be obtained at the Ballot Station upon surrender of the damaged ballot.*
- ~~l.~~ *Unless otherwise ordered by the assembly, polls for the first common ballot close at the time designated in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure.*
- ~~m.~~ *On the second ballot each ticket for which balloting is conducted by electronic device, the polls will remain open for a reasonable time, as determined by the chair, to permit members to record their votes.*
- ~~n.~~ *Unless the second ballot is conducted electronically, polls for the second common ballot close at the time designated in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure or as otherwise ordered by the assembly.*
- ~~o.~~ *On the second ballot, whether by paper ballot or electronically, the first position on each ticket shall be given to the nominee who received the greatest number of votes on the first ballot. If two nominees are tied for the highest number of votes, their respective first positions on the ticket shall be in alphabetical order determined by draw by the chair of the Elections Committee.*

**Chapter 20.**  
**CONSULTATION, DISCIPLINE, APPEALS, AND ADJUDICATION**

**20.51.A19A24. Recall or Dismissal of an Officer**

- ~~...~~
- ~~b.~~ *In the case of alleged physical or mental disability or incapacity of the officer,*

**Amendments to the Constitutions, Bylaws, and  
Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA Recommended by  
the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church**

**RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA®**

**ARTICLE IX**

For purposes of the laws of the State of Minnesota, only the Church's Constitution shall be treated as the bylaws of this corporation, and none of this corporation's governing documents other than these Articles of Incorporation and the Church's Constitution need be subject to the procedures specified by law or otherwise for the amendment of articles of incorporation or bylaws. The power to adopt, amend, or repeal the bylaws is vested in the Churchwide Assembly as set forth in the Church's Constitution.

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**CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS  
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**Chapter 8.**

**RELATIONSHIPS**

- 8.20.**        **RELATIONSHIP WITH INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND AGENCIES~~MINISTRIES~~**
- 8.23.**        **Institutions, Organizations, and Agencies~~Ministries.~~ This church shall seek to meet human needs through encouragement of its people to individual and corporate action, and through establishing, developing, recognizing, and supporting institutions, organizations, and agencies~~ministries~~ that minister to people in their spiritual and temporal needs.**
- 8.23.01.**     Related institutions, organizations, and ministries may affiliate with this church through criteria and policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit.

**Chapter 20.**

**CONSULTATION, DISCIPLINE, APPEALS, AND ADJUDICATION**

- 20.22.04.**    When there are indications that a cause for discipline may exist the bishop of the synod may request, and the general counsel of this church shall make available, resources for investigation into the facts

surrounding the alleged misconduct that gives rise to the potential cause for discipline. Such resources may include, but are not limited to, contracting for investigatory expertise in matters of alleged sexual abuse, forensic accounting in matters of alleged fiscal misconduct, or other specialized professional services. The cost of such investigation shall generally be borne one-half by the churchwide organization and one-half by the synod of the bishop requesting such investigation. Procedural details relating to such investigations shall be set forth in the Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings. ~~and b~~ Before charges are made, efforts shall be made by the bishop of the synod to resolve the situation by consultation; for assistance in these efforts, the bishop may utilize either a consultation panel or an advisory panel as herein provided:

**Chapter 22.**

**AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

**22.10. AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION**

**22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:**

- a. The Church Council may propose an amendment, with an official notice to be sent to the synods at least six months prior to the next ~~regular~~ meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. The adoption of such an amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of the members of the next ~~regular~~ meeting of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting.
- b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly.

**22.20. BYLAWS**

**22.21. Bylaws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted or amended at any ~~regular~~ meeting of the Churchwide Assembly when presented in writing by the Church Council or by at least 15 members of the assembly. An amendment proposed by at least 15 members of the assembly shall immediately be submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation. An**

amendment may not be placed before the assembly for action sooner than the day following its presentation to the assembly unless it has been presented in writing by the Church Council and sent with an official notice to the synods at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting shall be necessary for adoption.

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## CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS

### Chapter 9.

#### NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

‡S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

### Chapter 11.

#### COMMITTEES

(names of other organizational units)

‡S11.04. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.

## **Amendments to Provisions and Bylaws Recommended by the Office of the Secretary**

### **RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®**

#### **ARTICLE VII**

The voting members of the Church Council shall consist of the four churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and at least ~~33~~<sup>32</sup> and not more than 45 other persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly.

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### **CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®**

#### **Chapter 1.**

#### **NAME, INCORPORATION, SEAL, AND LOCATION**

**1.11. The churchwide organization shall be incorporated.**

**1.11.01.** The seal of the churchwide organization is a black globe comprising four stylized quadrants with a cross in the center. The words “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” encircle the globe ~~with three united flames emanating from the base of the cross and three entwined circles beside the cross. The year of the constituting convention of this church is included at the base of the cross. The name of this church forms the circular outer edge of the seal.~~



#### **Chapter 5.**

#### **PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION**

**5.01. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church. This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church by congregations, synods, and the churchwide**

organization shall be carried out under his rule and authority in accordance with the following principles:

....

- e. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the appropriate office or unit of the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. ~~Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.~~

## Chapter 6. MEMBERSHIP

- 6.03. The synods of this church and the churchwide organization have no individual members except for those congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community members who serve as voting members of the synod corporations and churchwide corporation.
- 6.04. The voting members of the synods and churchwide organization shall be those congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community members serving as members of the synod assemblies and the Churchwide Assembly respectively. Membership in a congregation or synod-authorized worshiping community does not, in and of itself, confer voting rights in these corporations.

## Chapter 7. MINISTRY

- 7.31.02. **Responsibilities.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
  - a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

....

- 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

**7.31.03. Preparation and Approval.** Except as provided in 7.31.04., a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament shall have:

- a. either
  - 1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and congregation council and the pastoral leadership of the congregation, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;  
or
  - 2) active participation in a Word and Sacrament ministry of this church and registration, by its governing body and the pastoral leadership of the ministry, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
- b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;
- c. completed the academic and practical preparation according to the criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological school in North America or completed a program of study for those accepted into the TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries), including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work;
- d. completed the expectations and outcomes established for Lutheran learning and formation in a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, except when waived by the appropriate committee in consultation with the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- e. been recommended for approval by the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or have received the waiver described in 7.31.03.d.;
- f. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended-developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with-reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;



~~ge.~~ been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and

~~hf.~~ received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

**7.31.04. Approval under Other Circumstances when Ordained in Another Church Body.** Candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament who ~~by reason of (a) age and prior experience, (b) ordination~~ have been ordained in another Lutheran church body; or ~~(eh) ordination~~ have been ordained in another Christian church body, whether in North America or abroad, shall be approved by the candidacy committee for ordination or reception according to criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In preparing such criteria, policies, and procedures, the appropriate churchwide unit shall consult with the seminaries of this church and, as appropriate, with other churchwide units.

**7.31.06. Reinstatement.** A person seeking reinstatement as a minister of Word and Sacrament, whether having served previously in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synod bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a minister of Word and Sacrament in this church.

**7.31.07. On Leave from Call.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call and who requests a temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, ~~upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council of the synod on whose roster the minister is listed in the synod of which the minister of Word and Sacrament is a member,~~ under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such leave shall be reviewed annually

and may be terminated by the Synod Council if it no longer meets the criteria under which it was granted.

- a. Regular Leave~~Normative Pattern: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, a~~ minister of Word and Sacrament who is without a current letter of call and who has requested temporary leave from active ministry may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of ~~three-six~~ years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synod bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit, a minister of Word and Sacrament engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Sacrament may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, such a minister of Word and Sacrament who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Sacrament or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- d. ~~Exception—Extensions to—of these time~~ limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.
- e. Ministers who have been granted on-leave status are expected to maintain membership in a congregation of this church. If a minister of Word and Sacrament who has been granted on-leave status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Sacrament to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been

declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**7.31.10. Synod-authorized Ministry.** While it is preferable in most circumstances that Word and Sacrament ministry be provided by a minister of Word and Sacrament, when need exists, ~~When need exists to render Word and Sacrament ministry for a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not feasible to provide rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament,~~ the synod bishop—acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and ~~approved-adopted~~ by the Church Council—may authorize a person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer ~~this Word and Sacrament ministry as a synod-~~authorized minister. Such an individual shall be supervised by a minister of Word and Sacrament appointed by the synod bishop; such service shall be rendered during its duration under the ~~sacramental~~ authority of the bishop ~~as the synod's pastor.~~ Such an individual will be trained to fulfill this ministry for a specified period of time and in a given location only. Authorization, ~~remuneration,~~ direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synod leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry. Authorization for such service shall be reviewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation.

**7.41. Letters of Call.** **Letters of call to ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and ~~approved-adopted~~ by the Church Council.**

**7.41.01. Service under Call.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a Synod Council, a Synod Assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution

or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.44.A19.

b. A pastor serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a pastor shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.

~~e. Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in interim ministry appointed by the synod bishop may serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop.~~

**7.41.02. Initial Call to Congregational Service.** Because the responsibilities of the office of the ministry of Word and Sacrament are most clearly focused in the congregational pastorate, experience in which is deemed by this church to be invaluable for all other ministry of Word and Sacrament, initial service of at least three years shall be in a congregation of this church or, with the approval of the synod bishop, a congregation of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists. Exceptions to the three-year requirement may be granted under criteria and procedures ~~recommended~~developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

**7.41.03. Calls to Interim Ministry.** Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in interim ministry shall normally serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop. Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have retired status may be appointed by the synod bishop without a letter of call.

**7.41.04. Calls to Supply Ministry.** When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, and upon recommendation of the synod bishop, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Sacrament for supply ministry. The minister of Word and Sacrament shall include a description of this ministry in the annual report to the synod bishop. A call to supply ministry is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it no longer fulfills the criteria under which it was issued.

~~7.41.0305.~~ **Calls to Non-Congregational Service. . . .**

**7.41.0406. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call.** When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod

Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Sacrament for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by ministers of Word and Sacrament for their convenience, status, or personal preference. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

**7.41.0507. Calls to Serve in Unusual Circumstances.** When it is deemed to be in the interests of this church in the care of the Gospel, ministers of Word and Sacrament may be called for a stated period of time, not to exceed three years, to minister on behalf of this church while employed in an occupation outside the traditional range of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls may be extended by a Synod Council or the Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops according to criteria and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. A call to serve in unusual circumstances is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council or Church Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

**7.41.0608. Calls in Predecessor Church Bodies. . . .**

**7.41.0709. Retirement. . . .**

**7.41.0810. Disability. . . .**

**7.41.0911. Retention of Roster Records. . . .**

**7.42. Each person on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be related to that synod:**

....

**d. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary leader in consultation with the board, subject to approval by the synod bishop ~~and in consultation with the Synod Council of each affected synod~~, This roster assignment ~~to should~~ promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in ~~each the~~ synods of its region;**

**7.61.02. Responsibilities.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

....

**c. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating**

dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

**7.61.03. Preparation and Approval.** Except as provided in 7.61.04., a candidate who is to be called and received onto the roster as a minister of Word and Service shall have:

- a. either
  - 1) membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and congregation council and the pastoral leadership of the congregation, of the candidate with the candidacy committee; or
  - 2) active participation in a Word and Sacrament ministry of this church and registration, by its governing body and the pastoral leadership of the ministry, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
- b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;
- c. completed the academic and practical preparation according to criteria and procedures ~~established~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, ~~after consultation with~~ reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- d. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, ~~after consultation with~~ reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- e. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod in which the candidate is being considered for first call in accordance with the procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
- f. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

~~7.61.04. Approval under Other Circumstances.~~ A candidate may, for reasons of age or prior experience, be granted approval under criteria and procedures which permit certain equivalencies as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

~~7.61.0504.~~ No person who belongs to any organization such as a lodge . . . .

~~7.61.0605.~~ Roster status in more than one church body is precluded . . . .

~~7.61.0706.~~ **Reinstatement.** A person seeking reinstatement as a minister of Word and Service shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of

the synod bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~ developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a minister of Word and Service in this church.

- 7.61.0807. On Leave from Call.** A minister of Word and Service of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call and who requests a temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, ~~upon endorsement by the synod bishop,~~ by action of the Synod Council of the synod on whose roster the minister is listed in the synod of which the minister of Word and Service is a member, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such leave shall be reviewed annually and may be terminated by the Synod Council if it no longer meets the criteria under which it was granted.
- a. ~~Normative Pattern~~ Regular Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, a minister of Word and Service who is without a current letter of call and who has requested temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of ~~three~~ six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
  - b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synod bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit a minister of Word and Service engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Service in this church, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
  - c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Service may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, such a minister of Word and Service who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Service or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health

condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church—~~under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council~~ for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

- d. ~~Exception to~~Extensions of these time limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.
- e. If a minister of Word and Service who has been granted on-leave status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Service to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**7.71. Letters of Call.** Letters of call to ministers of Word and Service of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Service shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and ~~approved~~adopted by the Church Council.

**7.71.01. Service under Call.** A minister of Word and Service of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a synod council, a synod assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria ~~recommended~~developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.74.A21.

**7.71.02. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call.** When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures ~~recommended~~developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister



of Word and Service for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is no longer serving the mission needs of this church.

## **Chapter 8. RELATIONSHIPS**

- 8.21.07.** The seminaries shall receive churchwide and synod financial support. The amount of such support shall be determined through a consultation process involving seminaries, synods, and the appropriate churchwide unit. To implement financial support by this church, synods shall be assigned to specific seminaries in such manner as to attain equitable distribution of synods. Normally, all synods in a given region will be assigned to one seminary. Churchwide funds shall be distributed according to a formula developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and ~~approved~~**adopted** by the Church Council. Seminaries shall provide for their remaining financial requirements through tuition, fees, endowment income, and fundraising programs. Fundraising in the congregations of supporting synods, however, shall be conducted only upon approval of the synods.
- 8.41.** **This church may establish relationships with independent Lutheran organizations, institutions, or agencies whose purposes are compatible with its mission and ministry. Policies and procedures to create and implement these relationships shall be adopted by the Church Council.**
- 8.62.** **Policies and procedures to implement church-to-church relationships of full communion established by action of a Churchwide Assembly may be ~~recommended~~developed by the appropriate officer or churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.**

## **Chapter 9. CONGREGATIONS**

- 9.21.01.** Approval of the synod bishop, as required in 9.21.d., involves the bishop's attesting that a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church has been approved, in conformity with the governing documents and policies of this church, through the synod candidacy process for first call as a seminary graduate or for call in this church through approval for reception into this church from another Lutheran church body or

another Christian church body. Consultation with the synod bishop in accordance with the call procedures and governing documents of this church and the synod is required for the calling of pastoral leadership from among:

- a. persons on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or
- b. persons who are candidates for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have been recommended for a congregation by the synod bishop~~persons on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or persons who are approved as eligible candidates for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church.~~

**9.26. Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria in 9.21. and 9.25. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations. ~~of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~**

- a. Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.
- b. Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished based on the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through action of the Synod Council and the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.

**1)a. If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.**

**2)b. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

**9.53.03. Each congregation shall provide a copy of its governing documents to the synod. If a congregation wishes to amend any portion of its governing documents, 9.52. and the following provisions shall apply:**

- a. The congregation shall follow the process for amending its governing documents set forth in its governing documents;
- b. The congregation shall submit ~~All~~ proposed changes ~~in the~~ to its governing documents, including changes to its constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions, constitution or incorporation documents of a congregation shall be referred to the synod with which the congregation is affiliated for review-;
- c. The synod shall ~~notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the~~ proposed changes to the congregation's constitution which do not conform to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* and notify the congregation of its decisions; ~~such~~ the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them-; and
- d. The synod shall recognize that congregations may organize themselves in a manner which they deem most appropriate, consistent with this chapter.

**Chapter 10.  
SYNODS**

**10.01. The territory of this church shall be divided into geographic synods, except the Slovak Zion Synod, the names and boundaries of which shall be determined by the Churchwide Assembly and except as provided in the bylaws. The names and boundaries of the synods shall be included in the bylaws.**

**10.01.01. Names and Boundaries.** The names and boundaries of the synods shall be:

....

Synod 3.A—Western North Dakota. The counties of Adams, Billings, Bottineau, Bowman, Burke, Burleigh, Divide, Dunn, Emmons, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, Kidder, Logan, McHenry, McIntosh, McKenzie, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Mountrail, Oliver, Pierce, Renville, Sheridan, Sioux, Slope, Stark, Ward, Wells, Williams in the state of NORTH DAKOTA; the congregation Leeds Evangelical, Benson County in the state of NORTH DAKOTA; the congregation Lemmon, Perkins County, and the congregation Ralph, Harding County in the state of SOUTH DAKOTA; the congregation Trinity, Wibaux County, and the congregation Immanuel, Sheridan County, in the state of MONTANA.

....

**10.01.03.** Any congregation in a border area desiring to change its synod relationship may do so upon approval of the synod assemblies of the synods concerned. The synods concerned shall notify the secretary of this church of any change. Such change shall be introduced into this constitution by the secretary and which shall be reported any such change to the Churchwide Assembly through the Office of the Secretary.

**10.01.04.** Within the territory of each geographic synod, the synod—in keeping with criteria, policies, and procedures proposed by the secretary of this church, after consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or units, and approved by the Church Council—may acknowledge certain authorized worshiping communities ~~and authorized outreach ministries such as~~ worshiping communities and authorized outreach ministries, ~~developing ministries, preaching points, or chapels~~ as related to the synod and part of the synod’s life and mission. Such worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod, ~~authorized worshiping communities of the synod~~ shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

**10.12.** **Each synod shall have a constitution, which shall become effective upon ratification by the Church Council. Each synod constitution shall include all mandatory provisions of the *Constitution for Synods, Amendments*. Each synod may amend its constitution in accordance with the required provisions in chapter 18 of the *Constitution for Synods, thereto*. Such amendments shall be subject to like ratification, provided, however, that an amendment which is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption and the Church Council shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.**

**10.13.** ~~The *Constitution for Synods* contains mandatory provisions that incorporate and record therein provisions of the constitution and bylaws of this church. A *Constitution for Synods* shall be provided by this church. Amendments shall be made in accordance with the required provisions in Chapter 18 of the *Constitution for Synods*. Amendments to the *Constitution for Synods* shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in Chapter 22 for amendments of the bylaws of this church. Non-mandatory provisions of the *Constitution for Synods* shall not may be inconsistent with the constitution and bylaws of this church.~~

**10.21.03.** In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical and global companions, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- ....
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, persons of all ages and gender identities and organizations for language or ethnic communities;

- 10.31.07.** Each officer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of the synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of the synod at the time of election.
- 10.41.** **Each synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall meet at least triennially. Special meetings may be called as needed. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of synods other than their synod of residence, each member of the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council, a board, committee, or other organizational unit of the synod shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of the synod.**
- 10.41.04.** Synods may establish processes that permit representatives of worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod~~synod-authorized worshiping communities~~, under bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.
- 10.52.** **The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, at least one young adult, and with a goal of at least one youth, all elected by the Synod Assembly. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of the synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of the synod who reside outside the territory of the synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise specified herein shall be determined by each synod. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America from the synod, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.**

**Chapter 12.**  
**CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY**

- 12.31.01.** The time and place of the Churchwide Assembly shall be determined by the Church Council. The date, time, and place for the next regular assembly normally shall be announced at the preceding assembly.
- 12.31.02.** The secretary shall give notice of the date, time, and place of each regular assembly by publication thereof at least ~~60-30~~ 30 days in advance on this church's website ~~and in this church's periodical~~. The secretary shall give written notice of a special assembly to the bishop of each synod upon the issuance of a call thereof and shall publish the same on this church's website ~~and in this church's periodical~~ at least 30 days in advance of the special assembly. Notice shall be provided to all voting members or voting members-elect not more than 30 days or less than

10 days in advance of any meeting. Notice may be provided electronically for voting members or voting members-elect who have provided email addresses, unless the voting member or voting member-elect has requested that written notice be mailed.

- 12.31.03.** At least 20 days prior to an assembly the secretary shall prepare and distribute to each congregation and synod-authorized worshipping community, and to the voting members-elect a bulletin of reports. Distribution to congregations and synod-authorized worshipping communities may be accomplished by posting the report on the website of this church. Distribution to voting members-elect may be accomplished electronically to those who have provided email addresses. A written copy of the bulletin of reports will be mailed to any voting member-elect who does not provide an email address and to any congregation or voting member-elect who requests a written copy.

**12.41.10. VOTING MEMBERS**

**12.41.11.** In electing voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this constitution, subject to the following requirements:

- a. Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod.
- b. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations and synod-authorized worshipping communities in the synod.
- c. The synod bishop shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and ~~The synod bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of the synod's voting members so determined.~~
- d. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synod vice president shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members.
- e. If the synod has elected or identified voting members in accordance with a. through d. of this bylaw, then:
  1. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election.
  2. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a person of color and/or a person whose primary language is other than English.
  3. The synod may elect one additional voting member who is a member of a historically underrepresented group.

~~In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English. The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional~~

voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

**12.41.12.** The secretary of each synod shall submit to the secretary of this church at least nine months before each regular Churchwide Assembly a certified list of the voting members elected by the Synod Assembly. If a voting member elected by the Synod Assembly is unable to serve, or the Synod Assembly fails to elect its full allocation of voting members at least nine months prior to the start of the Churchwide Assembly, the names of an eligible persons chosen by the Synod Council shall be submitted by the secretary of the synod to the secretary of this church. If a vacancy occurs or exists within 30 days ~~or less~~ of the convening of the Churchwide Assembly or during the meeting of the Churchwide Assembly, the synod bishop may submit the name of an eligible person to the secretary of this church. The individual whose name is submitted to the secretary of this church shall be registered and seated by the Credentials Committee as a voting member from the synod.

**12.41.13.** Each voting member of the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church. Any such voting member (except a rostered minister described in 7.42. or 7.72.) shall cease to be a member of the assembly if no longer a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church within the synod from which elected.

### **Chapter 13. OFFICERS**

#### **13.10. OFFICERS**

**13.11.** The officers shall be the presiding bishop, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Each officer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this church.

### **Chapter 14. CHURCH COUNCIL**

**14.15.** The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may remove for cause a voting member of the Church Council, other than ~~an officer~~ the presiding bishop, secretary, vice president, or the chair of the Conference of Bishops, at a duly held regular meeting by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members of the Church Council, provided that at least 30 days written notice shall be given to each voting member of the Church Council that removal of a specific member of the Church Council will be on the agenda for such a meeting. The Church Council may remove an advisory

member for cause, provided notice has been given as specified in this provision, by a majority vote of the voting members of the council.

14.32. With the exception of the officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and youth members, Church Council members shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to one six-year term and shall not be eligible for consecutive re-election. Youth members of the Church Council shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to one three-year term.

14.32.03. Any Church Council members appointed to fill a vacancy of less than ~~three years~~ half a term in a Church Council position not restricted to a specific synod shall not be deemed to have served a term and ~~are~~ is eligible for election to a full term if ~~they~~ the member otherwise ~~satisfy~~ satisfies the criteria for election.

#### Chapter 15.

#### CHURCHWIDE ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICES

15.20. STAFF

15.21. The churchwide organization shall employ staff according to churchwide policies. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of women and men, persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English, members of historically underrepresented groups, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.

#### Chapter 16.

#### UNITS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

16.11. A unit of the churchwide organization is assigned leadership responsibility for major, identified portions of the mission and ministry of this church.

~~16.11.01. In conformity with this church's commitment to inclusive practice, churchwide units and offices will assure that staff include a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and rostered ministers.~~

#### Chapter 17.

#### SEPARATELY INCORPORATED MINISTRIES

17.11. Each member of the board of directors of a separately incorporated ministry described in this chapter shall be a voting



**member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping community of this church, unless otherwise specified in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.**

- 17.50.04.** This organization shall have a board of 15 members elected by the assembly of this organization for one three-year term with eligibility for one consecutive re-election. At least 10 percent of the members of this board shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. No more than one elected board member shall be from any one synod. Board members are to serve with the perspective of the interdependence of all units of this church. In the event of a vacancy, the board shall elect a member to serve the balance of the term. The Conference of Bishops shall select one bishop to serve as an advisory member of the board of this organization with voice but not vote.

**Chapter 19.**  
**NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION PROCESS**

- 19.01.02.** The presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot ~~for presiding bishop~~ does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons ~~(plus ties)~~ receiving the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be required for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons ~~(plus ties)~~ receiving the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons ~~(plus ties)~~ receiving the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot, and a majority of the legal votes cast shall elect.

- ~~**19.01.03.** The vice president shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot for vice president does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three-fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons~~

(plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, and two thirds of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and 60 percent of the votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall elect.

~~19.01.04.~~ The secretary shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. The election shall proceed without oral nominations. If the first ballot for secretary does not result in an election, it shall be considered a nominating ballot. On the first ballot, three fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. Thereafter only such votes as are cast for persons who received votes on the first or nominating ballot shall be valid. On the second ballot, three fourths of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the third ballot, the voting shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, and two thirds of the votes cast shall be required for election. On the fourth ballot, voting shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and 60 percent of the votes cast shall elect. On subsequent ballots, voting shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot, and a majority of the votes cast shall elect.

19.03.01 Persons appointed to fill vacancies of less than half of a term may be subsequently elected to full terms provided that they are otherwise eligible for the positions to which they are elected.

~~19.03.02~~1. The terms of office of persons elected to regular terms . . . .

**19.04.** Each nominee for an elected position in the churchwide organization and each nominee for a position on the board of a separately incorporated ministry elected by the Churchwide Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping community of this church, unless otherwise specified in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this church.

**19.04.01.** Each voting member of the Church Council, board, or committee of the churchwide organization shall cease to be a member of the Church Council, board, or committee if no longer a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshipping community of this church.

**19.05.04.** Except for the full-time salaried officers, nNo employee of the churchwide organization of this church or its regions, or its separately incorporated ministries, nor any individual under contract to any unit of the churchwide

organization ~~or~~ a region, or a separately incorporated ministry shall be eligible for nomination or election to or membership voting or advisory membership on the Church Council, an advisory committee, a board of a separately incorporated ministry, the Committee on Appeals, the Committee on Discipline, the Committee of Hearing Officers, or the churchwide Nominating Committee during the period of employment or service under contract, ~~except the full-time salaried officers as specified in the~~ (For purposes of this provision only, “employee of the churchwide organization” includes employees of synods whose compensation is provided, in whole or in part, and who are supervised, in whole or in part, by the churchwide organization pursuant to a purchase of services agreement specific to that employee. It does not include employees of congregations, synods, or other ministries merely because their compensation may be paid, in whole or in part, from funds received as grants from synods or the churchwide organization.) The phrase “under contract” shall not mean short-term contracts for specific, limited purposes, usually not to exceed six months.)

**19.05.06.** A member of a committee, a board of a separately incorporated ministry, or an at-large member of the Church Council who has served less than half a term is not deemed to have served a regular term and is eligible for election to a full term if the member otherwise satisfies the criteria for election.

**Chapter 20.**  
**CONSULTATION, DISCIPLINE, APPEALS, AND ADJUDICATION**

**20.22.04.** When there are indications that a cause for discipline may exist and before charges are made, efforts shall be made by the bishop of the synod to resolve the situation by consultation; for assistance in these efforts, the bishop may utilize either a consultation panel or an advisory panel as herein provided:

.....

b. When requested by the synod bishop, an advisory panel consisting of five persons (three rostered ministers and two laypersons) appointed by the synod bishop shall assist the synod bishop in efforts to resolve a situation by consultation. Up to two members of the advisory panel appointed by the synod bishop may be members of church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion.

**20.51.01.** The recall or dismissal of the presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary of this church and the vacating of office may be effected:

a. for willful disregard or violation of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;

- b. for such ~~physical or mental~~ disability or incapacity as renders the officer incapable of performing the duties of office; or
- c. for such conduct as would subject the officer to disciplinary action as a rostered minister or as a member of a congregation of this church.

## CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS

### Chapter 1. NAME AND INCORPORATION

‡S1.21. The seal of this synod is (*describe*).

### Chapter 6. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

†S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be members of historically underrepresented groups, in addition to the 10 percent representation of persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English in †S6.04. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

### Chapter 7. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

†S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

- ....
- b. Lay voting members shall be elected by each congregation or its council as follows: A minimum of one lay member elected by from each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by from each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to this synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.

†S7.21.02. If a special Synod Assembly is called and voting members at the previous assembly are unable to serve as voting members, where permitted by state law, the congregation ~~through the Congregation Council~~ or its council may elect new members who shall continue to serve until the next regular Synod Assembly.

†S7.25. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution or in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, each voting member of the Synod Assembly shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod.

S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit persons currently serving as synod-authorized ministers and/or lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities and/or outreach ministries of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.

## **Chapter 8. OFFICERS**

### **S8.20. Vice President**

†S8.21. The vice president shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The vice president shall be a layperson. The vice president shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The vice president shall not receive a salary for the performance of the duties of the office.

### **S8.30. Secretary**

†S8.31. The secretary shall be elected by the Synod Assembly. The secretary shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The secretary may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

### **S8.40. Treasurer**

†S8.41. The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

### **S8.50. General Provisions**

†S8.51. The terms of office of the officers of this synod shall be as follows:

....

c. The treasurer of this synod shall be [elected] [appointed] [elected or appointed] to a term of \_\_\_\_ years and may be [re-elected] [reappointed] [re-elected or reappointed]. The treasurer shall serve until a successor takes office.

†S8.52. The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of [ (name of month) ] [the (ordinal number) month] following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

†S8.53. Each officer shall be a voting member in a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod, except that the bishop need not be a member of a congregation of this synod at the time of election.

## **Chapter 9.**

### **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who received the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons ~~(plus ties)~~ who receive the greatest number of legal votes (including ties in the final qualifying position) on the previous ballot.

## **Chapter 10.**

### **SYNOD COUNCIL**

†S10.01. The Synod Council, consisting of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, ~~and at least one youth-young adult, and with a goal of at least one young-adult youth,~~ shall be elected by the Synod Assembly.

a. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise

provided shall be specified in the bylaws. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.

- b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be \_\_\_\_ years.

**S10.05.** ~~No~~ Elected members of the Synod Council shall not receive compensation solely for ~~such their service~~ as council members.

**S10.06.** No person related to a synod staff member shall be eligible for nomination to or membership on the Synod Council [for the following synod committees: \_\_\_\_\_]. For this purpose, a related individual is one who, with respect to the synod employee, is a spouse, parent, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, including corresponding members of blended families and in-laws (parent, son, daughter, or sibling of a spouse, spouse of a sibling, or the parent or sibling of the spouse of a sibling).

~~S10.0607.~~ If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet . . . .

~~S10.0708.~~ The composition of the Synod Council . . . .

~~S10.0809.~~ *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall govern . . . .

~~†S10.0809.01.~~ To the extent permitted by state law, meetings of the Synod Council and its committees may be held through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. ~~electronically or by telephone conference, and~~ To the extent permitted by state law, ~~†~~notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

## **Chapter 11.**

### **COMMITTEES**

**(names of other organizational units)**

~~†S11.04.~~ ~~The~~ A Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop.

~~†S11.11.~~ This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation or a confirmed member of a synod-authorized worshiping community of this synod.

**Chapter 13.**  
**CONGREGATIONS**

†S13.01. Each congregation, except those certified as congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the uniting churches, prior to being listed in the roster of congregations of this synod, shall adopt the *Model Constitution for Congregations* or one acceptable to this synod that is not in contradiction to the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

.....  
c. **Recognition and reception.** Recognition and reception of additional congregations into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based upon the judgment of the synod that the congregations satisfy the criteria of 9.21. and 9.25. ~~is based on the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly.~~ The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.

1) Recognition and reception of congregations newly formed by this church is accomplished by action of the Synod Council.

2) Recognition and reception of transferring or independent congregations is accomplished by action of the Synod Assembly upon the recommendation of the Synod Council.

a. If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.

b. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

S13.40. **Synod-authorized Worshiping Communities and Outreach Ministries**

S13.41. ~~Authorized worshiping~~ Worshiping communities and outreach ministries, authorized by the synod and acknowledged under criteria, policies, and procedures approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of this church, shall



be served by leadership under the criteria of this church, and shall be subject to the discipline of this church.

**Chapter 14.**  
**ROSTERED MINISTERS**

†S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

.....

8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

†S14.18. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregation shall be as follows:

.....

d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. In the bishop's sole discretion, the bishop's committee may also present, as may be appropriate, either a report or report summary to the pastor and to the congregation together with the recommendations. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.

†S14.32. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

.....

c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

**Chapter 17.**  
**CONSULTATION AND ADJUDICATION**

†S17.02. The synod bishop and the Executive Committee of the Synod Council shall receive expressions of concern from rostered ministers ~~of this church,~~ congregations, and organizations within this synod; provide a forum in which the parties concerned can seek to work out matters causing distress or conflict; and make appropriate recommendations for their resolution. When a concern relates directly to the synod bishop, the synod vice president will lead the Executive Committee's efforts at resolving the matter. When the matter at issue cannot be resolved in this manner, applicable procedures for investigation, decision, appeal, and adjudication shall be followed. Allegations or charges that could lead to the discipline of a rostered minister ~~of this church~~ shall not be addressed by the Executive Committee but shall be resolved through the disciplinary process set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

**Chapter 18.**  
**AMENDMENTS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS**

†S18.12. Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended any non-required provision of the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.

†S18.13. Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures:

- a. Introduced with the support of at least \_\_\_\_\_ voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be ~~adopted-ratified~~ unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

**Chapter 1.  
NAME AND INCORPORATION**

**C1.02.** For the purpose of this constitution and the accompanying bylaws [and continuing resolutions], the congregation of (insert full legal name) is hereinafter designated as “this congregation.”

**Chapter 5.  
POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

**\*C5.04.** This congregation or the Congregation Council shall elect from among its the voting members of the congregation laypersons to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly as well as persons to represent it at meetings of any conference, cluster, coalition, or other area subdivision of which it is a member. The number of persons to be elected by this congregation and other qualifications shall be as prescribed in guidelines established by the (insert name of synod) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**Chapter 7.  
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP**

**\*C7.03.** If the voting members of this congregation present at a legally called and conducted special meeting of this congregation vote to relate~~transfer~~ to another Lutheran church body, title to property shall continue to reside in this congregation, provided the process for termination of relationship in \*C6.05. has been followed. Before this congregation takes action to ~~transfer~~ relate to another Lutheran church body, it shall consult with representatives of the (insert name of synod).

**Chapter 9.  
ROSTERED MINISTER**

**\*C9.02.** This congregation may call as a pastor only~~Only:~~  
a. a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; or  
b. a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop  
may be called as a pastor of this congregation.

**\*C9.03.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,  
a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:  
.....  
8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God’s love for the world, advocating

dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.

| \*C9.06. At a time of pastoral vacancy, an interim pastor ~~shall~~ may be appointed by the bishop of the synod with the consent of this congregation or the Congregation Council.

| \*C9.15. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

\*C9.23. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

.....

| c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, proclaiming God's love for the world, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations;

## **Chapter 10. CONGREGATION MEETING**

| C10.02. A special Congregation Meeting may be called by the [senior] pastor, the Congregation Council, or the president<sup>1</sup> of this congregation, and shall be called by the president of this congregation upon the written request of [number] [percent] of the voting members. The president of the Congregation Council shall call a special meeting upon request of the synod bishop. The call for each special meeting shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held, and no other business shall be transacted.

## **Chapter 15. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS AND ADJUDICATION**

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<sup>1</sup> *If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.*

- \*C15.01.** Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith, willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ, continual and intentional interference with the ministry of this congregation, or willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of this congregation is sufficient cause for discipline of a member. Prior to disciplinary action, reconciliation and repentance will be attempted following Matthew 18:15–17, proceeding through these successive steps, as necessary:
- a) ~~private~~ private counsel and admonition by the pastor,
  - b) ~~censure and admonition by the pastor in the presence of two or three witnesses,~~
  - c) ~~written referral of the matter by the Congregation Council to the vice president of the synod, who will refer it to a consultation panel drawn from the Consultation Committee of the synod, and~~
  - d) ~~written referral of the matter by the consultation panel to the Committee on Discipline of the synod.~~
- If, for any reason, the pastor is unable to administer the admonitions required by ~~paragraphs a. and b. hereof,~~ those steps may be performed by another pastor chosen by the Executive Committee of the Congregation Council.

- \*C15.11.** When there is disagreement between or among factions within this congregation on a substantive issue which cannot be resolved by the parties, members of this congregation may petition the synod bishop for consultation after informing the president [vice president] of this congregation of their intent to do so. The synod bishop shall seek a timely resolution of the dispute. If the issue relates directly to the pastor, the bishop may begin the process in ~~§14.18.\*C9.05.d.~~ In all other matters, if the bishop's consultation fails to resolve the issue, the bishop shall refer the matter to the Consultation Committee of the synod, which shall undertake efforts to find an appropriate solution. If the Consultation Committee's efforts fail to resolve the dispute, the entire matter shall be referred to the Synod Council for adjudication by whatever process the Council deems necessary. The Synod Council's decision shall be final.

## **Chapter 16.**

### **AMENDMENTS**

- \*C16.02.** An amendment to this constitution, proposed under \*C16.01., shall:
- a. be approved at any legally called meeting of this congregation by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting; and
  - b. be ratified ~~without change~~ unchanged at the next regular meeting of this congregation by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting.

**Chapter 20.**  
**PARISH AUTHORIZATION**

*[\* Required provisions when congregation is part of a parish]*

- \*C20.04.** Any one of the congregations of the parish may terminate their relationship with the pastor as provided in ~~†S14.18~~\*C9.05.d. of the synod constitution of the synod named in \*C6.01. In such case, the other congregation(s) of the same parish shall have the right to terminate the parish agreement.

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

**To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Pacifica Synod (2C):**

- †S3.01. The territory of this synod, as determined by the Churchwide Assembly, shall be the Counties of Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego in the State of California; the congregations St. Andrew, Salem Evangelical, Shepherd of the Hills, and Good Shepherd Evangelical, Los Angeles County, in the state of California; the and the State of Hawaii; and the territories of the U.S. in the Pacific Ocean, as their boundaries exist on the date this constitution is adopted.
- S7.13. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by at the direction of the secretary of this synod.
- S7.14. One-half of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- ~~S9.33. "Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited.~~
- S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of seven members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for two years from the time of the appointment, ~~including each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly at which elections requiring nominations from the Nominating Committee are to be held.~~ Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee, provided that the nominees meet the inclusivity qualifications, if any, established by the Synod Council. ~~(See S9.04.01)~~
- S9.08. In all elections, except for the bishop, ~~the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by if no candidate receives~~ a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled votes legally cast, the two candidates receiving the most votes shall appear on a subsequent ballot. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- ~~S9.11. The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region. (See S10.07.10)~~
- S10.03. The function of the Synod Council shall be to:  
.....  
f. Fill vacancies ~~that occur up to January 1~~ until the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly except as may otherwise be provided in the constitution or bylaws of this synod, and determine the fact of the incapacity of an officer or other member of the Synod Council of the synod. ~~Vacancies occurring after January 1 will be filled at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.~~
- S10.04. Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the prior approval of the Synod Council shall be immediately referred to the Synod Council for an opinion and report prior to any debate or action by the Synod Assembly. Any such amendment(s) shall require a two-thirds vote by the Assembly.

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

**To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Nebraska Synod (4A):**

- S7.02.** This Synod Assembly shall:  
[. . .]  
f. Elect officers, ~~board members~~, and other persons as provided in constitution or bylaws.
- S9.03.** There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of representatives of mission cluster units with consideration given to geographical representation and gender balance, alternating between clergy and lay persons. The members of the committee shall be elected by the Synod Council. Terms shall be for ~~two~~ three years with one ~~half~~ third being elected annually. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms. The Synod Council shall appoint one of its members to serve on the committee. Nominations from the floor shall also be permitted for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee. Each floor nomination shall be presented as an additional nominee within a specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as other nominees in that category. Biographical data shall be provided for each nominee. Each nominee should have given prior consent to serve if elected.
- S9.04.** The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Nominating ballots shall be cast at spring mission cluster unit meetings. The first ballot at the Synod Assembly shall include the names of the persons who have consented to candidacy following nomination at mission cluster unit meetings, in keeping with the process specified in the bylaws. The names of other ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament may be written in on the first ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot and second ballots. If no one is elected on the first ballot, that ballot shall be considered the Synod Assembly's nominating ballot and the assembly shall proceed to the second ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. Biographical data for the persons whose names shall appear on the third ballot shall be printed and distributed to members of the Assembly prior to the third ballot. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60% of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The final three candidates (plus ties) shall address the assembly. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.
- S9.08.** In all elections of officers, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes ~~after the second ballot~~, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on ~~either the first or the second ballot~~ a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S10.11** The Synod Council shall have an Executive Committee which shall be composed of the synod officers and three members of the Council elected by the Synod Council annually. The Executive Committee shall perform those functions of the Synod Council assigned to it by the Synod Council. The Executive Committee provides leadership for the Synod and may conduct business of the Synod in lieu of the Synod Council between regularly scheduled Council meetings. Such business shall be conducted in accordance with established policies of the Synod. The Committee shall make the Council aware of all such business and decisions made by the Committee within fifteen business days.



**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

**To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the New Jersey Synod (7A):**

- S7.13.** Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the secretary of this synod. The secretary shall ~~mail-distribute~~ a bulletin of reports to all ministers and lay voting members-elect at least twenty (20) days prior to each regular Synod Assembly.
- S9.03.** There shall be a Nominating Committee appointed annually by the Synod Council of from six to nine persons. The Synod Council may appoint the Mission District Deans to serve in this role. The Synod Bishop and Synod Secretary shall serve ex-officio with voice, but not vote. ~~The Nominating Committee shall provide at least one nomination for Counselor for each Mission Cluster.~~ The Nominating Committee shall provide nominations to the Synod Assembly for Synod Council and for ELCA Churchwide Voting Members for positions available after Mission District elections of nominees. The Nominating Committee shall designate categories for Mission Districts electing nominees for Synod Council and Churchwide Voting Members.
- ~~**S9.11.** The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.~~
- S10.06.** If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which ~~she or he was~~ elected or misses three consecutive meetings without excuse, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.
- S11.06.** Additional Synod Committees and Teams. ~~Other Synodical Committees and Teams Organizational Units~~
- 

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

**To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Upstate New York Synod (7D):**

- S10.07.** Conferences shall nominate for election by the Synod Assembly lay members and rostered ministers of ~~Word and Sacrament~~ to the Synod Council for four (4) year terms in accordance with the bylaws.
- S12.04. –** Conferences shall elect for their presiding officer a rostered minister of ~~Word and Sacrament or a Ministry of Word and Service~~ from the conference as their dean...
- S10.06.** If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which ~~he or she~~ the member was elected the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant. If a member of the Synod Council resigns or is absent from three successive regular meetings of the Synod Council without cause, the office filled by such a member shall at once become vacant. The person filling such vacancy shall be elected by the Synod Council upon nomination by the conference whose seat is vacant to complete the unexpired term of the predecessor member.
- 

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

**To ratify the following amendment to the constitution of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7E):**

- ~~**S7.28**~~ A Licensed Lay Minister who is serving as a pastoral presence in a congregation or parish of this synod shall have voice and vote at the Synod Assembly.

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

**To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F):**

**S7.29.** All rostered ministers ~~of Word and Sacrament~~, on leave from call but available for call, as determined by the Office of the Bishop, on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members, consistent with †S7.21. above. ~~All ministers of Word and Service, on leave from call but available for call, as determined by the Office of the Bishop, on the roster of this synod shall have both voice and vote as lay voting members in the Synod Assembly, in addition to the voting membership of lay members of congregations as provided in item †S7.21.e.~~

~~**S7.30.** Retired ministers of Word and Sacrament on the roster of the synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly may serve as voting members of this synod consistent with †7.21 above, and as specified in the bylaws.~~

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

**To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Upper Susquehanna Synod (8E):**

**S7.14** ~~One-half~~ Forty percent (40%) of members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

**Notification of the Church Council of Synods Reporting Adoption of 2022 Churchwide Assembly Amendments to Recommended Provisions in Accord with †S18.12.**

Provision †S18.12. of the *Constitution for Synods* states, “Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.”

The following synods reported adopting some or all of the amendments to recommended provisions of the *Constitution for Synods* approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

<b>Synod:</b>	<b>Amendment(s) Adopted</b>
Northwest Washington (1B)	All
Pacifica (2C)	S11.10.
Northeastern Minnesota (3E)	S7.24., S7.26., S7.27., S8.42., S11.10., S14.13., S14.15., S14.34.
Nebraska (4A)	S7.14., S7.24., S7.26., S7.27., S8.42.c., S11.10., S14.13., S14.15., S14.34.
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast (4F)	S7.14.
Northwestern Ohio (6D)	S7.14., S7.22., S7.24., S7.26., S7.27., S8.42., S14.13., S14.15., S14.34.
New Jersey (7A)	All
Upstate New York (7D)	All except S7.22.
Southeastern Pennsylvania (7F)	S7.26.
Caribbean (9F)	All

**Amendments to Recommended Provisions of the *Constitution for Synods*  
Approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly**

- S7.14.** ~~One-half~~One-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- ~~‡S7.21.01.~~ Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until ~~voting members are seated at the opening of~~ the opening of the next regular Synod Assembly.
- S7.22.** This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, provided that such processes not result in fewer than 60% of the voting members of the Synod Assembly being laypersons in contravention of consistent with ~~‡S7.21.e.~~ If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.24.** Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until the opening of the next regular synod assembly, or unless replaced by the election of new members for a special synod assembly, or until they have been disqualified by termination of congregation membership. ~~Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.~~
- S7.26.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit lay representatives of authorized worshipping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with ~~‡S7.21.~~
- S7.27.** This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly ~~of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~ the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S8.42.** The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:  
[...]  
c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.  
[...]  
~~f. Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.~~
- S.11.10. — General Provisions**
- S14.13.** The pastor (a) shall keep accurate ~~parochial~~ records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- S14.15.** Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ~~his or her~~ ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- S14.34.** Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ~~his or her~~ ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

THIRD AMENDED BYLAWS  
OF  
NATIONAL LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY, INC.

**ARTICLE I - Purpose**

This corporation has been established in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to assist ELCA and ELCA-related campus ministry agencies to provide for and maintain their facilities for ministries in academic communities.

**ARTICLE II - Location**

The principal office of the National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. (NLCM, Inc.) shall be at 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631. NLCM, Inc. may also have offices at such other places as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint or the activities of NLCM, Inc. may require.

**ARTICLE III - Board of Directors**

Section 3.1 The Board of Directors shall consist of no fewer than 3 and no more than 8 persons.

Section 3.2 Directors shall be nominated by a nominating committee and shall be approved by the ELCA Church Council. A director shall serve for a term of no more than four (4) years.

Section 3.3 Terms shall be staggered.

Section 3.4 Any director may be removed with cause, upon a vote of the majority of the Board of Directors. Any vacancy caused by death, resignation, or removal of a director, shall be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired term of such director or until the next Church Council meeting, whichever comes first.

Section 3.5 No director shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 3.6 Each member of the Board shall serve in a fiduciary capacity to the corporation and shall perform his/her duties as a director, including duties as a member of any Board committee, in good faith, in a manner he/she reasonably believes to be in the best interest of the corporation, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, skills, and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances.

**ARTICLE IV - Meetings of the Board of Directors**

Section 4.1 Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at least two (2) times each year at such place or places as may from time to time be fixed by the Board of Directors.

Section 4.2 The Annual Meeting shall be the first meeting of the fiscal year at the principal office of the corporation. If necessary, the Directors shall elect or re-elect Officers at this meeting.

Section 4.3 Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called at any time by the President, or by a majority of the Board of Directors.

Section 4.4 Written notice of every meeting of the members, stating the time, place, and purpose of

the meetings, shall be given by, or at the direction of, the Secretary to each member of the board, at least ten (10) days prior to the day named of the meeting. If the Secretary shall neglect or refuse to give notices of the meeting, the person or persons calling the meeting may do so.

Section 4.5 With the exception of the annual meeting, a director may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors by any means of communication permitting all members present at or participating in the meeting to hear one another simultaneously, in which case this participation constitutes presence at the meeting.

Section 4.6 Action of the Board of Directors may be taken without a meeting upon unanimous written or electronic consent of all the members of the Board of Directors and shall be filed with the Secretary of the corporation.

#### ARTICLE V – Officers

Section 5.1 The officers of the corporation shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers and assistant officers as the needs of the corporation may require.

Section 5.2 Officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors to serve for a term of two (2) years. A person may hold more than one office at the same time, but the President and Secretary shall hold no other office. There will be no limit to the number of terms a Board member may serve as an officer during his or her tenure as a director.

Section 5.3 Any officer may at any time be removed by the Board of Directors with cause. Vacancies by death, resignation, refusal to serve, or otherwise, shall be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the Directors then serving.

Section 5.4 **President.** The President shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation. He or she shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and shall in consultation with the appointee of the executive director of the unit of the ELCA that relates to NLCM, Inc., or his or her designee, have general supervision and direction of the affairs of the corporation. He or she shall execute all contracts, deeds, conveyances, and other instruments on behalf of the corporation when such action has been authorized by the Board of Directors.

Section 5.5 **Vice President.** The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the event of the President's absence or disability. The proper execution of any instrument by the Vice President on behalf of this corporation shall have the same force and effect as execution by the President.

Section 5.6 **Secretary.** The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings and shall be custodian of the records, documents, and papers of this corporation. The Secretary shall have any and all duties and may exercise any and all powers imposed or granted by law, regulation, or action of the Board of Directors.

Section 5.7 **Assistant Secretary.** The Board of Directors in its discretion may elect an Assistant Secretary, who shall perform the duties and assume the responsibilities of the Secretary as above set forth under the general direction of the Secretary or President. The Assistant Secretary need not be a member of the Board of Directors.

Section 5.8 **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall have and may exercise such duties as may be assigned to him or her from time to time by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall present a full financial report at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors and shall make other

reports to the Board as it may require.

Section 5.9 **Assistant Treasurer.** The Board of Directors in its discretion may elect an Assistant Treasurer who shall perform the duties and assume the responsibilities of the Treasurer as above set forth under the general direction of the Treasurer or President. The Assistant Treasurer need not be a member of the Board of Directors.

#### **ARTICLE VI - Relationship Between NLCM, Inc., and the ELCA**

Section 6.1 The executive director of NLCM Inc. shall serve as the NLCM administrator and shall consult with the President and the appropriate officers and assistant officers when matters dictate such actions.

Section 6.2 The executive director of NLCM, Inc. shall have active management of the affairs of this corporation and may delegate such responsibilities to his or her designee

Section 6.3 The executive director is nominated by the NLCM, Inc. board and approved by the ELCA Church Council.

Section 6.4 To further maintain the relationship with the ELCA and campus ministry, a representative of LuMin will be invited to NLCM Inc. board meetings with voice but not voting privileges.

#### **ARTICLE VII - Indemnification of Directors and Officers**

Section 7.1 To the fullest extent permitted by law a director of the corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken, any failure to take any action, or liability for monetary damages.

Section 7.2 To the fullest extent permitted by law the corporation shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, or proceeding, including actions by or in the right of the corporation, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a director or officer of the corporation for any fines, taxes, and amounts paid in the settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with such action, suit, or proceeding unless the act of failure to act giving rise to the claim for indemnification is determined by a court to have constituted willful misconduct or recklessness.

Section 7.3 The indemnification and advancement of expenses provided by or pursuant to this Article shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be entitled, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director or officer and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of such persons.

Section 7.4 The duties of the corporation to indemnify and to advance expenses to a director or officer provided in this Article shall be in the nature of a contract between the corporation and each such director or officer, and no amendment or repeal of any provision of this Article, shall alter the right of such a person to the advance of expenses or indemnification related to a claim based on an act or failure to act which took place prior to such amendment, repeal, or termination.

Section 7.5 This corporation may, to the full extent permitted by applicable law, purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is a director, officer, employee, or agent of this corporation against any liability asserted against such person in any such capacity.

**ARTICLE VIII – Miscellaneous**

- Section 8.1 The fiscal year of this corporation shall be January 1 through December 31.
- Section 8.2 The corporation shall have no seal.
- Section 8.3 The corporation shall have no voting members and thus shall have no meetings of members.
- Section 8.4 These Bylaws may be amended from time to time by a vote of a majority of the Board of Directors and ratification by the ELCA Church Council.
- Section 8.5 Directors shall not receive any compensation for their services, except by resolution of the Board. The Board may reimburse any director for reasonable and ordinary expenses incurred on behalf of the corporation.
- Section 8.6 The Board is authorized to appoint an administrator or other advisor who may receive compensation for his or her services, as determined by the Board of Directors in consultation with the ELCA.
- Section 8.7 The Board is authorized to act by and through such committees as may be specified in resolutions adopted by the Board of Directors. Any such committee will at all times be subject to the control and direction of the Board of Directors.
- Section 8.8 No officer, agent or employee of this corporation shall have any power or authority to borrow money on its behalf, to pledge its credit or to mortgage or pledge its real or personal property except within the scope and to the extent of the authority delegated by specific resolutions adopted from time to time by the Board of Directors.
- Section 8.9 All funds of this corporation shall be deposited to the credit of the corporation in such banks or other depositories as the Board of Directors may designate, and such funds shall be withdrawn only in a manner authorized by the Board of Directors.
- Section 8.10 In matters not covered by these Bylaws, each meeting of the Board of Directors shall be governed by the latest version of Robert's Rules of Order.
- Section 8.11 These Bylaws shall take effect upon a majority vote of the Board of Directors and ratification of the ELCA Church Council.

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President of NLCM, Inc.

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Secretary of NLCM, Inc.

**Date of Adoption of Third Amended Bylaws: October 4, 2024**  
**Date of Council Ratification: November\_\_\_\_, 2024**

**Date of Adoption of Second Amended Bylaws: October 5, 2015**  
**Date of Council Ratification: November 14, 2015, with requested revision to be approved By Board**  
**Date of Adoption of Second Amended Bylaws with Church Council Change: December 11, 2015**

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**ELCA GLOBAL MISSION UNIT (ELCA/GM)**

# **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SUPPORT FOR LONG-TERM GLOBAL PERSONNEL**

## **PREFACE**

A. The ELCA/GM staff has the responsibility of recommending ELCA global personnel policies to the ELCA Church Council for adoption. Those policies governing all global personnel (hereafter called “personnel”) are contained in *Personnel Policies and Expectations*.

B. Provisions of support, as stated in *Terms and Conditions of Support* for long-term personnel, are developed by the ELCA/GM staff and are shared as information with the ELCA Church Council.

C. Revisions to *Terms and Conditions of Support* may be made at any time and may affect the provisions and benefits of personnel. Long-term personnel are provided copies of *Terms and Conditions of Support* and will be informed of revisions.

D. The Director for Global Service is responsible for the consistent and equitable administration of *Terms and Conditions of Support*.

E. *Terms and Conditions of Support* do not create, imply or express a promise of continued appointment or employment of any Personnel of the ELCA/GM. ELCA Personnel are at-will employees. Both the ELCA/GM and Personnel have the right to terminate appointment or employment at any time.

## **1.0 FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES**

Compensation and benefits are intended to provide a reasonable and adequate level of support. The support system is not based on a wage or salary system related to job content, productivity or market conditions. Total support includes base salary plus other allowances and support provisions as outlined in this document. Components are built into the support system to compensate for the differences between living in the U.S. and in an international setting. Some support provisions are designed to provide assistance towards expenses and are not intended to pay all costs incurred.

The ELCA/GM support system is based on the following:

### **1.1 Adequacy**

The level of support is intended to provide resources to enable reasonable and healthy living conditions. The needs of personnel upon return to the U.S. are also given consideration.

### **1.2 Vocational and Professional Equity**

Support provisions are not affected by the quantity, type or intensity of the specific tasks and responsibilities undertaken, the education, status or professional standing of the personnel. There is no parallel relationship between the ELCA/GM’s support provisions and U.S. market-based salary and benefits.

### **1.3 Global Equity**

The ELCA/GM seeks to provide equitable support for all personnel regardless of the country of service. Support provisions are adjusted with respect to the cost of goods and services in the country served and with respect to in-country income tax liabilities.

### **1.4 ELCA Churchwide Support**

Financial support for long-term Personnel is based upon churchwide commitments through the ELCA/GM budget.

All long-term personnel participate in the missionary sponsorship program, administered by the ELCA Global Church Sponsorship team.

## **2.0 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

### **2.1 Employment**

ELCA/GM employs personnel following appointment to long-term service. This service is intended to provide continuity in core mission programs and ministries.

Employment begins with an orientation program, or as otherwise specified in the appointment action issued through the ELCA/GM and continues through reintegration. Throughout the entire period of employment, personnel are expected to abide by the personnel policies and demonstrate the expectations of all ELCA/GM global personnel as stated in *Personnel Policies and Expectations*, the *Security Policies and Guidelines* and other official ELCA/GM documents as may be developed, and to support the work of the ELCA/GM.

In mutual consultation with companion churches or agencies, the ELCA/GM determines the specific assignment. Particular parameters of the assignment, including work schedules, are developed in cooperation with the local supervisor and/or companion church or agency.

### **2.2 Length of a Term of Service**

A term of service begins with the arrival in the country of service and continues for 22 months. After 22 months in the country of service, personnel serve a Home Assignment with the ELCA in the U.S. as described in the section on Home Assignment. (*Terms and Conditions of Support* 9.0) Subsequent terms are determined in consultation with the personnel, the ELCA/GM and the companion church or agency.

### **2.3 Review and Evaluation**

Review is an ongoing process between personnel and the ELCA/GM. The Area Program Desk carries specific responsibility for evaluation and assessment of the ongoing ministry and the

personnel's service.

#### *a. Annual Review*

The Area Program Desk will conduct an annual review with all long-term personnel to facilitate conversation regarding work assignment, expectations and planning. Where possible, the local supervisor will participate in the review.

#### *b. Four-Year Review of Appointment*

Every four years, appointments are thoroughly reviewed in order to evaluate the assignment and the personnel's service. The ELCA/GM, companion church or agency and the personnel are involved in the review process. The structure of this review and evaluation will be communicated by the Area Program Desk.

Based on the four-year review, the ELCA/GM will determine future directions of the appointment.

#### *c. Other Reviews and Assessments*

Continued employment may be evaluated when there is a change in assignment, mission priorities, or personal status; when personal- or work-related issues adversely impact the ministry; or at the discretion of the ELCA/GM.

The ELCA/GM may use professional assessments and evaluation tools to assist in this evaluation. These may be requested at any time but generally will be conducted at the time of Home Assignment. In such cases, continuation of employment is, in part, conditional upon complying with the requests and upon an evaluation by the ELCA/GM.

### **2.4 Resignation Protocol**

In discerning an end to service, personnel should consult with companion church or agency leadership and the Area Program Desk prior to making any decision. This permits an opportunity to discuss work and family issues and possible alternative arrangements, as warranted.

If a decision is made to resign, personnel will provide sufficient advance notice to local leadership and the ELCA/GM for the sake of

planning.

Resignation usually occurs at the end of a 22-month term.

End of service support provisions are detailed in *Terms and Conditions of Support 12.0*.

## **2.5 Closure of Service**

The ELCA/GM reserves the right to end employment of personnel at any time with or without cause.

Personnel will be given written notice by the ELCA/GM specifying an effective date of termination that will not be earlier than the date such notice is given.

End of service support provisions are detailed in *Terms and Conditions of Support 12.0*.

## **2.6 Type of Employment**

### *a. Assigned Appointment*

The salary schedule is based upon one person filling an Assigned Appointment. The pension contribution rate for a person filling an Assigned Appointment is found in *Appendix 1.0-A*.

### *b. Assigned - Associate Appointment*

If the person filling an Assigned Appointment is married, the spouse may apply for an Associate Appointment. The procedure follows the usual candidacy evaluation and call process. The description of responsibilities for an Associate Appointment may vary. The Associate Appointment will end at the same time as the Assigned Appointment.

The base salary for a couple in an Assigned – Associate Appointment is 145 percent of the Assigned Appointment. The couple elects to receive this support in one of three ways:

1. The person in the Assigned Appointment receives 100 percent of base salary, and the additional 45 percent is received in the name of the person in the Associate Appointment. In this case both persons are employed with a job record, Social Security record and individual membership with Portico Benefit Services. The

pension contribution rate for both the Assigned Appointment and the Associate Appointment is found in *Appendix 1.0-B.1*.

2. The person filling the Assigned Appointment receives the full 145 percent of base salary. In this case the person in the Associate Appointment does not maintain a separate job record, Social Security record, an individual pension account or eligibility for individual disability benefits. The pension contribution rate for the person in the Assigned Appointment is found in *Appendix 1.0-B.2*.

3. The 145 percent base salary may be split equally between the person in the Assigned Appointment and the person in the Associate Appointment (72.5 percent of base for each person). The pension contribution rate for both the Assigned Appointment and the Associate Appointment is found in *Appendix 1.0-B.3*.

For all three options of salary support distribution, *Terms & Conditions 2.7* and *4.4* related to outside income will apply.

### *c. Full-Time Team Appointment*

When two Assigned Appointments are filled by a couple, both are supported in a Full-Time Team Appointment. The base salary for each is 83.5 percent of the Assigned Appointment. The pension contribution rate for a Full-Time Team Appointment is found in *Appendix 1.0.C*.

### *d. Part-Time Team Appointment*

A Part-Time Team Appointment may be designated when a couple mutually fills one Assigned Appointment. The salary designation options are identical to those that apply to the Assigned – Associate Appointment, as described in *Terms and Conditions of Support 2.6.b*. The pension contribution rate for a Part-Time Team Appointment is found in *Appendix 1.0.D*.

### *e. Employment of Non-US Citizens*

See *Terms and Conditions of Support 15.0*.

## **2.7 Outside Employment**

For personnel serving in an Assigned or Full-Time Team Appointment, employment outside

the ELCA/GM appointment is not permitted.

For personnel serving in an Associate Appointment, outside employment is permitted, but an annual accounting of this income must be reported to the ELCA/GM. The ELCA/GM salary support for the Associate Appointment may be affected by income from other sources, as stated in *Terms and Conditions of Support* 4.4. This applies also to Associate salary support paid in the name of the Assigned Appointment.

### **3.0 ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING**

This section further elaborates accountabilities as stated in *Personnel Policies and Expectations*.

#### **3.1 Personnel in Positions of Leadership**

Personnel shall not assume positions of elected leadership in companion churches or agencies or serve in positions as a director of major programs or institutions of the companion church, unless authorized in writing by the ELCA/GM and after consultation with the companion church or agency (*Personnel Policies and Expectations* 4.2).

If personnel have management or administrative responsibility for ELCA/GM funds, accounting in accordance with the ELCA/GM's Finance office guidelines is required.

#### **3.2 Personal Gifts**

Personnel can receive and retain an occasional personal gift from non-family members up to a limited cash amount (or value in-kind). Cash gifts in excess of this amount must be reported and remitted to the ELCA Global Church Sponsorship office. See *Appendix 2.0* for more information.

Personnel may retain certain non-cash gifts that exceed the limited cash amount in value if written approval is received from the ELCA/GM office. See *Appendix 2.0* and *Personnel Policies and Expectations 7.0*.

According to IRS regulations, cash or non-cash gifts of any amount received by Personnel from non-family members is considered earned income

and must be reported.

Gifts processed by the ELCA will be reported as income on W-2 statements but will not factor into pension contributions.

#### **3.3 Reporting to the ELCA/GM**

An annual report of ministry activity and goals for the following year must be provided to the ELCA/GM through the Area Program Desk.

#### **3.4 Reporting to ELCA Synod**

Rostered individuals are required to follow the expectations and requirements of the ELCA and their synod of roster. Lay individuals are encouraged to provide an annual report to their synod.

The ELCA/GM encourages personnel to maintain regular contact with their synod including, if possible, attendance at synod assemblies and visit to the synodical office while on Home Assignment.

#### **3.5 Reporting to Local Supervisor**

Personnel are expected to conform to the evaluation and reporting requirements requested by their local supervisors.

### **4.0 SALARY SUPPORT AND ADJUSTMENTS**

The ELCA/GM salary schedule is reviewed annually by Global Mission staff, who makes a request for allocation from the ELCA Office of the Treasurer. Salary support is adjusted by the following:

#### **4.1 Goods and Services Differential**

A Goods and Services Differential (GSD) provides equitable support among high-cost and low-cost countries of service. A professional organization is utilized in computing the adjustment appropriate to a given country. A GSD adjustment may be positive or negative and applies only while personnel are in the country of service. A full description of the GSD adjustment is available upon request.

*a. Countries with positive GSD*

If personnel are outside their country of service for less than 30 days on work-related travel or vacation, GSD will not be adjusted. Starting on the 31st day outside the country of service, GSD would be adjusted.

In the following instances, GSD is adjusted effective immediately with the personnel's departure from the country of service: Home Assignment; vacation in conjunction with a Home Assignment; reintegration; or medical, personal or extended leave.

*b. Countries with negative GSD*

If personnel are outside their country of service for any reason, GSD is adjusted effective immediately with the personnel's departure from the country of service.

#### **4.2 Income Tax**

Withholding for foreign income taxes is made in the form of a deduction from the base salary. These funds are pooled to pay in-country taxes levied on the ELCA/GM salary support. The ELCA/GM uses income tax tables prepared by a professional organization to determine the income tax deduction. The income tax tables represent an estimate of home-country resident income taxes that personnel do not pay, but would have incurred had they been working in the U.S.

Income taxes levied by the country of service on salary support provided by the ELCA/GM are reimbursable expenses.

By federal law, personnel are required to file annual U.S. income tax forms. The ELCA/GM Finance office can provide a *Tax Guide for International Personnel* but is unable to offer specific tax advice. Any U.S. tax liability is a personal responsibility.

#### **4.3 Social Security**

Social Security taxes are computed based on taxable income. Lay personnel who are U.S. citizens must participate in the U.S. Social Security program. The employer's share of the Social Security tax payments will be paid by the

ELCA/GM. For clergy, a Social Security offset allowance, as determined by the ELCA/GM, is added to the gross salary. Ordained personnel who are U.S. citizens are responsible for personally paying Social Security contributions.

#### **4.4 Support from Other Sources**

*a. Assigned Appointments and Full-Time Team Appointments*

Any cash received on a regular basis from non-ELCA/GM sources is considered outside income and must be reported and remitted to the ELCA/GM. This includes regular cash gifts from individuals or congregations.

In some circumstances, the local church or institution may provide some salary support or other cash provisions directly to ELCA Personnel. Such support is considered part of the ELCA/GM compensation package and must be reported to the ELCA/GM. The ELCA/GM will adjust its compensation to account for this local support.

*b. Associate Appointments*

For those serving in Associate Appointments who have outside employment, income from that employment can be retained in full without restriction. A reporting of this income must be made annually to the ELCA/GM. The Associate Appointment's ELCA/GM salary support continues in full until the total income (ELCA/GM salary plus outside income) equals that of the Assigned Appointment, adjusted by GSD. As income from other sources increases further, the ELCA/GM's salary support is reduced on a sliding scale. Additional information is available upon request.

Even if direct salary support is no longer provided for personnel in an Associate Appointment, they continue to receive other ELCA/GM support provisions and remain subject to *Personnel Policies and Expectations*.

#### **5.0 PERSONAL SUPPORT**

##### **5.1 ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Plan**

The ELCA/GM provides for membership in

Portico Benefit Services. This plan provides pension, major medical coverage and disability, among other benefits. A detailed description of the program is provided by Portico Benefit Services. It is the responsibility of Personnel to communicate directly with Portico Benefit Services regarding investment elections, changes, updates, or the status of their membership.

### **5.2 Return Benefit Allowance**

The purpose of the Return Benefit Allowance is to provide assistance at the time of reintegration to the U.S. at the end of service with the ELCA/GM. An annual amount will be provided commencing upon employment with the ELCA/GM. The amount for this allowance is found in *Appendix 3.0*.

These funds will be automatically deposited monthly in an account set up in the employee's name with the ELCA Mission Investment Fund and may be withdrawn at the end of service with the ELCA/GM. Contributions to the Return Benefit Allowance are not provided during the period of reintegration.

Personnel may elect a one-time-only option to receive this benefit as an addition to their monthly payroll.

### **5.3 Student Loan Assistance**

Personnel may apply for assistance toward personal monthly student loan obligations. This benefit applies to the monthly payment of post-secondary education loans contracted prior to service with the ELCA/GM. Supporting documentation for applying for this benefit include:

- Evidence of debt and a copy of the repayment schedule
- Evidence that the debt is a legally contracted loan (personal loans do not qualify)
- A statement of any other repayment assistance being provided
- A statement that such loans were incurred as a result of direct educational expenses, and do not include any other personal liabilities such as car loans and credit card debit, among others.

The amount provided for student loan assistance is found in *Appendix 4.0*.

### **5.4 Children's Savings Plan**

The children's savings plan is designed to assist with the costs of a child's post-secondary education or transition to independent living. The benefit applies for each biological or legally adopted child. The benefit begins with 's employment if there are eligible children, or at the time of birth or legal adoption of a child during the employment. The allowance is deposited in an account in the parent's name and invested in an account set up by the ELCA/GM with the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

The monthly benefit concludes when the child reaches the age of 18 or at the time when employment has concluded, whichever occurs first. At that time, the funds may be withdrawn by the parents to assist with costs for further education or for any other purpose.

The amount for this provision is found in *Appendix 5.0*.

### **5.5 Additional Insurance**

Both basic and voluntary supplemental life insurance benefits are offered by Portico Benefit Services. The basic life insurance benefit is provided at no cost to personnel and includes an accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) benefit. The voluntary supplemental life insurance benefit is available through payroll deduction. Additional life insurance, disability insurance, property insurance or other insurance are a personal responsibility.

## **6.0 PREPARATION SUPPORT**

### **6.1 Mission Preparation Program**

The ELCA/GM provides orientation and preparation programs annually. Participation in this program is required unless the ELCA/GM determines that participation is not possible. Costs related to the mission preparation program are borne by the ELCA/GM.

## **6.2 Language Training**

Language training is provided when deemed necessary by the ELCA/GM and is normally considered part of the initial 22-month term of service. At the ELCA/GM's discretion, a one-month stay in the U.S. may be provided upon completion of language study prior to the start of a 22-month term.

## **6.3 Visa Fees**

Visa fees for the country of service are reimbursable expenses.

## **6.4 Pre-Service Medical Exam**

A pre-service medical exam is required. Costs for the prescribed ELCA/GM medical protocol not covered by insurance are reimbursable. Additional medical services and testing are a personal responsibility.

Examination results, including medical clearance for the proposed service, must be submitted to the ELCA/GM prior to departure for the country of service.

## **6.5 Travel to the Country of Service**

Direct travel at the most economical rate is provided from the principal U.S. residence to the country of service. Arrangements must be made through the ELCA/GM. Personal travel plans are not reimbursable.

## **6.6 Relocation Allowance**

Personnel will receive a cash allowance to assist with costs related to relocation.

While personnel are encouraged to purchase household goods locally as much as possible, these funds may also be used for the shipment of personal effects to the country of service. If personnel choose to ship personal items, they have sole responsibility for the arrangement and payment of any shipment or air freight, insurance, customs charges, and in-country transportation and delivery charges.

This allowance is provided as a grant for which accounting is not required. The amount of the relocation allowance is found in *Appendix 6.0*. Costs in excess of the amount provided by the

ELCA/GM is a personal responsibility.

In certain circumstances, the ELCA/GM may at its discretion offer alternative shipping arrangements.

## **6.7 Storage of Personal Effects**

At the beginning of service, personnel may request assistance from the ELCA/GM towards costs related to moving personal effects from a U.S. residence to local storage.

ELCA/GM will provide assistance towards the cost of monthly public storage costs. See *Appendix 7.0* for more information.

The ELCA/GM does not accept any liability for stored items.

## **7.0 IN-SERVICE SUPPORT**

### **7.1 Housing**

Housing while in the country of service is facilitated by the ELCA/GM.

If personnel decline housing facilitated by the ELCA/GM, the level of assistance provided for other housing will be determined solely by the ELCA/GM. The ELCA/GM does not assume any liability for personal housing decisions beyond the ELCA/GM's stated responsibilities.

No cash provision or reimbursement for housing is provided prior to initial departure from the U.S.

### **7.2 Furnishings**

ELCA/GM provides support towards basic household furnishings. Assistance with furnishings is limited to:

- Kitchen/Dining Room: stove, refrigerator, table and six chairs
- Living Room: sofa, two easy chairs, two end tables or coffee tables, two lamps, desk and chair, bookcase, fans or heaters as necessitated by climate
- Bedroom: bed, dresser, night stand, lamp (adjusted by number of family members)



- Other: washing machine

If the housing does not include the items listed above or essential built-in equipment (e.g. closets, sinks, ceiling lights), a cost estimate must be given to the Area Program Desk for approval before any purchases are made.

Other home furnishings or purchases to outfit the household are considered a personal expense.

### **7.3 Utilities and Services**

While in the country of service, the ELCA/GM provides assistance towards the cost of utilities and services for electricity, gas, water, sewage and garbage disposal.

Consultation with the ELCA/GM is required to determine the level of eligible expenses for telephone, cell phone and e-mail services. A portion of eligible expenses are reimbursed. Hardware and software for telephone, cell phone and e-mail services are a personal responsibility.

The level of the ELCA/GM assistance for utility and service expenses is found in *Appendix 8.0*.

### **7.4 Transportation**

Appropriate transportation required for the work assignment is determined by the Area Program Desk.

#### *a. Local transportation*

Public transportation costs for work-related travel will be reimbursed. If a monthly or annual pass is purchased, a portion of the purchase price will be reimbursed.

Additional information on assistance with local transportation is found in *Appendix 9.0*.

#### *b. ELCA/GM vehicles*

The need or availability of a vehicle for use by personnel varies. Where the ELCA/GM determines a vehicle is required, one suitable for local conditions will be provided. In situations where the ELCA/GM owns or has responsibility for a pool of vehicles, the Area Program Desk will work with the appropriate party to assign

vehicles and evaluate such assignments as needed.

The ELCA/GM will provide for the following care and maintenance of ELCA/GM-owned vehicles: gas, oil change, minor repairs, documentation, insurance and licensing/registration fees. Personnel are to contact the Area Program Desk to authorize major repairs.

Personnel are responsible for securing and maintaining necessary insurance and licensing/registration for any ELCA/GM-owned vehicle assigned to them and for providing such information to ELCA/GM when requested.

Personal use of an ELCA/GM-owned vehicle is permitted if personal miles/kilometers are documented in a vehicle log and submitted as a personal expense. Personal use includes (among others) personal visits, shopping trips, eating out, extracurricular activities for children, church attendance (if not work-related) etc.

If a vehicle log is not maintained and submitted regularly, the personnel will be responsible for a percentage of basic care and maintenance costs for the vehicle (gas and oil change).

Additional information on charges for personal use of an ELCA/GM-owned vehicle is found in *Appendix 9.0*.

#### *c. Personal vehicles*

If personnel purchase their own vehicle, the ELCA/GM will reimburse work-related travel if miles/kilometers are documented in a vehicle log and submitted as a work-related expense. All other vehicle costs are a personal responsibility.

### **7.5 Vacation / Holidays**

Annual vacation of four work weeks is provided. Unused vacation may not be carried over to the next year.

Vacation plans must be approved by the local supervisor and notice must be given to the Area Program Desk prior to the vacation.

Paid holidays are granted in accordance with national holidays in the country of service. If not provided locally, salaried personnel will be granted two days paid leave for Christmas and two days paid leave for Easter. Personnel must consult with their local supervisor prior to taking these holidays.

### **7.6 Notification of Travel**

To maintain the safety and security of personnel, the ELCA/GM requires prior notice of any travel outside the location of assignment.

#### *a. Overnight Travel in Country of Service*

For overnight travel, including work-related travel or vacation, personnel are to provide travel details (place, length of stay, contact information) to a local contact person identified to the ELCA/GM.

#### *b. Travel Outside Country of Service*

Any travel outside the country of service requires that prior notification be provided to the Area Program Desk, including itinerary, length of stay and contact information.

### **7.7 Maternity/Paternity Leave**

Eight weeks of maternity leave are provided at the time of birth. Two weeks of paternity leave are provided within the first year.

### **7.8 Children's Education**

The level of assistance that ELCA/GM provides towards the costs of elementary and secondary education will vary according to the local context. Personnel are advised to consult with the ELCA/GM prior to making a decision about children's education. The personnel's contribution toward these costs will vary according to a variety of factors.

Biological or legally adopted children of personnel are eligible for education assistance.

Further information is available upon request.

### **7.9 College-Age Children Shipping Allowance**

Upon request, a one-time cash allowance will be provided at the completion of secondary school to assist with shipping a child's personal effects.

The amount of the shipping allowance is found in *Appendix 10.0*.

### **7.10 College-Age Children Travel**

a. The ELCA/GM will provide a one-way ticket from the country of service to the U.S. at the completion of secondary school. Travel must be made in consultation with and upon prior approval from the ELCA/GM.

b. Upon request, college-age children living outside the country of service will be provided with one direct round-trip air ticket arranged and purchased by the ELCA/GM to the parents' country of service every two years for a maximum of two visits. Travel must be made in consultation with and upon prior approval from the ELCA/GM.

### **7.11 Children's Saving Plan**

See *Terms and Conditions of Support 5.4*.

## **8.0 PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**

### **8.1 Summer Missionary Conference**

When on Home Assignment over the summer, personnel are expected to participate in the Summer Missionary Conference. Requests for exceptions should be addressed to the Area Program Desk.

### **8.2 Consultations and Debriefings**

Consultations with the ELCA/GM staff are held during Home Assignment. Debriefings are held at the end of service. The schedule and structure of these conversations will be communicated to personnel in advance.

### **8.3 Continuing Education**

Personnel who have completed at least two years in the country of service may submit a request for assistance towards continuing education. Program guidelines are available upon request.

### **8.4 Professional Qualifications**

The maintenance of required licenses and professional memberships essential for the appointment is an expectation. Assistance toward

the cost may be requested and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

## 9.0 HOME ASSIGNMENT

### 9.1 Purpose

~~After a 22-month term of service, Personnel will engage in eight weeks of home assignment a two-month Home Assignment in the U.S. to coincide with the Summer Missionary Conference. In consultation with the Development team, sponsoring congregations, and the area program desk, personnel will determine their assignments prior to their departure from their country of service. Assignments are determined prior to departure from the country of service in consultation with the Area Program Desk. These Home assignments activities include visiting sponsoring congregations, participating in the Summer Missionary Conference, obtaining medical checkups, consultation consulting with the ELCA/GM ELCA Service and Justice staff, presenting workshops, and other assignments as appropriate. The Development team and area program desk will provide personnel with information on such activities prior to the home assignment.~~

### 9.2 Vacation During a Home Assignment Year

~~Personnel may use all or part or all of their four-week annual vacation in conjunction with the Hhome Assignment.~~

### 9.3 Travel

~~ELCA Service and Justice provides personnel with Ddirect round-trip travel from the country of service to one point in the U.S. location to the country of service is provided. Personnel must arrange travel through the travel agency or, if using an outside agency, submit a request for reimbursement that includes the airfare quote from the travel agency; ELCA Service and Justice will reimburse the lower of two fares. Travel arrangements must be made in consultation with and following approval of the ELCA/GM.~~

~~Any additional travel during Home Assignment is a personal responsibility. The area program desk~~

will arrange travel to and from the Summer Missionary Conference. In coordination with sponsoring congregations, personnel will be responsible for any additional travel during home assignments.

### 9.4 Medical Exam

~~Personnel on home assignment must undergo are required to have a physical examination based on ELCA Service and Justice guidelines provided by the ELCA/GM. Additional Personnel are responsible for any additional medical services and or testing. are a personal responsibility.~~

~~Examination results, including~~ To continue serving, personnel must submit examination results and medical clearance from the physician to the area program desk for continued service, must be submitted to the ELCA/GM prior to the conclusion of end of the Hhome Assignment.

### 9.5 Housing Assistance

~~Personnel are eligible for housing assistance while in the U.S. on Hhome Assignment in the U.S. and for vacation taken in the U.S. in conjunction with the Home Assignment. This provision is intended to assist with lodging expenses, not necessarily and not to cover all costs incurred: costs. The amount will be prorated depending on the start and end dates for the home assignment. Accounting is not required.~~

~~The amount provided for housing assistance is found in Appendix 11.0.~~

Housing assistance during home assignment:  
Single: \$600/month  
Couple: \$700/month  
Family: \$800/month

### 9.6 Transportation Assistance in the U.S.

~~Personnel are eligible for transportation assistance while in the U.S. on Hhome Assignment. and for vacation taken in the U.S. in conjunction with the Home Assignment. This provision is intended to assist with local travel expenses, and not to cover all costs incurred. The amount will be prorated depending on the start and end dates for home assignment.~~

Transportation assistance during home assignment is \$500/month.

~~Accounting is not required.~~

~~The amount provided for transportation assistance is found in Appendix 11.0.~~

## **10.0 MISSION TO THE ELCA**

As stated in *Personnel Policies and Expectations*, personnel share the gifts and witness of companion churches with the ELCA and provide an important channel of communication through which the ELCA is enriched and challenged by the global church. This is done in cooperation with the ELCA/GM's Mission Formation team.

All long-term personnel participate in the missionary sponsorship program and maintain contact with sponsors through regular correspondence and visits. Additional information will be provided by the ELCA Global Church Sponsorship office.

## **11.0 SUPPORT IN EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **11.1 Short-Term Personal Leave**

Upon prior consultation and approval from the ELCA/GM, personnel may be granted up to one month unpaid leave for personal reasons. During this period, no salary or benefits will be provided to the individual, except for continued enrollment in Portico Benefit Services. The ELCA/GM may at its sole discretion provide alternative arrangements.

### **11.2 Extended Absence**

Upon prior consultation with the ELCA/GM, personnel may request an extended absence for personal reasons, including care and support for a spouse or child on extended medical leave. If the ELCA/GM approves the request, an absence not to exceed 12 months may be taken.

The first part of the extended absence is designated as Home Assignment, vacation and/or other ELCA/GM assignments. The ELCA/GM

will work with personnel in determining appropriate activities during this period. Upon completion of the Home Assignment, remaining vacation time or other ELCA/GM assignments, the ELCA/GM will determine further salary and benefits for the remainder of the extended absence.

The ELCA/GM may not be able to guarantee continued employment, either in the current assignment or in a new appointment, following an extended absence.

### **11.3 Medical Leave**

Personnel who are unable to continue in their assignment due to sickness or disability may be granted a medical leave. Travel to the U.S. for the individual will be provided if requested and in consultation with the ELCA/GM.

Full salary and benefits will continue for up to four months. If personnel anticipate the medical condition to continue for longer than four months, they need to inquire with Portico Benefit Services and/or the Social Security Administration about disability benefits. If after four months, Personnel are still unable to return to service, salary support will be reduced by the amount of disability income from Portico Benefit Services and Social Security. Reduced salary and full benefits will continue until the individual is able to resume service or up to a maximum of eight additional months, whichever comes first.

The ELCA/GM may not be able to guarantee continued employment, either in the current assignment or in a new appointment, following extended medical leave.

### **11.4 Emergency Medical Evacuation**

Evacuation to another country or to the U.S. for emergency medical care is provided as recommended by medical personnel in the country of service and in consultation with the ELCA/GM. In the case of the need to evacuate a child, provision is made for one parent to accompany the child.

### **11.5 Bereavement Travel**

In the case of the critical illness or death of a parent of personnel, the ELCA/GM will provide round-trip travel for one person. This assistance is limited to a trip during the illness or at the time of death, not both.

In the case of the critical illness or death of a child of personnel residing outside the country of service, the ELCA/GM will provide round-trip transportation for the parents. This assistance is limited to a trip for each parent either during the illness or at the time of death, not both.

### **11.6 Crisis Situations**

The ELCA/GM takes seriously the risk to which personnel are exposed in the course of their service. The *Security Policies and Crisis Response Plan*, provided under separate cover, outline the preparation for and response to crises of various kinds involving personnel, families, Global Mission staff, or ELCA facilities/assets. See also *Personnel Policies and Expectations* 9.0.

### **11.7 Death of Personnel**

At the request of the surviving family and where repatriation of remains is possible, the ELCA/GM will provide for the costs of the transportation of the body to the U.S. The Area Program Desk should be consulted prior to making arrangements.

Continued employment of a surviving spouse is subject to review under *Terms and Conditions of Support* 2.3.c. and 2.6.b.

For a surviving spouse, reintegration benefits will be provided at the Assigned - Associate level for a period of six months.

### **12.0 END OF SERVICE SUPPORT**

End of service support as detailed in this section is provided when personnel retire or resign at the end of a 22-month term or if employment is concluded due to program completion, reordered priorities, budgetary considerations, or other programmatic reasons.

If resignation occurs prior to the end of a 22-month term or if the ELCA/GM terminates

employment for any reason other than stated above, end of service support provisions will be determined by the ELCA/GM.

Some support provisions may be affected if personnel choose to remain in their country of service or to relocate to another country outside of the U.S.

### **12.1 Reintegration**

Reintegration provides an extended time for re-entry and transition to the U.S. The reintegration begins upon departure from the country of service or upon the conclusion of the mission assignment, whichever comes first.

Reintegration is inclusive of all other leave time including vacation.

The length of reintegration is found in *Appendix* 12.0.

### **12.2 Missionary Sponsorship**

All personnel are expected to communicate with their sponsors at the conclusion of service and to encourage them to continue their commitment to missionary sponsorship. In addition, personnel should designate some time during reintegration for visits to sponsoring congregations. Personnel should consult with the ELCA Global Church Sponsorship team to determine a priority for these visits.

### **12.3 Support Provisions During Reintegration**

For personnel who have completed at least one term of service (22-months), support provisions continue during reintegration. These include: base salary (not adjusted by GSD), membership in Portico Benefit Services, housing support (either a cash allowance calculated at 30% of base salary or housing at the ELCA Missionary Apartments in St. Paul, Minnesota), and the Children's Savings Plan (if applicable).

### **12.4 Return Benefit Allowance**

See *Terms and Conditions of Support* 5.2.

### **12.5 Return Travel**

Direct travel at the most economical rate is

provided from the country of service to the principal U.S. residence. Arrangements must be made through the ELCA/GM. Personal travel plans are not reimbursable.

### **12.6 End of Service Relocation Allowance**

Personnel will receive a cash allowance to assist with relocation back to the U.S. at the time of the completion of service.

Personnel have sole responsibility for the arrangement and payment of any shipment or air freight, as well as customs charges, insurance and in-country transportation and delivery charges. Accounting is not required.

The amount of the end of service relocation allowance is found in *Appendix 13.0*. Costs in excess of the amount provided by the ELCA/GM are a personal responsibility.

In certain circumstances, ELCA/GM may at its discretion offer alternative shipping arrangements.

### **12.7 Post-Service Medical Exam**

The ELCA/GM will assist with the costs of the physical exam at the end of service, based on the ELCA/GM guidelines.

The amount of assistance is found in *Appendix 14.0*. Costs in excess of the amount provided by the ELCA/GM as well as any additional medical services and testing that exceeds the ELCA/GM guidelines are a personal responsibility.

### **13.0 PERSONNEL FILES**

Files are maintained on all Personnel who serve with the ELCA/GM. When service is completed, files will be reviewed and appropriate materials sent to the ELCA Archives.

### **14.0 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

The word “grievance” is defined as a disagreement with a specific decision taken by the ELCA/GM staff in the interpretation of any provision of *Terms and Conditions of Support*, or

a disagreement with the manner in which the ELCA/GM staff have implemented any such provision. Disagreement with the policies or provisions themselves does not constitute a grievance as the word is used in this section.

Disagreements should initially be discussed with the Area Program Desk and/or the Director for Global Service. Every effort should be made to resolve the issue through consultation and conversation.

If a problem cannot be resolved through discussion, the employee may file a written grievance with the Executive Director for the ELCA/GM. The written grievance should provide sufficient details to clearly identify the matter being grieved or appealed, state the reasons why the employee believes the action or decision was not warranted and specify the particular remedy being requested, and be dated and signed by the employee. The Executive Director of ELCA/GM will respond within 30 days of receipt of the written grievance.

If the grievance is still unresolved, the Employee will have 30 days to submit a dated and signed written request to the ELCA Executive for Human Resources for review by a grievance committee. The grievance committee will be comprised of the Executive Director of the ELCA/GM, the ELCA Executive for Human Resources, and a member of the ELCA executive staff from a different unit and chosen by the Office of the Presiding Bishop. The grievance committee will make the final determination, and the ELCA Executive for Human Resources will inform the employee of the disposition in writing.

### **15.0 EMPLOYMENT OF NON-U.S. CITIZENS**

The *Terms and Conditions of Support* contained herein apply to U.S. citizens.

Under certain circumstances, the ELCA/GM may employ citizens of other countries under terms and conditions of service and support that must be specified in an employment letter of

agreement. Such employment must conform to the rules and regulations of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and applicable U.S. labor laws.

It is possible for the ELCA/GM to call a spouse who is a citizen of another country to an Associate Appointment. In this circumstance, the salary support option for the couple in the Assigned - Associate Appointment is provided in the name of the person in the Assigned Appointment (as stated in *Terms and Conditions of Support* 2.6.b.2) to conform to the rules and

regulations of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and applicable U.S. labor laws.

#### **16.0 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

The ELCA/GM may employ a person for international mission assignment when that person's current or former association with the country or church of service does not impair that person's effectiveness in ministry or the ELCA's relationship with the church in that country.

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## **9.0 HOME ASSIGNMENT**

### **9.1 Purpose**

Personnel will engage in eight weeks of home assignment in the U.S. to coincide with the Summer Missionary Conference. In consultation with the Development team, sponsoring congregations, and the area program desk, personnel will determine their assignments prior to their departure from their country of service. Home assignment activities include visiting sponsoring congregations, participating in the Summer Missionary Conference, obtaining medical checkups, consulting with ELCA Service and Justice staff, presenting workshops, and other assignments as appropriate. The Development team and area program desk will provide personnel with information on such activities prior to the home assignment.

### **9.2 Vacation During a Home Assignment Year**

Personnel may use all or a part of their four-week annual vacation in conjunction with the home assignment.

### **9.3 Travel**

ELCA Service and Justice provides personnel with direct round-trip travel from one U.S. location to the country of service. Personnel must make travel arrangements in consultation with and following approval of the area program desk. Personnel must arrange travel through the travel agency or, if using an outside agency, submit a request for reimbursement that includes the airfare quote from the travel agency; ELCA Service and Justice will reimburse the lower of the two fares.

The area program desk will arrange travel to and from the Summer Missionary Conference. In coordination with sponsoring congregations, personnel will be responsible for any additional travel during home assignments.

### **9.4 Medical Exam**

Personnel on home assignment must undergo a physical examination based on ELCA Service and Justice guidelines. Personnel are responsible for any additional medical services or testing. To continue serving, personnel must submit examination results and medical clearance from the physician to the area program desk prior to the conclusion of the home assignment.

### **9.5 Housing Assistance**

Personnel are eligible for housing assistance while on home assignment in the U.S. This provision is intended to assist with lodging expenses, not necessarily to cover all incurred costs. The amount will be prorated depending on the start and end dates for the home assignment.

Housing assistance during home assignment:

- a. Single: \$600/month
- b. Couple: \$700/month
- c. Family: \$800/month

### **9.6 Transportation Assistance in the U.S.**

Personnel are eligible for transportation assistance while in the U.S. on home assignment. This

provision is intended to assist with local travel expenses, not to cover all costs incurred. The amount will be prorated depending on the start and end dates for the home assignment. Transportation assistance during home assignment is \$500/month.



## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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On page 13, this message endorses specific goals, practices and policies, as well as those that are to be rejected. On page 16, the message challenges the church to 'demonstrate care for creation via our budgeting and investment of church funds.' The church is further challenged to take up this form of care intentionally and conscientiously. This screen is an example of such intentional and conscientious response.

Recognizing that various investors will implement this along a continuum, for the purpose of this screen, investment might include companies using technologies working toward just transition away from environmentally destructive or operating harmful practices and toward practices that minimally or less significantly damage serve the environment. Such damage may be on a continuous basis or may be catastrophic ends of intergenerational, intragenerational and intersectional justice. Investors may look at an industry or sector that harms the environment and distinguish between culling out the worst players (such as companies with high Environmental Protection Agency fines, multiple toxic spills or certain fossil-fuel companies, etc.) and those ~~who~~ that are most actively addressing the environment and/or taking corrective measures. While a continuum exists, the ELCA is on record that efforts should be taken toward removing the largest fossil-fuel companies from portfolios as an expression of its concern for creation's care and that priority be given to investments in companies that are taking corrective measures as well as those - corporations (such as clean-tech companies) that are contributing toward a sustainable environment in a way that protects human rights and promotes just distribution of resources.

### Social policy and studies:

"Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice" ELCA.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/SocialStatements/Caring-for-Creation [ELCA, 1993]  
Global warming: download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Global\_WarmingSP\_R01.pdf LCA-Churchwide Assembly Action CA01.07.57  
Environmental concerns; download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Enviromental\_ConcernsSPR89.pdf  
ELCA Churchwide Assembly Action CA89.08.108

Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice (ELCA social statement, 1993), ELCA.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Caring-for-Creation

"Global Warming" (ELCA social policy resolution, 2001), CA01.07.57, download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Global\_WarmingSP\_R01.pdf

"Environmental Concerns" (ELCA Churchwide Assembly Action, 1989), CA89.08.108, download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Enviromental\_ConcernsSPR89.pdf

"Toward a Responsible Energy Future: Social Policy Resolution ["] (ELCA social policy resolution, 2017), CA 16.06.30, Toward Responsible Energy Future\_SPR16.pdf (elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net)

Approved by the ELCA Church Council — April 21-23, 1990  
Updated by the Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility — May 24, 2007  
Approved by the ELCA Church Council — November 2007  
Approved by the ELCA Church Council — November 2014 — CC14.11.18

Approved by the ELCA Church Council — November 2017 — CC17.11.33k

"Earth's Climate Crisis" (ELCA social message, 2023), download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Earths\_Climate\_Crisis\_Social\_Message.pdf? ga=

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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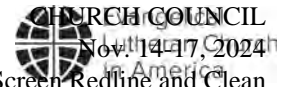
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## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1 AREA: Environment  
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Social Criteria Investment Screen  
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 4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council  
 5 FORMAT DATE: 10/16/2024  
 6

## MARKER DATES:

8 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council – April 21-23, 1990  
 9 UPDATED by the Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility – May 24, 2007  
 10 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council – November 2007  
 11 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council – November 2014 CC14.11.18  
 12 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council – November 2017 CC17.11.33k  
 13 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, October 2024  
 14 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, October 2024 [anticipated]  
 15

## Environment

### Authority

17  
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 19  
 20 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has laid out its concern for the environment in a  
 21 social statement, “Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice” (1993), acknowledging both God’s  
 22 goodness in creation and acceptance of the caregiving responsibility of Christians. It has expressed those  
 23 concerns in relation to investments in several social policy resolutions since that time, such as “Toward a  
 24 Responsible Energy Future” (2016). The recent message “Earth’s Climate Crisis” (2023) declared the  
 25 present climate crisis a “kairos moment,” demanding that consequences for future generations be taken  
 26 into account while also emphasizing the intersectional nature of any attempt to address environmental  
 27 justice.  
 28

### Wording of the screen

29  
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 31 The ELCA recommends limiting investments made in corporations that are the most egregious in terms of  
 32 damage to human health or the natural environment. The ELCA recommends investments in corporations  
 33 that are taking positive steps toward a sustainable environment.  
 34

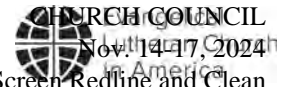
### Definition of the problem

35  
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 37 “The earth is a planet of beauty and abundance; the earth system is wonderfully intricate and incredibly  
 38 complex. But today living creatures, and the air, soil, and water that support them, face unprecedented  
 39 threats. Many threats are global; most stem directly from human activity. Our current practices may so  
 40 alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner we know.” —“Caring for  
 41 Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice” (ELCA social statement, 1993)

42 “We believe God yearns and strives for Earth’s ecological well-being, and we trust that ‘God’s  
 43 faithfulness alone sustains the Church and renews our faith, hope, and love.’ As God’s people we address  
 44 the climate crisis with active hope rather than paralyzing despair.” —“Earth’s Climate Crisis” (ELCA  
 45 social message, 2023)  
 46

47 On page 13, this message endorses specific goals, practices and policies, as well as those that are to be  
 48 rejected. On page 16, the message challenges the church to ‘demonstrate care for creation via our  
 49 budgeting and investment of church funds.’ The church is further challenged to take up this form of care  
 50 intentionally and conscientiously. This screen is an example of such intentional and conscientious





## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

51 response.

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53 Recognizing that various investors will implement this along a continuum, for the purpose of this screen,  
54 investment might include companies working toward just transition away from environmentally  
55 destructive or harmful practices and toward practices that serve the ends of intergenerational,  
56 intragenerational and intersectional justice. Investors may look at an industry or sector that harms the  
57 environment and distinguish between culling out the worst players (such as companies with high  
58 Environmental Protection Agency fines, multiple toxic spills or certain fossil-fuel companies, etc.) and  
59 those that are most actively addressing the environment or taking corrective measures. While a continuum  
60 exists, the ELCA is on record that efforts should be taken toward removing the largest fossil-fuel  
61 companies from portfolios as an expression of its concern for creation's care and that priority be given to  
62 investments in companies that are taking corrective measures as well as those corporations (such as clean-  
63 tech companies) that are contributing toward a sustainable environment in a way that protects human  
64 rights and promotes just distribution of resources.

65

### 66 Social policy and studies

67

68 *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice* (ELCA social statement, 1993), [ELCA.org/Faith/Faith-](https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Caring-for-Creation)  
69 [and-Society/Social-Statements/Caring-for-Creation](https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Caring-for-Creation)

70

71 “Global Warming” (ELCA social policy resolution, 2001), CA01.07.57,  
72 [download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Global\\_WarmingSPR01.pdf](https://download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Global_WarmingSPR01.pdf)

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74 “Environmental Concerns” (ELCA Churchwide Assembly Action, 1989), CA89.08.108,  
75 [download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Environmental\\_ConcernsSPR89.pdf](https://download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Environmental_ConcernsSPR89.pdf)

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77 “Toward a Responsible Energy Future” (ELCA social policy resolution, 2017), CA 16.06.30,  
78 [Toward\\_Responsible\\_Energy\\_Future\\_SPR16.pdf](https://www.elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/Toward_Responsible_Energy_Future_SPR16.pdf) (elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net)

79

80 “Earth’s Climate Crisis” (ELCA social message, 2023),  
81 [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Earths\\_Climate\\_Crisis\\_Social\\_Message.pdf?\\_ga=](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Earths_Climate_Crisis_Social_Message.pdf?_ga=2.215003095.1749754209.1713216865-1657835105.1702669119)  
82 [2.215003095.1749754209.1713216865-1657835105.1702669119](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Earths_Climate_Crisis_Social_Message.pdf?_ga=2.215003095.1749754209.1713216865-1657835105.1702669119)

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

1 AREA: Human Rights  
2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue Paper  
3  
4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council  
5 FORMAT DATE: 6/12/2019 10/16/2024  
6  
7 MARKER DATES:  
8 RECOMMENDED by the Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, Jan. 6, 2004.  
9 ENDORSED by the Division for Church in Society Board, Feb. 27, 2004.  
10 APPROVED by the Church Council, April 16-18, 2004.  
11 Updated/UPDATED by Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, Jan. 11,  
12 2008.  
13 Approved/APPROVED by Church Council, April 2008 [CC08.04.XXa].  
14 Approved/UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, September 5, 2019.  
15 APPROVED by Church Council, November 10, 2019 [CC19.11.2012 [CC12.11.44w.47j].  
16 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, October 2024  
17 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council in November 2019, October 2024  
18 [anticipated].

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights

Background

27 "In the name of the God who creates every human being out of love, this church teaches human dignity is  
28 God's gift to every person and that the commitment to universal rights protects that dignity." By teaching  
29 about human rights, protesting their violation, advocating their international codification, and supporting  
30 effective ways to monitor compliance, the church meets its commitment to work for human rights.

32 As part of its pledge to uphold human rights, this church has consistently supported international  
33 organizations in their work to safeguard human rights. The inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable  
34 rights of all members of the human family are at the heart of the movement to preserve, protect and  
35 promote human rights, as described by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations.  
36 "Human rights provide: 'The ELCA affirms the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as 'a common  
37 universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the  
38 individual in the international community.'"

40 The concept of human rights is regularly updated and refined. Corporate social responsibility is often  
41 guided by the 2011 U.N. Human Rights Council-endorsed "Guiding Principles on Business and Human  
42 Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework/Remedy'  
43 Framework," proposed by U.N. Special Representative John Ruggie. The "Ruggie Principles" are  
44 organized under the U.N. Framework's three pillars:

- 45 • The State Duty to Protect Human Rights.
- 46 • The Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights.
- 47 • The need for greater Access to Remedy for victims of business-related abuse.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



ELCA social policy

In 1995, the ELCA adopted the social statement *"For Peace in God's World"*, which states: "God's steadfast resolve for peace encompasses our time as it does all times. In creation and redemption, through Law and Gospel, God's faithful love acts for peace."<sup>iv</sup> The statement calls the church to be a disturbing presence, a reconciling presence, and a deliberating presence to promote respect for human rights.

The ELCA's 1999 social statement *"Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All"* describes the relationship between corporations and politics: "The economic power of large transnational corporations continues to grow, making some of them larger than many national economies. Along with this financial strength comes an inordinate potential to influence political decisions, local and regional economies, and democratic processes in society. The power they wield, enhanced through mergers and buyouts, can have positive effects, but it can also hold others captive to transnational corporate interests. The global community must continue to seek effective ways to hold these and other powerful economic actors more accountable for the sake of sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all."<sup>v</sup>

The ELCA's social teachings on the economy recognize corporate policies and practices with regard to employees as essential in protecting the right to participation in a just economy. The statement resists the commodification of workers: "No one should be coerced to work under conditions that violate their dignity or freedom, jeopardize their health or safety, result in neglect of their family's wellbeing, or provide unjust compensation for their labor."<sup>vi</sup> The same document recognizes that conditions may arise where workers need to organize and allows for the church to support that right.<sup>vii</sup>

In 2017, the ELCA issued the social message *"social message Human Rights"* that, which affirmed the following broad categories of human rights, adapted from the church's historical body of social teaching:

1. Humans have the right to worship freely.
2. Humans have the right to education and free speech and to be educated.
3. Humans have the right to the protection of foundational relationships, such as marriage and family.
4. Humans have the right to equal access and participation in legal, civic and political decisions affecting them.
5. Humans have the right to full participation in a just and sustainable economy. Humans may not be treated as commodities.
6. Humans have the right to physical goods such as water, food, shelter and health care as sourced sustainably.

The ELCA's 2019 social statement on gender justice, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*, affirms human rights and dignity and specifies that the church should "advocate for and support laws, policies, and practices that respect diverse bodies rather than discriminating against, objectifying, or devaluing them. Women, girls and people who identify as non-binary must not be deprived of their human or civil rights."<sup>viii</sup>

Using the above guidelines, this church answers God's call to "proclaim the Gospel of God's final peace and to work for earthly peace."<sup>ix</sup>

Corporate response

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



98 While we have been accustomed to governments setting boundaries to prevent human rights abuses, many  
99 countries do not provide adequate safeguards. In response to the challenge presented by globally diverse  
100 supply chains, there has been a growth of concern within a number of corporations for the human rights  
101 of those who are most vulnerable. As noted earlier, corporations are now called to set principles to  
102 promote human rights within their own operations that ensure safe and humane work conditions within  
103 their supply chains and within the societies in which they operate. Many corporations have developed  
104 policies that support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fundamental conventions of  
105 the International Labor Organization (ILO).

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106 Corporations have addressed community engagement, safety and healthy working conditions, sustainable  
107 wages, and community engagement (especially with regard to indigenous community  
108 concerns). Some lay out criteria for selection of and withdrawal from a country of operation, as well as  
109 how their work in this area will be verifiable and transparent. Shareholders have begun calling for  
110 corporations to use methods of reporting out such as via the U.N. Guiding Principles Reporting  
111 Framework or organizations such as Know the Chain.

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112 Due to armed conflict in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, the spotlight has turned on the defense,  
113 technology and surveillance industries. The implication of their products in human rights abuses  
114 represents a human rights and reputational risk for corporations.

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115 **Social criteria investment screens-**

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116 The social criteria investment screens on political and civil human rights, approved by the ELCA Church  
117 Council in 2018, responds to this issue.

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118 **Resolution guidelines for the ELCA**

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120 1. We support asking a corporation for the development, adoption, review or implementation of  
121 its policies related to human rights for a company and its supply chain. We support calls for  
122 human rights impact assessments covering a corporation's operations, activities, business  
123 relationships and products.

124 2. We support review of a company's operations in particular locations when our public policy  
125 position or partner churches and agencies express concerns about those operations. This  
126 includes reports on risk assessment and policy on additional responses in areas experiencing  
127 conflict or occupation.

128 3. We support reports examining the human rights impact of high-risk products and services.

129 4. We support reports on the extent to which a product may endanger, threaten or violate  
130 privacy or civil rights.

131 5. We support reports on the extent to which technologies may be marketed and sold to  
132 authoritarian or repressive governments, including those identified by the U.S. Department of  
133 State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices; the potential loss of goodwill and other  
134 financial risks associated with these human rights issues; and whether use of its products  
135 leads to violations of international law.

136 6. We support living-wage reports to provide investors with information needed to assess the  
137 extent to which the company is complying with international human rights standards and  
138 assessing systemic risks stemming from growing income inequality.

139 3-7. We support requests asking a corporation to endorse the Universal Declaration of Human  
140 Rights.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



4-8. We support requests for reports on policy and the implementation of a corporation's policy with respect to the "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework." This may include international production facilities, international suppliers and commitment to independent monitoring of compliance with the policy.

5-9. We support requests for reports on policy and implementation of a corporation's policy with respect to the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

6-10. We support reports outlining policy, procedure and practices for obtaining free, informed and prior consent of ~~indigenous~~Indigenous peoples affected by corporate activities through their recognized and official governance structure, and policy to avoid contact with ~~indigenous~~Indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation.

11. We support the company's adoption of a comprehensive human rights policy, which may apply to both its own operations and its suppliers, that includes the right to a sufficient standard of physical and mental health and establishes a process to identify, prevent, mitigate and remedy adverse human rights impacts, above and beyond supplier audits, including consultation with stakeholders.

7-12. We support the adoption of a human rights policy that includes the prohibition of sexual exploitation of minors, incorporating comprehensive, transparent and verifiable sections to address provisions contained in "The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism."The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism."

8-13. We support adoption of policy and practices, as well as reports addressing modern-day slavery in a ~~company's~~company's global operations and supply chain, to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights.

9-14. We support adoption of policy to include respect for and adherence to the preservation of the traditional knowledge rights of traditional agricultural communities, including enjoyment of their own means of subsistence.

10-15. We support the adoption of a comprehensive policy articulating ~~the~~ respect for and commitment to the human right to water.

11-16. We support reports on systems to ensure that a company contractor and suppliers are implementing human rights policies in their operations, including monitoring, training, addressing issues of noncompliance and assuring that no modern-day slavery concerns exist.

12-17. We support reports regarding the expectation to privacy and freedom of expression on the internet. Such reports may deal with individual situations, resisting demands for censorship, and when a company agrees to legally binding government filters, data retention or third-party use of data.

13-18. We support reports evaluating strategies and policies on content governance, including the extent to which they address human rights abuses and threats to democracy and freedom of expression, and the reputational, regulatory and financial risks posed by content governance controversies.

14-19. We support asking a corporation to endorse any of the following sets of principles:  
a. Bellagio Principles.  
a. Bellagio Principles.  
b. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 32.  
b. (Article 32).

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

- 192 c. Wood-Sheppard Principles,
- 193 ~~15-20.~~ We support requests for reports on the use of criminal background checks in hiring and
- 194 employment decisions for a ~~company's~~ ~~company's~~ employees, independent contractors
- 195 and subcontracted workers, including evaluation of the resultant risk of racial bias.
- 196 ~~16-21.~~ We support requests to evaluate the feasibility of adopting a policy of not doing business with
- 197 governments that are complicit in genocide ~~and/or~~ crimes against humanity as defined by
- 198 the U.S. Department of State or the appropriate international body.
- 199 ~~17-22.~~ We support requests to prohibit sales of facial recognition technology until an independent
- 200 evaluation has concluded that its use is not contributing to violations of human rights.
- 201 ~~18-23.~~ We support reports addressing the human rights risk posed by detention without parole of all
- 202 asylum-seekers and separating minor children from their parents who have been accused of
- 203 entering the U.S. illegally.
- 204 24. We support calls for employees to be able to utilize paid sick leave benefits without being
- 205 subject to discipline under employee attendance policies. This policy should not expire after a
- 206 set time or depend upon the existence of a global pandemic.
- 207 25. We support independent, third-party audits on the impact of the company's policies and
- 208 practices on the safety and well-being of workers.

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Resolution guidelines for the ELCA — general

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We support practices of good governance, specifically:

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- A company having an independent board chair or independent lead director.
- Reports on policies and procedures for political contributions and expenditures (both direct and indirect) made with corporate funds.
- Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt organization that is used for an expenditure or contribution that might be deemed political.
- Guidelines or policies governing the company's political contributions and expenditures.
- Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.

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Resolutions on related topics from other issue papers

- Violence: trafficking and slavery, exploitation of minors, risk assessments in conflict-afflicted areas, policies to prevent harassment and discrimination.
- Codes of Conduct: child labor, human rights risks assessments, workers' rights standards, forced labor.
- Domestic Access to Health Care: access to basic physical and mental health care.
- Environmental Issues: human right to water, seed saving rights of traditional agricultural communities.
- Extractive Industries: human rights impact assessments, rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.
- Non-Discrimination in the Workplace: accommodations for people living with disabilities, background checks, gender equality.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

<sup>i</sup> "ELCA Social Message on Human Rights," page" (ELCA social message, 2017), 2.

<sup>ii</sup> "For Peace in God's World," (ELCA, page social statement, 1995), 14.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>iv</sup> "For Peace in God's World," ELCA, page 3, Ibid, 3.

<sup>v</sup> "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All," (ELCA, page social statement, 1999), 13.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>viii</sup> Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action (ELCA social statement, 2019), 60.

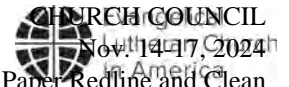
<sup>ix</sup> "For Peace in God's World," page, (ELCA social statement, 1995), 1.

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Working Document



## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1 AREA: Human Rights  
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue Paper  
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 4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council  
 5 FORMAT DATE: 10/16/2024  
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## MARKER DATES:

8 RECOMMENDED by the Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, Jan. 6, 2004.  
 9 ENDORSED by the Division for Church in Society Board, Feb. 27, 2004.  
 10 APPROVED by the Church Council, April 16-18, 2004.  
 11 UPDATED by Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, Jan. 11, 2008.  
 12 APPROVED by Church Council, April 2008 [CC08.04.XXa].  
 13 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, September 5, 2019.  
 14 APPROVED by Church Council, November 10, 2019 [CC19.11.47i].  
 15 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, October 2024  
 16 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, October 2024 [anticipated].  
 17

## Human Rights

### Background

22 “In the name of the God who creates every human being out of love, this church teaches human dignity is  
 23 God’s gift to every person and that the commitment to universal rights protects that dignity.”<sup>i</sup> By teaching  
 24 about human rights, protesting their violation, advocating their international codification and supporting  
 25 effective ways to monitor compliance,<sup>ii</sup> the church meets its commitment to work for human rights.  
 26

27 As part of its pledge to uphold human rights, this church has consistently supported international  
 28 organizations in their work to safeguard human rights. The inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable  
 29 rights of all members of the human family are at the heart of the movement to preserve, protect and  
 30 promote human rights. “The ELCA affirms the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as ‘a common  
 31 universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the  
 32 individual in the international community.’”<sup>iii</sup>  
 33

34 The concept of human rights is regularly updated and refined. Corporate social responsibility is often  
 35 guided by the 2011 U.N. Human Rights Council-endorsed “Guiding Principles on Business and Human  
 36 Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework,” proposed by U.N.  
 37 Special Representative John Ruggie. The “Ruggie Principles” are organized under the U.N. Framework’s  
 38 three pillars:

- 39 • The **State Duty to Protect** Human Rights.
- 40 • The corporate **Responsibility to Respect** Human Rights.
- 41 • The need for greater **Access to Remedy** for victims of business-related abuse.  
 42

### ELCA social policy

45 In 1995, the ELCA adopted the social statement *For Peace in God’s World*, which states: “God’s  
 46 steadfast resolve for peace encompasses our time as it does all times. In creation and redemption, through  
 47 Law and Gospel, God’s faithful love acts for peace.”<sup>iv</sup> The statement calls the church to be a disturbing  
 48 presence, a reconciling presence and a deliberating presence to promote respect for human rights.  
 49



## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

50 The ELCA’s 1999 social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* describes the relationship  
 51 between corporations and politics: “The economic power of large transnational corporations continues to  
 52 grow, making some of them larger than many national economies. Along with this financial strength  
 53 comes an inordinate potential to influence political decisions, local and regional economies, and  
 54 democratic processes in society. The power they wield, enhanced through mergers and buyouts, can have  
 55 positive effects, but it can also hold others captive to transnational corporate interests. The global  
 56 community must continue to seek effective ways to hold these and other powerful economic actors more  
 57 accountable for the sake of sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all.”<sup>v</sup>

58  
 59 The ELCA’s social teachings on the economy recognize corporate policies and practices with regard to  
 60 employees as essential in protecting the right to participation in a just economy. The statement resists the  
 61 commodification of workers: “No one should be coerced to work under conditions that violate their  
 62 dignity or freedom, jeopardize their health or safety, result in neglect of their family’s wellbeing, or  
 63 provide unjust compensation for their labor.”<sup>vi</sup> The same document recognizes that conditions may arise  
 64 where workers need to organize and allows for the church to support that right.<sup>vii</sup>

65  
 66  
 67 In 2017, the ELCA issued the social message “Human Rights,” which affirmed the following broad  
 68 categories of human rights, adapted from the church’s historical body of social teaching:

- 69 1. Humans have the right to worship freely.
- 70 2. Humans have the right to education and free speech.
- 71 3. Humans have the right to the protection of foundational relationships, such as marriage and  
 72 family.
- 73 4. Humans have the right to equal access and participation in legal, civic and political decisions  
 74 affecting them.
- 75 5. Humans have the right to full participation in a just and sustainable economy. Humans may not  
 76 be treated as commodities.
- 77 6. Humans have the right to physical goods such as water, food, shelter and health care as sourced  
 78 sustainably.

79  
 80 The ELCA’s 2019 social statement on gender justice, *Faith Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*, affirms  
 81 human rights and dignity and specifies that the church should “advocate for and support laws, policies,  
 82 and practices that respect diverse bodies rather than discriminating against, objectifying, or devaluing  
 83 them. Women, girls and people who identify as non-binary must not be deprived of their human or civil  
 84 rights.”<sup>viii</sup>

85  
 86 Using the above guidelines, this church answers God’s call to “proclaim the Gospel of God’s final peace  
 87 and to work for earthly peace.”<sup>ix</sup>

### 88 Corporate response

89  
 90 While we have been accustomed to governments setting boundaries to prevent human rights abuses, many  
 91 countries do not provide adequate safeguards. In response to the challenge presented by globally diverse  
 92 supply chains, there has been a growth of concern within a number of corporations for the human rights  
 93 of those who are most vulnerable. As noted earlier, corporations are now called to set principles to  
 94 promote human rights within their own operations that ensure safe and humane work conditions within  
 95 their supply chains and within the societies in which they operate. Many corporations have developed  
 96 policies that support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fundamental conventions of the  
 97 International Labour Organization (ILO).  
 98  
 99

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

100 Corporations have addressed community engagement, safety and healthy working conditions, sustainable  
 101 wages, and community engagement (especially with regard to Indigenous community concerns). Some  
 102 lay out criteria for selection of and withdrawal from a country of operation, as well as how their work in  
 103 this area will be verifiable and transparent. Shareholders have begun calling for corporations to use  
 104 methods of reporting out such as via the [U.N. Guiding Principles Reporting Framework](#) or organizations  
 105 such as [Know the Chain](#).

106  
 107 Due to armed conflict in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, the spotlight has turned on the defense,  
 108 technology and surveillance industries. The implication of their products in human rights abuses  
 109 represents a human rights and reputational risk for corporations.

### 111 Social criteria investment screens

112  
 113 The social criteria investment screens on political and civil human rights, approved by the ELCA Church  
 114 Council in 2018, respond to this issue.

### 116 Resolution guidelines for ELCA

- 118 1. We support asking a corporation for the development, adoption, review or implementation of  
 119 its policies related to human rights for a company and its supply chain. We support calls for  
 120 human rights impact assessments covering a corporation's operations, activities, business  
 121 relationships and products.
- 122 2. We support review of a company's operations in particular locations when our public policy  
 123 position or partner churches and agencies express concerns about those operations. This  
 124 includes reports on risk assessment and policy on additional responses in areas experiencing  
 125 conflict or occupation.
- 126 3. We support reports examining the human rights impact of high-risk products and services.
- 127 4. We support reports on the extent to which a product may endanger, threaten or violate  
 128 privacy or civil rights.
- 129 5. We support reports on the extent to which technologies may be marketed and sold to  
 130 authoritarian or repressive governments, including those identified by the U.S. Department of  
 131 State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices; the potential loss of goodwill and other  
 132 financial risks associated with these human rights issues; and whether use of its products  
 133 leads to violations of international law.
- 134 6. We support living-wage reports to provide investors with information needed to assess the  
 135 extent to which the company is complying with international human rights standards and  
 136 assessing systemic risks stemming from growing income inequality.
- 137 7. We support requests asking a corporation to endorse the Universal Declaration of Human  
 138 Rights.
- 139 8. We support requests for reports on policy and the implementation of a corporation's policy  
 140 with respect to the "[Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the  
 141 United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework](#)." This may include international  
 142 production facilities, international suppliers and commitment to independent monitoring of  
 143 compliance with the policy.
- 144 9. We support requests for reports on policy and implementation of a corporation's policy with  
 145 respect to the [U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).
- 146 10. We support reports outlining policy, procedure and practices for obtaining free, informed and  
 147 prior consent of Indigenous peoples affected by corporate activities through their recognized  
 148 and official governance structure, and policy to avoid contact with Indigenous peoples living  
 149 in voluntary isolation.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 150 11. We support the company’s adoption of a comprehensive human rights policy, which may  
 151 apply to both its own operations and its suppliers, that includes the right to a sufficient  
 152 standard of physical and mental health and establishes a process to identify, prevent, mitigate  
 153 and remedy adverse human rights impacts, above and beyond supplier audits, including  
 154 consultation with stakeholders.
- 155 12. We support the adoption of a human rights policy that includes the prohibition of sexual  
 156 exploitation of minors, incorporating comprehensive, transparent and verifiable sections to  
 157 address provisions contained in “The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from  
 158 Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.”
- 159 13. We support adoption of policy and practices, as well as reports addressing modern-day  
 160 slavery in a company’s global operations and supply chain, to ensure the protection of  
 161 fundamental human rights.
- 162 14. We support adoption of policy to include respect for and adherence to the preservation of the  
 163 traditional knowledge rights of traditional agricultural communities, including enjoyment of  
 164 their own means of subsistence.
- 165 15. We support the adoption of a comprehensive policy articulating respect for and commitment  
 166 to the human right to water.
- 167 16. We support reports on systems to ensure that a company contractor and suppliers are  
 168 implementing human rights policies in their operations, including monitoring, training,  
 169 addressing issues of noncompliance and assuring that no modern-day slavery concerns exist.
- 170 17. We support reports regarding the expectation to privacy and freedom of expression on the  
 171 internet. Such reports may deal with individual situations, resisting demands for censorship,  
 172 and when a company agrees to legally binding government filters, data retention or third-  
 173 party use of data.
- 174 18. We support reports evaluating strategies and policies on content governance, including the  
 175 extent to which they address human rights abuses and threats to democracy and freedom of  
 176 expression, and the reputational, regulatory and financial risks posed by content governance  
 177 controversies.
- 178 19. We support asking a corporation to endorse any of the following sets of principles:  
 179 a. Bellagio Principles.  
 180 b. Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 32).  
 181 c. Wood-Sheppard Principles.
- 182 20. We support requests for reports on the use of criminal background checks in hiring and  
 183 employment decisions for a company’s employees, independent contractors and  
 184 subcontracted workers, including evaluation of the resultant risk of racial bias.
- 185 21. We support requests to evaluate the feasibility of adopting a policy of not doing business with  
 186 governments that are complicit in genocide or crimes against humanity as defined by the U.S.  
 187 Department of State or the appropriate international body.
- 188 22. We support requests to prohibit sales of facial recognition technology until an independent  
 189 evaluation has concluded that its use is not contributing to violations of human rights.
- 190 23. We support reports addressing the human rights risk posed by detention without parole of all  
 191 asylum-seekers and separating minor children from their parents who have been accused of  
 192 entering the U.S. illegally.
- 193 24. We support calls for employees to be able to utilize paid sick leave benefits without being  
 194 subject to discipline under employee attendance policies. This policy should not expire after a  
 195 set time or depend upon the existence of a global pandemic.
- 196 25. We support independent, third-party audits on the impact of the company’s policies and  
 197 practices on the safety and well-being of workers.  
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**Resolution guidelines for the ELCA — general**

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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We support practices of good governance, specifically:

- A company having an independent board chair or independent lead director.
- Reports on policies and procedures for political contributions and expenditures (both direct and indirect) made with corporate funds.
- Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt organization that is used for an expenditure or contribution that might be deemed political.
- Guidelines or policies governing the company's political contributions and expenditures.
- Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.

<sup>i</sup> "Human Rights" (ELCA social message, 2017), 2.

<sup>ii</sup> *For Peace in God's World*, (ELCA social statement, 1995), 14.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>v</sup> *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (ELCA social statement, 1999), 13.

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>viii</sup> *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* (ELCA social statement, 2019), 60.

<sup>ix</sup> *For Peace in God's World*, (ELCA social statement, 1995), 1.





## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### Wording of the screen

The ELCA recommends not investing in corporations benefiting from the most egregious denials of human rights.

### Definition of the Engagement Strategy the problem

The ELCA's social message "Human Rights" affirms six broad categories of human rights that the ELCA seeks to nurture, as described in its history of social teaching.

1. Humans have been created for divine relationship and have the right to engage in that relationship through such means as worship and devotional practices.
2. Humans are creatures and creators of symbol and meaning and have the right to think and communicate freely and to be educated.
3. Humans are communal beings and have the right to the protection of foundational relationships, such as marriage and family. No one has the right to sunder or violate fundamental communal relationships or turn them into a commodity.
4. Humans are political and civic beings and have the right to equal access and participation in legal, civic and political decisions affecting them.
5. Humans are economic beings and have the right to participate fully in an economy where resources are justly allocated with a view to sustainability. Humans may not be treated as commodities.
6. Humans are physical beings and have the right to sufficient and sustainable levels of physical goods such as water, food, shelter and health care. This includes treating creation sustainably so the next generation has sufficient physical goods.

Recognizing that so many and such broad categories of rights could represent an infinite number of possibilities, this screen focuses on egregious denials of human rights taking place in occupied or controlled territories, given the specific authorization in "Justice for Holy Land Through Responsible Investment." Access to rights takes place in the context of both physical realities and social systems. Conflict makes equal access and participation in legal and political decisions difficult to ensure. In disputed or occupied territories, these rights are rarely guaranteed.

The engagement strategy "Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine," named in the ELCA social policy resolution 16.06.31, gives priority to working toward "Israelis and Palestinians co-existing in justice and peace, as citizens of viable and secure Israeli and Palestinian states," as foundational to building a just peace for all. Such citizenship is only possible only when the rights of humans as political and civic beings are upheld. -The violation of rights in any of the categories can inhibit the pursuit of a just peace, not just in the Holy Land but also in any disputed or occupied territories.

~~Wording of screen: The ELCA recommends not investing in corporations benefiting from the most egregious denial of the rights of humans as political and civic beings to have equal access and participation in legal and political decisions affecting them.~~

~~Definition of problem: Equal access and participation in legal and political decisions cannot happen when they occur in conflict-affected countries, especially disputed or occupied territories.~~

Recognizing that various investors will implement this along a continuum, for the purpose of this screen, investments might include screening companies supporting and benefiting from occupation. It could also include investments that promote positive economic development in such regions.

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**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**



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**Social policy, Churchwide Assembly actions and studies:**

*For Peace in God's World* (<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace>) (ELCA social statement, 1995), [www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace](http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace)

*Sufficient Sustainable Livelihood for All* (<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Economic-Life>) (ELCA social statement, 1999); Church in Society..., [www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Economic-Life](http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Economic-Life)

"Human Rights" (ELCA social message, 2017), [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Human\\_Rights\\_SM.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Human_Rights_SM.pdf)

"Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine-  
[http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW\\_Strategy.pdf?ga=2.267827726.1850467427.1502898236.473792649.1477574731](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW_Strategy.pdf?ga=2.267827726.1850467427.1502898236.473792649.1477574731) Ammparo Strategy  
[http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO\\_Strategy\\_Final\\_042616.pdf?ga=2.261080141.1984756162.1505246798.1575](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO_Strategy_Final_042616.pdf?ga=2.261080141.1984756162.1505246798.1575)

Approved by the ELCA Church Council, April 5-8, 2018

CC18-04-12" (ELCA pre-assembly report, 2005), [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW\\_Strategy.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW_Strategy.pdf)

*Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities* (AMMPARO) Strategy (ELCA strategy statement, 2016), [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO\\_Strategy\\_Final\\_042616.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO_Strategy_Final_042616.pdf)

<sup>i</sup> "Human Rights" (ELCA social message, 2017), 5, [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Human\\_Rights\\_SM.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Human_Rights_SM.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> *For Peace in God's World* (ELCA social statement, 1995), 14, [www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace](http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace).

<sup>iii</sup> See [www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/).

<sup>iv</sup> "Justice for Holy Land Through Responsible Investment" (ELCA social policy resolution, 2016), CA16.06.31, [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Justice\\_for\\_Holy\\_LandSPR16.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Justice_for_Holy_LandSPR16.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> "Human Rights," 11.

<sup>vi</sup> "Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine" (2005), 51, [https://download.elca.org/elca\\_resource\\_repository/pnw\\_strategy.pdf](https://download.elca.org/elca_resource_repository/pnw_strategy.pdf)

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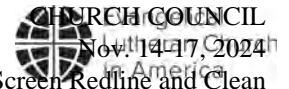
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## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Human Rights Screen Redline and Clean

Page 4 of 6

1 AREA: Human Rights  
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Social Criteria Investment Screen  
 3  
 4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council  
 5 FORMAT DATE: 10/16/2024  
 6  
 7 MARKER DATES:  
 8 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council, April 5-8, 2018 CC18.04.12i  
 9 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, October 2024  
 10 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, October 2024 [anticipated]  
 11

## Human Rights

### Authority

16 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has consistently affirmed its support for human  
 17 rights as “a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences.”<sup>i</sup> The social statement  
 18 *For Peace in God’s World* (1995) is grounded in the understanding that God desires Shalom for all  
 19 human beings and commits the ELCA to “defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to  
 20 violations.”<sup>ii</sup>

22 Several ELCA statements, such as *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (1991) and *Sufficient*  
 23 *Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999), also name the defense of human rights as a task for this church and  
 24 its members. The social message “Human Rights” (2017) affirms, on the basis of these and other ELCA  
 25 teachings, six broad categories on human rights as a middle link between the U.N. Declaration of Human  
 26 Rights<sup>iii</sup> and specific actions. These six categories encompass religious expression, communication and  
 27 education, communal relationships, political and civic rights, economic rights, and material sufficiency.  
 28 The message also expresses that this church’s witness includes exercising financial power as an investor  
 29 and shareholder prudently to focus attention on egregious violations of human rights, and to encourage  
 30 corporations to take responsibility to respect human rights.

32 “Justice for Holy Land Through Responsible Investment” (ELCA social policy resolution 16.06.31)<sup>iv</sup>  
 33 directed development of “a human rights social criteria investment screen based on the social teachings of  
 34 this church and, in the case of Israel and Palestine, specifically based on the concerns raised in  
 35 “Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine,” including the management of collective or  
 36 personal investments “with concern for their impact on the lives of all Holy Land peoples who suffer  
 37 from the ongoing conflict.”

### Wording of the screen

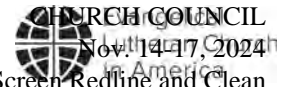
41 The ELCA recommends not investing in corporations benefiting from the most egregious denials of  
 42 human rights.

### Definition of the problem

46 The ELCA’s social message “Human Rights” affirms six broad categories of human rights that the ELCA  
 47 seeks to nurture, as described in its history of social teaching.

- 49 1. Humans have been created for divine relationship and have the right to engage in that  
 50 relationship through such means as worship and devotional practices.





## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 51 2. Humans are creatures and creators of symbol and meaning and have the right to think and  
52 communicate freely and to be educated.
- 53 3. Humans are communal beings and have the right to the protection of foundational  
54 relationships, such as marriage and family. No one has the right to sunder or violate  
55 fundamental communal relationships or turn them into a commodity.
- 56 4. Humans are political and civic beings and have the right to equal access and participation in  
57 legal, civic and political decisions affecting them.
- 58 5. Humans are economic beings and have the right to participate fully in an economy where  
59 resources are justly allocated with a view to sustainability. Humans may not be treated as  
60 commodities.
- 61 6. Humans are physical beings and have the right to sufficient and sustainable levels of physical  
62 goods such as water, food, shelter and health care. This includes treating creation sustainably  
63 so the next generation has sufficient physical goods.  
64

65 Recognizing that so many and such broad categories of rights could represent an infinite number of  
66 possibilities, this screen focuses on egregious denials of human rights taking place in occupied or  
67 controlled territories, given the specific authorization in “Justice for Holy Land Through Responsible  
68 Investment.” Access to rights takes place in the context of both physical realities and social systems.<sup>v</sup>  
69 Conflict makes equal access and participation in legal and political decisions difficult to ensure. In  
70 disputed or occupied territories, these rights are rarely guaranteed.  
71

72 The engagement strategy “Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine,” named in the  
73 ELCA social policy resolution 16.06.31, gives priority to working toward “Israelis and Palestinians co-  
74 existing in justice and peace, as citizens of viable and secure Israeli and Palestinian states”<sup>vi</sup> as  
75 foundational to building a just peace for all. Such citizenship is possible only when the rights of humans  
76 as political and civic beings are upheld. The violation of rights in any of the categories can inhibit the  
77 pursuit of a just peace, not just in the Holy Land but also in any disputed or occupied territories.  
78

79 Recognizing that various investors will implement this along a continuum, for the purpose of this screen,  
80 investments might include screening companies supporting and benefiting from occupation. It could also  
81 include investments that promote positive economic development in such regions.  
82

### 83 Social policy, Churchwide Assembly actions and studies

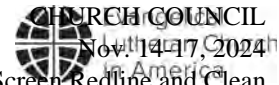
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85 *For Peace in God’s World* (ELCA social statement, 1995), [www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace](http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace)  
86

87  
88 *Sufficient Sustainable Livelihood for All* (ELCA social statement, 1999), [www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Economic-Life](http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Economic-Life)  
89

90  
91 “Human Rights” (ELCA social message, 2017),  
92 [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Human\\_Rights\\_SM.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Human_Rights_SM.pdf)  
93

94 “Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine” (ELCA pre-assembly report, 2005),  
95 [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW\\_Strategy.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/PNW_Strategy.pdf)  
96

97 Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities  
98 (AMMPARO) Strategy (ELCA strategy statement, 2016),  
99 [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO\\_Strategy\\_Final\\_042616.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO_Strategy_Final_042616.pdf)  
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## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

101  
102

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<sup>i</sup> “Human Rights” (ELCA social message, 2017), 5,

[download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Human\\_Rights\\_SM.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Human_Rights_SM.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> *For Peace in God’s World* (ELCA social statement, 1995), 14, [www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace](http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Peace).

<sup>iii</sup> See [www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/).

<sup>iv</sup> “Justice for Holy Land Through Responsible Investment” (ELCA social policy resolution, 2016), CA16.06.31, [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Justice\\_for\\_Holy\\_LandSPR16.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Justice_for_Holy_LandSPR16.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> “Human Rights,” 11.

<sup>vi</sup> “Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine” (2005), 51, [https://download.elca.org/elca\\_resource\\_repository/pnw\\_strategy.pdf](https://download.elca.org/elca_resource_repository/pnw_strategy.pdf)

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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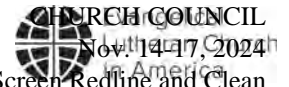
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## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Military Weapons Screen Redline and Clean

Page 3 of 3

1 AREA: Military Weapons  
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Social Criteria Investment Screen  
 3  
 4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council  
 5 FORMAT DATE: 10/16/2024  
 6

## MARKER DATES:

8 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council – November 13, 1988  
 9 UPDATED by the Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility – January 22, 2007  
 10 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council – November 2007  
 11 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council – November 2014 CC14.11.18  
 12 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, October 2024  
 13 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, October 2024 [anticipated]  
 14

## Military Weapons

### Authority

18  
 19 The ELCA has a legacy of peacemaking from its predecessor church bodies through the present. Our  
 20 concern for peace is laid out in the social statement *For Peace in God's World* (1995), where we  
 21 acknowledge the complexity and offer direction as we act to keep and build earthly peace. The statement  
 22 includes such assertions as “the principles for conducting war include noncombatant immunity and  
 23 proportionality.”  
 24

### Wording of the screen

25  
 26  
 27 The ELCA makes no investment in firms that contribute to research and development of nuclear,  
 28 biological or chemical weapons, or certain conventional weapons that may be deemed so destructive or  
 29 injurious that their deployment is likely to violate the limits of noncombatant immunity or proportionality.  
 30 It makes no investment in the production of key components for such weapons or the management of U.S.  
 31 government-owned facilities for such weapons.  
 32

### Definition of the problem

33  
 34  
 35 The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons speaks to weapons that are considered to cause  
 36 unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately. Recognizing  
 37 that various investors will implement this along a continuum, for the purpose of this screen, such weapons  
 38 might include nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; land mines; cluster bombs; blinding laser  
 39 weapons; and weapons with nondetectable fragments. Where weapons systems habitually violate the  
 40 principles of noncombatant immunity and proportionality by their design or effect, Portico could consider  
 41 an investment screen.  
 42

### Social policy and studies

43  
 44  
 45 *For Peace in God's World* (ELCA social statement, 1995), [www.elca.org/Faith/Faithand-Society/Social-Statements/Peace](http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faithand-Society/Social-Statements/Peace)  
 46  
 47  
 48

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

1 AREA: Nondiscrimination  
2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue Paper  
3  
4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council  
5 FORMAT DATE: 6/12/2019 10/16/2024  
6  
7 MARKER DATES:  
8 RECOMMENDED by ~~the~~ Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, January 22,  
9 2004. ~~Endorsed~~  
10 ENDORSED by ~~the~~ Division for Church in Society Board, February 27, 2004.  
11 ~~APPROVED~~ APPROVED by ~~the~~ Church Council, April 16-18, 2004.  
12 UPDATED by ~~the~~ Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, September 5, 2008.  
13 ~~APPROVED~~ by ~~the~~ Church Council, November 2008 [CC08.11.57a-].  
14 ~~APPROVED~~ by ~~the~~ Church Council, November 2013 [CC13.11.69y-].  
15 ~~Updated~~ APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council November 2019  
16 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, ~~September~~ October 4, 2019.  
17 APPROVED by Church Council, November 10, 2019- [CC19.11.47i].  
18 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, October 2024  
19 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, ~~November 2019~~ October 2024 [anticipated]

22 **FREED IN CHRIST: NONDISCRIMINATION IN BUSINESS ACTIVITIES**  
23 Freed in Christ: Nondiscrimination in Business Activities

25 **Background**

27 Historically the Lutheran church — Church — the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)  
28 and its predecessor church bodies — have been committed to the support of human rights and the  
29 struggle against injustice. The ELCA, in ~~the~~its 1999 social statement "For Peace in God's  
30 ~~World~~"For Peace in God's World, and in its 2017 social message on human rights, "Human  
31 Rights," supports and calls for respect and dignity for each person, assurance of opportunity, and  
32 provision for ~~participation~~participating in society nationally and internationally, as provided for in the  
33 United Nations Declaration of Human RightsUnited Nations Declaration of Human Rights.  
34  
35 Situations and obstacles detracting from this commitment to human rights are apparent in U.S. society.  
36 Discrimination occurs in many forms, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual  
37 orientation or gender identity and disability. The wage gap demonstrates the inequity.  
38 According to the Pew Research Center, "Large racial and gender wage gaps in  
39 the U.S. remain, even as they have narrowed in some cases over the years.  
40 Among full- and part-time workers in the U.S., blacks in 2015 earned just 75% as  
41 much as whites in median hourly earnings and women earned 83% as much as  
42 men." and disability. The wage gap demonstrates the inequity. A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of  
43 St. Louis found that the Black-white wage gap for women has begun rising again after improving in the  
44 early 2000s. The same gap for men has stabilized but remains high, at around 35%. Research by the U.S.  
45 Department of Labor demonstrated that Black and Hispanic women were paid tens of billions in wages

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



46 less than white men, a phenomenon driven by the reality that Black and Hispanic women are concentrated  
47 disproportionately in jobs that, on average, pay lower wages than those held by white men.

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48  
49 A report by the Department of Labor in the mid-1990s describes the situation  
50 where equal access to executive level positions does not occur in the U.S.  
51 corporate sector for women and minorities. This phenomenon is called the  
52 "glass ceiling." Women and people of color are still underrepresented in  
53 management positions.

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54  
55 Women are paid less than men at every education level and at every salary level.<sup>11</sup> McKinsey &  
56 Company's 2023 report on women in the workplace shows a modest increase in the percentage of women  
57 overall at upper levels of management in the past five years. At nearly every step on the way to that upper  
58 level, however, the number of women of color relative to white women and men of the same race and  
59 ethnicity declines. Women of color are reasonably well-represented in the entry level of the corporate  
60 world, but as they near the top of the pyramid, their numbers decline.

61  
62 Racial, ethnic and other discrimination in the workplace, and in everything from access to housing  
63 and service in a access to restaurant service, continues to be an ever-present reality. Disability  
64 discrimination issues pertain to employment, accommodation and customer service, to name a few.

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65  
66 Workplace discrimination is not only an obstacle to be faced, but also results in significant shareholder  
67 burden due to the high cost of litigation and potential loss of contracts. For example: Ford Motor Co.  
68 was ordered to pay one of its former employees over \$16 million for racial  
69 discrimination. Gender issues brought about a \$47 million settlement at Rent A  
70 Center and a \$31 million settlement at American Express. Racial and ethnic  
71 issues can bring about boycotts and major public relations concerns such as in  
72 the Denny's case, which resulted in a consent decree based on patterns of  
73 racial discrimination. In 2022, Albertsons Companies, Inc. was subject to a \$70 million verdict over  
74 the issue of employment discrimination (Yarbrough v. Glow Networks, Inc.). Google recently agreed to  
75 pay \$118 million to settle a gender discrimination lawsuit (Ellis v. Google, LLC).

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76  
77 Despite laws to counter the problem, discrimination of all kinds still exists in the workforce. The  
78 American workforce continues to become more diverse, thus increasing the urgency that the injustices be  
79 addressed.

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80  
81 **ELCA social policy**

82  
83 The ELCA's first social statement, in- of the ELCA, *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective*  
84 (1991, "The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective,"), set forth affirmations and  
85 commitments to guide this church's participation in society. This document develops the church's role to  
86 participate in social structures critically, to minister to human need with compassion and imagination, and  
87 to be a prophetic presence. In addition to advocating for justice and mercy in situations of brokenness, the  
88 church commits itself to removing obstacles of discrimination and indifference. The 1993 ELCA social  
89 statement "*Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*" further develops the role of the church,  
90 committing it and commits the church to "support legislation, ordinances, and resolutions that  
91 guarantee to all persons equally ... opportunity for employment with fair compensation, and possibilities

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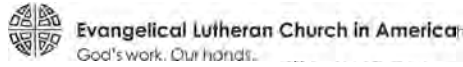
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**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**



92 for job training and education, apprenticeship, promotion, and union membership [as well as the]  
 93 opportunity for business ownership [and] access to ~~.....~~ insurance services ~~.....~~ <sup>iii</sup>.

94

95 In 1999, the ELCA social statement ~~“Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All”~~, continued this call by  
 96 committing the church to ~~“hire without discrimination~~discriminating on the basis of race, ethnicity,  
 97 ~~gender, age, disabilities, sexual orientation, or genetic factors.”~~<sup>iv</sup> ~~and to encourage~~ further calls for  
 98 similar practices for secular employers. In addition, the 1989 Churchwide Assembly declared racism a sin  
 99 and called on the church’s members to address the destructive results of racism in all aspects of ~~its~~ their  
 100 life and work. The 2009 ~~social statement “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust: Gift and Trust”~~, laid out  
 101 the church’s support for legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in  
 102 housing, employment and public services ~~on the basis of sexual orientation~~. The 2013 social  
 103 ~~statement, The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries: Hearing the Cries”~~ social  
 104 ~~statement~~ touches on the topic of collateral sanctions of the criminal justice system, which include  
 105 making it difficult to find employment and housing. In 2013, in response to a number of synodical  
 106 memorials, the Churchwide Assembly adopted a memorial addressing workplace discrimination based on  
 107 categories of sexual identity and gender identity. The assembly recommitted this church “to principles of  
 108 ~~nondiscrimination~~ non-discrimination in employment and to call for other employers to engage in  
 109 similar practices,” and affirmed ongoing support of employment nondiscrimination legislation and  
 110 opposition to workplace discrimination (CA13.03.07a). Disability issues also have been addressed by the  
 111 church in a Churchwide Assembly action calling for awareness education. *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A*  
 112 *Call to Action* noted the wage gap and its relationship to other societal ills such as domestic violence, and  
 113 committed the ELCA to work for equitable pay and benefits within its own institutions.  
 114

115 **Corporate response**

116

117 Legislation in this country has been passed to address many areas of discrimination. The Equal  
 118 Employment Opportunity Commission has addressed many individual employee concerns in this area.  
 119 The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission ~~Report~~ report recommended that both the public and private  
 120 sectors work toward increased disclosure of diversity data. The number of S&P 500 companies releasing  
 121 full EEO-1 data, which is a mandatory annual filing with the Equal Employment Opportunity  
 122 Commission, has risen dramatically, from about 5% in 2019 to about 75% in 2023.<sup>v</sup> Most corporations  
 123 have developed policies and programs to encourage diversity. Some reporting is occurring,  
 124 mainly through Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO1) reports. In 2017, only 3.2  
 125 percent of the Fortune 500 corporations released their full data sets included in  
 126 the EEO1.<sup>4</sup>, though some activists and lawmakers have targeted DEI programs for challenge.  
 127

128 The legal system continues to address complaints in this area, while dealing with a backlog of cases. At  
 129 the global level, the United Nations General Assembly in 2011 endorsed the Women’s Empowerment  
 130 Principles, which. These were developed through a partnership initiative of U.N.-UN Women and the  
 131 U.N. Global Compact Office and call for the advancement of equality between men and women across  
 132 the globe.

133

134 At the corporate level, movement has been seen in endorsing principles such as those above, changing  
 135 governance charters to move toward board diversity, and ~~report~~ reporting on diversity in sustainability  
 136 reports. Research has begun to show that attention to diversity is important to a company’s success,<sup>vii</sup>  
 137

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



- 139 1. We support requests of corporations to report on progress concerning the Federal Glass
- 140 Ceiling Commission's business recommendations.
- 141 2. We support requests of corporations to prepare a report on diversity and plans to increase
- 142 diversity.
- 143 3. We support requests to disclose a corporation's ~~EEO-1~~EEO-1 report.
- 144 4. We support requests that ~~the~~ board of directors appoint a committee to review and report on
- 145 the overall ~~EEO-1~~EEO-1 diversity policies and practices.
- 146 5. We support requests for ~~companies~~the company to expand diversity on ~~the~~the board of
- 147 directors through:
- 148 a. Specific efforts to search for women and minority candidates.
- 149 b. Issuance of a public statement on board inclusiveness.
- 150 c. Reports on efforts to encourage diversified representation on the board.
- 151 d. Nomination committee charters revised to reflect diversity assessments and efforts.
- 152 6. We support requests for a corporation to implement the U.S. Department of Labor's
- 153 voluntary pay equity audit and to report on such audit.
- 154 7. We support requests for a corporation's EEO policy to be amended explicitly to bar
- 155 discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity discrimination.
- 156 8. ~~We support reports that address the possible negative effects of any~~
- 157 ~~policies that may preclude due process on harassment and discrimination~~
- 158 ~~of any employee~~
- 159 ~~9-8.~~ We support requests for a corporation to identify and disassociate from any form of offensive
- 160 imagery to ethnic-specific communities in products, advertising, endorsements, sponsorships
- 161 and promotions.
- 162 ~~10-9.~~ We support requests for reports on policies concerning accommodation for people with
- 163 disabilities.
- 164 ~~11-10.~~ We support requests for reports on accessibility guidelines for people with disabilities.
- 165 ~~12-11.~~ We support reports on gender equality across all company working conditions and the supply
- 166 chain, including reports on the global median gender pay gap.
- 167 ~~13-12.~~ We support reports on ~~affirmative action~~DEI policies and programs to improve
- 168 performance where diversity is undervalued.
- 169 ~~14-13.~~ We support reports detailing the risks and costs to ~~a~~the company caused by any enacted or
- 170 proposed government policies supporting discrimination against people based on their sexual
- 171 orientation.
- 172 ~~15-14.~~ We support requests for reports on the use of criminal background checks in hiring and
- 173 employment decisions for ~~a company's~~the company's employees, independent
- 174 contractors and subcontracted workers, including evaluation of the resultant risk of racial
- 175 bias.
- 176 15. We support reports on median pay gaps across race and gender, including risks and benefits
- 177 related to recruiting and retaining diverse talent.
- 178 16. We support reports using quantitative metrics for workforce diversity, hiring, promotion and
- 179 retention of employees, including data by gender, race and ethnicity.
- 180 17. We support reports describing and quantifying the effectiveness of a company's efforts to
- 181 prevent harassment and discrimination against its protected classes of employees.
- 182 18. We support racial equity audits, as well as reports analyzing the racial and ethnic disparities
- 183 in a company's business, and the effect of those disparities.
- 184 19. We support reports assessing the potential risks to a company associated with its use of
- 185

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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concealment clauses in the context of harassment, discrimination and other unlawful acts. We support reports on the impact of mandatory arbitration on the prevalence of harassment and discrimination in its workplace, and on employees' ability to seek redress.

**Resolution guidelines for the ELCA — general**

We support practices of good governance, specifically:

- A company having an independent board chair or independent lead director.
- Reports on policies and transparency of procedures for political contributions and expenditures (both direct and indirect) made with corporate funds.
- Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt organization or trade association that is used for an expenditure or contribution which that might be deemed political.
- Guidelines or policies governing the company's political contributions and expenditures.
- Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.

**Resolutions on related topics from other issue papers**

**Access to Capital:** Fair lending practices.

**Domestic Access to Health Care:** Access to pharmaceuticals and to health care.

**Human Rights:** Criminal background checks in hiring and employment.

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<sup>i</sup> [Racial, gender wage gaps persist in U.S. despite some progress: pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/01/racial-gender-wage-gaps-persist-in-u-s-despite-some-progress.](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/01/racial-gender-wage-gaps-persist-in-u-s-despite-some-progress/)

<sup>ii</sup> Elise Gould, "Gender Wage Gap Persists in 2023," Economic Policy Institute, March 8, 2024, [www.epi.org/blog/gender-wage-gap-persists-in-2023-women-are-paid-roughly-22-less-than-men-on-average/](https://www.epi.org/blog/gender-wage-gap-persists-in-2023-women-are-paid-roughly-22-less-than-men-on-average/).

<sup>iii</sup> "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture" (ELCA, page social statement, 1993), 7.

<sup>iv</sup> [Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](https://www.sufficiency.com/free-tools/eeo1-insights/) (ELCA social statement, 1999), 10.

<sup>v</sup> See [diversig.com/free-tools/eeo1-insights/](https://www.diversig.com/free-tools/eeo1-insights/).

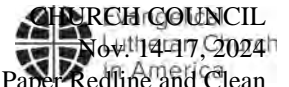
<sup>vii</sup> For example, see [assets.mckinsey.com/~media/857F440109AA4D13A54D9C496D86ED58.ashx](https://assets.mckinsey.com/~media/857F440109AA4D13A54D9C496D86ED58.ashx)

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## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Nondiscrimination Issue Paper Redline and Clean

Page 6 of 9

1 AREA: Nondiscrimination  
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue Paper  
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 4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council  
 5 FORMAT DATE: 10/16/2024  
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 18 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, October 2024  
 19 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, October 2024 [anticipated]

### Freed in Christ: Nondiscrimination in Business Activities

#### Background

Historically the Lutheran Church — the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its predecessor church bodies — have been committed to the support of human rights and the struggle against injustice. The ELCA, in its 1999 social statement *For Peace in God's World* and in its 2017 social message "Human Rights," supports and calls for respect and dignity for each person, assurance of opportunity, and provision for participating in society nationally and internationally, as provided for in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Situations and obstacles detracting from this commitment to human rights are apparent in U.S. society. Discrimination occurs in many forms, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or gender identity, and disability. The wage gap demonstrates the inequity. A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis found that the Black-white wage gap for women has begun rising again after improving in the early 2000s. The same gap for men has stabilized but remains high, at around 35%. Research by the U.S. Department of Labor demonstrated that Black and Hispanic women were paid tens of billions in wages less than white men, a phenomenon driven by the reality that Black and Hispanic women are concentrated disproportionately in jobs that, on average, pay lower wages than those held by white men.

Women are paid less than men at every education level and at every salary level.<sup>i</sup> McKinsey & Company's 2023 report on women in the workplace shows a modest increase in the percentage of women overall at upper levels of management in the past five years. At nearly every step on the way to that upper level, however, the number of women of color relative to white women and men of the same race and ethnicity declines. Women of color are reasonably well-represented in the entry level of the corporate world, but as they near the top of the pyramid, their numbers decline.

Racial, ethnic and other discrimination in the workplace, and in everything from housing access to restaurant service, continues to be an ever-present reality. Disability discrimination issues pertain to

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

51 employment, accommodation and customer service, to name a few.

52

53 Workplace discrimination is not only an obstacle to be faced but also results in significant shareholder  
 54 burden due to the high cost of litigation and potential loss of contracts. For example: In 2022, Albertsons  
 55 Companies, Inc. was subject to a \$70 million verdict over the issue of employment discrimination  
 56 (Yarbrough v. Glow Networks, Inc.). Google recently agreed to pay \$118 million to settle a gender  
 57 discrimination lawsuit (Ellis v. Google, LLC).

58

59 Despite laws to counter the problem, discrimination of all kinds still exists in the workforce. The  
 60 American workforce continues to become more diverse, thus increasing the urgency that the injustices be  
 61 addressed.

62

### 63 ELCA social policy

64

65 The first social statement of the ELCA, *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (1991), set forth  
 66 affirmations and commitments to guide this church's participation in society. This document develops the  
 67 church's role to participate in social structures critically, to minister to human need with compassion and  
 68 imagination, and to be a prophetic presence. In addition to advocating for justice and mercy in situations  
 69 of brokenness, the church commits itself to removing obstacles of discrimination and indifference. The  
 70 1993 ELCA social statement *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* further develops the role of the  
 71 church and commits the church to "support legislation, ordinances, and resolutions that guarantee to all  
 72 persons equally ... opportunity for employment with fair compensation, and possibilities for job training  
 73 and education, apprenticeship, promotion, and union membership [as well as the] opportunity for business  
 74 ownership [and] access to ... insurance services."<sup>ii</sup>

75

76 In 1999, the ELCA social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* continued this call by  
 77 committing the church to "hire without discriminating on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, age,  
 78 disabilities, sexual orientation, or genetic factors,"<sup>iii</sup> and further calls for similar practices for secular  
 79 employers. In addition, the 1989 Churchwide Assembly declared racism a sin and called on the church's  
 80 members to address the destructive results of racism in all aspects of their life and work. The 2009  
 81 statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* laid out the church's support for legislation that prohibits  
 82 discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, employment and public services. The 2013  
 83 social statement *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* touches on the topic of collateral  
 84 sanctions of the criminal justice system, which include making it difficult to find employment and  
 85 housing. In 2013, in response to a number of synodical memorials, the Churchwide Assembly adopted a  
 86 memorial addressing workplace discrimination based on categories of sexual identity and gender identity.  
 87 The assembly recommitted this church "to principles of non-discrimination in employment and to call for  
 88 other employers to engage in similar practices," and affirmed ongoing support of employment  
 89 nondiscrimination legislation and opposition to workplace discrimination (CA13.03.07a). Disability  
 90 issues also have been addressed by the church in a Churchwide Assembly action calling for awareness  
 91 education. *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* noted the wage gap and its relationship to other  
 92 societal ills such as domestic violence, and committed the ELCA to work for equitable pay and benefits  
 93 within its own institutions.

94

### 95 Corporate response

96

97 Legislation in this country has been passed to address many areas of discrimination. The Equal  
 98 Employment Opportunity Commission has addressed many individual employee concerns in this area.  
 99 The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission report recommended that both the public and private sectors work  
 100 toward increased disclosure of diversity data. The number of S&P 500 companies releasing full EEO-1

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

101 data, which is a mandatory annual filing with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, has risen  
 102 dramatically, from about 5% in 2019 to about 75% in 2023.<sup>iv</sup> Most corporations have developed policies  
 103 and programs to encourage diversity, though some activists and lawmakers have targeted DEI programs  
 104 for challenge.

105  
 106 The legal system continues to address complaints in this area while dealing with a backlog of cases. At  
 107 the global level the United Nations General Assembly in 2011 endorsed the Women's Empowerment  
 108 Principles. These were developed through a partnership initiative of UN Women and the U.N. Global  
 109 Compact Office and call for the advancement of equality between men and women across the globe.

110  
 111 At the corporate level, movement has been seen in endorsing principles such as those above, changing  
 112 governance charters to move toward board diversity, and reporting on diversity in sustainability reports.  
 113 Research has begun to show that attention to diversity is important to a company's success.<sup>v</sup>

### 114 115 Resolution guidelines for ELCA

- 116  
 117 1. We support requests of corporations to report on progress concerning the Federal Glass  
 118 Ceiling Commission's business recommendations.
- 119 2. We support requests of corporations to prepare a report on diversity and plans to increase  
 120 diversity.
- 121 3. We support requests to disclose a corporation's EEO-1 report.
- 122 4. We support requests that the board of directors appoint a committee to review and report on  
 123 the overall EEO-1 diversity policies and practices.
- 124 5. We support requests for the company to expand diversity on the board of directors through:  
 125 a. Specific efforts to search for women and minority candidates.  
 126 b. Issuance of a public statement on board inclusiveness.  
 127 c. Reports on efforts to encourage diversified representation on the board.  
 128 d. Nomination committee charters revised to reflect diversity assessments and efforts.
- 129 6. We support requests for a corporation to implement the U.S. Department of Labor's  
 130 voluntary pay equity audit and to report on such audit.
- 131 7. We support requests for a corporation's EEO policy to be amended explicitly to bar  
 132 discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity discrimination.
- 133 8. We support requests for a corporation to identify and disassociate from any form of offensive  
 134 imagery to ethnic-specific communities in products, advertising, endorsements, sponsorships  
 135 and promotions.
- 136 9. We support requests for reports on policies concerning accommodation for people with  
 137 disabilities.
- 138 10. We support requests for reports on accessibility guidelines for people with disabilities.
- 139 11. We support reports on gender equality across all company working conditions and the supply  
 140 chain, including reports on the global median gender pay gap.
- 141 12. We support reports on DEI policies and programs to improve performance where diversity is  
 142 undervalued.
- 143 13. We support reports detailing the risks and costs to the company caused by any enacted or  
 144 proposed government policies supporting discrimination against people based on their sexual  
 145 orientation.
- 146 14. We support requests for reports on the use of criminal background checks in hiring and  
 147 employment decisions for the company's employees, independent contractors and  
 148 subcontracted workers, including evaluation of the resultant risk of racial bias.
- 149 15. We support reports on median pay gaps across race and gender, including risks and benefits  
 150 related to recruiting and retaining diverse talent.

- 151 16. We support reports using quantitative metrics for workforce diversity, hiring, promotion and  
 152 retention of employees, including data by gender, race and ethnicity.
- 153 17. We support reports describing and quantifying the effectiveness of a company's efforts to  
 154 prevent harassment and discrimination against its protected classes of employees.
- 155 18. We support racial equity audits, as well as reports analyzing the racial and ethnic disparities  
 156 in a company's business, and the effect of those disparities.
- 157 19. We support reports assessing the potential risks to a company associated with its use of  
 158 concealment clauses in the context of harassment, discrimination and other unlawful acts. We  
 159 support reports on the impact of mandatory arbitration on the prevalence of harassment and  
 160 discrimination in its workplace, and on employees' ability to seek redress.

### 161 162 **Resolution guidelines for the ELCA — general**

163  
164 We support practices of good governance, specifically:

- 165 • A company having an independent board chair or independent lead director.
  - 166 • Reports on policies and transparency of procedures for political contributions and expenditures  
 167 (both direct and indirect) made with corporate funds.
  - 168 • Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt organization or  
 169 trade association that is used for an expenditure or contribution that might be deemed political.
  - 170 • Guidelines or policies governing the company's political contributions and expenditures.
  - 171 • Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.
- 172  
173  
174

<sup>i</sup> Elise Gould, "Gender Wage Gap Persists in 2023," Economic Policy Institute, March 8, 2024, [www.epi.org/blog/gender-wage-gap-persists-in-2023-women-are-paid-roughly-22-less-than-men-on-average/](http://www.epi.org/blog/gender-wage-gap-persists-in-2023-women-are-paid-roughly-22-less-than-men-on-average/).

<sup>ii</sup> *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* (ELCA social statement, 1993), 7.

<sup>iii</sup> *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (ELCA social statement, 1999), 10.

<sup>iv</sup> See [diversiq.com/free-tools/eeo1-insights/](http://diversiq.com/free-tools/eeo1-insights/).

<sup>v</sup> For example, see [assets.mckinsey.com/~media/857F440109AA4D13A54D9C496D86ED58.ashx](http://assets.mckinsey.com/~media/857F440109AA4D13A54D9C496D86ED58.ashx) or [txsw.com/pdf/board\\_brief.pdf](http://txsw.com/pdf/board_brief.pdf).

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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1 AREA: Violence  
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3  
4 POINT IN PROCESS: First Draft Transmission to Church Council  
5 FORMAT DATE: 6/12/2019 10/16/24  
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8 RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, January 22,  
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16 APPROVED by Church Council, November 2019 [CC19.11.47i]

VIOLENCE IN OUR WORLD

20  
21 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, October 2024  
22 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, October 2024 [anticipated]

Violence in Our World

25 **Background**

26  
27  
28 The ELCA's social teaching around citizenship gives all citizens the responsibility "to defend human  
29 rights and to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well-being, and good order in public life."  
30 As part of that understanding, this church has consistently supported efforts, whether community-based,  
31 national, or global, to protect human rights and recognize the inherent dignity of every person.

32  
33 Christians are called both to proclaim the Gospel of God's final peace, and to work for earthly  
34 peace, understanding earthly peace as "relationships among and within nations that are just,  
35 harmonious, and free from war." Earthly peace is fleeting, and can be disrupted in many ways.

36  
37 Violence is rightly understood as physical confrontation but can also be understood more broadly. For  
38 instance, ELCA social teaching on gender-based violence has described violence as harm directed at a  
39 person or group in order to maintain power and control. It can be inflicted in many forms: social,  
40 physical, and emotional, and thus we may recognize that violence is more than armed conflict between  
41 two nation-states. Violence pervades all aspects of life in our world. Intersecting identities such as  
42 ethnicity, immigration status, sexuality, economic means, age, and level of education all render people  
43 more or less vulnerable to personal and systemic violence. It is not only the immediate victims of violence  
44 who suffer: the message on gun violence details how the communal trauma initiated by gun violence  
45 spreads and perpetuates harm.

46  
47 This issue paper addresses issues of violence and trauma related to armed conflict, such as antipersonnel  
48 landmines and other weapons with indiscriminate effects, as well as gun violence and nuclear, biological,

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49 and chemical weapons. The ELCA's peace statement calls the people of this church as peacemakers to  
50 advocate for "an earthly peace that provides security from violence and aggression, seeks just order in  
51 place of tyranny or anarchy, checks unrestrained power, and defends and enhances the life of people who  
52 are poor and powerless."iii In keeping with a broadened understanding of violence, this paper also  
53 addresses community violence, sexual exploitation, gun safety, and workplace violence and harassment.

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55 ~~ELCA Social Policy~~ social policy

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57 Historically the Lutheran church—Church—the ELCA and its predecessor church bodies— has been  
58 committed to the support of human rights and the struggle against injustice. In terms of global issues of  
59 human rights, the ELCA social statement *For Peace in God's World* (1995) and the ELCA social  
60 message "Human Rights" (2017) call for respect and dignity for each person. The church is meant to be  
61 a disturbing, reconciling, and deliberating presence in word and deed in order to create an environment  
62 conducive to peace. The statement on peace develops the global perspective for individuals and our  
63 church body to join with others in searching for what makes for peace.

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64 In terms of domestic issues of violence, the ELCA Church Council has also adopted messages that pertain  
65 to particular expressions of violence. The 1994 message on "Community Violence" deals with such issues  
66 as the proliferation of guns and the culture of violence. Depictions of violence in the media and mediation  
67 toward just and peaceful solutions to conflict are also addressed. In the 2001 message on "Commercial  
68 Sexual Exploitation" examines pornography and sex trafficking are examined, calling the church to look  
69 at corporations whose earnings come from making and selling pornography or from promoting or  
70 profiting from the pornography industry. The 2009 social statement "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust"  
71 characterizes the misuse and abuse of sexuality for profit as always wrong. The 2015 social message  
72 "Gender-Based Violence" understands violence as an abusive exercise of power and form for the sake  
73 of control. Gender-based violence is perpetrated through means such as media portrayals of women as  
74 objects, sexual exploitation, economic subjugation, and legal bias, and across intersecting identities such  
75 as race, sexual orientation, and age. The 2024 social message "Gun-related Violence and Trauma"  
76 "expands moral responsibility"iv for gun-related violence and challenges the broader community,  
77 including private enterprise, to view reduction of gun-related violence as a shared responsibility. In this  
78 framework, the ELCA advocates that gun manufacturers, distributors and sellers embrace practices (e.g.  
79 in design and marketing) that will minimize the harm guns can cause and foster greater public safety.  
80 ELCA Churchwide Assembly actions have included other issues relating to violence.

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83 ~~Corporate Response~~ response

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85 These issues address the variety of aspects of violence in all its forms: physical, sexual, psychological,  
86 economic, and social, both internationally and domestically. In order to counter the culture of violence  
87 that pervades the national culture and media in this country, all of our society—including the  
88 corporate world— must find creative ways to work toward peace and nonviolence and reduction of  
89 traumatic events. Sometimes it is simple, such as a corporation having a policy not to display guns and  
90 ammunition in family-friendly areas. Other times, especially when human rights, national security and  
91 weapons are involved, it is more complex. The call to corporations is to recognize their role in the  
92 problem and to work to become part of the solution.

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94 ~~Social Criteria Investment Screens~~ criteria investment screens

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96 The social criteria investment screen on military weapons, revised and approved

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97 by the Church Council in 2014, responds to this issue. The social criteria investment ~~screen on~~  
98 ~~gambling~~~~screen on gambling~~, revised and approved by the Church Council in 2016, responds to this issue.  
99 The social criteria investment ~~screen on pornography~~~~screen on pornography~~, revised and approved by the  
100 Church Council in 2013, responds to this issue. The social criteria investment ~~screen on political and civil~~  
101 ~~human rights~~~~screen on political and civil human rights~~, approved by the Church Council in 2018, responds  
102 to this issue. The guidelines here ~~gather together~~, each of these for this issue paper.  
103

104 **Resolution Guidelines ~~guidelines~~ for ELCA**

- 106 1. We support requests to establish policies renouncing involvement in the production, sale, and  
107 use of antipersonnel landmines, cluster bombs, autonomous weapons systems, and other  
108 weapons with indiscriminate effects.
- 109 2. We support requests to establish policies renouncing involvement in the production, sale, and  
110 use of biological and chemical weapons.
- 111 3. We support reports describing involvement in the use of depleted uranium.
- 112 4. We support requests for reports describing involvement in the production of nuclear weapons.
- 113 5. We support reports concerning involvement in space-based weapons.
- 114 6. We support adoption of policies that impose restrictions upon financing transactions directly  
115 pertaining to the trade or manufacturing of antipersonnel land mines, cluster munitions,  
116 biological weapons, chemical weapons or nuclear weapons (controversial weapons), and  
117 investments in companies that generate revenue from controversial weapons.
- 118 7. We support reports on the company's due diligence process to identify and address  
119 environmental and social risks related to financing companies that produce controversial  
120 weapons or with business activities in conflict-affected and high-risk areas.
- 121 8. We support reports on the risk associated with the processing of payments involving a  
122 company's cards or its electronic payment system services for the sale and purchase of  
123 untraceable firearms, including "buy, build, shoot" firearm kits, components or accessories  
124 used to assemble privately made firearms known as ghost guns.
- 125 ~~6-9.~~ We support requests to establish policies to make arms sales open to public scrutiny and  
126 reduce the arms trade, including reports on foreign sales of weapons-related products and  
127 services.
- 128 ~~7-10.~~ We support requests for formal written workplace ~~anti-violence~~~~antiviolence~~ policies.
- 129 11. We support independent review of the impact of company policies and practices on  
130 workplace safety and violence, including gun violence.
- 131 ~~8-12.~~ We support requests for reports on policies and procedures aimed at stemming gun violence,  
132 increasing gun safety, and mitigating harm associated with gun products.
- 133 13. We support requests to embrace structures or practices that reduce tragic, irresponsible or  
134 illegal use of firearms.
- 135 14. We support requests for manufacturers, sellers and distributors of firearms to monitor how  
136 their products are used. We support requests to uphold preventive safety norms and practices.
- 137 ~~9-15.~~ We support requests to report involvement in the pornography industry and policies to reduce  
138 involvement.
- 139 ~~10-16.~~ We support requests to disclose policies aimed at stemming the production and sale of violent  
140 video media, including video games.
- 141 ~~11-17.~~ We support policies (including reports on such policies) aimed to eliminate exploitation,  
142 whether through slavery, human trafficking, or sexual exploitation, especially of minors.
- 143 ~~12-18.~~ We support reports on policies to address the negative effects of gambling and programs to

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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- 144 assist individuals who have a gambling addiction.
- 145 ~~13.19.~~ We support reports that address the possible negative effects of any policies that may
- 146 preclude due process on harassment and discrimination.
- 147 ~~14.20.~~ We support assessments of risk in conflict-affected areas (see ~~HR~~human rights issue paper).
- 148

**Resolution ~~Guidelines~~ guidelines for the ELCA — ~~General~~ — general**

- 149 **Resolution**
- 150 **Guidelines**
- 151 **guidelines for the ELCA — ~~General~~ — general**
- 152 **We support practices of good governance, specifically:**
- 153 •• A company having an independent board chair or independent lead director;
- 154 •• Reports on policies and procedures for political contributions and expenditures (both direct
- 155 and indirect) made with corporate funds;
- 156 •• Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt
- 157 organization that is used for an expenditure or contribution ~~which that~~ might be deemed
- 158 political; ~~and,~~
- 159 •• Guidelines or policies governing the company's political contributions and expenditures.
- 160 •• Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.

**Resolutions on Related Topics from Other Issue Papers**

- 161 **Codes of Conduct:** child labor, human trafficking and forced labor, including
- 162 prison, bonded, or indentured labor.
- 163 **Domestic Access to Health Care:** gambling
- 164 **Extractive Industries:** rights of indigenous peoples
- 165 **Human Rights:** areas experiencing conflict or occupation, consent of indigenous
- 166 people, sexual exploitation of minors, modern-day slavery, governments
- 167 complicit in genocide, detention of asylum seekers
- 168
- 169
- 170

<sup>i</sup> "The Church in Society," *A Lutheran Perspective* (ELCA, p. social statement, 1991), 5.

<sup>ii</sup> "For Peace in God's World," (ELCA, p. social statement, 1999), 1.

<sup>iii</sup> "For Peace in God's World," ELCA, p. 7, Ibid., 7.

<sup>iv</sup> "Gun-related Violence and Trauma" (ELCA social message, 2024), 2.

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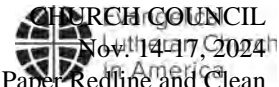
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## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1 AREA: Violence  
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue Paper  
 3  
 4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council  
 5 FORMAT DATE: 10/16/24  
 6  
 7 MARKER DATES:  
 8 RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, January. 22,  
 9 2004  
 10 ENDORSED by Division for Church in Society Board, February 27, 2004  
 11 APPROVED by Church Council, April 16-18, 2004  
 12 UPDATED by Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, January 11, 2008  
 13 APPROVED by Church Council, April 2008 [CC08.04.XXa]  
 14 APPROVED by Church Council, November 11, 2012 [CC12.11.44w]  
 15 UPDATED by the Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team October 4, 2019.  
 16 APPROVED by Church Council, November 2019 [CC19.11.47i]  
 17 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, October 2024  
 18 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, October 2024 [anticipated]

## Violence in Our World

### Background

24 The ELCA's social teaching around citizenship gives all citizens the responsibility "to defend human  
 25 rights and to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well-being, and good order in public life."<sup>i</sup>  
 26 As part of that understanding, this church has consistently supported efforts, whether community-based,  
 27 national or global, to protect human rights and recognize the inherent dignity of every person.

29 Christians are called both to proclaim the gospel of God's final peace and to work for earthly peace,  
 30 understanding earthly peace as "relationships among and within nations that are just, harmonious, and  
 31 free from war."<sup>ii</sup> Earthly peace is fleeting and can be disrupted in many ways.

33 Violence is rightly understood as physical confrontation but can also be understood more broadly. For  
 34 instance, ELCA social teaching on gender-based violence has described violence as harm directed at a  
 35 person or group in order to maintain power and control. It can be inflicted in many forms — social,  
 36 physical and emotional — and thus we may recognize that violence is more than armed conflict between  
 37 two nation-states. Violence pervades all aspects of life in our world. Intersecting identities such as  
 38 ethnicity, immigration status, sexuality, economic means, age and level of education all render people  
 39 more or less vulnerable to personal and systemic violence. It is not only the immediate victims of violence  
 40 who suffer: the message on gun violence details how the communal trauma initiated by gun violence  
 41 spreads and perpetuates harm.

43 This issue paper addresses issues of violence and trauma related to armed conflict, such as antipersonnel  
 44 landmines and other weapons with indiscriminate effects, as well as gun violence and nuclear, biological  
 45 and chemical weapons. The ELCA's peace statement calls the people of this church as peacemakers to  
 46 advocate for "an earthly peace that provides security from violence and aggression, seeks just order in  
 47 place of tyranny or anarchy, checks unrestrained power, and defends and enhances the life of people who  
 48 are poor and powerless."<sup>iii</sup> In keeping with a broadened understanding of violence, this paper also  
 49 addresses community violence, sexual exploitation, gun safety, and workplace violence and harassment.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

51 **ELCA social policy**

52

53 Historically the Lutheran Church — the ELCA and its predecessor church bodies — has been committed  
 54 to the support of human rights and the struggle against injustice. In terms of global issues of human  
 55 rights, the ELCA social statement *For Peace in God's World* (1995) and the ELCA social message  
 56 “[Human Rights](#)” (2017) call for respect and dignity for each person. The church is meant to be a  
 57 disturbing, reconciling and deliberating presence in word and deed in order to create an environment  
 58 conducive to peace. The statement on peace develops the global perspective for individuals and our  
 59 church body to join with others in searching for what makes for peace.

60

61 In terms of domestic issues of violence, the ELCA Church Council has also adopted messages that pertain  
 62 to particular expressions of violence. The 1994 message “[Community Violence](#)” deals with such issues as  
 63 the proliferation of guns and the culture of violence. Depictions of violence in the media and mediation  
 64 toward just and peaceful solutions to conflict are also addressed. The 2001 message “[Commercial Sexual](#)  
 65 [Exploitation](#)” examines pornography and sex trafficking, calling the church to look at corporations whose  
 66 earnings come from making and selling pornography or from promoting or profiting from the  
 67 pornography industry. The 2009 social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* characterizes the  
 68 misuse and abuse of sexuality for profit as always wrong. The 2015 social message “[Gender-based](#)  
 69 [Violence](#)” understands violence as an abusive exercise of power for the sake of control. Gender-based  
 70 violence is perpetrated through means such as media portrayals of women as objects, sexual exploitation,  
 71 economic subjugation and legal bias, and across intersecting identities such as race, sexual orientation and  
 72 age. The 2024 social message “Gun-related Violence and Trauma” “expands moral responsibility”<sup>iv</sup> for  
 73 gun-related violence and challenges the broader community, including private enterprise, to view  
 74 reduction of gun-related violence as a shared responsibility. In this framework, the ELCA advocates that  
 75 gun manufacturers, distributors and sellers embrace practices (e.g. in design and marketing) that will  
 76 minimize the harm guns can cause and foster greater public safety. ELCA Churchwide Assembly actions  
 77 have included other issues relating to violence.

78

79 **Corporate response**

80

81 These issues address the variety of aspects of violence in all its forms: physical, sexual, psychological,  
 82 economic and social, both internationally and domestically. In order to counter the culture of violence that  
 83 pervades the national culture and media in this country, all of our society — including the corporate world  
 84 — must find creative ways to work toward peace and nonviolence and reduction of traumatic events.  
 85 Sometimes it is simple, such as a corporation having a policy not to display guns and ammunition in  
 86 family-friendly areas. Other times, especially when human rights, national security and weapons are  
 87 involved, it is more complex. The call to corporations is to recognize their role in the problem and to  
 88 work to become part of the solution.

89

90 **Social criteria investment screens**

91

92 The social criteria investment [screen on military weapons](#), revised and approved by the Church Council in  
 93 2014, responds to this issue. The social criteria investment [screen on gambling](#), revised and approved by  
 94 the Church Council in 2016, responds to this issue. The social criteria investment [screen on pornography](#),  
 95 revised and approved by the Church Council in 2013, responds to this issue. The social criteria  
 96 investment [screen on political and civil human rights](#), approved by the Church Council in 2018, responds  
 97 to this issue. The guidelines here gather each of these for this issue paper.

98

99 **Resolution guidelines for ELCA**

100

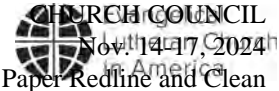
## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 101 1. We support requests to establish policies renouncing involvement in the production, sale and
- 102 use of antipersonnel landmines, cluster bombs, autonomous weapons systems and other
- 103 weapons with indiscriminate effects.
- 104 2. We support requests to establish policies renouncing involvement in the production, sale and
- 105 use of biological and chemical weapons.
- 106 3. We support reports describing involvement in the use of depleted uranium.
- 107 4. We support requests for reports describing involvement in the production of nuclear weapons.
- 108 5. We support reports concerning involvement in space-based weapons.
- 109 6. We support adoption of policies that impose restrictions upon financing transactions directly
- 110 pertaining to the trade or manufacturing of antipersonnel land mines, cluster munitions,
- 111 biological weapons, chemical weapons or nuclear weapons (controversial weapons), and
- 112 investments in companies that generate revenue from controversial weapons.
- 113 7. We support reports on the company's due diligence process to identify and address
- 114 environmental and social risks related to financing companies that produce controversial
- 115 weapons or with business activities in conflict-affected and high-risk areas.
- 116 8. We support reports on the risk associated with the processing of payments involving a
- 117 company's cards or its electronic payment system services for the sale and purchase of
- 118 untraceable firearms, including "buy, build, shoot" firearm kits, components or accessories
- 119 used to assemble privately made firearms known as ghost guns.
- 120 9. We support requests to establish policies to make arms sales open to public scrutiny and
- 121 reduce the arms trade, including reports on foreign sales of weapons-related products and
- 122 services.
- 123 10. We support requests for formal written workplace antiviolence policies.
- 124 11. We support independent review of the impact of company policies and practices on
- 125 workplace safety and violence, including gun violence.
- 126 12. We support requests for reports on policies and procedures aimed at stemming gun violence,
- 127 increasing gun safety and mitigating harm associated with gun products.
- 128 13. We support requests to embrace structures or practices that reduce tragic, irresponsible or
- 129 illegal use of firearms.
- 130 14. We support requests for manufacturers, sellers and distributors of firearms to monitor how
- 131 their products are used. We support requests to uphold preventive safety norms and practices.
- 132 15. We support requests to report involvement in the pornography industry and policies to reduce
- 133 involvement.
- 134 16. We support requests to disclose policies aimed at stemming the production and sale of violent
- 135 video media, including video games.
- 136 17. We support policies (including reports on such policies) aimed to eliminate exploitation,
- 137 whether through slavery, human trafficking or sexual exploitation, especially of minors.
- 138 18. We support reports on policies to address the negative effects of gambling and programs to
- 139 assist individuals who have a gambling addiction.
- 140 19. We support reports that address the possible negative effects of any policies that may
- 141 preclude due process on harassment and discrimination.
- 142 20. We support assessments of risk in conflict-affected areas (see human rights issue paper).
- 143

**Resolution guidelines for the ELCA — general**

We support practices of good governance, specifically:

- 147 • A company having an independent board chair or independent lead director.
- 148 • Reports on policies and procedures for political contributions and expenditures (both direct
- 149 and indirect) made with corporate funds.
- 150 • Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt organization



# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 151 that is used for an expenditure or contribution that might be deemed political.
- 152 • Guidelines or policies governing the company’s political contributions and expenditures.
- 153 • Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.
- 154
- 155
- 156

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<sup>i</sup> *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (ELCA social statement, 1991), 5.  
<sup>ii</sup> *For Peace in God’s World* (ELCA social statement, 1999), 1.  
<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid*, 7.  
<sup>iv</sup> “Gun-related Violence and Trauma” (ELCA social message, 2024), 2.

Working Document



# ELCA Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

## Memo

**Date:** 31 October 2024  
**To:** ELCA Church Council  
**From:** Rev. Carla Christopher and Leon Schwartz, CRLC Co-Chairs  
**Subject:** CRLC Status Report

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Greetings from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC)!

Since we last presented to you at your April meeting, the CRLC has been diligently moving forward to address our mandate as described in the memorial that created the CRLC entitled “Restructure the Governance of the ELCA”. Over the last few months our committees have been researching and discussing a wide variety of issues. A particular focus has been to identify any specific proposals to modify the *ELCA Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly with the knowledge that any such modifications needed to be in front of you at this November meeting.

The status of all issues can be classified into the following three categories:

1. Submitted to the Church Council for action
2. Transmitted to the Church Council for consultation
3. Continuing to be discussed and researched within the CRLC committees

All of the issues under items one and two above were provided in consultation to the Conference of Bishops (COB) at their September meeting. Their feedback was mixed with both affirmation and concerns being expressed. Following the COB meeting and with their feedback in hand the committees continued their work and the full CRLC then met and voted to move certain items forward as action items. As you will see, the list of action items is small and will be provided directly to the LCRC. The CRLC benefits from the presence of Kevin Anderson, the Chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee (LCRC), as a resource person to the CRLC and David Lenz, a member of both the LCRC and CRLC. The list of items transmitted as “in consultation” is very similar to what was provided to the COB. The CRLC looks forward to receiving feedback from the Church Council on both action items and “in consultation” items. The following documents are being presented to the Church Council.

1. Submitted to the Church Council for action – “CRLC Proposals for Action”
2. Transmitted to the Church Council for “in consultation” – “CRLC in consultation proposals”

A separate issue before the CRLC is the request issued by the Church Council at your November 2022 meeting. This request was to examine the issue of the name of our denomination. The CRLC Who Are We Committee held several discussions on this topic. In summary, neither the

Committee nor the full CRLC could come to an agreement on whether the name should be changed. It is a very complex issue. The following two documents related to this issue are being presented to the Church Council.

1. Response to the Church Council from the CRLC entitled “CRLC Report on ELCA Name Change”.
2. Background information provided by Dr. Susan McArver, a member of the CRLC, entitled “Historical Reflections on the Name, ELCA”

We thank you for the opportunity to serve this church and to work with you on these issues.



## Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church Proposals for Action Items

Over the last few months CRLC committees have been researching and discussing a wide variety of issues. A particular focus has been to identify any specific proposals to modify the *ELCA Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly with the knowledge that any such modifications needed to be in front of you at this November meeting.

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## 1. Address the DEIA Audit Report Recommendations

### Explanation

A DEIA Audit subcommittee of the Dismantling Racism Committee consisting of members of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC), the Church Council's Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, and the Office of the Secretary was convened to oversee the church's response to the recommendations of the external DEIA Audit report that was prepared in 2023 at the direction of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. Several of the recommendations in that report included changes to our governing documents. Given the timeline to have governing document changes be recommended by the Church Council to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, the DEIA Audit Committee has focused its work on governing document changes first, though there

is significant support and excitement for creating better resources to help all expressions of our church more fully embrace DEIA in a manner that is the most meaningful for their local context.

The committee has discussed several potential modifications but at this time only recommended the following two which were supported by the full CRLC as action items.

- A. The first set of changes provides definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility for use in this church. Currently there are no such definitions in our governing documents. It also defines various groups that are collectively considered “Historically Underrepresented Groups,” which include persons of color, persons of diverse sexual orientation, persons of lower income, persons who are disabled, and persons who are not natural-born U.S. citizens. Recognizing that definitions of this sort may evolve over time, the Committee recommends that definitions be adopted at the Continuing Resolution level. Continuing Resolutions can be amended by a 2/3 vote of the Church Council at any of its meetings, meaning there would be at least two chances for amendment each year if a definition were found to be problematic. This would be far preferable to including them in Bylaw or Constitution level provisions, which can only be acted on by the Churchwide Assembly once every three years. Further, the definitions used in this section will support the bylaw amendments concerning historically underrepresented groups that are the subject of a separate proposal from the Committee. This amendment is intended to give greater clarity to how this church uses various DEIA terms both in its governing documents and in other policy documents it may adopt.
  
- B. The second set of changes provides a goal in the representational principles that 10% of assemblies, boards, councils, etc. be members of Historically Underrepresented Groups. This proposal is in response to the suggestions of the DEIA Audit to encourage greater participation in this church by a broader range of groups that have been historically marginalized and underrepresented beyond our specific requirements for persons of color. This is “goal” language parallel to how youth and young adults are included in existing Continuing Resolution 5.01.F19. It is not “requirement” language like persons of color in constitution provisions 5.01.e and 5.01.f. Additionally, the proposal authorizes synods to send one additional voting member to churchwide assembly from a Historically Underrepresented Group in the same way we do for youth/young adults and persons of color in bylaw 12.41.11. This proposal is intended to advance the opportunities for full participation in this church’s governance by groups that have historically been marginalized and excluded by codifying goals for the churchwide organization and for synods that they seek out individuals from those groups to engage in leadership.

## Proposed Language

The first set of changes proposes to create a new continuing resolution 5.01.I25 to be adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in 2025 and to remove the definition of “persons of color and/or persons

whose primary language is other than English” that currently appears as 5.01.C21, updating and integrating it into the new continuing resolution.

~~5.01.C21— The term, “persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English,” shall be understood to mean African American, African Descent, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native people. This definition, however, shall not be understood as limiting this church’s commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work.~~

5.01.I25. This church is dedicated to fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment that honors the diversity of God’s creation, ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to participate fully in the life and work of this church. None of the definitions in Chapter 5 shall be construed as limiting this church’s commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work. For all purposes in this church’s governing documents, the terms diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility shall have the following meanings:

a. **Diversity** is a reality that flows from life together as church rooted in the variety found in the body of Christ. The method and the goal are to include specific attention to a wide range of communities and identities related to race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexuality, age, backgrounds, abilities, economics, cultures, and perspectives. The goal of diversity is to recognize and value the rich tapestry of human differences and to foster an environment where all feel respected and valued, regardless of ourtheir background or characteristics.refers to an environment resulting from the intentional inclusion of a wide range of communities and identities, including different races, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, backgrounds, social classes, abilities, cultures, and perspectives, recognizing and valuing the rich tapestry of human differences and fostering an environment where all feel respected and valued, regardless of their background or characteristics.

b. **Equity** means fair treatment of people according to their needs. The principle of equity takes into account that people exist on inherently uneven playing fields due to poverty, sexism, racism, etc. Because of these different contexts, individuals or groups may require different resources and support to ensure that they have the same rights and abilities to make choices as others do (such as having a choice of quality doctors, careers, neighborhoods, etc.). The goal of equity is to ensure each person receives what each person needs to flourish and is not disadvantaged.the fair and just treatment of all individuals, ensuring that their development of God-given gifts and faith is not impeded by any of their characteristics. Equity encompasses

c. Ensuring fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

d. Providing necessary resources and support to historically underrepresented groups, ensuring full participation in this church and society.

e.b. Allocating and distributing resources based on the needs of communities and individuals deprived of or denied full access to resources.

f.c. **Inclusion** means the proactive and meaningful engagement of diverse individuals in all aspects of church life, especially in decision-making processes and leadership roles. Inclusion encompasses:

- 1) Actively seeking out and valuing the perspectives and contributions of diverse individuals from all backgrounds.
- 2) Creating a church culture where everyone feels welcomed, respected, and valued for their unique perspectives and abilities.
- 3) Ensuring that diverse voices are represented in leadership and decisionmaking positions, so that the church reflects the full diversity of its members and the broader communitythe body of Christ.

g.d. **Accessibility** means designing, constructing, developing, and maintaining the church's physical infrastructure, information, communication technology, programs, and services so that all people can fully and independently use them.

Accessibility encompasses

- 1) Providing accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access to employment, worship, and participation in church activities for people with disabilities.
- 2) Reducing or eliminating physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities and participation.
- 3) Committing to universal design principles that make spaces, activities, and electronic resources accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities.
- 4) Pursuing best practices to ensure that all church members can participate fully and independently in every aspect of church life.
- 5) Ensuring that digital spaces, including online worship services, educational resources, and community activities, are accessible to individuals with disabilities and communities with limited internet access. This includes providing alternative means of access, such as downloadable content, offline resources, and outreach programs to bridge the digital divide.

5.01.I26. As one facet of its commitment fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment this church commits to working to intentionally lift up voices from Historically Underrepresented Groups in its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units. While specific identities are listed below, this church recognizes that humans have multiple aspects of their identities that are tied to systemic privilege and oppression that shape the lives of individuals and communities in distinct ways. For all purposes in this church's governing documents, Historically Underrepresented Groups shall be understood to include the following:

- a. Persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English;
- b. Persons of diverse gender identities and persons of diverse sexual orientations; gender identities, and gender expressions;
- c. Persons experiencing poverty or persons of lower income
- d. Persons who are disabledliving with disabilities;
- e. Persons who are not natural-born United States citizens

For all purposes in this church's governing documents, the terms above shall have the following meanings:

- a. **Persons of cColor and/or persons whose primary language is other than English** means African American, African Caribbean, African Descent, African National, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Latin(-o, -a, -é, -x), Hispanic, American Indian, Indigenous, and Alaska Native people, as well as multi- and bi-racial people.
- b. **Persons of diverse gender identities and persons of diverse sexual orientations;** ~~gender identities, and gender expressions~~ means individuals who do not conform to ~~traditional a sex and gender norms~~ binary, individuals whose gender identity may be fluid, and individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or other ~~non heteronormative~~ identitiessex, gender, and sexual identities that are more complex than sex, gender, and sexuality binaries.
- c. **Persons experiencing poverty or persons of lower income** means individuals whose economic circumstances inhibit their ability to meet basic living needs according to their societal context and standards.
- d. **Persons ~~who are disabled~~ living with disabilities** means individuals who have physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may hinder their full participation in church life.
- e. **Persons who are not natural-born United States citizens** needs no additional clarifying definition.

The second set of changes proposes to create a new continuing resolution 5.01.J25; amend Bylaw 12.41.11, and create new required synod bylaw †S6.04.02.

5.01.J25. It is the goal of this church that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be members of historically underrepresented groups in addition to the required 10% representation of persons of color in 5.01.e. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

12.41.11 Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synod bishop, who is ex officio a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synod vice president shall serve as an ex officio member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members. The voting members elected by each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this Constitution.

In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election, ~~and~~ one additional voting member who is a person of color, and one additional voting member who is a member of a historically underrepresented group or a person whose primary language is other than English. The Church Council may allocate

up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

†S6.04.02. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be members of historically underrepresented groups, in addition to the 10% representation of persons of color in †S6.04. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal.

## 2. Strengthen relationships with Related Institutions, Organizations, and Ministries (RIOMs) and focus on Faith Formation Ministries

### Explanation

The Who Are We Committee held extensive discussions on the relationship this church currently has with a wide variety of related institutions, organizations, and ministries that support its mission (e.g., social ministries, campus ministries, outdoor ministries).

One of our challenges on the CRLC is to make recommendations about how our church can encourage and better relate to institutions, organizations, and ministries that may or may not be structurally part of the ELCA but which serve to help the ELCA carry out its mission. These include but are not limited to social ministry organizations, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, food pantries and other hunger ministries, and national organizations such as Lutheran Services in America, Global Refuge, and Lutheran World Relief. (In this proposal, we are not dealing with the Lutheran seminaries and universities, for which the current governance language seems to be clear.)

In our CRLC subcommittee and committee discussions, we have a strongly held view that the ELCA must celebrate and support its Related Institutions, Organizations, and Ministries. They are an important way in which the ELCA carries out its mission, and in which the Lutheran understanding of love and service for the neighbor is made manifest.

In our subcommittee and committee discussions, we have also come to a deeper understanding and appreciation for what are called “faith formation ministries.” These include campus and outdoor ministries. They are often the places where younger people come to faith and come to the church. Some of these ministries are structurally part of the ELCA, for example a campus ministry that is tied to an ELCA congregation. Some of them are not, for example an outdoor ministry that may be supported by congregations or synods but is not structurally part of them. Our view is that for the future of the church the ELCA should be strategic in supporting the staffing and budgets of these faith formation ministries, and also have a means of accountability for the pastors and other leaders of these ministries.

## Proposed Language

The Committee proposes to change current constitutional language to “Related Institutions, Organizations, and Ministries”. In addition, to adopt bylaws to strengthen the ties between the ELCA and its Related Institutions, Organizations, and Ministries.

8.20: Relationship with Institutions, Organizations, and Agencies~~Ministries~~

8.23: Institutions, Organizations, and Agencies~~Ministries~~. This church shall seek to meet human needs through encouragement of its people to individual and corporate action, and through establishing, developing, recognizing, and supporting institutions, organizations, and agencies ~~ministries~~ that minister to people in their spiritual and temporal needs.

In addition, add bylaws and other language, along these lines:

- Other institutions, organizations, or ministries may relate to this church through criteria and policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit. Depending on the circumstances, such relationship may be at the congregational, synod, or churchwide level.

The appropriate churchwide unit shall maintain a directory of the related institutions, organizations, and ministries.

- This church recognizes the importance of “faith formation ministries,” such as campus and outdoor ministries. This church shall be strategic in supporting the staffing and budget of such ministries, as well as in providing for accountability for those pastors and others who are called for leadership in such ministries.

## 3. Empower Lay Leadership---Association of Synod Vice-Presidents

### Explanation

This proposal was developed by the How We Are Governed Committee.

In an effort to recognize, lift up and further develop the highest elected lay leaders in this church, a proposal to create an Association of Vice Presidents is offered. The Association would allow for a more intentionally organized orientation, education and training of these leaders. The Association would elect its own “convenor” and “co-convenor” to lead its efforts. They would be able to attend the Church Council meetings as resource people with voice only. The Association would meet at least annually.

There is presently no such formal gathering of the highest elected lay leaders in the church recognized in the governing documents. To the extent Synod VPs gather (presently by zoom scheduled monthly), it is of their own initiative.

## Proposed Language

For placement in a section of the constitution to be determined:

### 10.XX. ASSOCIATION OF SYNOD VICE PRESIDENTS

10.XX. The Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall be composed of the vice presidents of the synods. The Churchwide Vice President shall be a member with voice but not vote. The Conference of Bishops may appoint a synod bishop as a liaison to the Association.

10.XX.01. The Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall provide for orientation, continuing education, collaboration, and leadership development for synod vice presidents.

10.XX.02. The Association shall meet at least annually. In years in which churchwide assemblies are held, the Association meeting may occur in conjunction with the assembly.

10.XX.03. The responsibilities of the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall be enumerated in a continuing resolution. The resolution may be amended by majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. Should the Association disagree with the action of the Church Council, it may appeal the decision to the Churchwide Assembly.

#### 10.XX.A16. Responsibilities of the Association of Synod Vice Presidents

The Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall provide opportunities for worship, spiritual renewal, and leadership development for those elected to the office of vice president of a synod. To fulfill these responsibilities, the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall:

- a. be a forum in which goals, objectives, and strategies may be developed and shared concerning lay leadership for the synods;
- b. offer programs for orientation and continuing education for vice presidents;
- c. assist the vice presidents in their role as synod council chairs by being a resource for training and guidance in the governance of this church; d. assist the vice presidents in their role as collaborative leaders with bishops in fostering the work of the synods; and
- d. provide advice and counsel when requested by the Church Council or other church leaders.

#### 10.XX.B14. Organization of the Association of Synod Vice Presidents

The Association of Synod Vice Presidents may establish task forces as its members, from time to time, may determine to assist in fulfillment of the Association's responsibilities. Biennially, the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall elect a convener and co-convener to lead its meetings. The convener, or co-convener in the convener's absence, or their designee may attend, as a resource person, meetings of the Church Council with the privilege of voice only.

#### 10.XX.C20. Staff Services for the Association of Synod Vice Presidents

Staff services for meetings of the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall be provided by the Office of Synod Relations. The executive for synod relations shall coordinate and support the operation of the Association of Synod Vice Presidents.



## 4. Offer Professional Investigative Assistance

### Explanation

This proposal was developed by the How We Are Governed Committee.

Disciplinary actions often involve matters relating to sexual abuse, fiscal misconduct, and other similarly sensitive matters. The synod bishops are given a significant role in the administration of discipline and efforts to resolve such matters by consultation. Often this places the synod bishop in a situation of trying to learn more about the facts of what has occurred, and the synod bishop is often not trained in the proper manner to handle such sensitive investigations. Proper investigation of such matters can avoid causing further harm and better reveal the underlying facts that may lead to more appropriate informal resolution and restitution. The ELCA has a strong culture of taking accusations seriously and investigating them, but we do not have a formal mechanism for synod bishops to call on the churchwide organization for assistance and independent resources to help conduct such investigations.

The amendment seeks to empower synod bishops to request professional investigative assistance, which will come in the form of services rendered under the guidance of the general counsel of the ELCA. Because such services will often be provided by outside contractors, this amendment also provides that the cost of such investigations will be split between the churchwide organization and the requesting synod.

### Proposed Language

#### ELCA Bylaw

20.22.04 When there are indications that a cause for discipline may exist, the bishop of the synod may request, and the general counsel of this church shall make available, resources for investigation into the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct that gives rise to the potential cause for discipline. Such resources may include, but are not limited to, contracting for investigatory expertise in matters of alleged sexual abuse, forensic accounting in matters of alleged fiscal misconduct, or other specialized professional services. The cost of such investigation shall generally be borne one-half by the churchwide organization and one-half by the synod of the bishop requesting such investigation. Procedural details relating to such investigations shall be set forth in the Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings. ~~and~~ Before charges are made, efforts shall be made by the bishop of the synod to resolve the situation by consultation; for assistance in these efforts, the bishop may utilize either a consultation panel or an advisory panel as herein provided. . . . . [Balance of 20.22.04 appears as-is.]

#### Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings

Rule D2. In addition to, or in lieu of, a consultation panel or an advisory panel, a synod bishop may utilize the assistance of one of the synod bishop's assistants or other staff persons or any other individual appointed by the synod bishop for this purpose. In addition, a bishop

may request investigatory assistance under 20.22.04, which may include, but is not limited to, contracting for investigatory expertise in matters of alleged sexual abuse, forensic accounting in matters of alleged fiscal misconduct, or other specialized professional services.

- a. Any contractors providing services in such investigations will work under the supervision of the general counsel.
- b. The result of such investigation shall be the preparation of a written report delivered to the general counsel and to the bishop requesting the investigation.

## 5. Increase Flexibility in Amending the Constitution and Bylaws

### Explanation

This proposal was developed by the How We Are Governed Committee.

The main purpose of this proposal is to provide more flexibility in modifying the constitution and bylaws, especially in light of the 3-year assembly cycle. This proposal was developed with the input from the ELCA General Counsel.

This proposal has two parts. The first recommends the amendment of the ELCA's Articles of Incorporation to resolve an "inconsistency" with Minnesota not-for-profit law. It would amend the Articles to reflect the current practice of allowing the Churchwide Assembly to modify the constitution.

The second proposal recommends the following:

1. Remove the word "regular" when describing the Assembly meetings at which adoption of constitutional amendments must occur. This change would allow amendments to the ELCA constitution to be considered at both regular and special Churchwide Assemblies.
2. Allow constitutional amendments brought by 25 members of the Churchwide Assembly and after review, passed by 2/3 of those present and voting, to be ratified at the next Churchwide Assembly or by a 2/3 vote of the Church Council. Also ensures the Church Council acts in a timely manner when ratifying amendments.
3. Allow bylaws proposed by the Church Council or 15 members of the Churchwide Assembly to be adopted at any Churchwide Assembly (removing the requirement that it be a "regular" Assembly).

### Proposed Language

#### Articles of Incorporation

#### ARTICLE IX

For purposes of the laws of the State of Minnesota, only the Church's Constitution shall be treated as the bylaws of this corporation, and none of this corporation's governing documents other than these Articles

of Incorporation and the Church's Constitution need be subject to the procedures specified by law or otherwise for the amendment of articles of incorporation or bylaws. The power to adopt, amend, or repeal the bylaws is vested in the Churchwide Assembly and may be delegated to the Church Council.

## ELCA Constitution

### 22.10. AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

a. The Church Council may propose an amendment, with an official notice to be sent to the synods at least six months prior to the next ~~regular~~ meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. The adoption of such an amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of the members of the next ~~regular~~ meeting of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting.

b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly.

### 22.20. BYLAWS

22.21. Bylaws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted or amended at any ~~regular~~ meeting of the Churchwide Assembly when presented in writing by the Church Council or by at least 15 members of the assembly. An amendment proposed by at least 15 members of the assembly shall immediately be submitted to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation. An amendment may not be placed before the assembly for action sooner than the day following its presentation to the assembly unless it has been presented in writing by the Church Council and sent with an official notice to the synods at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting shall be necessary for adoption.

## 6. Changes to Dagger Strikes in the *Constitution for Synods*

### Explanation

A Select Subcommittee of the Why and What Committee reviewed the *Constitution for Synods* with an eye to retention and removal of daggers.

For those unfamiliar with this shorthand, a dagger (†) in the *Constitution for Synods* indicates a required provision (in the same way that an asterisk (\*) indicates a required provision in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*). The *Constitution for Synods* may be divided into two types of provisions: required (dagged) and non-required.

Required (daggered) provisions must appear in a synod's constitution exactly as they appear in the *Constitution for Synods*. There is no mechanism by which the synod may refuse to adopt any changes to required provisions as amended by the Churchwide Assembly, and there is no mechanism by which a synod may deviate from the required verbiage.

The non-required provisions may be thought of as *recommended* provisions in that definite language is proffered, but deviation is possible. The recommended provisions may be thought of as the *default setting*. The non-required provisions, as they appear, are *privileged* (in terms of constitutional economics) as it is easier to adopt a non-required provision as it is proffered than it is to adopt variant language or a provision of entirely different nature. A synod may deviate from the verbiage of the non-required provisions, but doing so is a more complicated process (with what would be considered additional checks in terms of parliamentary law) than simply accepting the verbiage as proffered.

The *Constitution for Synods* is *owned* by the Churchwide Assembly in that the Churchwide Assembly is the body with sole authority to define the verbiage of its provisions (both required and non-required) and also to define which provisions are required vs. non-required.

A synod may adopt provisions peculiar to the synod (*i.e.*, provisions that are not in any way found in the *Constitution for Synods*) under the same process as that used for adopting deviant verbiage in non-required provisions.

## Proposed Language

The committee offers the following:

- a list of provisions currently daggered that the committee is of the opinion should have the dagger struck;
- a list of provisions currently daggered that the committee is of the opinion would be improved with minor tweaking;
- a list of provisions currently daggered that the committee is of the opinion would be improved with major tweaking; and
- one provision for striking in its entirety.

### Daggers for striking

That the committee proposes the removal of a dagger should not be interpreted to mean that the committee thinks that the provision should be struck in its entirety or even that its current verbiage should be changed. On the contrary, the committee suspects that many, if not most synods, will simply content themselves with the verbiage as is. Neither does the committee believe that this church's institutional unity would be threatened by reclassification and potential deviation from the current verbiage, nor does the committee believe that such would significantly endanger its members.

†S9.02

†S10.01

†S11.04

†S15.01

†S15.12

Minor tweaking

For both provisions listed here, the committee is of the opinion that better than striking the dagger would be modification of verbiage to make the listed activities illustrative rather than prescriptive.

†S6.03.02

†S6.03.03

Major tweaking questioning

The provisions related to the relocation of congregations and the opening of additional worship sites appear to function like "franchise protection." The committee does not recommend striking the dagger but notes a lack of parallelism, specifically that Synod Council approval, while required for relocation, is not required for the opening of an additional worship site. The committee is of the opinion that Synod Council approval should be required for both. Additionally, it is not clear that consultation with the appropriate churchwide office is still needed. Any changes to these provisions should be paralleled in the coordinate provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Second, the provision for an annual external audit conducted by a CPA reflects *best practice*, but it is not clear that best practice is sufficient grounds for daggerring. It is possible that a different way of doing something may be adequate or otherwise sufficient to the desired end. Best practice, therefore, should be held in balance with the desired end, sufficiency, and resource expenditure. The committee recognizes that mechanisms for financial accountability are meet, right, and salutary but asks whether verbiage can be modified in this provision such that accountability may be maintained without the incurring of unnecessary expense. Whether there are particular legal or insurance requirements that would require an audit as described in the provision is unknown to the committee. Therefore, the committee commends this provision for the prudential judgment of the appropriate entities.

†S13.20 & †13.21

†S15.31

Striking provision in its entirety

One of the most debated provisions was †S6.02. Opinion in the committee varied significantly. There is an underlying question about the function of the provision. Does the provision define the work of the synod qua incorporated entity as distinguished from the congregations and the churchwide organization, or does the provision describe the work of the synod qua the congregations and/or the churchwide organization joined in abstracted common endeavor? If the former, it is not clear that this provision is necessary; furthermore, it is not clear that the extant verbiage actually describes the work of the synod. If the latter, does the extant verbiage clearly set forth the relationship?

†S6.02

## **Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church “in consultation” Proposals**

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) has met nine times. The work of the CRLC has continued through the service of the seven committees (i.e., Who Are We, Why and What, How We Are Governed, Dismantle Racism, All Ears, Communications, and Planning and Report committees) and in some cases, sub-committees. There have been many committee meetings of the How We Are Governed, Who Are We, and Why and What committees.

Over the last few months our committees have been researching and discussing a wide variety of issues.

The status of all issues can be classified into the following three categories:

1. Submitted to the Church Council for action
2. Transmitted to the Church Council for consultation
3. Continuing to be discussed and researched within the CRLC committees

All of the issues under items one and two above were provided in consultation to the Conference of Bishops (COB) at their September meeting. Their feedback was mixed with both affirmation and concerns being expressed. Following the COB meeting and with their feedback in hand the committees continued their work and the full CRLC then met and voted to move certain items forward as action items. The list of items transmitted as “in consultation” is very similar to what was provided to the COB. This document contains the concepts voted on by the CRLC to be transmitted to the Church Council as “in consultation” items. This means they are not being recommended for action but simply concepts that the CRLC is seeking feedback upon. Transmittal of these proposals does not imply endorsement by members of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC).

Other ideas, concepts, and draft language will continue to be discussed for the final report and recommendations being prepared for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. The report will be shared with the Conference of Bishops at its spring meeting for consultation and forwarded by the Church Council to the assembly for action.

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## 1. Reconsider Purpose Statements

The Why and What Committee has been tasked with considering the constitutional purpose statements of the denomination as a whole, as well as the three expressions of this church. The Committee proposed to the full CRLC a major restructuring of the purpose statements. Their concept is listed as Option A below. In addition, an alternative Option B is listed below. It was approved by vote of the full CRLC to be sent as an alternative proposal.

### Option A – Reconsider Purpose Statements

#### *Executive Summary*

The language is intended to provide guidance but is not final language and requires significant work before specific constitutional amendments could be proposed.

#### To the Church Council of the ELCA:

Greetings in Christ! The Why and What Committee of the CRLC was tasked with considering the constitutional purpose statements for each of the three expressions of the ELCA.

The proposals we are offering today are intended to be draft language. Our hope is that constitutional language, once ultimately amended, will:

- Distinguish clearly between purposes, responsibilities, goals, and means of achieving purposes.
- Be clear and accessible.
- Where appropriate, give synods and congregations the flexibility to determine the specifics of their purposes contextually and to change direction swiftly if necessary.
- Ensure consistency across expressions, acknowledging that all the expressions of this church work collectively to fulfill its collective purposes.
- Distinguish the separate work of each expression.

In order to properly set forth purpose statements, consideration must be given to cross-referencing the purpose statements in each of the constitutions in which they are included and keeping the constitutions consistent with each other. Much language would be deleted from current statements. That is because the language goes beyond statements of purpose and includes responsibilities, goals, and suggestions as to how to achieve purposes, rather than stating purposes. Careful consideration must be given to whether that language should be included elsewhere in the constitutional document or enacted as a bylaw or continuing resolution. Additional drafting beyond the drafting of the purpose statements will be required.

The following language reflects the work done by the Why and What Committee in considering the purposes of each expression of the church. The numbering included relates to the current placement within the constitutions. Below are documents developed to amend specific language which should provide a starting point for the necessary amendments.

## Purpose of ELCA

4.02. Collectively, this church gathers around the living and inspired Word of God and the means of grace found in the Sacraments; proclaims God’s abundant grace and love through Jesus Christ; and sends disciples out, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to live into their baptismal vocation for the sake of the world.

4.03. To participate in God’s mission, this church shall:

- a. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- b. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- g.

## Purpose of Congregation

9.11. A congregation is a local expression of this church, gathered around word and sacrament, that supports and equips God’s people as they live out their baptismal vocation in their local community and the world.

C4.04. The congregation is a local expression of this church, gathered around word and sacrament, that supports and equips God’s people as they live out their baptismal vocation in their local community and the world.

9.12.; C4.05.

Each congregation:

- a. **Gathers:**
  - 1) Proclaims the Word of God, provides for the administration of the Sacraments, and gathers in worship



b. **Supports:**

- 1) Provides pastoral care

c. **Equips:**

- 1) Teaches the Word of God
- 2) Encourages the mutual conversation, consolation, and accountability of the people of God
- 3) Prepares people to live lives consistent with their baptismal vocation in their place in life and in the world, and in their relationship to God and neighbor as informed by the teachings of Luther's catechisms
- 4) Encourages God's people to give thanks by joyfully offering what God has first given as signs of God's gracious love: Time, possessions, gifts and skills
- 5) Enables God's people to serve their neighbors in response to God's love, and to work for justice in their local communities and throughout the world.

## Purpose of Synod

10.21. Each synod of this church supports congregations, rostered ministers, and related ministries, strengthens and coordinates relationships between congregations, the churchwide organization, and ministry partners, and interprets the work of this church to the public.

S6.01. The synod supports congregations, rostered ministers, and related ministries, strengthens and coordinates relationships between congregations, the churchwide organization, and ministry partners, and interprets the work of this church to the public.

10.21.01.; S6.02.

Within its unique context, each synod:

a. **Supports in certain ways, such as:**

- 1) Provides pastoral care to congregations and rostered ministers
- 2) Provides for discipline of congregations and rostered ministers
- 3) Provides resources and accountability necessary for healthy congregations and rostered ministers
- 4) Provides support and facilitates structures necessary to raise up new leadership
- 5) Provides financial, prayerful, and [human] support for campus ministries, camping ministries, and other strategic outreach ministries

b. **Strengthens, facilitates, and coordinates relationships**

- 1) Collaborates with churchwide, congregations, other synods, and related ministries
- 2) Works with the churchwide organization to develop and revitalize ministries
- 3) Accompanies global partners

c. **Interprets**

- 1) Within its specific context, the synod fosters ecumenical and interfaith relationships as it works toward peace and unity in the world
- 2) Provides a public voice on issues impacting the synod's local, regional and global partner organizations

## Purpose of Churchwide

11.12. The [churchwide organization] is the national body that supports and equips the work of synods, congregations, and [strategic outreach ministries] of this church. The churchwide organization establishes the vision and strategy of this church within the context of our congregational polity; provides a legal framework and best practices for operations; equips leaders for the sake of the Gospel; and provides a public voice through social teaching, advocacy, and accompaniment with our global, ecumenical, and interfaith partners.

11.21. The churchwide organization:

a. **Establishes vision and strategy**

- 1) Ensures the development and maintenance of a vision, mission statement, goals, objectives, strategic plan, metrics and other planning elements for both the denomination and the national body
- 2) Gathers the denomination together with a goal of moving toward the unity of believers
- 3) Coordinates the efforts of the expressions of this church by gathering and communicating best practices for healthy and thriving ministry
- 4) Communicates to inform, interpret, and edify, and to invite people into greater understanding of, and participation in, the work of God through this church
- 5) Facilitates the provision of theologically sound educational and worship materials to support spiritual growth.
- 6) Ensures the development of a financial plan that addresses revenues, expenditures, asset management, and other financial components in an equitable manner across the entire denomination
- 7) Provides coherent, truthful, accessible branding, and protects that branding in online and physical spaces

b. **Facilitates accountability**

- 1) Facilitates the compliance of the churchwide organization with the IRS and other legal entities
- 2) Provides standard best practice policies and procedures for processes
- 3) Maintains the integrity of this church
- 4) Serves as a resource for synods, congregations, and [strategic outreach ministries] as they work to maintain compliance with the IRS and other legal entities
- 5) Sets expectations and provides standards of accountability for synods, congregations, [strategic outreach ministries], and rostered ministers
- 6) Provides for the means of evaluation of congregations, [strategic outreach ministries], rostered ministers, and synods

c. **Equips leaders**

- 1) With the synods, encourages and equips those called to rostered ministry and lay leadership
- 2) Sets standards for theological education of rostered ministers

- 3) Ensures candidacy and theological curriculum are synthesized (synchronized?)
- 4) Sets standards for the candidacy of rostered ministers
- 5) Provides curriculum standards for boundaries and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility training for all rostered ministers
- 6) Supports and provides a standard foundational curriculum for licensed lay ministers
- 7) Ministers to and provides accountability for bishops
- 8) Provides and monitors a system of discipline, appeals, and adjudication
- 9) Provides for a pension and benefit plan for employees

**d. Provides a public voice**

- 1) Serves as a unified voice in proclaiming the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.
- 2) Advocates for those without a voice, the oppressed, and the under-served
- 3) Connects with and supports affiliate service and advocacy organizations
- 4) Forms, publishes, communicates, and fosters discussion around social statements and messages
- 5) Accompanies our global partners, including ecumenical and interfaith organizations, as we work toward peace and unity in the world

Additional documents that delineate very early efforts at constitutional drafting and summarize the conversation on strategic outreach ministries are available on request.

## Option B – Reconsider Purpose Statements

The "Modest Proposal for the Purpose Statements of the Three Expressions" was originally presented to the September meeting of CRLC 4 (Why and What Committee) in recognition that the Why and What Committee's work, though extensive, was not at a point where it could be reasonably advanced as a solid recommendation for amendment of the *CBCR*. As a more modest approach, this proposal retains as much of the current *CBCR* language and structure as possible while at the same time attempting to introduce flexibility for the synodical expression in particular. The current form represents changes argued in CRLC Plenum (8-9 August 2024) in connection with justice and social ministries and tweaking suggested by others and submitted to CRLC Plenum (8-9 October). Very slight amendment of the footnotes has been made in the aftermath of the CRLC Plenum (8-9 October 2024).

The surgical use of the terms *collectively* and *may* clarify what is the purpose of the church *qua* ELCA as a whole vs. what is the required and optional work of the synodical and congregational expressions. The footnotes indicate where these proposed changes satisfy, in part, the recommendations of the Dagger Strike Select Committee.

It should be remembered that making changes to the *CBCR* is not a once and done thing. Amendments to the *CBCR* are proposed by the Church Council (and the vast majority adopted) at every CWA. What follows does not tackle every perceived issue with the three purpose statements, neither is it intended to thwart the ongoing work of the Why and What Committee.

The CRLC did not advance the substance of this option B to the Church Council for action. It is being included as an "in consultation" concept. Nothing, however, prevents LCRC from taking up the suggestions contained herein as a matter of its own reflections upon the purpose statements of the three expressions of the ELCA. Completely apart from any work of the CRLC, the suggestions contained herein represent a reasonable modification of the purpose statements in terms of clarity and increased flexibility while retaining the unifying threads of constitutional language and structure.

The footnotes are expository and should not be considered part of the proposed modifications *per se*. Highlights are provided to draw attention to changed verbiage. Italics indicate insertions. Strikethroughs indicate deletions.

## Constitution of the ELCA

- 4.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- 4.02. To participate in God's mission, this church shall, *collectively*:<sup>1</sup>
- a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
  - c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.<sup>2</sup>
  - d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.<sup>3</sup>
  - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
  - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

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<sup>1</sup> The term *this church* may be taken to refer to the whole of the ELCA, *i.e.*, the ELCA taken collectively in all three expressions.

<sup>2</sup> In CRLC 4's September 2024 meeting, the majority did not support striking this provision (as had been proffered in the original "Modest Proposal").

<sup>3</sup> Does it seem odd to anyone else that worship is located as far down the list as it is?

- 4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this church shall, *collectively*:<sup>4</sup>
- a. Receive, establish, and support those congregations, ministries, organizations, institutions, and agencies necessary to carry out God's mission through this church.
  - b. Encourage and equip all members to worship, learn, serve, and witness; to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world; and to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel.
  - c. Call forth, equip, certify, set apart, and oversee a ministry of Word and Sacrament, a ministry of Word and Service, and such other forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission.
  - d. Seek unity in faith and life with all Lutherans within its boundaries and be ready to enter union negotiations whenever such unity is manifest.
  - e. Foster Christian unity by participating in ecumenical activities, contributing its witness and work and cooperating with other churches which confess God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
  - f. Develop relationships with communities of other faiths for dialogue and common action.
  - g. Lift its voice in concord and work in concert with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with church and other groups participating in activities that promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged.<sup>5</sup>
  - h. Produce and publish worship materials for corporate, family, and personal use and resources for education, witness, service, and stewardship.
  - i. Establish and maintain theological seminaries, schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions to equip people for leadership and service in church and society.
  - j. Assure faithfulness to this church's confessional position and purpose and provide for resolution of disputes.
  - k. Publish a periodical and make use of the arts and public communication media to proclaim the Gospel and to inform, interpret, and edify.
  - l. Study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world.
  - m. Establish, support, and recognize institutions and agencies that minister to people in spiritual and temporal needs.
  - n. Work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Again, *this church*, in this provision, when examined, refers to the work of the ELCA in all three expressions.

<sup>5</sup> See fn. 2.

<sup>6</sup> The continued utility of *functional interaction* has been challenged by some (q.v. Leslie F. Weber, "Changing Lutheran Perspectives on the Role of Government," *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*, 1 March 2014 [<https://www.elca.org/JLE/Articles/52>]). The Social Statement Task Force on Civic Life and Faith is examining this question. Whether it will recommend a change in language remains to be seen. As for timing, such a change would likely not be considered until Churchwide Assembly 2028 and only if Civic Life and Faith were adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in a form that rejects *functional interaction*.

- ~~o. Provide structures and decision-making processes for this church<sup>7</sup> that foster mutuality and interdependence and that involve people in making decisions that affect them.<sup>8</sup>~~
- p. Support the mission of this church by arranging for and encouraging financial contributions for its work, management of its resources, and processes of planning and evaluation.
- ~~q. Provide fair personnel practices and adequate compensation, benefits, and pensions for those employed by this church.<sup>9</sup>~~

4.04. *The churchwide organization<sup>10</sup> of this church shall:*

- a. *Engage in the activities enumerated in 4.03 to the extent and as described in the provisions of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.<sup>11</sup>*
- b. *Provide structures and decision-making processes for this church that foster mutuality and interdependence and that involve people in making decisions that affect them.<sup>12</sup>*

## Constitution for Synods

- †S6.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.

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<sup>7</sup> *This church*, here, refers to the collective ELCA.

<sup>8</sup> For the most part, it is the Churchwide Assembly that does this through its ownership of the *Constitution of the ELCA*, the *Constitution for Synods*, and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

<sup>9</sup> Unless the Churchwide Assembly created required provisions for synods and congregations, this provision applies only the churchwide organization. Furthermore, this is more properly a policy level provision.

<sup>10</sup> The extent 4.02 and 4.03 employ the term *this church* in reference to the purpose of the ELCA collectively (*i.e.*, in all three of its expressions) without distinguishing between the works of the expressions. The degree to which the churchwide organization discharges the enumerated items under 4.03 varies. At present, there is a question as to what works should continue to be done by the churchwide organization, a question instigated by financial pressures. Some of the elements of 4.03 may not be things discharged by the churchwide organization principally or at all. Furthermore, some provisions may not be applicable to the other expressions—I hesitate to say that they could not be imposed as mandates upon the other expressions as the Churchwide Assembly owns the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. By creating a required (daggered) provision in the *Constitution for Synods*, the Churchwide Assembly may mandate. The matter for congregations is more complicated. In the vast majority of cases, the Churchwide Assembly’s creation of a required (asterisked) provision in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* only becomes a mandate for any given congregation when that congregation changes any provision in its constitution. It is possible, however, for the Churchwide Assembly to impose a mandate that applies to a congregation without or without the congregation’s consent through enumeration in 9.22. It may make sense to delineate in 4 those works that specifically belong to the churchwide organization in the same way that †S6 and \*C4 do.

<sup>11</sup> If we render 4.03 as the collective work of the church, there is no need to rehearse every item under the specific work. 4.04.a encompasses 4.03 while at the same time providing for self-regulation by the Churchwide Assembly and Church Council. The other provisions in the governing docs can flesh things out.

<sup>12</sup> See fn. 8.

- †S6.02. To participate in God’s mission, this ~~church shall, collectively synod as a part of the Church shall~~.<sup>13</sup>
- a. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
  - b. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
  - c. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.<sup>14</sup>
  - d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
  - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
  - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- †S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:
- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
  - b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
  - c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
  - d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.
- †S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
    - 1) approving candidates for rostered ministry in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
    - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining rostered ministers on behalf of this church;

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<sup>13</sup> As the language in †S6.02 parallels that of 4.02, it would be reasonable to take the language as a whole, recognizing that it enumerates the collective work of the ELCA. The substitution of *church shall collectively* in place of *synod as a part of the Church shall* satisfies the Dagger Strike Select Committee's recommendation for striking the provision in its entirety.

<sup>14</sup> See fn. 2.

- 3) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
  - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
  - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
  - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
  - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
  - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church’s colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church’s constitution.
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.

†S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod *may*<sup>15</sup> include the following:

- a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
- b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
- c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
- d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;<sup>16</sup>
- e. providing resources for congregational life;
- f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.

†S6.03.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod *may*<sup>17</sup> include the following:

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<sup>15</sup> It may be better to distinguish between those activities deemed *sine qua non* and those deemed optional, but this would entail significant disambiguation. By inserting may, each synod is given the freedom to undertake those enumerated responsibilities that make the most sense for context and resource. The insertion of may satisfies the Dagger Strike Select Committee's recommendation for minor tweaking.

<sup>16</sup> It would be better to reward this provision to be clear that these ostensibly temporal works are not works proper to the ecclesiastical estate though they are optional. Teaching on these works is proper to the ecclesiastical estate, but the actual performance of these works is proper to the political estate and the economic estate.

<sup>17</sup> See fn. 15. The insertion of may satisfies the Dagger Strike Select Committee's recommendation for minor tweaking.



- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;<sup>18</sup>
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;
- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions;
- i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

- †S6.03.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
  - b. participating in churchwide programs;
  - c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
  - d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

- †S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

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<sup>18</sup> Many interdependent relationships require no promoting. They are simply demanded by the policies and procedures of the church. *Promoting*, therefore, addresses those interdependent relationships that are perhaps good but still optional.

- †S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.
- †S6.05. Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synod units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.
- †S6.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.<sup>19</sup>

## Model Constitution for Congregations

- \*C4.01. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- \*C4.02. To participate in God’s mission, this *church shall, collectively* ~~congregation as a part of the Church shall.~~<sup>20</sup>
- Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
  - Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

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<sup>19</sup> One can infer the reason for this provision. It is paralleled in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* at \*C4.06. Is there a reason why there is no parallel in Chapter 4 of the *Constitution of the ELCA* (or is it simply unnecessary)?

<sup>20</sup> Cf. fn. 13.

- c. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- d. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.<sup>21</sup>
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

\*C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:<sup>22</sup>

- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
- b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.

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<sup>21</sup> See fn. 2.

<sup>22</sup> \*C4.03 includes items that should be required of congregations as a matter of essential and auxiliary works (e.g., a-e). It also includes items that are optional works (e.g., f-i). The provision could be split into two separate provisions or arranged into a *shall* section and a *may* section. The latter option would not inflict a cascading of changing provision numbering. The former would have ripple effects throughout Chapter 4. If it is desired at this time to restructure this provision, something like this may work:

\*C4.03. To fulfill these purposes:

- a. This congregation shall:
  - 1. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
  - 2. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
  - 3. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
  - 4. Teach the Word of God.
  - 5. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
  - 6. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation’s ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- a. This congregation may:
  - 1. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
  - 2. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
  - 3. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

- d. Teach the Word of God.
- e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
- f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.<sup>23</sup>
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation’s ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.<sup>24</sup>
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.<sup>25</sup>

\*C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.]

\*C4.05. This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

\*C4.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.<sup>26</sup>

## 2. Reconsider Organizational Principles

### A. Restructure the Church Council and Executive Leadership

#### *Executive Summary*

The How We Are Governed (Governance) Committee brings, through the CRLC, a proposal relating to a restructuring of the church council and executive leadership.

There is a sometimes confusing and cumbersome structure for governance at the Church Council and Executive Level. As to the Council, it is tasked with both being a “board of directors” and the

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. fn. 2.

<sup>24</sup> This provision should be nuanced. There are required interdependent relationships, and then there are interdependent relationships that go beyond the base requirement. *Participate* seems to point to the required relationships. *Foster* seems to point beyond.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. fn. 24. There are no required ecumenical relationships for congregations. If a congregation is federated or union, or if its pastor is a non-ELCA pastor serving under any one of several provisions for ecumenical service, there are policies that must be observed.

<sup>26</sup> See fn. 19.

“interim legislative authority” of the denomination, yet it meets only twice a year and has scheduled turnover. This proposal would have the Church Council function more in its “legislative capacity” and form a more robust Executive Committee that would function more like the board of directors in a not for profit.

As to the Executive Level, the position of Presiding Bishop requires an extensive range of skills and gifts. It includes executive management skills suited to a large, national organization, as well as deep theological grounding, a pastoral presence and strong communication gifts. The proposal would center the ecclesiastical, ecumenical and theological leadership of the denomination in the Presiding Bishop and create a Chief Executive Officer, hired by and accountable to the Church Council. This will give clarity to the churchwide assembly in its discernment for a Presiding Bishop and allow for governance and management of the organization to be handled in a more efficient manner. In that light, the Secretary and Treasurer would be recommended by the CEO to the Church Council; the CEO would supervise that work.

These documents outline proposed changes in existing constitutional language around the Presiding Bishop, Secretary and Treasurer; describe key aspects of the job of the new CEO; and make changes to the Church Council and the Church Council Committees, including the Executive Committee. Additional changes will be required to the governing documents to fully implement these proposals.

Finally, with respect to the Churchwide Vice President, the proposal changes “may” to “shall” with respect to the compensation of the VP. This would at least require a discussion between the VP and the Council as to whether and if so, how much, compensation would be provided.

None of these changes are anticipated to change the upcoming elections of a Presiding Bishop and Secretary at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

The following sections relate to this proposal:

- Proposed New Section on/Description of Chief Executive Officer
- Proposed Changes to Officer Descriptions in Chapter 13
- Proposed Changes to Church Council structure in Chapter 14
- Proposed Changes to Church Council committees in Chapter 14

#### Proposed New Section on/Description of Chief Executive Officer

*[Note: placement of language in constitution, bylaw, continuing resolution or other document to be determined]*

The Church Council shall elect a lay or rostered person to serve as Chief Executive Officer of the church. The Executive Committee shall recruit, interview and recommend to the Church Council a person to serve in this capacity. The Executive Committee shall also review the performance of the CEO and provide that review to the Church Council. The CEO shall serve at the pleasure of the Council for a term of six years. The CEO may be reelected.

The CEO shall guide the implementation of policies as directed by church council or the churchwide assembly, developing the strategic direction of the church. The CEO shall work collaboratively with the Presiding Bishop in the development of a vision for the church.

The CEO shall work collaboratively with the presiding bishop, the conference of bishops and the association of synod vice presidents to further the work, ministry and mission of the church.

The CEO shall have the responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the churchwide organization. The CEO shall consult with HR and the Office of General Counsel in motivating and managing the personnel of the churchwide organization. The CEO shall review and manage the structure of the churchwide organization to facilitate the mission and ministry of the church.

The Chief Executive Officer shall be a full time, salaried position and shall be based at the home office of the churchwide organization. The CEO shall report to the Executive Committee and the full Church Council. The CEO shall be the President of the corporation. The CEO shall attend all Church Council meetings unless excused.

The CEO shall recommend to the Church Council persons (lay or rostered) to serve as Secretary and Treasurer and oversee the work of the Secretary and Treasurer.

The CEO shall prepare, in consultation with the secretary, treasurer and presiding bishop, an annual budget for consideration by the Church Council. The CEO shall ensure timely reports are made to the Executive Committee on the administrative workings of the churchwide organization. The CEO shall monitor budgets, resources and procedures, utilizing cross functional teams.

The CEO shall appoint and supervise the churchwide units whose portfolios are largely administrative in nature.

The CEO shall be (or become) a member of an ELCA congregation or synod authorized worshipping community.

#### Proposed Changes to Officer Descriptions in Chapter 13

13.20. PRESIDING BISHOP

13.21. The presiding bishop shall be a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church who, as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of this church. The presiding bishop shall:

- a. ~~Be the president and chief executive officer of the corporation, overseeing the work of the churchwide organization.~~ Lead the development of a vision for the church as it seeks to spread the Gospel, work toward unity of God’s people, and resource and support ministry to and for God’s people in their respective contexts.
- b. Be the chief ecumenical officer of this church and its primary representative in the national and international interchurch agencies in which this church holds membership.

- c. Preside at the Churchwide Assembly.
  - d. Provide leadership and care for the bishops of the synods.
  - e. ~~Oversee the work of the other officers.~~ Work collaboratively with other leaders in the church, including the officers, to develop a budget for consideration by church council.
  - f. ~~Provide for the preparation of the budget for the churchwide organization.~~ Supervise the development of social statements, social messages and other statements on behalf of the church.
  - g. ~~Nominate and direct the work of the executive for administration.~~ Speak on behalf of this church to matters of public concern and interest consistent with this church's teachings and confessions.
  - h. ~~Appoint and supervise the executive directors of churchwide units.~~ Recommend for appointment and supervise as appropriate the leaders of identified churchwide units, as they may be formed from time to time.
  - i. Recommend for appointment by the church council ~~Appoint~~ members of ~~all~~ identified churchwide committees for which election procedures are not provided.
  - j. Relate, through the appropriate churchwide unit, to the chaplaincies of this church in federal agencies, institutions, and armed forces.
  - k. Serve as an advisory member, with voice but not vote, on ~~all~~ identified committees of this church and ~~all~~ identified boards or designate a person to serve as the presiding bishop's representative.
- 13.22. The presiding bishop shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office.
- 13.22.01. The presiding bishop shall be elected as provided in Chapter 19 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.
- 13.22.02. The presiding bishop shall be a full-time, salaried position.
- 13.30. ~~VICE PRESIDENT~~ CHURCH COUNCIL CHAIR
- 13.31. The ~~vice president~~ Church Council Chair shall be a layperson who shall serve as chair of the Church Council and, in the event the presiding bishop is unable to do so, as chair of the Churchwide Assembly. ~~The vice president shall serve under the presiding bishop of this church, providing leadership as specified in provision 11.33. of this constitution.~~
- 13.32. The ~~vice president~~ Church Council Chair shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office.
- 13.32.01. The ~~vice president~~ Church Council Chair shall be elected as provided in Chapter 19 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.
- 13.32.02. The ~~vice president~~ Church Council Chair may perform such other tasks for the benefit of this church as the Church Council directs, and ~~may~~ shall be compensated as the Church Council determines.

- 13.32.03. Staff services for the work of the ~~vice president~~ Church Council Chair shall be provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Chief Executive Officer, and the Office of the Secretary, as needed.
- 13.40. SECRETARY
- 13.41. The secretary shall serve under the ~~presiding bishop of this church,~~ Chief Executive Officer providing leadership, as specified in Chapter 11 of this constitution, and shall fulfill the normal functions of the secretary of a corporation.
- 13.41.01. The secretary, as the recording officer of this church, shall keep the minutes, have responsibility for rosters, records, and reporting of congregation statistics, oversee the archives, attest to all documents that require such signature, be the custodian of the seal, and perform other duties as prescribed by the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 13.41.02. The secretary shall:
- a. Be responsible for the minutes and records of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Executive Committee, and Conference of Bishops, and Association of Synod Vice Presidents and shall receive complete minutes for permanent record of all boards and committees of the churchwide organization.
  - b. Maintain the rosters of ministers, congregations, and synods.
  - c. Provide for the publication of official documents and policies of this church; assembly reports; assembly minutes; a directory of congregations, rostered ministers, and entities of this church; and other informational and statistical material.
  - d. Receive the annual report of the congregations in a form devised by the secretary, summarize the information, and make the summary available to this church.
  - e. Oversee the general counsel and coordinate the use of legal services by the churchwide organization.
  - f. Be responsible for the archives of this church.
  - g. Implement and operate a records management system for the churchwide organization.
  - h. In collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer, Presiding Bishop, and the Church Council Chair ~~and the leadership of each group~~, provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Executive Committee, and Conference of Bishops.
  - i. Arrange for and manage churchwide meetings, including the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, Conference of Bishops, Association of Synod Vice Presidents and others.
  - j. Have custody of the seal, maintain a necrology, and attest documents.
- 13.41.03. The secretary, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and Presiding Bishop, shall be responsible for preparation and research of amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as well as the Constitution for Synods and the Model Constitution for Congregations, to be proposed by the



Church Council for action by the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with provisions of Chapter 22.

- 13.41.04. The secretary, in consultation with the General Counsel, shall prepare interpretations, as necessary, of the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. If a board (including a board of a separately incorporated ministry), committee, or synod disagrees with the interpretations, as rendered, the objecting entity may appeal the secretary's interpretation to the Church Council.
- 13.41.05. The secretary may, upon two successive unexcused absences of a member of the Church Council, board, or committee of the churchwide organization, declare that member's position vacant.
- 13.41.06. The secretary shall provide staff services to the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly and the nomination process of the Church Council; shall be responsible for declaring an interim vacancy resulting from the resignation, death, removal, disqualification, or disability of a member of a board (including a board of a separately incorporated ministry), committee, or council; and shall arrange for an election by the Church Council to fill the vacancy consistent with Chapter 14.
- 13.42. The secretary shall be appointed by the Church Council on recommendation of the Chief Executive Officer ~~elected by the Churchwide Assembly~~ to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office.
- 13.42.01. ~~The secretary shall be elected as provided in Chapter 19 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.~~ The Chief Executive Officer shall recommend to the Church Council a person, either lay or rostered, to serve as Secretary. The Secretary shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Church Council for a term of six years. No person shall serve as Secretary for more than two terms.
- 13.42.02. The secretary shall be a full-time, salaried position.
- 13.50. TREASURER
- 13.51. The treasurer shall serve under the ~~presiding bishop of this church,~~ Chief Executive Officer providing leadership as specified in Chapter 11 of this constitution, and shall fulfill the normal functions of the treasurer of a corporation.
- 13.51.01. The treasurer, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, shall propose policy for review and action by the Church Council and provide for the implementation, within such policies, of the financial, accounting, investment, and money management systems, and related services for the units of the churchwide organization.
- 13.52. ~~The treasurer shall be elected by the Church Council to a six year term and serve until a successor takes office.~~ The Chief Executive Officer shall recommend to the Church Council a person, either lay or rostered, to serve as Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Church Council for a term of six years.

~~13.52.01. The treasurer shall be elected as provided in Chapter 19 and shall take office on the first day of the third month after election.~~

13.52.02. The treasurer shall be a full-time, salaried position.

~~13.52.03. The Church Council, by a two-thirds vote, may dismiss the treasurer for cause.~~

#### Proposed Changes to Church Council structure in Chapter 14

#### Chapter 14 CHURCH COUNCIL

##### 14.10. PURPOSE AND MEETINGS

14.11. The Church Council shall exercise interim legislative authority and shall serve as the board of directors of the churchwide organization.

14.12. The Church Council shall meet at least two times each year.

14.12.01. The Church Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

14.12.02. The Church Council shall use parliamentary procedure in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, unless otherwise ordered by the council.

14.12.03. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted at meetings of the Church Council.

14.13. “Interim legislative authority” is defined to mean that between meetings of the churchwide assemblies, the Church Council may exercise the authority of the Churchwide Assembly, including dealing with all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church, so long as:

- a. the actions of the Church Council do not conflict with the actions of and policies established by the Churchwide Assembly; provided, however, that nothing in this constitution and bylaws precludes the Church Council from establishing policies concerning areas where the Churchwide Assembly has not acted; and
- b. the Church Council is not precluded by the Articles of Incorporation or this constitution and bylaws from taking action on the matter.

14.14. The Church Council shall elect a Chief Executive Officer, the treasurer, and the secretary.

- a. The Chief Executive Officer shall be elected after recommendation by the Executive Committee.
- b. The secretary and treasurer shall be elected after recommendation by the Chief Executive Officer.

14.15. The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may remove for cause a voting member of the Church Council, other than an officer or the chair of the Conference of Bishops, at a duly held regular meeting by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members of the Church Council, provided that at least 30 days written notice shall be given to

each voting member of the Church Council that removal of a specific member of the Church Council will be on the agenda for such a meeting. The Church Council may remove an advisory member for cause, provided notice has been given as specified in this provision, by a majority vote of the voting members of the council. The Chief Executive Officer, secretary and treasurer shall serve at the pleasure of the Church Council.

14.20. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

14.21. The specific duties of the Church Council shall be listed in the bylaws.

14.21.01. The Church Council shall act on the policies proposed by churchwide units, when requested by the presiding bishop, the chief executive officer or the churchwide unit. The Church Council shall ensure that the actions of the Churchwide Assembly are implemented by the applicable unit or office.

14.21.02. The Church Council shall receive from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Chief Executive Officer as appropriate, regular reports on the programs and procedures of the churchwide units. The Church Council, through the presiding bishop and chief executive officer, shall ensure that the purposes, policies and objectives of this church are being fulfilled.

a. Specific policies identified in this constitution and bylaws, developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, shall be submitted to the Church Council for approval.

b. Separately incorporated ministries of this church, as defined in Chapter 17, shall submit a report to the Church Council on their policies and programs. The Church Council shall act to approve those policies and programs as required in this constitution and bylaws.

14.21.03. The Church Council shall review all recommendations from churchwide units for possible consideration by the Churchwide Assembly and determine which, if any, should be forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly for action.

14.21.04. The Church Council may adopt policies in accord with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

14.21.05. The Church Council, upon recommendation of the ~~presiding bishop~~ chief executive officer, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets.

14.21.06. The Church Council shall, in consultation with the chief executive officer, adopt personnel policies for the churchwide organization. Salary structures of churchwide units shall be within the personnel policies of the churchwide organization, unless exceptions are granted by the Church Council.

14.21.07. The Church Council shall report its actions to the Churchwide Assembly.

14.21.10. OTHER DUTIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

14.21.11. The Church Council shall consult with and refer matters to the Conference of Bishops as well as receive reports from it. The Church Council shall act on resolutions from Synod Councils.

14.21.XX The Church Council shall consult with and refer matters as appropriate to the Association of Synod Vice Presidents as well as receive reports from it.

- 14.21.12. The Church Council shall provide for the installation of the churchwide officers. At the installation of a newly elected presiding bishop of this church, the presiding minister shall be the previous presiding bishop of this church or, where that is not possible, a synod bishop designated by the Church Council.
- 14.21.13. The Church Council shall establish ranges for the salaries for the presiding bishop, secretary, ~~and~~ treasurer, and chief executive officer after receiving a recommendation from the Executive Committee.
- 4.21.14. The Church Council may direct the churchwide organization to exercise the corporate social responsibility of this church by filing shareholder resolutions, casting proxy ballots, and taking other actions as it deems appropriate.
- 14.21.15. The Church Council shall establish the criteria and policies for the relationship between the churchwide organization and independent, cooperative, and related Lutheran organizations. The policies adopted by the Church Council shall be administered by the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization. The determination of which organization shall relate to a specific unit of the churchwide organization shall be made by the Church Council.
- 14.21.22. The Church Council shall arrange the process for all elections as specified in this constitution and bylaws for churchwide units to assure conformity with established criteria.
- 14.22. The Church Council shall fulfill responsibilities for elections as provided in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and, in the event that a vacancy on the council or on a board (including the board of a separately incorporated ministry) or committee of the churchwide organization is declared by the secretary, the Church Council shall elect an individual to serve the balance of the term.
- 14.22.01. Before electing an individual to fill a vacancy on a board (including the board of a separately incorporated ministry) or committee, the Church Council shall consult with the board or committee.
- 14.30. COMPOSITION OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL
- 14.31. The voting members of the Church Council shall consist of the ~~four churchwide officers~~, Presiding Bishop, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and at least ~~33~~ and not more than 45 other persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly.
- 14.32. With the exception of youth members, Church Council members shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to one six-year term and shall not be eligible for consecutive re-election. Youth members of the Church Council shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to one three-year term.
- 14.32.01. The Church Council shall have as liaison members nine synod bishops, each elected by the Conference of Bishops to one four-year term. One bishop shall be elected from each region.

The Church Council shall also have as liaison members 4 synod vice presidents, elected by the Association of Synod Vice Presidents to a two year term.

- 14.32.02. Liaison members of the Church Council shall have voice but not vote.
- 14.32.03. Any Church Council members appointed to fill a vacancy of less than three years in a Church Council position not restricted to a specific synod shall not be deemed to have served a term and are eligible for election to a full term if they otherwise satisfy the criteria for election.
- 14.32.A13. A member of the Church Council, upon invitation, may serve as a liaison for a board of trustees of a separately incorporated ministry.
- 14.33.01. Advisory Members. Categories of advisory members may be designated by the Church Council. These categories shall be set forth in continuing resolutions. Advisory members shall have voice but not vote.
- 14.33.A22. The Church Council shall have as advisory members each president, or the designated representative of the president, of the ELCA ethnic associations, as well as a representative of Reconciling Works. Advisory membership of the Church Council shall be reviewed each triennium.

#### Proposed Changes to Church Council committees in Chapter 14

- 14.40. CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEES
- 14.41. The Church Council shall establish committees and nominate or elect such persons as necessary to carry out the functions assigned to it. The description of such committees shall be set forth in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.
- 14.41.01. Executive Committee. The Church Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the Church Council Chair and Vice Chair, the Presiding Bishop, the Chair of the Conference of Bishops ~~churchwide officers~~, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and eight members of the Church Council elected by the council. The CEO shall have voice but not vote on the Executive Committee. The Church Council Chair ~~vice president~~ of this church shall chair this committee. Members of the Executive Committee, other than the Chair, Vice Chair, Presiding Bishop and Chair of the Conference of Bishops, serve at the pleasure of the Church Council and shall serve staggered 2 year terms. Members of the Executive Committee may serve more than one term.

The Executive Committee shall:

- a. meet as needed, either in person or electronically, to perform those functions of the Church Council assigned to it by the Church Council, which shall include acting for the Church Council between meetings of the council as the Board of Directors;
- b. recruit, interview and recommend to the Church Council a lay or rostered person to serve as Chief Executive Officer;
- c. transmit resolutions from synods to the appropriate unit or units of the churchwide organization;

- d. fulfill the responsibilities of the Church Council related to nominations, with staff services for the nomination and election processes of the Church Council provided by the Office of the Secretary;
  - e. provide advice and counsel for the Chief Executive Officer and other officers;
  - f. review the work of the Chief Executive Officer and other officers and, with the absence of the salaried officers from such deliberations, set salaries of the Chief Executive Officer, presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer within the ranges established by the Church Council;
  - g. demonstrate concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the Church Council members, officers of this church, and members of Church Council committees; and
  - h. when necessary, serve as members of the U.S.A. National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation.
- 14.41.02. Liaison bishops, ecumenical guests, and other advisors to the Church Council may serve as advisory members to the council's committees with voice but not vote.
- 14.41.A15. Budget and Finance Committee  
A Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The treasurer of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer. The committee shall prepare and present a comprehensive budget to the Church Council for its consideration and presentation to the Churchwide Assembly. The committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Treasurer. {CEO}
- 14.41.B22. Christian Community and Leadership Committee  
A Christian Community and Leadership Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Christian Community and Leadership unit, and have staff services provided by the Christian Community and Leadership unit. This committee shall receive reports from the Christian Community and Leadership unit, act upon policies and strategies recommended from this unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of this unit. {PB}
- 14.41.C22. Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee  
A Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Chief Executive Officer and the Innovation unit, and have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Innovation unit. This committee shall assist the presiding bishop and chief executive officer in coordinated, strategic planning for the work of the churchwide organization. Further, in consultation with the executive for administration chief executive officer, this committee shall evaluate and report annually to the Church Council and to the Churchwide Assembly on how the churchwide organization complies with and implements commitments and policies adopted by the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council. This committee shall be responsible for reviewing policies related to ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious activities, and make

recommendations to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly. It shall provide ongoing review of the development of this church’s social teaching documents and act upon recommendations from the Office of the Presiding Bishop. All churchwide policies and strategies recommended by the Office of the Presiding Bishop that have implications for congregations, synods, other churchwide units, or institutions and agencies of this church shall be considered by this committee for recommendation to the Church Council. This committee also shall receive reports from the Innovation unit, act upon policies recommended from the Innovation unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of the Innovation unit. {PB/CEO; consider revisions to divide scope more clearly }

14.41.D22. Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

A Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The secretary of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Secretary. This committee shall provide ongoing review of legal and constitutional matters. It shall review all proposed amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions. {CEO }

14.41.E22. Service and Justice Committee

A Service and Justice Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Service and Justice unit, and have staff services provided by the Service and Justice unit. This committee shall receive reports from this unit, act upon policies and strategies recommended from this unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of the Service and Justice unit. {PB/CEO }

14.41.F22. Audit Committee

An Audit Committee—composed of five to seven members appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and approved by the Church Council for two-year, renewable terms—shall assist the Budget and Finance Committee and the Church Council in fulfilling oversight of the churchwide organization’s accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems, and audit functions, consistent with its responsibilities as specified in the charter recommended by the Audit Committee, reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee, and approved by the Church Council. A minimum of two members of the Audit Committee shall be members of the Budget and Finance Committee. The chair of the Audit Committee shall be a member of the Budget and Finance Committee and shall be appointed by the chair of the Budget and Finance Committee. In consultation with the executive for administration, the Audit Committee approves the selection of and dismissal of the internal auditors. {CEO }

14.41.G22. Board Development Committee

A Board Development Committee—composed of six to eight members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Executive Committee, and of which at least two shall be from each elected class of the Church Council—shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council for three-year, renewable terms to assist the presiding bishop and the Church Council in developing and implementing efforts to help members of the Church Council to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the council’s role and fiduciary responsibility as the board of directors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The chief executive

~~officer executive for administration~~ shall relate to this committee, with staff services provided by the Office of the Secretary. Members appointed to the Board Development Committee shall be eligible for service on other committees of the Church Council. {CEO}

14.41.H22. Resource Development Committee

A Resource Development Committee—composed of eight to ten members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Budget and Finance Committee, and appointed by the Executive Committee – shall assist the Budget and Finance Committee and the Church Council in developing strategies related to funding initiatives and churchwide appeals. This committee shall oversee how to grow resources to support the ministries and priorities of the churchwide organization. The treasurer and [executive for development?] shall serve as ex officio members of the committee. Church Council members shall be appointed for three-year terms, renewable for so long as they are on Church Council. Non-Church Council members, who shall be members of an ELCA congregation, shall be appointed for three-year terms with the possibility of two consecutive re-appointments. No member shall serve more than nine consecutive years. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Chief Executive Officer and the Office of the Treasurer. Church Council members appointed to the Resource Development Committee shall be eligible for service on other committees of the Church Council. {CEO}



## **Commission on a Renewed Lutheran Church Report on a Proposed Change of Name for the ELCA**

In 2022, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a resolution leading to the creation of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) and charged it with addressing issues relating to the ELCA Constitution. The CRLC was later asked to consider an additional question, whether the name “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” should continue to be utilized for this church body. [CC22.11.34.cc.]

The CRLC engaged in significant discussion of a possible change of name. As the members of the CRLC considered this issue, the conversations highlighted a range of opinions about the significance of the term “evangelical” and the larger implications that any new name might create.

In the end, no strong consensus emerged among members of the CRLC as to whether the name ELCA should be changed.

Some participants maintain that the term “evangelical” has shifted significantly in meaning in the present day and may hinder the proclamation of the gospel, due to its associations with more conservative forms of Christianity and even, in some quarters, with Christian nationalism. Eliminating the term “evangelical,” they believe, would avoid these initial negative perceptions and indicate a more welcoming stance.

Others, however, support maintaining the term “evangelical” because of its deep scriptural and theological roots (the term comes from the root word of “gospel” and literally means, “good news”), and argue that to eliminate the term “evangelical” would actually diminish the church’s core identity and mission. The term also connects the ELCA with the larger global Lutheran communion: the large majority of individual LWF church bodies utilize “Evangelical” in their names.

While the CRLC did not come to consensus on this matter, they make the following observations:

- The CRLC believes that this question reflects larger issues of identity. Changing the name alone will not address deeper issues within the denomination and may in fact lead to unintended consequences for various groups.
- If a change of name is to be considered, the Commission recommends engaging a broader range of voices in deeper conversation about the church’s core identity before making final recommendations.
- If, after thoughtful discussion the name ELCA is kept, the CRLC would recommend an intentional effort to lean more intentionally into our understanding and definition of what it means to be “evangelical,” and that new branding might assist with this emphasis.
- If, after thoughtful discussion the name ELCA were to be changed, a possible approach might be to consider retaining the legal name of the ELCA, while creating a new name under which it would known (“Doing Business As” (DBA)).
- Discussions regarding a name change should be separated from the work of the CRLC to avoid distraction from the original charge given to the CRLC.
- The CRLC will present a summary of this issue to the Church Council.

Overall, the CRLC acknowledges the complexities surrounding the term “evangelical” and its implications for the church’s identity, emphasizing that thoughtful dialogue and understanding are essential before any decisions are made on this significant matter.

Historical Reflections on the Name, *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

Dr. Susan Wilds McArver

H. George Anderson Professor of Church History

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary

**“The name of this Church shall be Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”**

Chapter 1, Section 1.01 of the *ELCA Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions*

In 2022, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a resolution leading to the creation of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC). One of the items the Commission has been asked to consider is whether the name, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” should continue to be utilized for this church body. This brief paper gives some historical and theological background regarding the original choice of name and ends with observations about implications for the future.

Choosing a name

In the mid-1980s, three major Lutheran church bodies - the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) – came together to form a new, single Lutheran body. They appointed a “Commission for a New Lutheran Church” (CNLC) to help bring about this unification. Among its many tasks, the CNLC had to consider what to name this new church, and the Commission appointed an ad hoc committee, made up of representatives from each of the three original church bodies, to consider possibilities.<sup>1</sup>

Choosing a name for a new church, now or in the past, can prove a difficult prospect theologically, culturally, socially, and even corporately. In choosing a recommendation, the CNLC considered questions such as:

- What are the definable criteria for the selection of a church name?
- What theological considerations should be included?
- Should the name include specific terms or adjectives, or, conversely, should it avoid any?
- Should a geographical location describing the church be specified, and if so, what would be the most inclusive usage?
- Should the length of the name, and the resulting acronym, stand as important considerations?

It was not easy to balance all of these considerations. In 1985, the ad hoc committee received over two hundred suggestions from members of the uniting churches for possible names, ranging from the serious to the whimsical.

After a great deal of work sifting through the various issues involved and searching for something clear and communicative of the aims of the new church, the original recommendation of the ad hoc committee was to name the new church, “The Lutheran Church in the U.S.A.” However, six

months later, on a substitute motion made by future Presiding Bishop Herbert Chilstrom, the name “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” was chosen instead.

Why?

The CNLC eventually selected “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” after giving each word in the name thoughtful consideration. Examining each term individually illustrates their rationale:

### Evangelical

In 2024, the word “evangelical” in the official title of the ELCA appears to some individuals the most problematic part of its name because of its contemporary association with religious conservatism and even, in some quarters, with Christian nationalism. Even in the mid-1980s, the term was already becoming associated with conservative religion and politics, but the CNLC understood that interpreting the word only in this way diminished its original meaning and intent, and they reached beyond their contemporary environment to return to the origins of the term by examining scripture and history.

**Scripture:** The term “evangelical” encompasses deep theological and historical roots, extending well beyond its current political usage. In fact, the word goes all the way back to Scripture itself, and comes from the Greek word *euangelion*, meaning literally, “good news”. It is the root word, not only of “evangelical,” but of the word “gospel”. Evangelical, therefore, describes the very foundation of who we are as Christians: we are the people who share the good news of Christ.

**Reformation:** During the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther and his followers utilized the Latin version of the term, *evangelium*, to delineate the new Protestant churches that preached justification by faith, not works. The term came to designate churches that followed Luther’s Protestant teaching, as opposed to those who remained Roman Catholic. Thus, the word “evangelical” stands on a Reformation heritage as well as a scriptural one.

**American Lutheranism:** Because of this scriptural and historical heritage, the term “evangelical” was utilized in several predecessor church bodies of the ELCA, including Norwegian, Danish, and Finnish Lutherans. It was even included in the name of one of the three church bodies that made up the ELCA itself in 1988 (the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches – the AELC).

**Global Lutheranism:** “Evangelical” is the self-designation of many Lutheran churches comprising the international communion of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

In 1985, of two hundred fifty-four international Lutheran churches surveyed, one hundred forty-nine utilized the term “evangelical” in their name. Today, these churches range from the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Angola, Bolivia, Denmark, Canada, Ethiopia, the Czech Republic, and the principality of Liechtenstein to the most recent member to join the LWF, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine, which was approved for membership in September 2023.

Considering all of these issues, then, the term “evangelical” was selected for use in the name of the new church because of its theological, historical, and global origins and interconnections.

### Lutheran

In the 1980s, many lively suggestions came to the ad hoc committee for consideration. A few members of the uniting churches encouraged the CNLC to drop the name “Lutheran” from any new nomenclature in favor of introducing the term “catholic” (i.e. “universal”). The CNLC did not

adopt this suggestion, noting that the term “Lutheran” had long described a particular way of being Christian in the world. Again, examining their global partners, they noted that of the two hundred fifty-four churches of the LWF, one hundred and ninety-nine utilized the term “Lutheran” in their title.

### *In, Not Of*

Even the shortest word in the name, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, came under scrutiny as the committee considered names. The CNLC selected the term “in America,” not “of America,” to acknowledge that the new church would not be the only Lutheran church in the country. Other existing churches, such as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), also laid claim to the name Lutheran in the United States. The new church did not wish to assert that it represented the entirety of Lutheranism in America.

### *America*

Almost all Lutheran global partners include their geographical location in the name of their church body. Originally, the CNLC considered identifying the new church as the “Lutheran Church in the U.S.A.,” out of a perceived sensitivity for their neighbors in South and Central America, as well as Canada. Later conversations, however, with members of neighboring regions, including the Caribbean, convinced the members of the CNLC that in many cases, members themselves preferred the use of “America” over “U.S.A.”

### *Summary*

Analyzing even briefly the etymology of the name ELCA reveals the complicated nature of choosing a name that meets theological, historical, cultural, popular, and eventually legal realities. (After all of the debate over a new name and a final vote for ELCA on February 16, 1986, for example, it was discovered that the name was already in use by a tiny, Norwegian-heritage Lutheran body in Minnesota, an embarrassing and inauspicious development that took some time to settle.)

If the CRLC decides to recommend a change of name for the church, it will need to consider many of the same factors that the CNLC had to consider in the mid-1980s. And after three decades of usage, changing identities is not as easy as it may appear.

If, on the other hand, the ELCA elects to keep its current name, it will need to confront the reality that language can and does change meaning over time. The term “evangelical” has undergone a substantial redefinition in contemporary society, and an understanding of its original significance cannot be assumed.

But that does not necessarily mean the ELCA should relinquish its right to recover the term, “evangelical,” for a new age. The ELCA might do well to consider intentionally reclaiming the historically rich meaning of its evangelical name, rather than running away from it. To be “evangelical” in the truest and original sense of the word is to emphasize that sharing the “good news” of Jesus Christ is the primary mission of the church. And that is a word that the world today indeed needs to hear.

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the historical background for this brief paper is based on Edgar Trexler’s book, *Anatomy of a Merger: People, Dynamics, and Decisions that Shaped the ELCA* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 125-130 and on the *Minutes of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church*, February 16-20, 1985.

1 TO: The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church  
2 FROM: Executive Committee of Conference of Bishops  
3 DATE: October 7, 2024

4  
5 RE: Proposals and Concepts of the CRLC  
6

7 When the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church was set in motion at the  
8 2022 Churchwide Assembly, many in the Conference of Bishops were excited about the  
9 possibilities of the ways in which this renewal process might lead to new life for this church. We  
10 affirm that the CRLC wants to make proposals that dream of new ways of being church in the  
11 world.  
12

13 There are several areas of affirmation for the work presented to us at the fall meeting of the  
14 Conference of Bishops. These include:

- 15 1. Gratefulness for the opportunities for people across this church to be part of listening  
16 sessions.
- 17 2. Appreciation for the care and attention that has gone into the proposals and concepts  
18 document.
- 19 3. Affirmation of much of the work that the Commission and its subcommittees have begun  
20 in the areas of DEIA, especially the inclusion of accessibility. We do hope we were heard  
21 in the use of the phrase “person of color” as not being as inclusive as the Commission  
22 may have intended.
- 23 4. Affirmation of much of the material presented by the Select Subcommittee on Dagger  
24 Striking in the model constitution for synods.  
25

26 At the same time the Conference of Bishops has deep concerns about the specific proposals  
27 and the constitutional language provided by the CRLC. Our concerns center around:

- 28 1. Scope of Project: We understand the vastness of the assignment entrusted to the  
29 Commission. We are concerned that some committees focused on secondary work at  
30 the expense of foundational matters that need to be considered. The proposals for  
31 constitutional changes are technical and do not function to make our church more agile,  
32 which we understand to be the original intent of the memorials that came before the  
33 Churchwide Assembly. The Conference wonders if the Commission’s work has missed  
34 the mandate by focusing on narrow constitutional amendments instead of broader  
35 recommendations for consideration by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. For example: we  
36 are curious about your findings on the interdependence of the three expressions of the  
37 church, subsidiarity in decision making, and how funding flows.
- 38 2. Disempowerment of the Laity: While stating that the hope was to empower more lay  
39 people, the structure proposed will actually take power away from the Churchwide  
40 Assembly and make the structure more top down. This change would negate a key  
41 element of our ecclesiology and theology: the priesthood of all believers. The  
42 Conference values the ministry of the laity, as well as the participatory decision making  
43 of the Churchwide Assembly.

44 3. Relationships: Distrust of public institutions is pervasive in our culture and we long for an  
45 organizational structure that deepens relationships of trust. Instead, the current  
46 proposals seem to undercut mutuality and trust. Specifically, the insertion of a non-  
47 elected CEO into the structure suggests that future Presiding Bishops need reduced  
48 power and authority for the church to thrive. Bifurcating spiritual and managerial  
49 responsibilities does not align with our understanding of church nor that of our  
50 ecumenical partners and the global Lutheran community. The officers of the ELCA,  
51 Executive for Administration, and the Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious  
52 Relations and Theological Discernment were not interviewed directly regarding this  
53 proposal.  
54

55 On the whole, the Conference of Bishops senses that the proposals of specific constitutional  
56 amendments have been rushed and are underprepared. Stronger foundational work is needed  
57 and that the specifics have been offered too quickly without considering the long term, ecclesial,  
58 theological, and ecumenical ramifications of the proposals and concepts.  
59

60 We want to encourage you in your ongoing work and ministry, and we look forward to continued  
61 conversations on the draft you plan to share with us in February. This is not easy work, and we  
62 appreciate you and everything you are putting into this. We can tell that, like us, you love the  
63 church, and you love Jesus even more. We trust that this church, and the whole world, is in  
64 Christ's hands. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may  
65 abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

1967 ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE



# A TIME FOR BURNING REVISITED



Join us for an online discussion and preview of a new documentary that revisits a classic film about a congregation wrestling with racial justice. Hear interviews with filmmaker Bill Jersey—60 years after he made his film; Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; and others.



Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024  
7p.m. Central  
[bit.ly/BurningRevisitedRegister](https://bit.ly/BurningRevisitedRegister)



## Ecumenical Visit Reports

**Name:** Rev. Joanne Elise Engquist  
**Meeting:** Executive Council, The Episcopal Church  
**Place:** Raleigh, NC  
**Date:** April 18-20, 2024

The Executive Council's spring meeting was marked by two significant realities: (1) the return of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry following an extended medical leave of absence; and (2) preparations for "Together in Love," the upcoming General Convention of The Episcopal Church (June 23 – 28, 2024 in Louisville, KY). In opening remarks to the Council, Bishop Curry reflected on transition, not only his experiences during illness and in upcoming retirement, but also for the wider church. He reminded the council of the need for an orienting word and grounded that in biblical story, particularly highlighting the image in Exodus with the Egyptians closing in, the sea ahead and Moses telling an anxious community to be still and watch for God's salvation. This image was raised frequently throughout the meeting—as a reminder in the midst of a church (and world) in times of great uncertainty and transition.

In her opening remarks, the President of the House of Deputies, Rev. Julia Ayala-Harris, reflected on Paul's words to the Romans: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." She encouraged the council to work in its decision-making, governance, and in daily lives, a transforming people who are Spirit-led: transparent, inclusive, and bold in witness to justice and peace. Voicing gratitude to the presiding bishop for his leadership, Ayala-Harris urged those assembled to follow his example being "bold in our witness, steadfast in our commitment to the Gospel, and tireless in the pursuit of becoming Beloved Community and following that Way of Love."

In the course of committee meetings, preparations were made in advance of General Convention. Resolutions were brought forward to uplift concerns of justice, resulting in particular with resolutions concerning wars in Gaza and Ukraine, concern for the upcoming decisions by the United Methodist Church, and people/churches dealing with the early April 7.4 earthquake that shook eastern Taiwan. Also considered were many issues for finances and "ordinary" business.

The Council continued its work toward becoming an "anti-racist church." Consultant Zena Link reported observations of the work to date raising concern about the episodic nature of the conversations on racial justice. She reminded the council that "minutes don't capture the nuance" and pressed for consideration and conversation about how anti-racism work will continue and how groups work to make things intentional and reflective when minutes essentially reduce things to transactional. Ms. Link facilitated discussion in which the Council raised concern about how the work would continue across the many transitions underway with the upcoming General Convention. The Council was encouraged to engage the Sacred Ground materials, a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith.

As part of the transition emphasis, supplies and encouragement were provided for handwritten notes of appreciation and blessing to outgoing council members. A festive banquet celebrated the gifts of Bishop Curry and Canon Barlowe, whose terms conclude later this year. Because of travel schedule and constraints of the agenda, my report to the Executive Council—including greetings on behalf of the ELCA—was delivered by video in the session on Saturday morning.



## **Church Council and Committee Operational Ethics Policy of the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

The Church Council and Committee Operational Ethics Policy of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America addresses business ethics and does not include the other ethical values and policies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (referred to as “ELCA”). The Church Council and Committee Operational Ethics Policy applies to members of the Church Council and to all ELCA churchwide organization (referred to as the “churchwide organization”) committee members (referred to as “members”) in matters relating to the performance of their duties and responsibilities for the churchwide organization.

All funds and property received and administered by the churchwide organization are entrusted to the organization by God through the faithful financial support of ELCA members and friends. The highest degree of stewardship and fiduciary responsibility is expected of all members, including the receiving, reporting, and use of funds, property, and time. Members are responsible for complying with laws, regulations, and the governing documents, policies, and procedures of the churchwide organization.

### **Standards of Ethical Conduct**

1. *Duty of Loyalty.* Each member is responsible for acting in the best interests of the churchwide organization. These responsibilities are set forth below.
2. *Conflicts of Interest.* All members shall avoid conflicts of interest, potential conflicts of interest, and situations that give the appearance of conflicts of interest.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Conflict of interest means any situation in which the member may be influenced or appear to be influenced in decision-making or business dealings by any motive or desire for personal advantage other than the success and well-being of the churchwide organization. Personal advantage means a financial interest or some other personal interest, whether present or potential, whether direct or indirect. This standard applies to both actual and contemplated transactions. When in doubt, the member is to assume there might be a conflict.
  - b. All present and potential conflict of interest issues must be disclosed. If the conflict is known in advance of any meeting, business transaction, contract, or other activity at which issues may be discussed or on which the issues may have a bearing on the member’s approach, whether directly or indirectly, it shall be disclosed ahead of time. If the conflict is not known in advance, it shall be disclosed when the actual or potential conflict becomes apparent. Disclosure is to be made in writing to an officer of the churchwide organization or chairperson of the committee.
  - c. When issues relate to a meeting, disclosure is appropriate to the person in charge of the meeting and, at the discretion of the person in charge, to the full meeting. The member shall leave the meeting room to avoid all discussion, voting, and deliberation on the issue. Following full disclosure of the actual or potential conflict, the Church Council or committee may decide that no conflict of interest exists and invite the participation of the member. All such actions shall be recorded in any minutes or records kept of the meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this ethics policy, participation in the ELCA pension and other benefits plans and investments/gifts with the Mission Investment Fund and the ELCA Foundation are not considered conflicts of interest.

- d. All members are likewise to disclose, in writing, matters and relationships that have the potential for giving rise to the appearance of a conflict in business dealings with the churchwide organization. Examples include, but are not limited to, financial interests and/or leadership roles with vendors and other organizations doing business with the churchwide organization. The unit executive, in consultation with ELCA General Counsel or, as appropriate, the Executive Committee of the Church Council, will evaluate disclosures and determine the appropriate action to be taken. Business dealings with friends and family of members are particularly sensitive and are to be disclosed and carefully evaluated because of the potential for inferences of tangible or intangible personal advantage and the appearance of impropriety.
  - e. To avoid appearances of impropriety, any gifts, gratuities, and hospitality—such as goods, free travel, or lodging—offered to a member from any person or organization that sells, delivers, or receives any goods, materials, and services to or from the churchwide organization can only be accepted and used for the benefit of the organization. Occasional *de minimus* gifts are exempt from this rule.<sup>2</sup> Gifts that primarily benefit the churchwide organization and not an individual, such as gifts of hospitality given to the churchwide organization by hotels, conventions, and conferences in relation to official churchwide organization business, are exempt from this rule. Members may also participate in reasonable, normal relationship-building activities, such as meals, entertainment events, and other similar activities. Gifts and such participation are to be reported to the chair of the committee, the unit executive relating to the committee, or an officer of the church.
3. *Confidentiality*. Members shall not disclose information about the churchwide organization that is not known outside of the churchwide organization or is not known by public means.
  4. *Duty of Care*. The duty of care and obligation of good stewardship requires all members to act first in the best interests of the churchwide organization. All members shall exercise reasonable efforts to inform themselves of the mission and ministry of the ELCA. All members shall act as a reasonable member would act under the same or similar circumstances.
  5. *Transactions and Reporting*. Each member has a duty to maintain and report complete, accurate, and timely records pertaining to their actions and responsibilities as applicable to their role.
  6. *Duty to Disclose*. Members have a duty to disclose all breaches of this policy. Likewise, concerns about the appearance or the possibility of breaches should be reported. Care must always be taken to be factual and objective. Breaches shall be reported to one of the following: an officer of the ELCA, the director for internal audit, or the General Counsel. There will be no retaliation for good faith complaints, reports, or participation in an investigation.
  7. *Violations*. Violation may result in termination from the Church Council or committee.
  8. *Amendments*. The policy may be amended from time to time.

Adopted 2004  
Amended 2009, 2013

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<sup>2</sup> *De minimus* gifts are typically gifts of less than \$75.00 value, such as flowers or foodstuffs. "Occasional" would mean as part of a special event or seasonal holiday.

## Representation by Church Council Member

I acknowledge that:

- I have received a copy of the Church Council and Committee Operational Ethics Policy.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policy and any revisions made to it.
- I understand that:
  - I am subject to the policy and am required to comply with it.
  - I am responsible for reporting any possible conflict of interest that involves me, is reported to me, or that I observe.
  - I am responsible for reporting any complaints that I receive under the policy, as well as any other violations of the policy that I observe.

---

*Signature*

*Date*

---

*Name (Please print)*

*Failure to sign this document does not eliminate the member's responsibilities to comply with the ethical standards of the churchwide organization.*

Note: If a member will not sign, the date when the representation is given to the member should be noted for the file.

Adopted 2004  
Amended 2009, 2013

## Representation by Committee Member

I acknowledge that:

- I have received a copy of the Church Council and Committee Operational Ethics Policy.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policy and any revisions made to it.
- I understand that:
  - I am subject to the policy and am required to comply with it.
  - I am responsible for reporting any possible conflict of interest that involves me, is reported to me, or that I observe.
  - I am responsible for reporting any complaints that I receive under the policy, as well as any other violations of the policy that I observe.

---

*Signature*

*Date*

---

*Name (Please print)*

---

*Name of Committee*

*Failure to sign this document does not eliminate the member's responsibilities to comply with the ethical standards of the churchwide organization.*

Note: If a member will not sign, the date when the representation is given to the member should be noted for the file.

Adopted 2004  
Amended 2009, 2013

## **Progress Report from the Educational Debt Task Force**

At its spring 2022 meeting, the Executive Committee of the ELCA Church Council voted to form the Educational Debt Task Force (EC22.03.12). As reported previously, the work of the task force is organized into three phases: self-education; research; and communication of research findings.

The Educational Debt Task Force is currently in the research phase. This phase has three main objectives:

- Better understand the breadth and depth of the experience and impact of educational debt among ELCA candidates and rostered ministers;
- Gather information about what programs already exist to assist rostered ministers to reduce their educational debt; and
- Resource existing and forming programs, task forces and study committees, actively considering their research needs.

As it moved into the research phase, the task force organized itself into two research-focused sub-teams: 1.) the Synod Debt Reduction Programs team, whose purpose is to determine the activities happening in ELCA synods around educational debt reduction, and 2.) the Survey of Rostered Ministers team, who conducted a survey to learn more about the extent, experience, and impact of educational debt on ELCA rostered ministers.

### *Synod Debt Reduction Programs team*

The Synod Debt Reduction Programs team identified a list of 10 bishops and synod staff with whom to have more detailed conversations about the specifics of their educational debt reduction programs. The goal was to explore the responses each bishop or staff member had provided through a December 2023 survey. These conversations uncovered several common themes:

- Synod bishops perceive the landscape of educational debt to be changing, with newly ordained rostered ministers in most synods tending to carry less educational debt than those ordained a decade or more ago.
- Synods whose programs were simple to administer found this advantageous for both synod staff and rostered ministers called to the synod.
- Most synods found that their programs were not particularly effective at attracting or retaining rostered ministers to their synod. Rather, the programs were a bonus for folks who were already in or already planned to come to the synod.
- Most bishops and synod staff indicated they were moderately satisfied with their programs because they provided some relief to rostered ministers. They indicated they would be very satisfied if they were able to provide more relief.

The team is currently working on strategies and mechanisms for sharing this information with all synod bishops and staff and creating resources to be used by synod staff, candidates, and rostered ministers.

### *Survey of Rostered Ministers team*

The survey of rostered ministers was conducted from Jan. 25 – Feb. 9, 2024. All rostered ministers, active and retired, were invited to participate, even if they no longer carried or never carried educational debt. In all, over 3,500 rostered ministers completed the survey. The data collected went through an extensive cleaning process to remove or correct errors. Analysis on the survey's individual items has been completed. The team will soon begin the process of reporting and commenting on the findings. This team is also in the process of analyzing salary and compensation information to complete the pay equity analysis requested by the ELCA Church Council (CC23.04.08I)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Several members of the sub-team are analyzing data from Portico Benefit Services and the ELCA churchwide organization to further explore pay equity in the ELCA.

**Questions for Church Council during Ad Team Report – 30-minute session**  
**5 minutes per question in small groups**  
**10 report out to the whole group**

1. What are the potential benefits you see for the churchwide organization with the upcoming transitions?
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 office following the CWA and into 2025?

<b>Augsburg Fortress</b>	<b>MIF (FCU)</b>	<b>ELCA Foundation</b>	<b>Portico</b>	<b>Women of the ELCA</b>
<b>Full Epiphany</b>	<b>4th Floor Conference Room</b>	<b>5th Floor Screening Room</b>	<b>Pentecost</b>	<b>10th Floor Training Room</b>
Kevin Anderson	Tracey Beasley	Lisa Ahlness	Marcus Bigott	Ben Bergren
Nick Billardello	Susan Boxberger	Kerry Fehrman	Heather Brown	Jamie Brusehoff
Bill Callister	Rindra Josoa	Hans Giller	Joanne Engquist	Kristy Henriksen
Leroy Cannon	Olivia Martin-Call	Cherrish Holland	Sheena Foster	Gwendolyn King
Divine	Kari Olsen	Mitch McCartney	Pamela Hoh	David Lenz
Emily Hartner	Noah Roux	Valerie Shaw	Joel Miller	Iván Perez
Tara Lynn	Andraine Sinaga	Loni Taylor	Keoni Newman	Kjersten Sullivan
Jennifer Trom			Loren Solberg	
Brenda Bos	Laurie Jungling	Craig Schweitzer	Scott Johnson	Suzanne Dillahunt
	Amy Current	James Dunlop	Pedro Suárez	Christopher deForest
Bimen Limbong	Alejandro Mejia	Joann Conroy	Aubrey Thonvold	Michael Wilker
	Jesse Brown			

## Synod Visit Reports

Name: Susan Boxberger  
Synod Visited: Central States  
Visit Date: 6/20/2024  
Purpose of Visit: Participate in Synod Event/Discussion

This was a meeting of participants from across the Central States Synod to review and discuss the draft Social Statement on Civic Life and Faith. It was led by Bishop Susan Candea; there were about 15 participants, both clergy and lay.

### ***What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?***

The meeting began with “ground rules” for discussion, with an emphasis on listening and accepting views different from our own. There was good discussion of selected articles from the draft, always made with care and respect, and with an emphasis on God’s will and God’s intentions for people and for creation. Examples were given of various ministries and interfaith organizations within our synod that work for the common good.

### ***How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?***

The topic lent itself very well to illustrating the interconnections among individuals, congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization. Being able to comment on various aspects of the draft statement with the assurance that they will be heard/read and considered helps make everyone feel a part of the larger ELCA. Just a brief explanation of what social statements are and how they are adopted was very helpful. We were left with a feeling of investment in this social statement, and looking forward to its consideration at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.



*En Bloc* Items

**I. Budget and Finance Committee**

**A. Audit Committee Report**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing their approval from June 2024 of the audited financial statements for the churchwide organization's fiscal year ended January 31, 2024.

**B. Engagement of Crowe LLP**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

To approve the engagement of Crowe LLP to perform the audit service plan for the churchwide organization's fiscal year ending January 31, 2025.

**C. ELCA Supplemental Retirement Plan for Government Chaplains**

At its August 2024 meeting, Portico Benefit Services Board of Trustees supported the termination of the ELCA Supplemental Retirement Plan for Government Chaplains and the ELCA Supplemental Retirement Trust for Government Chaplains. The recommendation now comes to Church Council for approval. In recent years, there have been very few applications, and none have been found to be eligible for the plan.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

To approve the termination of the ELCA Supplemental Retirement Plan for Government Chaplains and the ELCA Supplemental Retirement Trust for Government Chaplains.

**D. Amendments to Investment Policies**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

To approve changes to the Cash Management Policy.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

To approve changes to the Operating Investment Policy.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

To approve changes to the Core Investment Policy.

**II. Executive Committee**

**A. Appointment of Memorials Committee**

Churchwide bylaw 12.51.02., in regard to the Churchwide Assembly, provides for the appointment of a Memorials Committee to review memorials from synod assemblies and make recommendations for assembly action. The 15-member committee includes members of the Church Council, voting members of the assembly, and representatives of the Conference of Bishops. The

Church Council appoints the committee at its November meeting prior to the Churchwide Assembly to allow for adequate notice to members for their participation in the meeting of the Memorials Committee subsequent to the completion of the 2025 synod assemblies.

**CC ACTION** [*En Bloc*]

**Recommended:**

**To appoint the members of the Memorials Committee for the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:**

1. Pr. Emily Hartner [9B] (co-chair)
2. Mr. Noah Roux [8E] (co-chair)
3. Ms. Sheena Foster [8G; POC]
4. Bp. Patricia Lull [3H]
5. Bp. Christopher deForest [7E]
6. Ms. Rachel Pritchett [1B]
7. Mr. Jeffrey Pennington [2A]
8. Ms. Elna Solvang [3B]
9. Deacon Timothy Siburg [4A]
10. Pr. Michael Schmidt [5D]
11. Pr. Katherine “Kate” Van Valkenburg [6B; YA]
12. Ms. Janasia Carter [7A; YA; POC]
13. Ms. Sylvia Black [9B; POC]; and

**To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Memorials Committee for the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as needed.**

**B. Appointment of Reference and Counsel Committee**

Churchwide bylaw 12.51.01., in regard to the Churchwide Assembly, provides for the appointment of a Reference and Counsel Committee to review items—proposed resolutions—that are not germane to items contained in the stated agenda of the assembly and also to review all changes or additions to the constitution and bylaws submitted by voting members at the assembly. The 15-member committee includes Church Council members, assembly voting members, and Conference of Bishops representatives.

**CC ACTION** [*En Bloc*]

**Recommended:**

**To appoint the members of the Reference and Counsel Committee for the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:**

1. Pr. Gwendolyn King [7F; POC] (co-chair)
2. Mr. Mitchell McCartney [5E] (co-chair)
3. Pr. Lisa Ahlness [3A]
4. Bp. Stacie Fidler [5B]
5. Bp. Michael Lozano [8A]
6. Mr. Mondo Davila [1D; POC]
7. Mr. Jeff Cours [2C]
8. Deacon Sarah Bjornebe [2E]
9. Ms. Carolyn Davis [3G; POC]
10. Ms. Lorie Garcia [4E]
11. Dayle Matheny [6A; NB]
12. Ms. Rachel Faulkner [8B; YA]
13. Pr. Matthew Henning [9D]; and

**To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Reference and Counsel Committee for the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as needed.**

**C. 2025 Churchwide Assembly Process for Elections**

At the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, elections will be held for a presiding bishop and secretary of the ELCA. The procedure for these elections is established in the ELCA constitution, specifically in bylaws 19.01.02. and 19.01.04. as well as continuing resolutions 19.01.A24., 19.01.B09., and 19.01.C19. Other relevant information is contained in Chapter 13. In addition to these constitutional procedures, the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the Churchwide Assembly usually provide opportunities during the balloting process for voting members to hear nominees' views on matters relevant to this church and the office for which they have been nominated.

In previous elections of officers, the Executive Committee of the Church Council has played a role in helping shape the election process. The processes recommended by the Executive Committee became part of the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the Churchwide Assembly.

For the 2025 elections, it is proposed that the Church Council delegate to the Executive Committee the authority to review, evaluate, and make possible recommendations for Part 16 of the draft Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, particularly the assembly discernment process.

**CC ACTION** [*En Bloc*]

**Recommended:**

**To delegate to the Executive Committee of the Church Council responsibility for review and evaluation of and recommendations for Part 16 of the draft Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, particularly the assembly discernment process; and**

**To bring to the Church Council recommendations for Part 16 of the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly no later than the April 2025 meeting.**

**D. Site for the 2028 Churchwide Assembly**

The Office of the Secretary is responsible to “arrange for and manage churchwide meetings, including the Churchwide Assembly...” (ELCA 13.41.02.i.) and presents its recommendation for a Churchwide Assembly site to the Church Council for approval.

**CC ACTION** [*EN BLOC*]

**Recommended:**

**To designate [Iowa Events Center, 730 3<sup>rd</sup> Street] Des Moines, Iowa – subject to the satisfactory completion of negotiations in the judgment of the secretary of this church – as the site for the Eighteenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, August 7-11, 2028; and**

**To authorize the Executive Committee to select another venue, if negotiations are not successful.**

### III. Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

#### A. Synod Constitution Amendments

Provision 10.12 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* stipulates: “Each synod shall have a constitution, which shall become effective upon ratification by the Church Council. Amendments thereto shall be subject to like ratification....”

The amendments to certain synod constitutions are [here](#).

#### CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

##### Recommended:

- To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Pacifica Synod (2C); and
- To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

#### CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

##### Recommended:

- To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Nebraska Synod (4A); and
- To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

#### CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

##### Recommended:

- To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the New Jersey Synod (7A); and
- To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

#### CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

##### Recommended:

- To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Upstate New York Synod (7D); and
- To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

#### CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

##### Recommended:

- To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7E); and
- To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

#### CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

##### Recommended:

- To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F); and
- To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

#### CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

##### Recommended:

- To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Upper Susquehanna Synod (8E); and
- To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

#### B. NLCM Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

The changes to the National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. (NLCM) Restated Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were approved by the NLCM, Inc. board at its meeting on October 4, 2024. The changes are in Articles 3, 4 and 6, and are located [here](#).

Following is NLCM’s rationale for the amendments:

Section 3:

3.1: We have an additional candidate for the board that we would like to add, but we are already at 7. Moving from 7 to 8 will allow us to add the new candidate. Our staggering has also become less staggered than we would like, so the candidate for board member number eight will help us do that.

3.2: We simplified the language and practice for nominating board members to reflect what is practically happening.

Section 4:

Added electronic to written consent to take into account deliberations handled via email.

Section 6:

Given the current dearth of staff positions supporting campus ministry at the ELCA, and the establishment of LuMin with its own director, we wanted to clarify how NLCM, Inc would nominate and select an executive director (currently a volunteer role) and continue to relate to the ELCA including LuMin.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To ratify the amended articles of incorporation and bylaws of the National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Incorporated.**

**IV. Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee**

**A. Jubilee USA Network**

At its Spring 2024 meeting, the Church Council approved an action for a social policy resolution affirming Jubilee USA Network be presented to the November 2024 Church Council meeting [CC24.04.09i]. The social policy resolution is [here](#).

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To adopt the Social Policy Resolution on Jubilee Network USA.**

**V. Service and Justice Committee**

**A. Terms and Conditions of Support for Long-Term Global Personnel**

Church Council is responsible for reviewing the “Terms and Conditions of Support for Long-Term Global Personnel” document. At this time, the Service and Justice home area, in consultation with legal counsel, People Solutions and the Service and Justice Administration and Global Mission, is bringing amendments to Article 9.0 [Home Assignment] to bring the document into alignment with current practices. The amendments to Article 9.0 are [here](#).

Further amendments to the Terms and Conditions are anticipated for the Spring 2025 Church Council meeting.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To approve the amendments to Article 9 in “Terms and Conditions of Support for Long-Term Global Personnel.”**

## **B. Corporate Social Responsibility Documents**

The Church Council is responsible for reviewing this church's ongoing work in corporate social responsibility. The Service and Justice Committee reviewed three issue papers and three social criteria investment screens.

### **CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

#### **Recommended:**

**To approve the amendments to the following corporate social responsibility documents to serve as the basis for ongoing corporate social responsibility work in this church:**

- **Human Rights Issue Paper**
- **Freed in Christ: Nondiscrimination in Business Activities Issue Paper**
- **Violence in Our World Issue Paper**
- **Environment Social Criteria Investment Screen**
- **Human Rights Social Criteria Investment Screen**
- **Military Weapons Social Criteria Investment Screen; and**

**To request that the original issue papers be archived for historical and research purposes.**

## **VI. Christian Community and Leadership Committee**

### **A. Outdoor Ministry Affiliation**

Affiliation is the way the ELCA establishes and maintains its relationship with the outdoor ministries of this church. The criteria in the "Outdoor Ministry Affiliation" document describes the benefits, requirements and procedures for affiliation. It has been approved by the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry board and the Office of the Secretary.

Following the action, a task force will connect with the currently affiliated outdoor ministry organizations to strengthen the relationship and, in some cases, to determine if the organization wishes to remain affiliated with the ELCA.

### **CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

#### **Recommended:**

**To approve the criteria described in the "Outdoor Ministry Affiliation" document for the ELCA to use as it establishes and maintains its relationship with the outdoor ministries of this church.**

## **VII. Other Items**

### **A. Resolution from Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage ELCA Advocacy for Peace & Justice in the Middle East and Dismantling of Christian Zionism in our Churches**

*Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage Biennial Assembly [2024]*

Be it Resolved, The Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage in Assembly laments both the destruction of Gaza's and Lebanon's infrastructure, housing, schools and universities, hospitals, and places of worship; and the millions of people who are experiencing displacement, facing malnutrition, and starvation, as a result primarily of the government of Israel's continuing air strikes and blocking entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza; and

Be it further Resolved, That individuals and congregations of the [Evangelical] Lutheran Church in America are recommended to:

- Become informed about the SUMUD initiative of the ELCA: <http://elca.org/sumud>;
- To learn more about the conflict and occupation, and its effects using books, articles video or online ELCA approved resources provided by Palestineportal.org or SUMUD;

- To build awareness of the scriptural errors of Christian Zionism and its negative impact on the people of the Holy Land and be engaged in dismantling it;
- Become informed that there are Christians and Christian Churches in Gaza and Lebanon;
- Use ELCA, SUMUD, Kairos Document and other recommended resources to learn about the history of the region and current causes for conflict;
- Consider signing up for ELCA Advocacy Alerts - “Middle East Network” at <http://elca.org/sumud>;
- Pray for Palestinians and Israelis who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all in both communities; and
- Stand in solidarity with all who are suffering in Palestine and Israel and support the work of the ELCJHL (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land), LWF (Lutheran World Federation), ALAMEH (Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage), in bringing comfort, support, accountability, justice, equity and relief.

The full resolution can be found [here](#).

### **CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

#### **Recommended:**

**To thank the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage in its Biannual Assembly for the “ELCA Advocacy for Peace & Justice in the Middle East and Dismantling of Christian Zionism in our Churches” resolution; and**

**To encourage the congregations and members of the ELCA to implement the following recommendations identified in the resolution:**

- **Become informed about the SUMUD initiative of the ELCA: <http://elca.org/sumud>;**
- **Learn more about the conflict and occupation, and its effects using books, articles video or online ELCA approved resources provided by [Palestineportal.org](http://Palestineportal.org) or SUMUD;**
- **Build awareness of the scriptural errors of Christian Zionism and its negative impact on the people of the Holy Land and be engaged in dismantling it;**
- **Become informed that there are Christians and Christian churches in Gaza and Lebanon;**
- **Use ELCA, SUMUD, Kairos Document, and other recommended resources to learn about the history of the region and current causes for conflict;**
- **Consider signing up for ELCA advocacy alerts about the Middle East at <http://elca.org/sumud>;**
- **Pray for Palestinians and Israelis who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all in both communities; and**
- **Stand in solidarity with all who are suffering in Palestine and Israel and support the work of the ELCJHL (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land), LWF (Lutheran World Federation), ALAMEH (Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage), in bringing comfort, support, accountability, justice, equity and relief.**

#### **B. Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the Church Council meeting on [April 11-14, 2024](#) have been provided to council members electronically on Church Council Microsoft Teams.

The minutes of the council’s Executive Committee meetings on [April 11, 2024](#), [April 29, 2024](#), [May 21, 2024](#), [June 12, 2024](#), [July 23, 2024](#), [Aug. 21, 2024](#), and [Sept. 18, 2024](#), have been provided electronically to members on Church Council Teams.

Please provide any notations or typographical errors in the distributed text of the minutes in writing to the executive for Office of the Secretary administration ([Keith.Fry@elca.org](mailto:Keith.Fry@elca.org)). Proper

corrections will be entered into the protocol copies of the minutes. Such corrections need not be raised in the plenary session in connection with the approval of the minutes.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To approve the minutes of the April 11-24, 2024 meeting of the Church Council; and  
To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the April 11, 2024, April 29, 2024, May 21, 2024, June 12, 2024, July 23, 2024, Aug. 21, 2024, and Sept. 18, 2024, meetings.**

**C. Church Council Nominations and Elections**

The Church Council has the responsibility for electing people to fill terms on boards of Separately Incorporated Ministries (SIM), social ministry organizations, and seminaries. Bylaws 8.21.03. and 8.21.04. outline basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. Pursuant to 14.22. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the Church Council is also to elect nominees to a vacancy on a board or committee of the churchwide organization.

Biographical information is provided in [Biographies](#).

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To re-elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a term beginning January 1, 2025, and expiring December 31, 2028: The Rev. Andrea F. DeGroot-Nesdahl and Ms. Debra Ann Hibbard.**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago to a term beginning October 1, 2024, and expiring September 30, 2028: Mr. Laurence John Tietjen and Ms. Patricia Zoe Cornelius Woods.**

**To re-elect to the board of directors of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago to a term beginning October 1, 2024, and expiring September 30, 2028: Mr. DeWayne Allen Cook and Mr. Oswald Gregory Lewis.**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To elect to the advisory board of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary to a term expiring in June 2027: Bishop Jeff R. Johnson and The Rev. Marjorie Ann Funk-Pihl.**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To elect to the Publishing House of the ELCA Board of Trustees to a term expiring in August 2025: Ms. Shelly Talcott.**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To appoint to the National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. Board of Directors to a term beginning March 2025 and expiring March 2029: Ms. Anne Marie Gerriettes, Mr. David Neas Schaeffer, and The Rev. Herb G Wounded Head.**



## Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions

### 1. Holy Communion Practices

*Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.05n]*

To receive with gratitude the memorial on “Holy Communion Practices in Unusual Circumstances and in Pandemic Times” from the Pacifica Synod;

To request that the Worship team of the Christian Community and Leadership home area, in collaboration with the Conference of Bishops, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and teaching theologians, facilitate continued conversation and study regarding Holy Communion practices; and

To request that a report be provided to the Church Council no later than its Fall 2024 meeting.

*Response from the Worship Team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2024)*

*[The Worship Team moved from the Christian Community and Leadership home area to the Office of the Presiding Bishop]*

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced online worship to many congregations and worshipping communities for the first time. The pandemic also introduced a time when it was not safe to participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion in many places for a lengthy period. Congregations experimented in how to offer worship, sacraments, and pastoral care during trying times. Questions about whether it is appropriate to have Holy Communion in online situations quickly became at the forefront of congregations, pastors, bishops, and church leaders around the world. These questions continue even beyond pandemic times as some worshipping communities continue to experiment with online sacramental practice.

The ELCA is grounded in the Lutheran Confessions that define the church as “the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel.”<sup>1</sup> *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament*, adopted by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly, continues to guide the practice of word and sacrament in the ELCA. However, neither this statement nor the confessions offer explicit guidance for the questions at hand.

Early in the pandemic, Bishop Eaton and the Worship Team of the churchwide organization organized a conversation among liturgical scholars. Based on that consultation, [a statement](#) was issued encouraging congregations to fast from the sacrament for what was thought would be a short time. As the pandemic continued to lengthen, many pastors (who, in conversation with their councils and under the supervision of their bishops, bear the ultimate responsibility of Word and Sacrament ministry in their context) experimented with diverse ways to offer Holy Communion mediated by video technology. Bishops, leaders, and liturgical scholars from the ELCA and among ecumenical and global partners offered a wide variety of opinions and guidance. Disagreement among leaders and liturgical scholars often led to confusion and frustration for those desiring to make informed decisions while navigating unprecedented circumstances.

The ELCA Conference of Bishops engaged in conversation about sacramental practice since early in the pandemic, long before this 2022 memorial. Similar conversations have occurred among other connected groups, including those convened by ELCA seminaries, the Lutheran participants in the North

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<sup>1</sup> Augsburg Confession, Article VII, from *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 42. This Article is quoted from an older translation as Principle 3 in *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament* (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1997).

American Academy of Liturgy, ecumenical partners, and others. These dialogues continue to raise important questions and acknowledge that this is a topic that will not be settled quickly.

There are multiple areas of discernment about online Holy Communion, like layers of an onion. Once one peels back one layer of the conversation, another theological question or concern becomes apparent. Certain “layers” may be theological “sticking points,” while others may be seen as opportunities for further conversation and study. These areas of conversation among theologians and the Conference of Bishops include:

- **Defining the Christian Assembly:** Principle 39 of *The Use of the Means of Grace* states that “The gathered people of God celebrate the sacrament.” There are differing views as to what constitutes a gathered assembly. If God promises to show up and encounter people where they are, many conclude that God is fully present in the assembly gathering for worship mediated in an online format. Others note that being connected electronically is meaningful and important, but not the same “assembly.”
- **Technology Format:** Is online Holy Communion possible in more participatory, synchronous situations (i.e., on the Zoom platform) vs. less participatory or asynchronous situations (i.e., watching a YouTube livestream or recording)?
- **Elements:** There are concerns about the choice of elements used by individuals in online communion. Are only bread and wine/juice acceptable?
- **Experience and Community:** Does online-only communion lead to isolation? How does the sacrament create community? What is the community missing if online Holy Communion is not offered?
- **Pastoral Care:** Is there adequate pastoral care in online-only worshiping communities? How do online worship opportunities replace or supplement the church’s ministry of providing for the sending of communion from the gathered [onsite] assembly to the absent (See ELCA Worship FAQ: *How can we provide for communion of the ill, homebound, and imprisoned?*)?
- **Normative Practice:** Are there circumstances when online Holy Communion is the best thing this church can do? Are “emergency” situations treated differently than “non-emergency” times? Is there an expectation that online communion is always required or necessary?
- **Justice:** Who is excluded in online communion? Who is excluded without online communion? For example, what about those who lack access to the Internet?
- **Role of the bishop** as the synod’s pastor... to “administer the sacraments” ... and with “primary responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in [the] synod and its congregations.”<sup>2</sup> How might a synod bishop teach about sacraments? How does a bishop oversee sacramental practice in their synod?
- **Other rites of the church:** How does this conversation affect other rites that call for some level of physical proximity such as Holy Baptism and ordination?

While this list is not exhaustive, it demonstrates some of the complex questions and concerns that arise when discerning sacramental practice in online situations.

Following multiple presentations and discussions among the Conference of Bishops, a poll in Fall 2023 gauged bishops’ positions on the acceptability of online Holy Communion. Among fifty votes, 34% leaned “Strongly toward yes,” 42% leaned “Strongly toward no,” and 24% were “Somewhere in the middle.” These results reveal a wide diversity of thought within the conference, as in other church

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<sup>2</sup> ELCA *Constitution for Synods*, S8.12.a; S8.12.b

leadership, regarding online communion. Some bishops noted that the idea of “leaning” on this issue might itself be problematic, highlighting an underlying concern that the sacrament is sometimes viewed as “our own thing” rather than a shared holy practice. While some bishops call for further conversation and education, encouraging physical gathering, when possible, others consider online Holy Communion potentially acceptable in “emergency” situations—noting that the “emergency” period has ended. Some lean “no” but remain open to further discussion, while others struggle to reconcile online communion with the church’s confessions. Concerns were raised about the implications of online communion, with some arguing that it assumes privilege, fosters individualism, and contributes to fragmentation. Meanwhile, those with a strong leaning toward “yes” advocate for best practices, such as ensuring synchronous, two-way participation in online worship.

ELCA global companions and ecumenical partners are engaging in similar discernment regarding online communion, though direct guidance has been limited, with only a few instances of clear prohibitions. The ELCA’s discernment on this issue also has potential implications for its relationships with Catholic and Orthodox dialogue partners. Insights from ecumenical and global partners will continue to offer insight and foster mutual respect for diverse theological perspectives.

*The Use of the Means of Grace* notes that the statement itself “seeks to encourage unity among us in the administration of the means of grace and to foster common understanding and practice. It does not seek to impose uniformity among us” (Principle 4). Further, this statement “does not address our practice of Word and Sacrament out of antiquarian or legalistic interests but rather to ground the practice of our church in the Gospel and to encourage good order within our church” (Application 4A). Although much has been learned regarding online worship experiences in this time since the COVID-19 pandemic, there is not a clear consensus on the implications of online Holy Communion. Along with this church’s global and ecumenical partners, it will take time to seek unity in the administration of the means of grace in online and other situations.

The memorial to the Churchwide Assembly asked the ELCA “to consider with great faith, flexibility, and theological reflection how to speak, write, and teach about Holy Communion concerning participants who are worshipping online remotely, and other alternative communion practices.” The memorial did not direct the church to reach a decision one way or another at this time. As the church continues to learn from those within the ELCA and this church’s partners, it is clear that this deeply complex conversation and discernment will continue.

Appendix: A sampling of resources on the topic of online Holy Communion

- [Currents in Theology in Mission, Vol. 50 No. 1 \(2023\): Eucharist and Online Worship: Toward Extended Theological Reflection](#)
- [CrossAccent, Vol 28 No 2 \(2020\): In the Emptiness, God Is](#)
- Dirk G. Lange, [“Digital Worship and Sacramental Life in a Time of Pandemic.”](#) The Lutheran World Federation website
- Deanna A. Thompson, [“Christ is Really Present Virtually: A Proposal for Virtual Communion.”](#) The Lutheran Center for Faith, Values and Community at St. Olaf College

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the response on “Holy Communion Practices” from the Worship Team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop;**

**To thank those who contributed to the conversation including teaching theologians, the Conference of Bishops, and others;**

**To commend congregations and worshiping communities for their ongoing care of the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and especially for the flexibility and resilience required during the COVID-19 pandemic, and**

**To encourage continued dialogue and discernment on sacramental practice, especially as it relates to online Holy Communion, throughout this church and with global and ecumenical partners; and**

**To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

## **2. Motion I: Nominations and Elections Process**

*Submitted by: The Rev. Kathy Gerking [Nebraska Synod, 4A]*

RESOLVED, that the Church Council appoint a Task Force to explore and analyze nomination and election processes used by synods and the churchwide organization, including but not limited to the ecclesiastical ballot, in order to determine best practices and to make practical recommendations concerning options for the selection of all synod and churchwide officers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Task Force report to the Conference of Bishops and Church Council in sufficient time that potential governing document amendments and/or a report on best practices can be prepared in time for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

*Churchwide Assembly action [CA22.04.27]*

To adopt Motion I as submitted.

*Executive Committee action [EC22.09.23b11]*

To refer the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action on “Motion I: Nominations and Elections Process” to the Office of the Secretary for a report or a timeline on when this will receive further attention.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2022)*

The Office of the Secretary plans to provide a report to the Church Council in November 2023, with a final report and recommendations to be brought to the Church Council at its November 2024 meeting.

*Church Council Action [CC22.11.34.w.]*

To receive the timeline on “Motion I: Nominations and Elections Process” from the Office of the Secretary on when the resolution will receive further attention; and

To request a progress report by the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting, with a final report and recommendations by the Fall 2024 Church Council meeting.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2024)*

At its November 2023 meeting, the Church Council authorized the Executive Committee to appoint members to the task force [CC23.11.20q] and the individuals were appointed at the December 2023 meeting of the Executive Committee [EC23.12.57].

The Task Force on Synod Nominations and Elections met over the past several months to consider the nominations and elections process currently outlined in the governing documents and policies, including the question of use of the ecclesiastical ballot. Included in the consideration were questions of pre-identification processes for nominees that are being used by synods and the Churchwide Assembly. After much discussion, the task force determined that no changes to the existing process will be recommended at this time. Members of the task force, all of whom have served as leaders in their own synods' elections, are compiling a set of best practices regarding discernment processes, nominations, pre-identification, and education of voting members that will be published as a standalone document as

well as being incorporated into the Bishop Election Toolkit that will be made available to all synods as they prepare for their synod assemblies.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the response on “Motion I: Nominations and Elections Process” from the Office of the Secretary;**

**To thank the Task Force on Synod Nominations and Elections for their diligent exploration and analysis of nomination and election processes used by synods; and**

**To commend to synods the document on best practices regarding discernment processes, nominations, pre-identification, and education of voting members for their use in nominations and elections processes.**

**3. Specialized Ministries and On-Leave-from-Call Status\***

*Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.04.26]*

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Southwest California Synod, South Dakota Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Northern Illinois Synod, La Crosse Area Synod, Indiana- Kentucky Synod, Northwestern Ohio Synod, and Lower Susquehanna Synod concerning specialized ministries and on- leave-from-call status;

To direct the Church Council to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to initiate a review process of the “Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and the constitutional provisions and policies and procedures as they relate to interim, transition, bridge, specialized, non-parish- based, and innovative calls, as well as on-leave-from-call status, protocols for removal from the rosters, and communication protocols;

To direct the Church Council to ensure that this review process include in its scope of inquiry, but not be limited to: the time limits given for on-leave-from-call, steps for requesting a roster status, and a process by which an action or lack of recommendation from a bishop may be appealed, including the possibility of an appeal in a judicatory other than the synod from which they were removed from the roster;

To require that those involved in the review process include a diverse group representing both the roster of Word and Sacrament and the roster of Word and Service who are or have recently been involved in specialized ministries (e.g., interim, transition, campus, outdoor, college or seminary faculty, chaplains, mission developers, etc.), and those currently or recently on leave from call for a variety of reasons (e.g., between calls, family, disability, study, healing from abuse, etc.);

To urge bishops and synod councils to use sparingly any action by which a minister is removed from the roster for non- disciplinary reasons, unless the minister requests removal, until this review is complete, especially for those serving contract calls, as supply preachers, and in other ELCA ministries that don't qualify as a call; and

To require that the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization prepare a report and recommendations for consideration by the fall 2024 meeting of the ELCA Church Council.

\*Report and recommendations to include above as well as response to the following resolutions:

- “Guidance on Retired or Retiring Ministers for the Roster of the ELCA” (CC22.11.34.ee.)
- “Extending Pastoral Counseling through Private Practice” (CC22.11.34.gg.)
- “Providing for Ordination of Candidates serving as Interim Pastors” (CC23.11.20cc)
- “Revisions to Roster Manual” regarding roster appeals (EC23.11.53c1)
- “Extending OLFC to six years” (EC22.03.10c); and
- recommendations to current discipline process shared by Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color (CC23.04.05)

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2024)*

A Task Force on On-Leave-from-Call and Specialized Ministry was appointed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council [EC23.09.40] to initiate the review process. The task force was also requested to address related topics as cited in the various resolutions listed above.

The Task Force on On-Leave-from-Call and Specialized Ministries has prepared a [preliminary report and recommendations](#) that are included in the materials for this meeting of the Church Council, along with proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* for presentation by the Church Council to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. (The proposed amendments are included as an appendix to the task force's report and also appear among the amendments proposed by the Office of the Secretary, which will be offered to the Church Council at this meeting by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee.)

The current recommendations relate to the questions concerning On Leave from Call (OLFC) protocols and protocols for granting and continuing retired status that are included in the memorial and in the various resolutions listed above. They also were informed by and respond to the recommendations that came from the Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color, as the recommendations of that task force included reform of the protocols for granting OLFC and retired status, given that the existing protocols hold potential for unfair application. The recommendations propose substantive changes to the existing policy, some of which will be addressed through bylaw changes while others will be addressed through policy changes to the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters* that will be presented for approval following successful adoption of the revised bylaws by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

Still to be addressed in the next few months are questions related to specialized ministry. In January, the task force will be convening listening sessions with rostered ministers engaged in specialized ministry, with a further report and recommendations to be presented to the Conference of Bishops for consultation at its February 2025 meeting and a final report and recommendations to be presented to the Church Council at the April 2025 meeting. The issues concerning pastoral counseling through private practice will be part of those recommendations, as will the question of allowing for candidates to be ordained to interim ministry.

#### **CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

##### **Recommended:**

**To receive the response and preliminary report on the memorial concerning specialized ministries and on-leave-from-call status from the Office of the Secretary and the Task Force on On-Leave-from-Call and Specialized Ministry;**

**To thank the Task Force on On-Leave-from-Call Status and Specialized Ministry for their faithful work in the review process;**

**To affirm the recommendations for On-Leave-from-Call Status, interim ministry, retired roster status, and average time requirements for calls that are identified in the preliminary report;**

**To anticipate another report and recommendations regarding specialized ministry to be presented at the April 2025 Church Council meeting; and**

**To request that the secretary inform the synods of this action.**

#### **4. Black Migrant Strategy**

##### *Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.09]*

To receive with gratitude the memorial on "ELCA Strategy Regarding Black Migrants" from the Delaware-Maryland Synod;

To direct the Service and Justice home area, in consultation with the program directors for African Descent Ministries, African Nationals, and Latino Ministries; African Descent Strategy Team; African Descent Lutheran Association; Association of Latino Ministries of the ELCA; and Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities (AMMPARO), to prepare a proposal for the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants, that includes cost estimates, for Church Council consideration by its Spring 2024 meeting;

To strengthen the current protection and accompaniment of Black migrants through AMMPARO in partnership

with ecumenical and interfaith partners both domestically and internationally;

To recommit this church to advocating for Temporary Protected Status and just and humane immigration policy through the Witness in Society team within the Service and Justice home area; and

To encourage congregations to affirm the aims of the African Descent Strategy Implementation Plan for 2020–2025 and the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent.

*Response from the Service and Justice home area (April 2024)*

The Service and Justice (S&J) home area received the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action requesting the preparation of a proposal for the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants, including cost estimates, for Church Council consideration by its Spring 2024 meeting. However, upon further review of the strategy’s scope, it was determined that S&J would benefit from more input from stakeholders. It was clear that more time would be needed to prepare a well-rounded proposal. The program director for Migration Policy, in consultation with the Service and Justice interim executive director, and program director for African Descent Ministries, initiated a process to obtain more input from stakeholders with direct relationships with people and communities of African descent. In November, S&J formally invited stakeholders from across the ELCA to form part of a task force dedicated to “advising, developing, and implementing” the Black Migrant Strategy.

As stated in the assembly action, representatives from these groups were invited to form part of the Black Migrant Strategy Task Force: African Descent Ministries, Latino Ministries, Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities (AMMPARO), African National, African Descent Strategy Team, African Descent Lutheran Association, and the Association of Latino Ministries of the ELCA. The task force met for the first time on Jan. 8, 2024. The first task force meeting set expectations for the work, provided an opportunity for participants to share why they were motivated to work on this proposal, and laid out the next steps.

The proposal will receive further attention at the next meeting of the task force this spring. The Program Director for Migration, in consultation with the task force, aims to provide a proposal for the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants, that includes cost estimates, for Church Council consideration by its Fall 2024 meeting. In the meantime, a report summarizing projects and programs, through AMMPARO, that address migrants of African descent from 2021-2023 is being developed to share with the task force to aid the development of the proposal.

Proposal Timeline:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Status</u>
Nov. 10, 2023	Initiate task force	Completed
Jan. 8, 2024	Task force meeting	Completed
March 18, 2024	Deadline for Church Council response	Completed
April-May 2024	Task force meeting	
Summer 2024	Draft Proposal	
Fall 2024	Finalize Proposal	

*Church Council Action [CC24.04.09g]*

To receive the response on “ELCA Strategy Regarding Black Migrants” from the Service and Justice home area;

To request a final proposal for the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants, including cost estimates, for Church Council consideration by its November 2024 meeting; and  
To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Service and Justice home area (November 2024)*

Below is a final proposal from the Service and Justice (S&J) home area for the strengthening of advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants, including cost estimates

## **Proposal**

### A) Advocacy

ELCA advocacy is led through the Witness in Society Team, which works for national and international public policy change based on the experience of Lutheran ministries, programs and projects around the world, including Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities (AMMPARO).

To strengthen and support advocacy around Black Migrants, it is recommended:

- 1) Witness in Society will continue to advocate for just and humane immigration laws and policies in consultation with global companions and partners and in collaboration with national ecumenical and interfaith partners.
- 2) Witness in Society will continue to vigorously pursue legislation and policies supported by ELCA social teaching, resolutions, and actions impacting migrants that may include immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, in collaboration with Black immigrant-led organizations such as UndocuBlack, Haitian Bridge Alliance, African Communities Together, Cameroonian Advocacy Network, Black Alliance for Just Immigration, and others.
- 3) Witness in Society will continue to encourage local advocacy by international partners and companions as well as contribute to advocacy in solidarity with these partners and companions, including by utilizing the Lutheran Office for World Community to promote civic society engagement on Black migrants' issues at the multi-lateral level.
- 4) Witness in Society will continue to provide advocacy information and advocacy opportunities through action alerts, blogs, social media, and network updates so that ELCA members can become more informed about Black migrants, in the U.S., and around the world.
- 5) Witness in Society through the Program Director for Migration Policy will initiate a regular consultation process with stakeholders such as African Descent Ministries, Latino Ministries, AMMPARO, African National, African Descent Strategy Team, African Descent Lutheran Association, and the Association of Latino Ministries of the ELCA, and others to inform advocacy strategies that incorporate information of relevance on Black migrants.
  - a. Others: Association of Liberian Lutherans in the Americas (ALLIA); ELCA African Nationals Caucuses
- 6) To further protect and accompany Black migrants, Witness in Society will recommit to advocating for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), especially for Haitian migrants, for those unable to safely return to their homelands. The Secretary of Homeland Security can designate a country for TPS if the country is experiencing ongoing armed conflict, natural disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. TPS allows its beneficiaries to stay in the U.S. during the designation period and receive work permits. Sending these migrants back to their country of



origin, if TPS were to be terminated or not extended, would be dangerous for their safety and impact their current community.

There are **no additional financial costs** associated with these activities, which will be handled as part of existing responsibilities.

B) Protection

Protection may refer to protection provided to people outside of their country of origin, ratified by international legal instruments and treaties, and reinforced through advocacy from civic society. Per the United Nations, all migrants are entitled to the protection as well as respect and fulfillment of all human rights, regardless of status, with only narrowly defined and limited exceptions. Advocating for the basic human rights and protection of migrants is a just response to the plight of people forced to flee their countries of origin. It is also well-recognized, through research and anecdotal evidence collected through years of engaging with partners on the ground, that people of African descent often face disproportionate obstacles availing of protection and avoiding discrimination in immigration processes. Everyone should be able to enjoy the fulfillment of their God-given dignity without prejudice.

To strengthen and support advocacy around Black Migrants, it is recommended:

- 1) Witness in Society will continue to advocate to strengthen the human rights of migrants in countries of origin, transit, destination, and return and will work to prevent systematic discrimination, including racism, xenophobia, and intolerance toward migrants in federal migration management, as well as internationally.

To strengthen and support protection for Black Migrants in the U.S.,

- 1) AMMPARO has and will continue to encourage congregations and synods to sponsor Black migrant families through their asylum process.

There are **no additional financial costs** associated with these activities, which will be handled as part of existing responsibilities.

C) Accompaniment

At the ELCA, accompaniment is defined as “walking together in a solidarity that practices mutuality and interdependence in mission.” The AMMPARO strategy is uniquely positioned to be a strategy to advocate with, support, and encourage others to walk with Black migrants, who may include immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers at various stages of the migrant journey. Since its inception in 2016, AMMPARO has strived to live out these values with ELCA welcoming and sanctuary congregations, synod immigration taskforces, and international synodical companions and partners. Increasingly, AMMPARO is engaged with more ELCA companions and partners around the world as the strategy goes global. An accompaniment model is especially important in building relationships that honor, promote, and maintain the dignity of marginalized people, including Black migrants. The culture and values of accompaniment are crucial to reflect in current and future work surrounding Black migrants with global companions and partners.

Specific ELCA supported activities to accompany Black Migrants:

- 1) For the 2021-2024 and renewing proposal for 2025-2027 in 2025, Fundación de Education Popular en Salud (EPES) with support from ELCA AMMPARO carried out various activities and projects to support the integral development and psychosocial needs of Haitian migrants in Chile, particularly children and women in the El Bosque community in Santiago.
- 2) For the 2021-2026 period, Pastoral de Migracion, Iglesia Luterana Mexicana, with support from ELCA AMMPARO, provided know-your-rights information, assisted with basic needs, and led worship and Bible studies to address racism and xenophobia in Mexico.
- 3) For a significant period of time to 2025, St. Andrew's Refugee Service, Cairo, Egypt, has accompanied Black migrants from Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries on the continent of Africa with integrated services including psychosocial and legal support. These services are offered to families, individuals, and a significant number of unaccompanied minors.
- 4) Through World Hunger support, several organizations in the European context have accompanied Black migrants, some as they decide to remain in various European countries and others in transit.

To strengthen and support accompaniment around Black Migrants, it is recommended for:

- 1) Service & Justice to continue to invest in programs and initiatives led by companions and partners, through the AMMPARO strategy, that accompany migrants in country of origin, transit, destination, and return.
- 2) AMMPARO to develop resources, documents, and other materials to assist ELCA members and asylum-seeker co-sponsoring congregations to become more strongly aware of anti-Black racist and xenophobic rhetoric, how to address it, and how to accompany migrants.
- 3) AMMPARO to identify additional places for information sharing, capacity building, and scaling up of initiatives brought under AMMPARO with companions and partners.
- 4) Service & Justice to utilize social media and traditional media to raise awareness about the stories of Black migrants and the work of companions and partners with ELCA members and other audiences.
- 5) ELCA to promote advocacy among ELCA members as a vehicle to support public policy change to improve the lives and conditions of people before they have to migrate, as well as after they do. The aim is for would-be migrants to be free to remain in their homeland, support their families, and contribute to their communities.

For AMMPARO to further support initiatives and partners serving all populations, but especially African and African descent migrants, **a sustained investment** is necessary to cover the associated activities.

### **New Funding**

With additional funding, the Service and Justice home area could facilitate additional spaces to strengthen advocacy, protection, and accompaniment of Black migrants.

**Proposal #1:** Contractor/organizer/advisor to help facilitate a panel or webinar conversation with policy experts and community members to review the issues that are important to Black migrants.

Possible Outcomes: Policy recommendations; create a training/toolkit for action for advocates; letter writing campaigns.

Estimated Cost: This is a contractor position with compensation of \$5,000 for the work necessary to create one event and one impact report.

**Proposal #2:** Contractor/organizer to help facilitate community-led discussions about how the ELCA can better support African and African-Descent migrants and refugees.

Possible Outcomes: Create several virtual or in-person spaces for dialogue; collect and create resources concerning legal services, social services, mental health services, and more; create guidance for rostered ministers to directly spiritually and emotionally support/accompany Black migrants and refugees; and/or create a toolkit for local advocacy for local community development, housing, and human needs of newcomers and residents.

Estimated Cost: This is a contractor position with compensation of \$15,000 for the work necessary to organize several small-group conversations, and create one public event, one resource, and one impact report.

### **Definitions**

**Immigrant:** In common usage, immigrants may refer to all newcomers who now live in this country. [\[Source\]](#)

**Migrant:** There is no universal, legal definition of a ‘migrant’. ‘Migrant’ is thereby used as a neutral term to describe a group of people who have in common a lack of citizenship attachment to their host country. It is without prejudice to the protection regimes that exist under international law for specific legal categories of people, such as refugees, stateless persons, trafficked persons, and migrant workers. [\[Source\]](#)

**Refugee:** Persons who have “a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” This definition from the United Nations’ 1951 “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees” was adopted by the United States in the Refugee Act of 1980. [\[Source\]](#)

**Asylum-Seekers:** Persons who have fled their country because of personal danger, who arrive in the United States without legal protection, and who must prove a “credible fear of persecution” to receive an opportunity to seek legal protective status or asylum. [\[Source\]](#)

### **CC ACTION** *[EN BLOC]*

#### **Recommended:**

**To receive the response and proposal with cost estimates on "ELCA Strategy Regarding Black Migrants" from the Service and Justice home area;**

**To affirm the recommended strategies and activities for strengthening and supporting advocacy, protection, and accompaniment around Black Migrants as identified in the proposal;**

**To refer the proposed cost estimates to the Office of the Treasurer and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Service and Justice home area, to determine the necessary additional funding to cover the associated activities; and**

**To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

## Responses to Synod Actions

### 1. ELCA Name Change

*Southwest California Synod (2B) [2022]*

*(The Southwest California Synod Assembly ran out of time to act on the “ELCA Name Change” as a memorial. Therefore, the Southwest California Synod Council has forwarded it as a synod council resolution to the Church Council for its action.)*

WHEREAS, the word “evangelical” appears in the name of our denomination (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: ELCA) and our primary worship book (Evangelical Lutheran Worship: ELW); and

WHEREAS, the constituting members of the ELCA and the Commission for a New Lutheran Church which led into the ELCA’s formation held to the historic view and value of the word “evangelical” as meaning “pertaining to the Gospel;” and

WHEREAS, the word “evangelical” was hoped to be maintained in its historic usage and sense at the time of the ELCA’s formation; and

WHEREAS, the word “evangelical” has become culturally synonymous in the U.S. with a religious expression and belief that is not compatible with the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, the word “evangelical” in the U.S. now culturally refers to fundamentalist Christianity including many forms of exclusion which we find to be contrary to the “evangel” (gospel) including the ordination of women and LGBTQ persons; and

WHEREAS, the word “evangelical” is now representative of a narrow swath of conservative Christian denominations and sects rather than a broad notion of being Gospel-centric and inclusive of all persons; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the word “evangelical” be discontinued in use and stricken from the name of our denomination and future books of worship; and be it further

RESOLVED that ELCA Church Council determine the nature of the transition in the use of the word “evangelical” in our denominational title leading up to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southwest California memorialize the ELCA 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to discontinue the use of the word “evangelical” in our denomination name and to adopt a new name for the denomination which more faithfully reflects its identity in the U.S.

*Executive Committee action [EC22.06.19c8]*

To refer the “ELCA Name Change” resolution from the Southwest California Synod to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention, particularly in light of certain memorials that are coming before the 2022 Churchwide Assembly; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Secretary (November 2022)*

On April 6, 2018, *Living Lutheran* published an [article](#) written by the Rev. Robert C. Blezard titled, “The ‘e’ word: Why does the ELCA have the word “evangelical” in its name?” where he addressed the historical significance of using the word “evangelical” in this church’s denominational name and the challenges of using a word where society and culture has shifted the word’s original meaning.

In light of the pending work to be accomplished with the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary recommends the reconsideration of a denominational name change be given to the commission.

*Church Council action [CC22.11.34.cc.]*

To receive the response on “ELCA Name Change” from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Secretary;

To request the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church consider the question of whether the denomination name, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” should be changed;

To anticipate a recommendation when the commission presents its findings for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (November 2024)*

In 2022, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a resolution leading to the creation of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) and charged it with addressing issues relating to

the ELCA Constitution. The CRLC was later asked to consider an additional question, whether the name “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” should continue to be utilized for this church body. [CC22.11.34.cc.]

The CRLC engaged in significant discussion of a possible change of name. As the members of the CRLC considered this issue, the conversations highlighted a range of opinions about the significance of the term “evangelical” and the larger implications that any new name might create.

In the end, no strong consensus emerged among members of the CRLC as to whether the name ELCA should be changed.

Some participants maintain that the term “evangelical” has shifted significantly in meaning in the present day and may hinder the proclamation of the gospel, due to its associations with more conservative forms of Christianity and even, in some quarters, with Christian nationalism. Eliminating the term “evangelical,” they believe, would avoid these initial negative perceptions and indicate a more welcoming stance.

Others, however, support maintaining the term “evangelical” because of its deep scriptural and theological roots (the term comes from the root word of “gospel” and literally means, “good news”), and argue that to eliminate the term “evangelical” would actually diminish the church’s core identity and mission. The term also connects the ELCA with the larger global Lutheran communion: the large majority of individual LWF church bodies utilize “Evangelical” in their names.

While the CRLC did not come to consensus on this matter, they make the following observations:

- The CRLC believes that this question reflects larger issues of identity. Changing the name alone will not address deeper issues within the denomination and may in fact lead to unintended consequences for various groups.
- If a change of name is to be considered, the Commission recommends engaging a broader range of voices in deeper conversation about the church’s core identity before making final recommendations.
- If, after thoughtful discussion the name ELCA is kept, the CRLC would recommend an intentional effort to lean more intentionally into our understanding and definition of what it means to be “evangelical,” and that new branding might assist with this emphasis.
- If, after thoughtful discussion the name ELCA were to be changed, a possible approach might be to consider retaining the legal name of the ELCA, while creating a new name under which it would be known (a “Doing Business As” (DBA)).
- Discussions regarding a name change should be separated from the work of the CRLC to avoid distraction from the original charge given to the CRLC.
- The CRLC will present a summary of this issue to the Church Council.

Overall, the CRLC acknowledges the complexities surrounding the term “evangelical” and its implications for this church’s identity, emphasizing that thoughtful dialogue and understanding are essential before any decisions are made on this significant matter.

Appendix:

[Historical Reflections on the Name, ELCA](#)

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive with gratitude the response on “ELCA Name Change” from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;**

**To defer consideration of the question of whether the denomination name, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” should be changed until after the 2025 Churchwide Assembly when at such time a task force may be authorized to address the matter; and**

**To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

**2. Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation**

*Upstate New York Synod (7D) [2022]*

WHEREAS, ELCA Constitution 7.44A19 “Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament” b. “Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament” 1.2 reads:

Setting	Calling Body
1.2 Multiple-congregation parish	Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal
1.21 Pastor	One of the participating congregations
1.22 Other pastoral arrangements and	One of the participating congregations;

WHEREAS, each congregation, as a place where the Promises of Jesus are proclaimed to gathered people, has the authority to call a person to be their proclaimer of those promises of Jesus; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the ELCA Church Council work up a resolution to be presented at the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly that allows more than one congregation concurrently to call the same person as pastor, and to make all necessary changes to its constitution.

*Executive Committee action [EC22.06.19c3]*

To refer the “Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation” resolution from the Upstate New York Synod to the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide organization office or home area, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2022)*

This question will need to be discerned with the Conference of Bishops, in consultation with the Leadership Committee and the Roster Committee of that body. Any change would require amendments to the governing documents and revision of the roster manual.

After discussion with the Christian Community and Leadership home area, the Office of the Secretary plans to bring a report and proposed timeline to the Church Council at its November 2023 meeting, with a final report and recommendations to be brought to the Church Council at its November 2024 meeting.

*Church Council action [CC22.11.34.ff.]*

To receive the timeline on “Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation” from the Office of the Secretary on when the resolution will receive further attention;

To request a progress report by the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting, with a final report and recommendations by the Fall 2024 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2023)*

The energy and focus of the Conference of Bishops (COB) and its Leadership Committee over the past year has been on the restructuring of the candidacy process. As that work is coming to fruition, it will be possible for the Leadership and Roster Committees of the COB to begin to address this question. Conversation with the bishops will be scheduled for the spring 2024 COB. As any change to these policies would require amendments to the ELCA Constitution, a report and recommendations will come to the Church Council at its November 2024 meeting.

*Church Council action [CC23.11.20z]*

To receive the progress report on “Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation” from the

Office of the Secretary and to anticipate a report and recommendations at the November 2024 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2024)*

Because of ongoing discernment about the candidacy process and about the protocols for leave, there has not been an opportunity for full discussion of the question of allowing for concurrent calls for rostered ministers. The question will be put before the Roster and the Leadership Committees of the Conference of Bishops in coming months. A report and recommendation will be made to the Church Council at its April 2025 meeting.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the progress report on “Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation” from the Office of the Secretary;**

**To request a report and recommendation be presented at the April 2025 Church Council meeting; and**

**To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

**3. Non-Binary Inclusion**

*Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2024]*

*(Originally submitted as a memorial to the Office of the Secretary, but the secretary has determined that the action should be reclassified as a resolution so the Church Council can consider it with other possible constitutional amendments.)*

WHEREAS, in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* and its accompanying implementing resolutions the ELCA is “To call upon rostered and lay congregational leaders, synodical and CWO staff, social ministry organizations, and faculty and staff at ELCA colleges, seminaries, and universities to renew their efforts to welcome, care for, and support the lives and gifts of LGBTQIA+ persons and to oppose discrimination against these persons so that they may live into the promise of gender justice envisioned in this social statement”; and

WHEREAS, the church representational principles of this church are: At least 60 percent of voting members shall be laypersons —as nearly as possible, at least 45% shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45% shall be men. The percentage of laypersons not allocated to women or men may be allocated to persons who identify as gender non-binary, gender fluid, women, men, or other genders. About 40 percent or fewer shall be rostered ministers and shall include both women and men. Note that this category includes deacons. Ten percent of the voting members are to be persons of color or persons whose primary language is other than English; and,

WHEREAS, 24 of the 65 synods of the ELCA have less than 10 voting members allotted for Churchwide Assembly; and,

WHEREAS, a minimum of at least 10 members are necessary for a person who identifies as gender non-binary, gender fluid, women, men, or other non-cisgender to be considered for participation on assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units based on the current representative percentages; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has set a priority to “A Welcoming Church: Engaging new, young and diverse people” with the goal to “engage 1 million new, young, diverse members by the end of the decade”; and

WHEREAS, according to a Pew research study 5% of young adults in the U.S. say their gender is different than their assigned sex at birth; and

WHEREAS, “75% of LGBTQ youth reported that they had experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity at least once in their lifetime. More than half of LGBTQ youth reported that they had experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity in the past year.”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to refine proportional representation to allow, as closely as possible, equal representation between male and female with space for gender non-conforming identities to serve as well.

*Executive Committee action [EC24.07.26a2]*

To refer the “Non-Binary Inclusion” resolution from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod to the Office of the Secretary and the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee as it considers proposed constitutional amendments to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2024)*

The representational principles in Chapter 5 of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* are the subject of a number of recommendations coming both from the Office of the Secretary and from the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) audit that has been considered by both the Church Council and the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC). Proposed amendments are included in the materials for this meeting. The Office of the Secretary would like to point out that provision 5.01.f. already has been amended to delineate gender representation on the basis of “as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members ... shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men,” with 5.01.H21. further specifying that “the percentage of laypersons that is not allocated to women or men may be allocated to persons who identify as gender non-binary, gender fluid, women, men, or other genders.” In addition, among the recommended amendments being proposed is an expansion of the categories of gender identity that are currently listed.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the response on “Non-Binary Inclusion” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;**

**To acknowledge the action on the amendments to continuing resolutions in Chapter 5 of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* as the response of the Church Council to the resolution from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod; and**

**To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

**4. Seasonal Membership**

*Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2024]*

*(Originally submitted as a memorial to the Office of the Secretary, but the secretary has determined that the action should be reclassified as a resolution so the Church Council can consider it with other possible constitutional amendments.)*

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Model Constitution for Congregations (MCC), Chapter 8, “Membership”, Section \*C8.02.e, Seasonal, does not provide full privileged membership status for “Seasonal members”; and

WHEREAS, in an era of generational change for both the ELCA and the population of the United States, the generations born in the 1940-1950s have become a highly mobile, dual-location retiree population; and

WHEREAS, many ELCA congregations are experiencing declining membership and are increasingly dependent on “shared” members to provide a necessary pool of eligible members and participants to meet governance, operational and functional requirements; and

WHEREAS, section C8.02.e does recognize the existence of generational change, but otherwise fails to allow “Seasonal members” to share their talent, experience, and abilities in the crucial matter of congregational governance and for congregations to benefit from shared membership; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod in assembly memorializes the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to amend section \*C8.02.e (1-6) of the Model Constitution for Congregations to read:

“e. *Seasonal* members are voting members of other congregations of this church who wish to retain such membership but desire to participate in the life and mission of this congregation, including exercising limited full voting rights in this congregation once acknowledgment is received from the home congregation. The Congregation Council may grant seasonal membership to such persons provided that this congregation is a member of a synod where the Synod Council has approved seasonal member voting on its territory. Seasonal members shall only be counted in the home congregation for ELCA membership statistics. Such seasonal members shall have all the privileges and duties of voting members except that:



- 1) they shall not be eligible for elected office in, or for membership on the Congregation Council or on a call committee of, this congregation;
- 2) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the call or termination of call of any minister of this congregation;
- 3) they shall not have the right to vote on any matter concerning or affecting the affiliation of this congregation with this church;
- 4) they shall not be eligible to serve as voting members from this congregation of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly;
- 5) they shall not, even if otherwise permitted by this congregation, vote by proxy or by absentee ballot; and
- 6) they shall not, within any two calendar month period, exercise voting rights in this congregation and in the congregation where they remain voting members.”

*Executive Committee Action [EC24.07.26a3]*

To refer the “Seasonal Membership” resolution from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod to the Office of the Secretary and the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee as it considers proposed constitutional amendments to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2024)*

The Office of the Secretary considered the proposed amendments to the existing provision of the *Model Constitution for Congregations* concerning seasonal membership that were forwarded by the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod. The proposed amendments differ in two primary aspects from the existing provision: 1) a granting of “limited full voting rights” that requires receipt of acknowledgment from the home congregation and 2) specification of where membership is to be counted. The first includes an inherently contradictory designation of voting rights, which cannot be both “full” and “limited” at the same time; furthermore, the list of exclusions of voting rights already appears in the numbered list, so the proposed change is redundant and potentially confusing. The second is a matter that is best handled in the Annual Congregation Report and its instructions to congregations, as that is where it is most likely to be conveyed to those who maintain congregation records. The Office of the Secretary therefore declines to recommend these amendments.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

- To receive the response on “Seasonal Membership” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;**
- To decline to propose the constitutional amendments to Chapter 8 in the Model Constitution for Congregations for the reasons stated in the response; and**
- To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

**5. Including Creation Care**

*Greater Milwaukee Synod Council (5J) [July 2023]*

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee 2023 Synod Assembly (Resolution 1) called for amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, to request the Church Council and the Office of the Secretary to develop amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to be presented at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly that add “care for creation” to the purposes of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that these amendments should include adding the purpose “care for creation” to 4.02., 4.03., 7.31.02., 7.61.02., 9.41., 11.21., 16.12.D21., †S6.02., †S14.12., †S14.32., \*C4.02., \*C4.03., \*C9.03., and \*C9.23., as well as any other applicable places within the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and be it further

RESOLVED, to request the Church Council and the Office of the Secretary add a new provision on “the purpose of membership” to “Chapter C8. Members” and/or amend \*C8.04., the privileges and duties of members, to

include the visions laid out in 4.03.b. of the Constitution, stating that members of this church will be equipped “to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel”, and in the liturgies of baptism and affirmation of baptism as printed in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, especially the hope that the baptized will “care for others and the world God has made”.

*Executive Committee action [EC23.09.41b]*

To refer the “Including Creation Care” resolution from the Greater Milwaukee Synod to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2023)*

The question of amending constitutional provisions and bylaws to include “care for creation” among the purposes of this church will need to be discerned along with other constitutional amendment changes. The Office of the Secretary plans to include consideration of this request when it presents the slate of proposed ELCA Constitution amendments to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee in the summer of 2024. The Church Council will forward proposed amendments to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly at its November 2024 meeting.

*Church Council action [CC23.11.20aa]*

To receive the response on the “Including Creation Care” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;

To anticipate possible amendments related to this resolution when the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee reviews proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* at the November 2024 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2024)*

Because the provisions and bylaws listed in the resolution from the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council generally fall within the definition of purposes of the expressions of this church, the Office of the Secretary is deferring this discussion to the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church to consider among its recommendations.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the response on “Including Creation Care” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;**

**To acknowledge the constitutional amendments identified in the resolution are under the general purview of the purposes of the expressions of this church and to refer this discussion to the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as it considers the purposes; and**

**To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

**6. Supporting Vulnerable Youth**

*Greater Milwaukee Synod Council (5J) [July 2023]*

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee 2023 Synod Assembly (Resolution 5) called for amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, to request the Church Council and the Office of the Secretary to develop amendments to 4.02.c., †S6.02.c., and \*C4.02.d. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, as well as any other applicable places, to be presented at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly that adds “supporting children and vulnerable youth” to the purposes of this church.

*Executive Committee action [EC23.09.41c]*

To refer the “Supporting Vulnerable Youth” resolution from the Greater Milwaukee Synod to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2023)*

The question of adding “supporting children and vulnerable youth” to the purposes of all three expressions of this church will need to be discerned along with other constitutional amendment changes. The Office of the Secretary plans to include consideration of this request when it presents the slate of proposed ELCA Constitution amendments to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee in the summer of 2024. The Church Council will forward proposed amendments to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly at its November 2024 meeting.

*Church Council action [CC23.11.20bb]*

To receive the response on the “Supporting Vulnerable Youth” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;

To anticipate possible amendments related to this resolution when the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee reviews proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* at the November 2024 Church Council meeting; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2024)*

Because the provisions and bylaws listed in the resolution from the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council generally fall within the definition of purposes of the expressions of this church, the Office of the Secretary is deferring this discussion to the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church to consider among its recommendations.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the response on “Supporting Vulnerable Youth” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;**

**To acknowledge the constitutional amendments identified in the resolution are under the general purview of the purposes of the expressions of this church and to refer this discussion to the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church as it considers the purposes; and**

**To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

**7. Amending Gendered Constitutional Language**

*Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2022]*

WHEREAS the Greater Milwaukee 2021 Synod Assembly called for amendments to the binary language related to gender in this church’s and this synod’s governing documents (2021 SA Resolution 2), we, the Synod Council of the Greater Milwaukee Synod,

RESOLVE, that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America consider and recommend the following amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly; and 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.

- 5.01.** The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church. This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church by congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization shall be carried out under his rule and authority in accordance with the following principles:

- e. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the appropriate office or unit of the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least ~~45~~ 50 percent of the lay members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be people who identify as: women, transgender, non-binary, gender queer, agender, bigender, gender non-conforming, or gender expansive and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament shall include many genders. ~~both men and women~~. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of gender diversity ~~women and men~~, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.
- f. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, synods, through synod councils, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 50 ~~45~~ percent of the lay members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be people who identify as: women; transgender, non-binary, gender queer, agender, bigender, gender non-conforming, or gender expansive; and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament shall include many genders. ~~both women and men~~. Each synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of the membership of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

~~5.01.H21.~~ *For purposes of the representational principles set forth in 5.01.e. and f., the percentage of laypersons that is not allocated to women or men may be allocated to persons who identify as gender non-binary, gender fluid, women, men, or other genders.*

**10.21.03.** In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical and global companions, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- b. fostering organizations for people of all ages and genders ~~youth, women, and men~~, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;

**10.41.01.** Membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

- c. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to the synod, typically at least one of whom shall be a person who identifies as: a woman, transgender, non-binary, gender queer, agender, bigender, gender non-conforming, or gender expansive; shall be voting members. ~~typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman~~, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least ~~45~~ 50 percent of the lay

members of the assembly shall be women, transgender, non-binary, gender queer, agender, bigender, gender non-conforming, or gender expansive, and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men.

**17.50.03.** Constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 11.34.01., 14.21.02., and 14.21.06. shall apply to this organization. Bylaw ~~16.11.01~~ 15.21.03. shall apply to the women's organization with the exception of the balance provisions for multiple genders ~~women and men~~ and for laypersons and rostered ministers.

And, be it further,

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Church Council, with guidance from the Office of the Secretary, shall establish a formal process to review the gender-specific language in this church's governing documents, social statements, and policies no less than every three years.

*Executive Committee action [EC22.02.06b]*

To refer the "Amending Gendered Constitutional Language" resolution from the Greater Milwaukee Synod to the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

*Response from Office of the Secretary (Spring 2022)*

The Office of the Secretary notes that the proposed amendments to constitutional provisions called for by the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council were received too late to meet the constitutionally mandated notification period detailed in 22.11.a. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. For the Church Council to propose to the Churchwide Assembly an amendment to a provision, there must be official notice sent to the synods at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments thus would have needed to be forwarded to the Church Council for consideration prior to its November 2021 meeting; if the Council chose to propose amendments to the Churchwide Assembly, notification would have had to be presented to the synods no later than Feb. 8, 2022. While bylaws and continuing resolution amendments function under different requirements, the language proposed in the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council resolution would require first that the constitutional provisions to which these refer be amended. The Office of the Secretary will take these proposed amendments under review for possible consideration by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

In regard to the request for a formal review process for gender-specific language in this church's governing and other documents, the Office of the Secretary has been actively involved in a recent revision of the Style Guidelines for the ELCA, which addresses use of gendered language in ELCA communications and documents. In addition, many of the proposed amendments to the governing documents that have been proposed by the Church Council to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly eliminate gendered references to people, and were based on an extensive review of the constitutions of this church by Office of the Secretary staff.

*Church Council action [CC22.04.17p]*

To receive the response on "Amending Gendered Constitutional Language" resolution from the Office of the Secretary;

To request that the Office of the Secretary consider the amendment to the constitutional provision 5.01. and related bylaw and continuing resolution references as it reviews possible amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly;...

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2024)*

The representational principles in Chapter 5 of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* are the subject of a number of recommendations coming both from the Office of the Secretary and from the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) audit that has been considered by both the Church Council and the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC). Proposed amendments are included in the materials for this meeting.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the response on “Amending Gendered Constitutional Language” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;**

**To acknowledge the action on the amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* as the response of the Church Council to the resolution from the Greater Milwaukee Synod; and**

**To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

## Responses to Previous Church Council Actions

### 1. Creation of a Racial Justice Ombudsperson Position

*Church Council action [CC22.06.20]*

To receive the request to explore creation of the position of a Racial Justice Ombudsperson with a report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop delivered to the Church Council at its Fall 2022 meeting;

To acknowledge the previous action of the council to create “a task force charged with reviewing the current process for discipline and its impact on persons of color and other historically marginalized groups, considering recommendations for staffing, community healing and restoration, and learning best practices from full communion partners” (CC22.04.04); and

To review the role and membership of the ELCA Response Team.

*Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2022)*

The Task Force Addressing Disciplinary Concerns of Leaders of Color held its first Microsoft Teams meeting on Oct. 4, 2022. Judith Roberts, senior director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, facilitated the conversation with task force members. The agenda opened with a devotion, prayer, an introduction of task force members, and a review of the 2019 Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity recommendation for the creation of an ombudsperson position within the churchwide organization. The conversation was followed by examples of the impact for leaders of color and communities they served when disciplinary actions occur. The task force received a brief presentation on the current churchwide DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) portfolios, and where an ombudsperson position might be housed within the current organization. The meeting concluded with a conversation regarding expectations of work, timeline for completion, and engagement with additional churchwide staff. The task force is scheduled to meet again virtually on Dec. 1, 2022.

*Church Council action [CC22.11.34.x]*

To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop concerning the exploration of a Racial Justice Ombudsperson position; and

To encourage the continued conversation within the Task Force Addressing Disciplinary Concerns of Leaders of Color.

*Recommendations regarding the creation of an ombudsperson position/office:*

The Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color supports the creation of an ombudsperson/office to help this church more faithfully demonstrate equity and justice in its dealings with rostered ministers, especially those within communities of color and LGBTQIA+ communities.

As this position/office is being considered, the following questions and issues should be addressed:

1. Where will this position/office be located in the churchwide organization structure?
2. What will be the areas of focus for this position/office?
  - a. Training and education (prevention)
  - b. Advice and accompaniment (guiding rostered ministers, bishops, and others as they navigate challenging situations)
  - c. Oversight and appeal (receiving and investigating complaints and working for resolution and adjudication)
  - d. Information and reporting (gathering data on allegations of discrimination experienced by rostered ministers and making recommendations for systemic changes)
3. How will rostered ministers have access to this position/office?

This task force also recognizes that situations in which conflict exists between a rostered minister and their congregation and/or the bishop’s office or others are often complex, sensitive, and multi-faceted. Care and attention will need to be given to balance the demands of transparency, confidentiality, and integrity. Above all, this position/office should be dedicated to promoting reconciliation, healing, justice, and growth.

*Church Council action [CC23.04.05]*

To receive the report and recommendations from the Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color and thank the members of the task force for their care and due diligence to the work;

....

To refer the recommendations regarding the creation of an ombudsperson position/office to the Administrative Team, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, with a report to be made to the Church Council at its November 2023 meeting; and

....

*Response from the Administrative Team (November 2023)*

The Administrative Team consulted with the Conference of Bishops at the Fall 2023 meeting. More time is needed for conversation and research before the Administrative Team can decide on the creation of an ombudsperson position.

*Church Council action [CC23.11.20t]*

To receive the report from the Administrative Team regarding the creation of an ombudsperson position and to anticipate a report in 2024.

*Response from the Administrative Team (November 2024)*

The Administrative Team recommends further collaboration with the Conference of Bishops in 2025 to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and accountability of an Ombuds position within the churchwide organization.

In addition, the churchwide organization is beginning an investigative reporting hotline that allows employees to anonymously report fraud, ethics, and compliance issues 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with IntegraReport Powered by Forvis. This external whistleblower service works to maintain professional conduct in the workplace through confidential reporting of issues of harassment, discrimination, and misconduct in the workplace. Results from this service could assist in shaping the reporting of an Ombuds position that could serve as a resource for rostered ministers. The Administrative Team wishes to learn from this reporting tool and how it might be used to support the intent of the request for an Ombuds position, as it continues to dialogue with the Conference of Bishops regarding this matter.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the report from the Administrative Team regarding the ongoing conversation on the creation of an ombudsperson position;**

**To affirm the churchwide organization's efforts in utilizing an investigative reporting hotline to allow employees to anonymously report fraud, ethics, and compliance issues; and**

**To encourage the Administrative Team to research how such a reporting tool might be used to support the intent of the request for an ombudsperson position as it continues its dialogue with the Conference of Bishops regarding this matter.**





*Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage*

رابطة العرب والشرق أوسطيون في الكنيسة الإنجيلية اللوثرية في أمريكا

## **ELCA Advocacy for Peace & Justice in the Middle East and Dismantling of Christian Zionism in our Churches**

**Whereas,** The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2023 established the “SUMUD” initiative for justice in Palestine and Israel; and

**Whereas,** The ELCA, in its Social Statement *For Peace in God’s World*, has committed to serve as “a reconciling presence” and to promote respect for human rights, particularly for “groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children”; and

**Whereas,** The ELCA is in accompaniment relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL); and

**Whereas,** many of our Christian siblings have unfortunately adopted the false tenets of Christian Zionism; and

**Whereas,** The ELCA Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, on October 13, 2023 denounced the attacks and hostage-taking on October 7, 2023, by Hamas and has denounced the subsequent disproportionate death toll among Palestinian civilians; as reported by the United Nations, more than 42,500 civilians have been killed and approximately 97,000 have been wounded in Gaza since October 7, 2023; <https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8207>; therefore

**Be it Resolved,** The Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage in Assembly laments both the destruction of Gaza’s and Lebanon’s infrastructure, housing, schools and universities, hospitals, and places of worship; and the millions of people who are experiencing displacement, facing malnutrition, and starvation, as a result primarily of the government of Israel’s continuing air strikes and blocking entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza; and



*Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage*

رابطة العرب والشرق أوسطيون في الكنيسة الإنجيلية اللوثرية في أمريكا

**Be it further Resolved,** That individuals and congregations of the Lutheran Church in America are recommended to:

- Become informed about the SUMUD initiative of the ELCA: <http://elca.org/sumud>; and
- To learn more about the conflict and occupation, and its effects using books, articles video or online ELCA approved resources provided by Palestineportal.org or SUMUD; and
- To build awareness of the scriptural errors of Christian Zionism and its negative impact on the people of the Holy Land and be engaged in dismantling it; and
- Become informed that there are Christians and Christian Churches in Gaza and Lebanon; and
- Use ELCA, SUMUD, Kairos Document and other recommended resources to learn about the history of the region and current causes for conflict; and
- Consider signing up for ELCA Advocacy Alerts - “Middle East Network” at <http://elca.org/sumud>; and
- Pray for Palestinians and Israelis who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all in both communities; and
- Stand in solidarity with all who are suffering in Palestine and Israel and support the work of the ELCJHL (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land), LWF (Lutheran World Federation), ALAMEH (Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage), in bringing comfort, support, accountability, justice, equity and relief.

**Submitted by:** Board and members of ALAMEH at its 14<sup>th</sup> biannual Assembly.

**Report of the Task Force on On-Leave-From-Call and Specialized Ministry  
October 2024**

**Mandate**

The Task Force on On-Leave-from-Call and Specialized Ministry was mandated by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly and appointed by the Church Council in response to memorials sent from eight synods. The assembly took the following action:

**ASSEMBLY ACTION CA22.04.26**

**To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Southwest California Synod, South Dakota Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Northern Illinois Synod, La Crosse Area Synod, Indiana-Kentucky Synod, Northwestern Ohio Synod, and Lower Susquehanna Synod concerning specialized ministries and on-leave-from-call status;**

**To direct the Church Council to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to initiate a review process of the “Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and the constitutional provisions and policies and procedures as they relate to interim, transition, bridge, specialized, non-parish-based, and innovative calls, as well as on-leave-from-call status, protocols for removal from the rosters, and communication protocols;**

**To direct the Church Council to ensure that this review process include in its scope of inquiry, but not be limited to: the time limits given for on-leave-from-call, steps for requesting a roster status, and a process by which an action or lack of recommendation from a bishop may be appealed, including the possibility of an appeal in a judicatory other than the synod from which they were removed from the roster;**

**To require that those involved in the review process include a diverse group representing both the roster of Word and Sacrament and the roster of Word and Service who are or have recently been involved in specialized ministries (e.g., interim, transition, campus, outdoor, college or seminary faculty, chaplains, mission developers, etc.), and those currently or recently on leave from call for a variety of reasons (e.g., between calls, family, disability, study, healing from abuse, etc.);**

**To urge bishops and synod councils to use sparingly any action by which a minister is removed from the roster for non-disciplinary reasons, unless the minister requests removal, until this review is complete, especially for those serving contract calls, as supply preachers, and in other ELCA ministries that don't qualify as a call; and**

**To require that the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization prepare a report and recommendations for consideration by the fall 2024 meeting of the ELCA Church Council.**

In addition, the Church Council asked the task force to consider the work of other task forces and to respond to other resolutions that had come from synods:

- “Guidance on Retired or Retiring Ministers for the Roster of the ELCA” (CC22.11.34.ee.)
- “Extending Pastoral Counseling through Private Practice” (CC22.11.34.gg.)
- “Providing for Ordination of Candidates serving as Interim Pastors” (CC23.11.20cc)
- “Revisions to Roster Manual” regarding roster appeals (EC23.11.53c1)
- “Extending OLFC to six years” (EC22.03.10c); and
- recommendations to current discipline process shared by Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color (CC23.04.05)

## **Process**

The task force met a number of times to identify the issues and to develop strategies for gathering information from rostered ministers and from the Conference of Bishops. Members held a series of listening sessions across this church for rostered ministers who are OLFC or who have recently been OLFC. A survey of the Conference of Bishops (COB) was conducted to solicit bishops' opinions on questions related to OLFC and to interim ministry. In addition, members reviewed the policies of our full communion partners, including The Episcopal Church (USA), the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church in America, and the United Methodist Church. In addition, the task force engaged in discussion of this church's understanding of call and of ordination.

Because of the scope of the task, these recommendations center on OLFC and interim ministry, while questions related to other aspects of specialized ministry (ordination to interim ministry, non-congregational first calls, innovative calls, and calls for pastoral counselors in private practice) remain to be discerned further in coming months.

## **On-Leave-From-Call Status**

The Churchwide Assembly action identified three primary areas of concern related to on-leave-from-call status:

- Time limits for OLFC
- Steps for requesting a roster status
- Possibility of an appeal of the synod bishop's status recommendation

Under existing policy, regular OLFC is limited to three years, while family leave and study leave are both for six years. OLFC must be requested in writing within 45 days of ending a call, and the synod bishop must make a recommendation to the synod council as to whether leave should be granted. A positive recommendation from the bishop allows the synod council to vote on granting the status. A failure to endorse the request, however, immediately terminates the process and results in the removal of the rostered minister from the roster. Rostered ministers have complained that this process is open to potential abuse by a bishop, who could use an unappealable negative recommendation to remove a minister with whom the bishop has a poor relationship, avoiding the formal disciplinary process.

Rostered ministers are required to seek annual renewal of their OLFC status from the synod council. Those whose leave is coming to an end can seek up to two years of extension, which must be requested by the synod bishop and synod council, recommended by the Roster Committee, and approved by the Conference of Bishops. These extensions are quite regularly granted. Second, and even third, extensions can be granted by the COB, effectively expanding the time limit to as much as 12 years for those with family or study leave and 9 years for those with regular OLFC.

Task force members were struck by the consistency of the discussions across the listening sessions. It was clear that there is much anxiety around the process of OLFC. While the process is outlined in the roster manual, it frequently is unfamiliar to rostered ministers. In addition, many synods have their own paperwork and process steps. Rostered ministers report that they frequently are confused by or are ignorant of the process and that they have not received clear instruction from the synod regarding expectations for requesting OLFC status, the time limits, and what is expected for annual renewal of the leave or for requesting an extension. Many rostered ministers report a sense of isolation or of "being forgotten." Many feel frustration that they are actively engaged in ministry such as supply preaching or serving as an interim, yet that ministry is not officially recognized as a call. Even the term "on leave from call" is a source of pain for some, because they continue to understand themselves as called to ministry—they simply don't have a recognized outlet for exercising their continuing call to ministry.

There was almost unanimous consensus among those interviewed that the three-year limit for regular OLFC is too short, and that, as the end of the leave approaches, anxiety rises and stress mounts because of the threat of being removed from the roster.

Interviewees discussed the fact that the church and its needs are changing. Increasingly, congregations cannot afford a pastor at the minimum 15 average hours per week threshold that is the current criterion for ministry to qualify as a call. (This threshold was established because of Portico requirements for sponsorship.) Ministers wondered why their ten hours a week of supply preaching or other ministry with one congregation or multiple congregations as a transition or bridge pastor could not count as a call.

Rostered couples are especially challenged by the time limits, with one spouse often unable to find a call near their spouse's call. Those in the listening sessions wondered how the ELCA could be more adaptive with the language of "call," especially in interim situations. Some synods issue calls for most interims, while others do not issue interim calls at all, and still others issue calls only for interims that have significant time commitments. The result is that for some ministers who are OLFC but serving as interim pastors the OLFC "clock" doesn't stop ticking, while for others an interim call "resets the clock" and they can start over with a full term of leave again. This can happen even within the same synod, depending on the bishop's or synod council's decisions about which interims qualify for a letter of call.

Finally, there is definitely a perceived stigma among rostered leaders about being OLFC. The feeling most often expressed is that the minister is seen as having "failed" in a call and had to leave, which adds to the grief of leaving the call.

In surveying synod bishops, the task force learned that the refusal to make a positive recommendation to grant leave is exercised less frequently than popular perception would suggest. Only three bishops reported using that authority even once a year. A majority of bishops favor increasing time limits. A majority also supported the idea of maintaining some time limits for OLFC but establishing an alternative roster status for those ministers who continue to provide ministry such as supply and contract ministry that does not currently qualify for a letter of call, and a similar majority supported some sort of inactive roster status for those who, for various reasons, need to step away from all active ministry for a time.

Bishops having sole authority to deny on-leave or retired status without review was seen as problematic. A majority supported establishment of a policy that all requests for a change in roster status would automatically go before the synod council with the bishop's recommendation as a point of information, rather than being determinative. There was support for establishment of a policy that, if the bishop's recommendation is to deny the roster status request, the rostered minister would have to be informed of that recommendation and be given a guaranteed opportunity to present the minister's position. There was support for establishing a process that would allow for the minister to appeal the bishop's recommendation at the synod level.

#### ***Recommendations for On-Leave-From-Call Status:***

- Establish in the roster manual a protocol for roster status requests that includes the following:  
(*See Appendix for proposed roster manual changes.*)
  - All requests for on-leave status will be voted on by the Synod Council.
  - The synod bishop will make a recommendation to the Synod Council regarding approval or denial of the status request.
  - The bishop will communicate the recommendation to the rostered minister prior to the Synod Council vote.
  - If the recommendation is for denial of status, the rostered minister will be granted an opportunity to address the Synod Council or a designated committee.

- After hearing from the rostered minister and the synod bishop, the committee may request that the bishop convene a consultation panel to investigate further and make recommendations to the Synod Council. The decision of the Synod Council is final.
- If the Synod Council wishes to override the synod bishop's positive recommendation for leave, the rostered minister would be granted the same opportunity to be heard as described above before a final decision is made.
- The regular OLFC category would be intended primarily for those rostered ministers who for various reasons are choosing to step away from active ministry for a season. Others may be granted a synod council letter of call to supply ministry.
- Increase the time limit for regular OLFC to six years to match the limits for family and study leave, still with the possibility of being granted extensions to that leave. Rostered ministers already on leave would have their current leave extended to the new limit.
- Establish in the ELCA Constitution the possibility of a synod council letter of call to supply ministry that would be a one-year term call, renewable annually, for those ministers of Word and Sacrament who do not have a settled call but who remain active in ministry. This type of call would not be eligible as a first call for those candidates seeking ordination.
- Establish policies and standards in the roster manual for those who have a letter of call to supply ministry that includes minimum thresholds for service and a requirement of annual reporting to the synod bishop of the minister's exercise of the call, with that report to be incorporated into the regular annual report form required of all rostered ministers.
- Encourage synods to consider whether ministers of Word and Service without a regular call may actually be engaged in an employment that could qualify as a call.
- Include in the ELCA bylaws that a rostered minister who resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, may be granted permission to hold membership in a congregation of one of our full communion partners. (This possibility has already been granted to those rostered ministers with retired or disability status.)
- Change the title from "on leave from call" to simply "on leave" to stress that the rostered minister is temporarily on voluntary leave, but to avoid suggesting that the Spirit's call to ministry has been withdrawn.

*(See Appendix for proposed changes to the Constitution and certain of the proposed changes to the roster manual. Additional changes to roster manual policy will be drafted following action by the Churchwide Assembly.)*

### **Interim Ministry**

As detailed above, the task force learned that calls to interim ministry are handled very differently from synod to synod, which can lead to inequity. The task force believes that issuance of a synod letter of call to interim ministry should be the norm in most situations, while still leaving discretion to the synod bishop and synod council to vary from that norm if there are circumstances that call for it, such as a very short-term interim that is better addressed by a supply pastor.

Synods have also asked that ministers of Word and Service be given the possibility of a synod council letter of call to serve as an interim deacon in a congregation. It should be stressed that this is not to be understood as granting sacramental authority to a deacon to serve as an interim pastor. However, a deacon could receive a synod call to serve as an interim congregation deacon and the synod bishop could separately, under the established policies, authorize that deacon to also serve as a synod-authorized minister (SAM).

### ***Recommendations for Interim Ministry:***

- Establish in the bylaws that rostered ministers serving in an interim ministry shall normally serve under a letter of call. (The existing exception will be maintained that allows ministers with retired status to be appointed to serve an interim without a letter of call.)
- Add “interim congregation deacon” to the Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service in the ELCA Constitution.

### **Retired Roster Status**

This task force was asked by the Church Council to incorporate into its work the previous work of a task force that was created to look at roster manual policies regarding the granting of retired roster status, triennial review of those with retired roster status, and revocation of retired status.

Many of the issues laid out above concerning the granting of OLFC status are similar to those that exist for the retired status. The task force believes that these requests should follow the same protocol as requests for OLFC, with the rostered minister being granted opportunity to present a position in the case of a recommendation for denial or revocation of status.

### ***Recommendations for Retired Roster Status:***

- Establish policies in the roster manual that require the following: (*See Appendix.*)
  - All requests for granting or revocation of retired status will be voted on by the Synod Council.
  - The synod bishop will make a recommendation to the Synod Council regarding approval or denial of the status request.
  - The bishop will communicate the recommendation to the rostered minister prior to the Synod Council vote.
  - If the recommendation is for denial of status, the rostered minister will be granted an opportunity to address a designated committee.
  - After hearing from the rostered minister and the synod bishop, the committee may request that the bishop convene a consultation panel to investigate further and make recommendations to the Synod Council. The decision of the synod council is final.
  - If the Synod Council wishes to override the synod bishop’s positive recommendation for retired status, the rostered minister would be granted the same opportunity to be heard as described above before a final decision is made.
- Provide in the roster manual clear guidelines for synod councils to use in the review of retired status currently mandated at least triennially.

### **Average Time Requirements for Calls**

Current policy requires that all calls must require an average minimum of 15 hours per week. As described above, however, an increasing number of ministry situations do not require (or cannot afford) that many hours of service.

The task force believes that it would be wise to eliminate average time requirements for non-stipendiary and supply ministry calls and establish policies to set minimum accountability standards for those calls, and to reduce the requirement for a regular letter of call to 10 hours average minimum per week. Rostered ministers who are working less than 15 hours per week would be advised that their call does not qualify for Portico benefits. The churchwide organization would work with Portico to create a mechanism for a sponsoring entity to report whether a call meets Portico’s threshold for sponsorship.

### ***Recommendations for Average Time Requirements for Calls:***

- Eliminate average time requirements for non-stipendiary and supply ministry calls and establish policies in the roster manual for minimum accountability standards.
- Reduce the average time requirement for regular calls to 10 hours per week.

### **Specialized Ministry**

Because of time constraints, the task force was unable to fully engage the questions raised regarding specialized ministry. We are not prepared at this time, for example, to make recommendations regarding letters of call for pastoral counseling, which is an area of ministry that raises unique questions of liability for the synods.

Questions concerning the ordination of candidates to interim ministry still need to be raised with the Conference of Bishops, as do questions regarding calls to non-congregational settings and other forms of innovative or specialized ministry. Current policy allows for exceptions to the three-year congregational service bylaw to be granted by the COB upon recommendation by the Roster Committee, so a path to a letter of call does exist, and a number of these exceptions are granted twice yearly when the Conference meets. However, this is seen by many as a slow process. At the heart of this discussion are all the issues of how we are to understand calling to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. It may be that some of these ministries are better served by ministers of Word and Service. Also to be considered is the conviction strongly held by many that three years of pastoral formation in a congregation is a great benefit to this church. Others hold an equally strong conviction that the three-year bylaw restrains the movement of the Spirit into new ministries.

### ***Recommendations for Specialized Ministry***

- The task force believes that additional time should be spent over coming months to continue in its study and discernment in this area. An additional report and recommendations will be presented to the Conference of Bishops and Church Council at the spring 2025 meetings. Listening sessions will be held with rostered ministers in January.

### **Conclusion**

The Task Force on On Leave from Call and Specialized Ministry is grateful for the opportunity to meet together and to engage rostered ministers from across this church in envisioning faithful, just, and equitable policies that will also serve the needs of the gospel in the many and varied contexts in which our rostered ministers serve. We have heard the voices of ministers deeply pained by their experiences in those times of waiting for a new call, as well as the voices of those who believe that our current policies need to change in those places where they may hinder the work and call of the Spirit. Our prayer as a group is that the recommendations we make might tend to the needs of our rostered ministers and that they might offer good order in a time of change, while remaining open to the new thing to which the Spirit is calling this church.

### ***Members of the Task Force:***

Mr. Philip Allen

Ms. Yvonne Curtis

Bishop Paul Erickson

Ms. Julie Grindle

Bishop Constanze Hagmaier

Bishop Kurt Kusserow

Deacon Krista Lind

The Rev. Gabriel Marcano

The Rev. Keats Miles-Wallace

Deacon Karla Neumann Smiley

The Rev. Charles Pierson Shaw



## APPENDIX

**7.31.07. On Leave from Call.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, and who requests a temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the minister of Word and Sacrament is a member of the synod on whose roster the minister is listed, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such leave shall be reviewed annually and may be terminated by the Synod Council if it no longer meets the criteria under which it was granted.

- a. Normative Pattern Regular Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, a A minister of Word and Sacrament who is without a current letter of call and who has requested temporary leave from active ministry may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of ~~three~~ six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synod bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit, a A minister of Word and Sacrament engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Sacrament may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, such a minister of Word and Sacrament who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Sacrament or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church— under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council— for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- d. Exception Extensions to of these time limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.
- e. Ministers who have been granted on-leave status are expected to maintain membership in a congregation of this church. If a minister of Word and Sacrament who has been granted on-leave status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Sacrament to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**7.41.01. Service under Call.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a Synod Council, a Synod Assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide

unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.44.A19.

- b. A pastor serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a pastor shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.
- ~~e. Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in interim ministry appointed by the synod bishop may serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop.~~

**7.41.03.** Calls to Interim Ministry. Ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in interim ministry shall normally serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop. Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have retired status may be appointed by the synod bishop without a letter of call.

**7.41.04.** Calls to Supply Ministry. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, and upon recommendation of the synod bishop, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a minister of Word and Sacrament for supply ministry. The minister of Word and Sacrament shall include a description of this ministry in the annual report to the synod bishop. A call to supply ministry is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it no longer fulfills the criteria under which it was issued.

[RENUMBER OLD 7.41.03. through 7.41.09]

**7.44.A19. Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament**

*a. Principles for Sources of Calls*

- 1) A “call” is an action by expressions of this church, as specified in the “Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament,” through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a “letter of call.”
- 2) Interdependence within the body of this church suggests that any action of one of its entities affects other entities. Therefore, interdependence is expressed in all calls extended within this church.
- 3) A call expresses a relationship between this church and the person called involving mutual service, support, accountability, supervision, and discipline.
- 4) A letter of call is issued by that expression of this church authorized to do so which is most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.
- 5) Decisions on calls for ministries in unusual circumstances not otherwise provided for but deemed to be in the interests of this church’s care of the Gospel are referred to the Conference of Bishops for recommendation to the appropriate calling body.

*b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament*

	Setting	Calling Body
1.0	<i>Congregational ministry</i>	
1.1	<i>Single congregation</i>	<i>Congregation meeting</i>
	1.11 <i>Pastor</i>	
	1.12 <i>Senior pastor</i>	
	1.13 <i>Associate/assistant pastor</i>	
	1.14 <i>Co-pastor</i>	
	1.15 <i>Shared-time pastor</i>	
1.2	<i>Multiple-congregation parish</i>	<i>Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal</i>
	1.21 <i>Pastor</i>	<i>One of the participating congregations</i>
	1.22 <i>Other pastoral arrangements</i>	<i>One of the participating congregations</i>
1.3	<i>Coalition and cluster ministry</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.4	<i>Congregations beyond this church</i>	
	1.41 <i>Independent Lutheran congregation</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
	1.42 <i>Overseas independent Lutheran congregation</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
	1.43 <i>Full communion congregation</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
	1.44 <i>Other</i>	<i>Synod Council or Church Council</i>
1.5	<i>Interim pastor</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.6	<i>Pastor in a synod-authorized ministry</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
2.0	<i>Synod ministry</i>	
2.1	<i>Bishop</i>	<i>Synod Assembly</i>

INSERT: 1.7      Supply Pastor      Synod Council

## 7.74.A21. Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service

### b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service

	Setting	Calling Body
1.0	<i>Congregational ministry</i>	
1.1	<i>Single congregation</i>	<i>Congregation meeting</i>
1.2	<i>Multiple-congregation parish</i>	<i>Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal, with one of the participating congregations issuing the call</i>
1.3	<i>Coalition and cluster ministry</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.4	<i>Congregations beyond this church</i>	
1.41	<i>Independent Lutheran congregations</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.42	<i>Full communion congregation</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.43	<i>Deacon in a synod-authorized ministry</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.44	<i>Other</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.5	<u><i>Interim congregation</i></u> <u><i>deacon</i></u>	<u><i>Synod Council</i></u>

**7.61.08. On Leave from Call.** A minister of Word and Service of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, and who requests a temporary leave from active ministry, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the minister of Word and Sacrament is a member of the synod on whose roster the minister is listed, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such leave shall be reviewed annually and may be terminated by the Synod Council if it no longer meets the criteria under which it was granted.

- a. Normative Pattern Regular Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, a A minister of Word and Service who is without a current letter of call and who has requested temporary leave from active ministry may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of ~~three~~ six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synod bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit a A minister of Word and Service engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Service in this church, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- c. Family Leave: A minister of Word and Service may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synod bishop, such a minister of Word and Service who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the minister of Word and Service or the care of an immediate

family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church—~~under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council~~— for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.

- d. ~~Exception to Extensions of~~ these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.
- e. If a minister of Word and Service who has been granted on-leave status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no congregations of this church in the vicinity, other than a congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster may grant permission for the minister of Word and Service to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

#### SELECTED PROPOSED ROSTER MANUAL CHANGES

Page 31, under “Definition and criteria for on leave from call status”

(See also page 66, items 4 and 5 for Ministers of Word and Service—parallel changes to be made there)

Proposed language:

- o ~~4) If a rostered minister requesting on-leave from call status desires to make a personal statement relative to the request, the Synod Council may, at its discretion and in the manner of its determination, allow for a personal appearance by the rostered minister to the Synod Council (or its designated committee). The synod bishop shall make a recommendation to the Synod Council whether to grant or deny on-leave status, and shall inform the rostered minister of the nature of the recommendation prior to the Synod Council taking action. If the bishop recommends granting on-leave status, the Synod Council shall determine, in its discretion, whether to grant that status. If the bishop recommends that the rostered minister not be granted on-leave status, the bishop shall inform the rostered minister that the minister has the right make a personal statement to the Synod Council (or its designated committee), in the manner of the Synod Council’s determination, before it acts on the bishop’s recommendation. The rostered minister shall be given a reasonable amount of time to respond to this notification. The Synod Council (or its designated committee) may request that the bishop convene a consultation panel to investigate the situation more fully and make recommendations to the Synod Council. If the Synod Council wishes to override the synod bishop’s positive recommendation for leave, the rostered minister would be granted the same opportunity to be heard as described above before a final decision is made.~~

~~5) On-leave-from-call status is not automatically granted. Action granting or denying leave from call is to be taken by the Synod Council [ELCA constitutional provision 20.17., bylaw 7.31.07., and †S8.12.i.9. in the Constitution for Synods] upon endorsement by the synod bishop within 90 days of receiving a recommendation from the synod bishop. A committee may be designated by the bishop to evaluate applications and bring recommendations to the Synod Council through the synod bishop for action.~~

Page 36, under “Policy and procedures related to retired status”

(See also page 71 for ministers of Word and Service—parallel changes to be made there)

- c. ~~The synod bishop shall determine whether the minister of Word and Sacrament [Service] is eligible for retired status and whether, in the bishop’s sole discretion, to recommend to the Synod Council that such roster status be granted. If the synod bishop does not endorse the request, the bishop shall report the decision to the Synod Council, in executive session if deemed necessary to recommend to the Synod Council that such roster status be granted. The bishop shall inform the rostered minister of the nature of the recommendation prior to the Synod Council taking action. If the synod bishop recommends granting retired status, the Synod Council shall determine, in its discretion, whether to grant retired status. If the bishop recommends that the rostered minister not be granted retired status, the bishop shall inform the rostered minister that the minister has the right to make a personal statement to the Synod Council (or its designated committee) in the manner of the Synod Council’s determination, before it acts on the bishop’s recommendation. The rostered minister shall be given a reasonable amount of time to respond to this notification. The Synod Council (or its designated committee) may request that the bishop convene a consultation panel to investigate the situation more fully and make recommendations to the Synod Council. If the synod bishop does endorse the request, †The Synod Council shall determine, in its discretion, whether to grant retired status. If the Synod Council wishes to override the synod bishop’s positive recommendation for retired status, the rostered minister would be granted the same opportunity to be heard as described above before a final decision is made.~~

**Other committee or board**  
**Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago**

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**Mr. DeWayne Allen Cook**

**Synod:** RCA  
**Congregation:** Ecumenical  
**Birthdate:** 10/14/1981 **Gender:** Man  
**Primary Language:** English **Ethnicity:** African American/Black Non-Hispanic  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

5285 Explorer Drive  
Apt 212  
Kalamazoo, MI 49009 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 6124330006 (Cell)

**Email:**

cook1da@gmail.com (Home)

**Educational Institutions:**

Davenport University (2010-2013): Bachelor Of Business Admin  
Davenport University (2013-2015): Master Of Arts In Management

**Employment:**

Chief Development Officer (11/13/2023 - Present )  
Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, MI

**Previous Employment:**

Lutheran World Relief (2023-2023)  
ELCA Churchwide Office - Development (2019-2023)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

Childwide Office - Development (2019-2023)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

Having had the privilege of serving on the board and being elected as its secretary, I have experienced firsthand the powerful impact of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago mission in shaping future leaders of the church and advancing theological education rooted in justice, compassion, and faith. My sense of calling remains strong as I continue to serve God's mission through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). I believe that my gifts in leadership, philanthropy, and relationship-building are well-suited to furthering the vital work of LSTC. With over 15 years of major gift fundraising experience and a deep commitment to health equity and faith-based community initiatives, I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to LSTC's growth and sustainability. I have been privileged to help guide discussions and decisions that support the strategic goals of the institution.

**Alternate Committee Nominations:**

1. Nominating Committee
2. Committee on Discipline
3. Committee of Hearing Officers

**Reference:** Rachel Wind **Phone:**7733802415 **E-mail:**rachel.wind@elca.org

**Relationship:** former Leader

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**Other committee or board**  
**Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago**

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**Ms. Patricia Zoe Cornelius Woods**

**Synod:** Episcopalian  
**Congregation:** Ecumenical  
**Birthdate:** 10/14/1956 **Gender:** Woman  
**Primary Language:** English **Ethnicity:** African American/Black Non-Hispanic  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

9437  
S. Hamilton Ave  
Chicago, IL 60643 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 3125022495 (Cell)

**Email:**

pzcwoods2@gmail.com (Home)

**Educational Institutions:**

Wellesley College (1974-1978): Bachelor Of Arts  
University of Chicago Graduate School of Business (1989-1992): Master Of Business Administration  
University of Chicago (1989-1992): Master Of Social Work

**Employment:**

Director of Finance and Administration (01/01/2003 - 08/22/2008)  
Northwestern Memorial Foundation  
Chicago, IL

**Previous Employment:**

Northwestern Memorial Hospital (1992-2003)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

Warden, Diocesan Council, Episcopal Diocese of Chicago (2023-2024)  
Member, Diocesan Council, Episcopal Diocese of Chicago (2020-2024)  
Treasurer, Messiah-St Bartholomew Episcopal Church (2012-2024)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

In both my own congregation and during my tenure on the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Chicago. I have witnessed the growing challenges facing the Episcopal Church and shared with other denominations including ELCA. One of the most critical of these challenges is how to foster and develop faithful, innovative clergy and lay leadership equipped to provide spiritual guidance to a hurting people as they face an often tumultuous and changing future. Having had the opportunity to work with several LSTC alumni, it is evident to me that the Lutheran School of Theology of Chicago is committed to addressing this critical need. I am honored to have been nominated to the Board of the LSTC, and I look forward to the opportunity to offer my twenty plus years of experience in non-for-profit financial management and strategic planning to support LSTC in fulfillment of its mission and goals.

**Reference:** Andrea Mysen, Canon to the Ordinary **Phone:**3127514203 **E-mail:**amysen@episcopalchicago.org  
**Relationship:** Colleague

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**Other committee or board**  
**Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago**

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**Mr. Oswald Gregory Lewis**

**Synod:** Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA, (5A)  
**Congregation:** Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church (ID: 30469) - Chicago, Illinois  
**Birthdate:** 02/01/1948 **Gender:** Man  
**Primary Language:** English **Ethnicity:** African American/Black Non-Hispanic  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

1201 S. Prairie Avenue  
4201  
Chicago, IL 60605 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 7732978424 (Home)

**Email:**

greglewis.lewis@gmail.com (Home)

**Educational Institutions:**

Oberlin College (1965-1969): Bachelor Of Arts  
Northwestern Law School (1969-1972): Doctor Of Jurisprudence  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (2003-2007): Doctor Of Ministry

**Employment:**

Adjunct Professor of Health Care Law (09/01/2011 - 09/01/2013)  
DePaul Law Schol  
Chicago, IL

**Previous Employment:**

US Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Regional Counsel (1999-2008)  
Carney and Brothers Law Firm (1996-1998)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

Bethlehem ELCA Council (2010-2024)  
St Mark's ELCA Council President (2000-2010)  
Peace Lutheran Church Washington, D.C. Council President (1992-1998)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

Even from adolescence I have been called to serve as an acolyte and Sunday School teacher (St. James Lutheran Church Chicago). This calling has continued and expanded to include Confirmation Class teaching and Council leadership in other ELCA churches (see above). Today there is a clear need for educational leadership in the African American community and I feel I can serve this need.

**Alternate Committee Nominations:**

1. Church Council

**Reference:** Bisho Yahiel Curry **Phone:**7737329501 **E-mail:**ycurry@mcsela.org

**Relationship:** Friend

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**Other committee or board**  
**Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago**

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**Mr. Laurence John Tietjen**

**Synod:** Central States Synod, ELCA, (4B)  
**Congregation:** Trinity Lutheran Church (ID: 07613) - Chesterfield, Missouri  
**Birthdate:** 05/12/1958      **Gender:** Man  
**Primary Language:** English      **Ethnicity:** White  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

965 Kimswick Manor Lane  
Ballwin, MO 63011 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 3144823008 (Cell)

**Email:**

ljtietjen@gmail.com (Home)

**Educational Institutions:**

Valparaiso University (1976-1980): Bachelor Of Science Engineering

**Employment:**

President CEO (10/01/1981 - 01/10/2020)  
Experitec, Inc  
Chesterfield , MO

**Previous Employment:**

Monsanto Chemical Company (1980-1981)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

LSTC Foundation Board of Trustees (1998-2021)  
Chair LSTC Foundation Board of Trustees (2021-)  
Council Member, Vice President, Trinity Lutheran Church (2022-)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

Christie my wife and I have had a passion for the development of men and women to be leaders in ministry in the world. I have served on the LSTC Foundation board for over 20 years and have come to know the faculty, staff, and students at LSTC. Through this I understand the distinctive value that LSTC provides in creating leaders for the ELCA and the world. As a business owner and leader, I have competencies in the area of Finance as well as Sales and Marketing. I have utilized these as a foundation board member in support of LSTC as an Investment and Advancement committee member and now as Chair of the Foundation Board. As a President and CEO I have leadership and leadership development competencies and my top five gallop strengths are Strategic, Ideation, Futuristic, Maximizer, and Belief. I believe these strengths are a good fit for a board role. I am also an MBIT certified coach.

**Reference:** Harry Mueller    **Phone:**3145406492    **E-mail:**hcmuel@aol.com

**Relationship:** Friend, Foundation Trustee, Congregational Member

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**Other committee or board**  
**Wartburg Theological Seminary**

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**The Rev. Andrea F DeGroot-Nesdahl**

**Synod:** South Dakota Synod, Elca, (3C)  
**Congregation:** Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (ID: 16318) - Sioux Falls, South Dakota  
**Birthdate:** 01/09/1950      **Gender:** Woman  
**Primary Language:** English      **Ethnicity:** White  
**Rostered:** 3C      **Leader Key:**  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

920 West 36th Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 6053598726 (Cell)

**Email:**

BISHOPADN@aol.com (Home)

**Educational Institutions:**

Wartburg Theological Seminary (1973-1977): Master Of Divinity  
University of North Dakota (1968-1971): Bachelor Of Arts  
Wartburg Theological Seminary (Date not specified.): Honorary Degree

**Employment:**

Retired (01/10/2015 - Present )

Retired

Sioux Falls, SD

**Previous Employment:**

South Dakota Synod Bishop (1995-2007)  
Southwestern Minnesota Synod - Associate to the Bishop (2012-2014)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

ELCA; Director of ELCA Malaria Campaign and HIV/AIDS Strategy (2008-2011)  
Northeastern Iowa Synod - Interim Bishop (2020-2021)  
South Dakota Synod - Bishop (1995-2007)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

I desire to continue my service on the Wartburg Seminary Board. I have served in several capacities related to the Board, and on it, since 2012, It seems my length of Board service now affords me the vantage point of knowing history and having gleaned some wisdom which the Board appreciates as we guide our institution into the future. I have discerned that God is not finished with me yet, and continues to provide opportunities for service and learning in and through the institutions of the Church.

**Alternate Committee Nominations:**

1. Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services)
2. Committee on Discipline
3. Committee on Appeals

**Reference:** Pres. Kristin Largen **Phone:**6053598726 **E-mail:**klargen@wartburgseminary.edu

**Relationship:** President of Wartburg Seminary where I serve on Board of Trustees; friend

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**Other committee or board**  
**Wartburg Theological Seminary**

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**Ms. Debra ann Hibbard**

**Synod:** Saint Paul Area Synod, ELCA, (3H)  
**Congregation:** St Andrew's Lutheran Church (ID: 03078) - Mahtomedi, Minnesota  
**Birthdate:** 12/22/1964      **Gender:** Woman  
**Primary Language:** English      **Ethnicity:** Latino/Latina  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

4873 STEWART AVE  
SAINT PAUL, MN 55110 United States

**Residential Mailing Address:**

4873 STEWART AVE  
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**Telephone:**

Preferred: 6513281265 (Cell)

**Email:**

debra.hibbard@isd624.org (Work)

**Educational Institutions:**

University of Texas (1982-1987): Bachelor Of Science  
University of St. Thomas (2007-2009): Master Of Science In Education

**Employment:**

Elementary school teacher (08/01/2008 - Present )  
White Bear Lake schools  
SAINT PAUL, MN

**Previous Employment:**

Tokyo Union Church (2005-2007)  
American School in Japan (2001-2005)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

Tokyo Union Church (2001-2007)  
Christ church C of E- Surrey (2000-2001)  
King of Kings Lutheran Woodbury, MN (1994-2000)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

As a dedicated educator, I believe that my unique gifts, skills, and experiences contribute significantly to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment. I possess a deep passion for teaching and a commitment to nurturing each student's potential. My strong communication skills enable me to connect with students from various backgrounds, fostering a sense of belonging. I am skilled in differentiating instruction, ensuring that every learner's needs are met, and I strive to create engaging and relevant lessons that resonate with diverse perspectives. I believe that can help the board with adding this teacher voice. Life Experiences: My own diverse life experiences have shaped my understanding of the world and the importance of inclusivity. My faith drives my commitment to inclusivity. I believe that every student is a cherished part of God's creation, I believe that I bring a different perspective to the board and draw on that lens of God's inclusivity.

**Alternate Committee Nominations:**

1. Church Council

**Reference:** Mike Carlson    **Phone:**6513281265    **E-mail:**debra.hibbard@isd624.org

**Relationship:** My pastor

10/16/2024 4:54:26 PM

**Other committee or board**  
**Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary**

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**The Rev. Marjorie Ann Funk-Pihl**

**Synod:** Southwest California Synod, ELCA, (2B)  
**Congregation:** Mount Carmel Lutheran Church (ID: 13985) - San Luis Obispo, California  
**Birthdate:** 03/26/1959      **Gender:** Woman  
**Primary Language:** English      **Ethnicity:** White  
**Rostered:** 2B      **Leader Key:** L001216  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

5005 Palmetto Ave  
#58  
Pacifica, CA 94044 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 8055401601 (Cell)

**Email:**

marj@livingtheresurrection.com (Work)

**Educational Institutions:**

Fuller Theological Seminary (2015-2020): Doctor Of Ministry  
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (1993-1996): Certificate  
Seattle Pacific University (1990-1993): Master Of Arts

**Employment:**

Primary Consultant (09/01/2021 - Present )  
Living the Resurrection  
Pacifica, CA

**Previous Employment:**

ELCA DEM SWCA (2014-2021)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

Senior Pastor, Mt Carmel Lutheran Church, San Luis Obispo, CA (2006-2014)  
Associate Pastor, First Lutheran Richmond Beach, Shoreline, WA (1997-2006)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

The ELCA Vision statement describes the world God is pulling us toward. Our Purpose statement reminds us that we are called to participate in God's great vision. These statements resonate with how God has been leading me throughout my career, but especially in the last ten years. I am called to build the capacity of congregation members to love God, love one another and love their neighbors. I earned a Doctorate of Intercultural Studies which focuses on the intersection between the Church, the Word, and the World. My research supported congregations as they partnered with neighbors to do something good for the neighborhood. I earned a Certificate of Advanced Theological Studies at PLTS. We lived and studied up on the hill, far from the world below. Being in the city makes the relationship between PLTS and its neighbors urgent and obvious. It is a physical reminder to every student that we are called to work in the world, not just in the church. I'd be honored to serve on this board.

**Reference:** R. Guy Erwin    **Phone:**8059076605    **E-mail:**gerwin@uls.edu

**Relationship:** He was Bishop of SWCA when I was DEM of SWCA

10/1/2024 3:30:52 PM

## Other committee or board

### Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

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#### The Rev. Jeff R Johnson

**Synod:** Sierra Pacific Synod, ELCA, (2A)  
**Congregation:** University Lutheran Chapel (ID: 20003) - Berkeley, California  
**Birthdate:** 06/21/1962      **Gender:** Man  
**Primary Language:** English      **Ethnicity:** White  
**Rostered:** 2A      **Leader Key:**  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

#### **Preferred Mailing Address: (Work)**

2000 Center Street  
Suite 200  
Berkeley, CA 94704 United States

#### **Residential Mailing Address:**

121 Entrada Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94611 United States

#### **Telephone:**

Preferred: 510-757-36 (Cell)

#### **Email:**

bishopjeff@spselca.org (Work)

#### **Educational Institutions:**

California Lutheran University (1980-1984): Bachelor Of Arts  
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (1984-1988): Master Of Divinity

#### **Employment:**

Bishop (11/01/2023 - Present )  
Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA  
Berkeley, CA

#### **Previous Employment:**

University Lutheran Chapel of Berkeley (1999-2023)  
First United Lutheran Church, San Francisco (1990-1999)

#### **Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

University Lutheran Chapel of Berkeley (1999-2023)  
First United Lutheran Church, San Francisco (1990-1999)

#### **What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

I am deeply committed to the training of rostered and non-rostered leaders for the proclamation of the gospel. PLTS of CLU shares this commitment and is striving to make the gospel known in new ways and to create leaders for the next era of ministry.

**Reference:** The Rev. Dr. Ray Pickett    **Phone:**5105590340    **E-mail:**rpickett@plts.edu

**Relationship:** Colleague and friend

9/23/2024 12:00:13 PM

**Other committee or board**  
**National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc.**

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**Ms. Anne Marie Gerrietts**

**Synod:** Saint Paul Area Synod, ELCA, (3H)  
**Congregation:** St Timothy Lutheran Church (ID: 11936) - Saint Paul, Minnesota  
**Birthdate:** 11/23/1973      **Gender:** Woman  
**Primary Language:** English      **Ethnicity:** White  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

2607 Fernwood Court  
Roseville, MN 55113 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 5635806230 (Cell)

**Email:**

amgerrietts@outlook.com (Home)

**Educational Institutions:**

Augustana University - Sioux Falls, SD (1992-1995): Bachelor Of Arts  
Washington University - St. Louis, MO (1995-1997): Bachelor Of Science Engineering

**Employment:**

Church Building Consultant (04/03/2023 - Present )  
Vanman Architects and Builders  
Minneapolis, MN

**Previous Employment:**

CentralSquare Technologies (2022-2023)  
Episcopal Church Building Fund (2021-2021)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

St. Timothy LC - council member (2022-2024)  
St. Timothy LC - capital campaign committee & seasons of renewal team (2023-2025)  
St. Paul area synod - voting member (multiple years), elections committee (2021-2024)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

Lutheran Campus Ministry has made significant impact on my faith and life - first as a student and then as a board member for LCM-TC. For that reason I feel God calling me to serve and support the Lutheran Campus Ministry efforts as part of the National LCM board. Prior to the work positions listed above, I served as a Church Building Consultant with the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA for 12 years. In that time I was privledged with work with congregations and ministries across the country to review their facilities and help them determine how best their buildings and grounds could support their ministry. My knowledge of buildings and connections throughout the ELCA are gifts that I would bring to working on the board along with my passion for LCM and the ELCA.

**Reference:** Pastor Hans Jorgensen    **Phone:**6514890336    **E-mail:**hans@sttimothylutheran.org

**Relationship:** Pastor at my church

10/8/2024 6:51:28 PM

**Other committee or board**  
**National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc.**

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**Mr. David Neas Schaeffer**

**Synod:** South Carolina Synod, ELCA, (9C)  
**Congregation:** St Matthew Lutheran Church (ID: 05674) - Charleston, South Carolina  
**Birthdate:** 07/30/1956                      **Gender:** Man  
**Primary Language:** English                      **Ethnicity:** White  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

341 Governor's Drive  
Kiawah Island, SC 29455 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 4043099536 (Cell)

**Email:**

dschaefferlawfirm@gmail.com (Home)

**Educational Institutions:**

Duke University (1974-1978): Bachelor Of Arts  
UVA Law School (1978-1981): Doctor Of Jurisprudence

**Employment:**

Attorney - Of Counsel (01/03/2011 - Present )  
Chilivis Grubman Law Firm  
Atlanta, GA

**Previous Employment:**

Kidd & Vaughan, LLP (law firm partner) (1981-2010)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

St. Luke Lutheran Church - Atlanta - Assisting Minister (1983-2019)  
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church - Charleston (2019-2024)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

My grandfather, H. Brent Schaeffer, and father, William B. Schaeffer, were Lutheran pastors. My grandfather also served as President of Lenoir-Rhyne College. I grew up in the church and know how important it is to minister to youth, especially in the college years. Religion was one of my majors at Duke, as I considered following in my father's footsteps. However, I ended up going to law school and had a very successful law practice in Atlanta for 38 years, helping people through difficult times in their lives. As President of the Atlanta Bar Association in 2010, I developed a grant program to help fund pro bono legal service providers and community service projects, so I am familiar with the grant application and analysis process which is the central role of NLCM, Inc. I am also an author of three books, including a beautiful Lutheran love story called "Letters from Sweden," which recently was featured in the "Living Lutheran." I also have a charitable fundraising background.

**Reference:** Pastor Eric Childers    **E-mail:** pastor@smlccharleston.org

**Relationship:** He is my pastor at St. Matthew's in Charleston, SC.

10/26/2024 8:29:41 PM



**Other committee or board**  
**National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc.**

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**The Rev. Herb G Wounded Head**

**Synod:** South Dakota Synod, Elca, (3C)  
**Congregation:** First Lutheran Church (ID: 13545) - Colton, South Dakota  
**Birthdate:** 03/07/1971 **Gender:** Man  
**Primary Language:** English **Ethnicity:** American Indian/Alaska Native  
**Rostered:** 3C **Leader Key:** LO27596  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Work)**

405 E 3rd St  
Colton, SD 57108 United States

**Residential Mailing Address:**

1708 S 6th Ave  
Sioux Falls, SD 57105 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 6056900329 (Cell)  
Alternate: 6054463271 (Work)

**Email:**

herbwh@gmail.com (Work)

**Educational Institutions:**

Augustana University (1989-1993): Bachelor Of Arts  
Luther Seminary (2000-2004): Master Of Divinity

**Employment:**

Pastor (03/15/2022 - Present )  
Colton Lutheran Parish  
Colton, SD

**Previous Employment:**

Grace Lutheran Church - Sisseton, SD (2021-2022)  
University Lutheran Center (2014-2020)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

Committee on Discipline - Churchwide (2023-2024)  
Synod Planning Committee - Synod (2022-2024)  
Multicultural Committee - Synod (2004-2016)

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

I feel that my sense of calling into this is to provide a voice that may not always be heard, or a perspective that is not always seen. As a bicultural person, I understand the complications of living in a world that is set up in a way that was not meant to benefit people of my upbringing. As a former campus pastor, I also understand the challenges that campus ministries face as well as the challenges of the people to whom they minister. I feel that I am an active listener as well as someone who seeks to understand. I was accepted into the First Parish Project funded by the Lilly Foundation in my first call through which I gained invaluable insights on management of the parish and of the self. Primarily though, I know of my need to hear the good news, and try to make that grace heard in whatever capacity I am allowed to serve.

**Alternate Committee Nominations:**

1. Publishing House (1517 Media) Board of Trustees
2. Church Council

**Reference:** The Rev Dan Overbo **Phone:**6058862696 **E-mail:**danoverbo@hotmail.com

**Relationship:** Colleague

10/23/2024 10:12:03 AM

## Publishing House (1517 Media) Board of Trustees

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### Ms. Shelly Talcott

**Synod:** Delaware-Maryland Synod, Elca, (8F)  
**Congregation:** The Canton Mission/Church On The Square (ID: 31075) - Baltimore, Maryland  
**Birthdate:** 05/21/1980      **Gender:** Woman  
**Primary Language:** English      **Ethnicity:** White  
**Willing to serve:** Yes

**Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)**

2515 Boston Street  
901  
Baltimore, MD 21224 United States

**Telephone:**

Preferred: 6128160179 (Home)

**Email:**

shelly.hochhalter@gmail.com (Home)

**Educational Institutions:**

Gustavus Adolphus College (1998-2002): Bachelor Of Arts

**Employment:**

Chief of Staff (12/04/2023 - Present )

Global Refuge

Baltimore, MD

**Previous Employment:**

Lutheran World Relief (2011-2023)

**Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:**

Grace Lutheran Church

**What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?**

I am excited about the possibilities of serving on the board of 1517 Media. My background includes an English Degree and an original calling into editing. I now have professional experience in marketing and communications, strategy, and organizational effectiveness and design. I also have hands-on experience staffing boards and committees and feel that I can bring a very healthy perspective to the board.

**Reference:** Kathi Tunheim    **Phone:**6122516106

**Relationship:** Former board member

9/25/2024 7:45:07 PM

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# Church Council Meeting

Racial Justice & Gender Justice

**November 15**  
**2024**

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# Session Objectives

Name what grace is for you.

Reflect on how a Lutheran understanding of grace can shape and guide your work.

Examine characteristics of white supremacy and patriarchy and give examples.

Practice embodying racial justice and gender justice commitments of this church in your role as a church council members.



# How are we working Together?

Respectful Communication Guidelines



## RESPONSIBILITY

Take Responsibility for what you say and feel without blaming others.



## EMPATHETIC

Use Empathetic listening.



## SENSITIVE

Be Sensitive to differences in communication styles.



## PONDER

Ponder what you hear and feel before you speak.



## EXAMINE

Examine your own assumptions and perceptions.



## CONFIDENTIALITY

Keep Confidentiality.



## TRUST

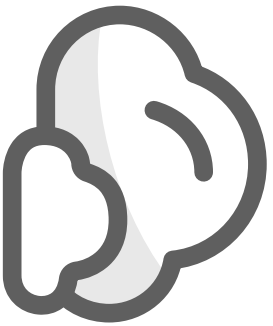
Trust ambiguity because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong.

Resource:

The KI Tool Kit

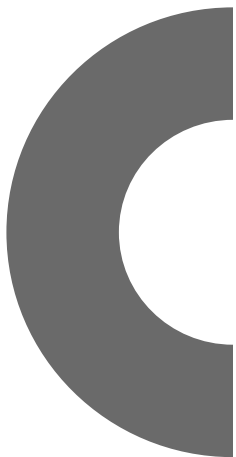
**slido**

Please download and install the Slido app on all computers you use



**What is grace for you?**

**i** Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



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# DEVOTION

Iván Perez

Church Council member  
St. Luke's Lutheran Church  
of Logan Square, Chicago



## Journal and share

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### **Reflect and Journal**

Related to racial justice and gender justice/white supremacy and patriarchy, identify one way *within your work as Church Council members* you can reimagine someone embodying grace for you AND you embodying grace for someone else.

### **Share**

Turn to a partner and share.





## Let's Practice

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### **One**

In groups of three, discuss one thing that stood out to you in each of the tools.

### **Two**

Give three concrete examples of three separate characteristics from each sheet.

### **Three**

Return to the full group.

Be

Gracie.

B  
R  
E  
A  
K

This church's work is ongoing and flows from our faith convictions.

Sometimes our faith convictions clash with historic and contemporary forces.

### Gender Justice

1972, "Women and Men in Church and Society," American Lutheran Church

2019 this church named patriarchy as systemic sin.

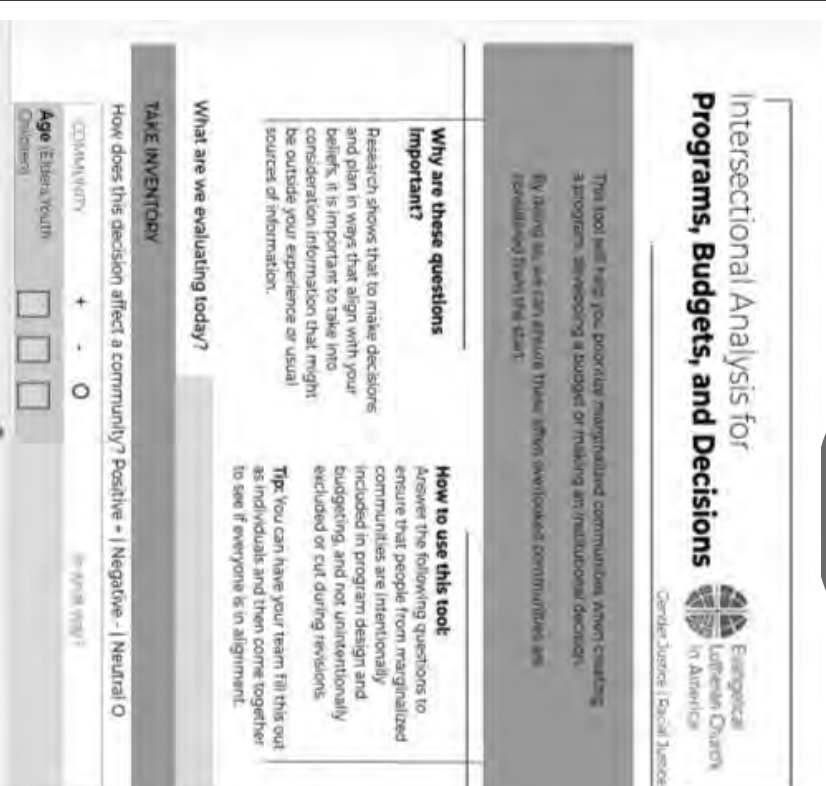
### Racial Justice

1993, this church committed in *Freed in Christ*, to confront racism and affirm the unity of all people as God's creation.

2019 this church as part of the National Council of Churches named white supremacy as systemic sin.

# Gender & Racial Justice Intersectional Analysis Tool

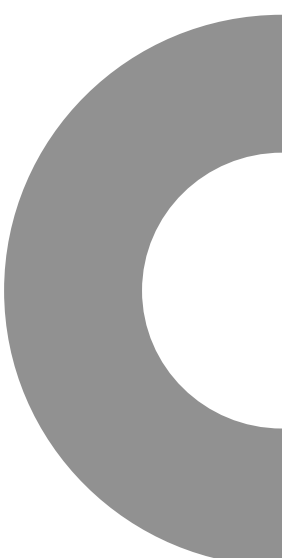
We are introducing this analytical tool with you so you can help yourselves, each other, and people and groups in your synods when you make decisions, prepare budgets, and plan programs and policies.



The screenshot displays the user interface of the 'Intersectional Analysis for Programs, Budgets, and Decisions' tool. At the top right, there is a large grey semi-circular graphic. Below it, the title 'Intersectional Analysis for Programs, Budgets, and Decisions' is prominently displayed in bold black text. To the right of the title is the logo for the Episcopal Lutheran Church in America, featuring a circular emblem with a cross and the text 'Episcopal Lutheran Church in America'. Below the logo, the text 'Center Justice | Local Justice' is visible. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Why are these questions important?' and contains text explaining that research shows that to make decisions and plan in ways that align with your beliefs, it is important to take into consideration information that might be outside your experience or usual source of information. The right column is titled 'How to use this tool' and provides instructions on answering the following questions to ensure that people from marginalized communities are intentionally included in program design and budgeting, and not unintentionally excluded or cut during revisions. A 'Tip' is provided: 'You can have your team fill this out as individuals and then come together to see if everyone is in alignment.' Below the text, there is a 'TAKE INVENTORY' section with the question 'How does this decision affect a community?' and a dropdown menu set to 'COMMUNITY'. The dropdown menu is open, showing options for 'Age (Elders, Youth, Children)', '+', '-', and '0'. At the bottom right of the dropdown, there is a 'SHOW RESULTS?' button.

## Let's Practice

- 1) With a partner from your committee:**
  - Use the tool. Identify a decision your committee needs to make or is thinking about.
- 2) In a small group, perhaps with your committee:**
  - Share an example of a recommendation you concluded.



**Closing**





# Patriarchy is a system, not a person.

Patriarchy is a social system in which we are all enmeshed. The word patriarchy is used in sociology to describe how a group of people interact.

Patriarchy is evident in a wide range of contexts, including societies, religions, religious communities, families, and educational systems.

This analysis does not mean that males are bad and that females are good. From a Lutheran perspective, using these words to name what is harmful as sin is part of being a theologian of the cross.

Using common vocabulary helps us as a community of faith. (See *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*, pp. 4, 27-38.)

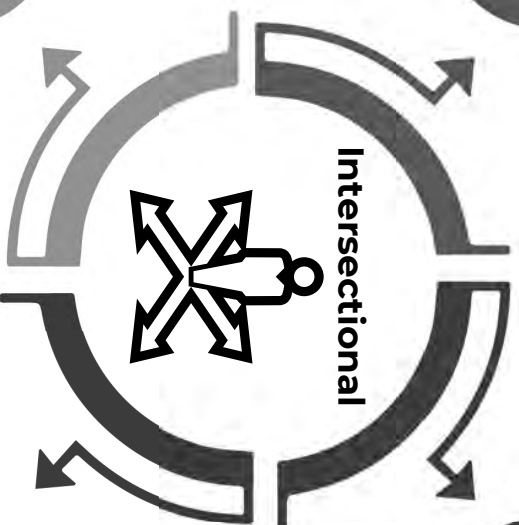
“A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.” (Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works* 31:40).



Male-dominated



Male-centered



Intersectional



Male-identified



Controlling



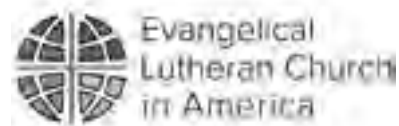
Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

Gender Justice & Racial Justice

The four central characteristics of patriarchy as a social system come from sociologist Allan G. Johnson's book *The Gender Knot*.



# Intersectional Analysis for Programs, Budgets, and Decisions



Gender Justice | Racial Justice

This tool will help you prioritize marginalized communities when creating a program, developing a budget or making an institutional decision.

By doing so, we can ensure these often overlooked communities are considered from the start.

## Why are these questions important?

Research shows that to make decisions and plan in ways that align with your beliefs, it is important to take into consideration information that might be outside your experience or usual sources of information.

## How to use this tool:

Answer the following questions to ensure that people from marginalized communities are intentionally included in program design and budgeting, and not unintentionally excluded or cut during revisions.

**Tip:** You can have your team fill this out as individuals and then come together to see if everyone is in alignment.

What are we evaluating today?

## TAKE INVENTORY

How does this decision affect a community? Positive + | Negative - | Neutral O

COMMUNITY	+	-	O	In what way?
<b>Age</b> (Elders, Youth, Children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>BIPOC*</b> People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Differently Abled People</b> (Visual and Audio Impairments, Mobility Impairments, Learning Impairments)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Men</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>LGBTQIA+*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Women</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other marginalized communities*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Will this proposal eliminate or reduce programs, services, or access to communities or groups of people that are already marginalized?

COMMUNITY	Y <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>	In what way?
<b>Age</b> (Elders, Youth, Children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>BIPOC*</b> People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Differently Abled People</b> (Visual and Audio Impairments, Mobility Impairments, Learning Impairments)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Men</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>LGBTQIA+*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Women</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other marginalized communities*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Does this reinforce white supremacy\*? If so, how?

Does this reinforce patriarchy\*? If so, how?

# EXERCISE

Name a social teaching that supports your proposal:

## SOCIAL STATEMENTS

1. [Abortion | Aborto \(1991\)](#)
2. [Caring for creation | Medio ambiente \(1993\)](#)
3. [Church in society | Iglesia en la sociedad \(1991\)](#)
4. [The church and criminal justice | La iglesia y la justicia penal \(2013\)](#)
5. [The death penalty | Pena de Muerte \(1991\)](#)
6. [Economic life | Vida economica \(1999\)](#)
7. [Education | Educación \(2007\)](#)
8. [Genetics \(2011\)](#)
9. [Health and health care | Salud y asistencia sanitaria \(2003\)](#)
10. [Human sexuality | La sexualidad humana \(2009\)](#)
11. [Peace | Por la paz \(1995\)](#)
12. [Race, ethnicity and culture | Raza, etnicidad y cultura \(1993\)](#)
13. [Sexism | Sexismo \(2019\)](#)

## SOCIAL MESSAGES

1. [Climate | Clima \(2023\)](#)
2. [Government | Gobierno \(2020\)](#)
3. [Human Rights | Los derechos humanos \(2017\)](#)
4. [Gender-based Violence | La violencia de genero \(2015\)](#)
5. [Mental Illness | Las enfermedades mentales \(2012\)](#)
6. [People Living with Disabilities | Personas discapacidades \(2010\)](#)
7. [Terrorism | Terrorismo \(2004\)](#)
8. [Commercial Sexual Exploitation | Explotación sexual \(2001\)](#)
9. [Suicide Prevention | Suicidio \(1999\)](#)
10. [Immigration | Inmigración \(1998\)](#)
11. [Sexuality: Common Convictions | La sexualidad \(1996\)](#)
12. [Community Violence | Violencia comunidad \(1994\)](#)
13. [End of Life Decisions | Final de la vida \(1992\)](#)
14. [Homelessness | Gente sin vivienda \(1990\)](#)
15. [Israeli/Palestinian Conflict \(1989\)](#)
16. [AIDS | El SIDA \(1988\)](#)

In what way?

Will the proposal **increase, expand or create** programs, services, or access to communities or groups of people that are already marginalized? Yes  No

If yes, check all that apply.

COMMUNITY	I	E	C	In what way?
<b>Age</b> (Elders, Youth, Children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>BIPOC*</b> People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Differently Abled People</b> (Visual and Audio Impairments, Mobility Impairments, Learning Impairments)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Men</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>LGBTQIA+*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Women</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other marginalized communities*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Will this proposal hinder or shut out leadership to communities or groups of people that are already marginalized? Yes  No

If yes, check all that apply.

COMMUNITY	Y	N	In what way?
<b>Age</b> (Elders, Youth, Children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>BIPOC*</b> People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Differently Abled People</b> (Visual and Audio Impairments, Mobility Impairments, Learning Impairments)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Men</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>LGBTQIA+*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Women</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other marginalized communities*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Will this proposal create or include access by leadership to communities or groups of people that are already marginalized: Yes  No

If yes check all that apply.

COMMUNITY	Y	N	In what way?
<b>Age</b> (Elders, Youth, Children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>BIPOC*</b> People	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Differently Abled People</b> (Visual and Audio Impairments, Mobility Impairments, Learning Impairments)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Men</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>LGBTQIA+*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Women</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other marginalized communities*</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How will this proposal come with adequate, sustainable resources (funding, staff, equipping) to address inequalities? List all that apply:

Funding	Staff	Equipping

In what other ways?

Will this proposal provide provisions to ensure successful and fair participation by stakeholders? Yes  No

If yes, check all that apply:

- Development
- Implementation
- Evaluation

Elaborate:

In what other ways?



What, if any, modifications does this proposal need to achieve equity and inclusion and to reflect gender justice and racial justice commitments of this church?

### Gender Justice Definition

Gender justice is a goal to make sure people do not experience discrimination or oppression based on sex, gender, and/or sexuality. It is both individual and systemic. (See Faith, Sexism, and Justice, 14, 21, 76.)

### Racial Justice Definition

Confronting racism to ensure fairness and dignity for all, recognizing our shared humanity in Christ. Rooted in our faith, it involves embracing diversity, dismantling racist structures, and working toward a more just and inclusive church and society. (See Freed in Christ Pages 5 and 6)

## EVALUATION

1. Where did we land?
2. What do we need to figure out?
3. What additions, subtractions or edits are needed in our proposal to be equitable and intentional?
4. Was there anything that surprised you?

# DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

**BIPOC** - Acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

**Gender Justice** - Gender justice is a goal to make sure people do not experience discrimination or oppression based on sex, gender, and/or sexuality. It is both individual and systemic. *(See Faith, Sexism, and Justice, 14, 21, 76.)*

**LGBTQIA+** - Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and more.

**Marginalized Communities** - Marginalized communities refer to communities, peoples, populations, and the individuals within these that historically and today experience discrimination, exclusion, or erasure due to complex social and religious factors based usually on race, ethnicity, class, sex, gender, sexuality, ability, age, etc.

These populations experience the effects of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, religious, and cultural dimensions.

**Patriarchy** - is a social system that is male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered. This analysis does not mean that males are bad and that females are good. Patriarchy as a social system operates with the threat of violence to control people who are female-identified or identify as women, girls, or queer. We are all enmeshed in patriarchy. *(See Faith, Sexism, and Justice, See p. 4.)*

“A patriarchal worldview and way of life grants male privilege. Sexism is the reinforcement of male privilege, which leads to discrimination” *(See Faith, Sexism, and Justice, See p. 4.)*

**Racial Justice** - Confronting racism to ensure fairness and dignity for all, recognizing our shared humanity in Christ. Rooted in our faith, it involves embracing diversity, dismantling racist structures, and working toward a more just and inclusive church and society. *(See Freed in Christ Pages 5 and 6)*

**White supremacy** - Through colonization and slavery, the United States of America helped to create and embrace a system of valuing and devaluing people based on skin color and ethnic identity. The name for this system is white supremacy. This system deliberately subjugated people of color and Indigenous people for the purpose of material, political, and social advantage. White supremacy creates, sustains and protects a culture that structurally and ideologically privileges whiteness in virtually all facets of society. Racism is the continuing legacy of white supremacy. It is counter to the Gospel, anathema to core tenets of all major religions and people of good will. Racism is a sin that we must confess and seek to dismantle in our own lives and institutions.

*(Language adapted from the following sources: the Presbyterian Mission Racial Equity & Women’s Intercultural Ministries & The Episcopal Church Resources internal document)*

## **ELCA Foundation Report**

*Submitted by Annette C. Shoemaker, Interim President and CEO*

As mentioned in the spring 2024 report, the Foundation continues to see meaningful improvements in processes, procedures, systems, marketing and development. The migration to the new investor client portal from the legacy portal has been successfully completed; the ability to accept and disburse Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) has been implemented with new gifts starting to come in during the third quarter; and work continues to migrate to a new process and system to handle stock gifts that will eliminate donor fees. In August, Jason Watt officially joined the Foundation team as Vice President of Advancement, and the implementation of the new gift planner strategy, along with plans to rebrand the identity and image of the Foundation and its work, are underway.

In July, the summer gift planner meeting was held at Carol Joy Holling Camp and Retreat Center just outside Omaha. Victoria Raymont, our strategic planning consultant, served as the facilitator of the meeting leading the discussion around the implementation of the new gift planner strategy. In addition, she organized a master class on relationship management utilizing gift planners as presenters. Trustee Bruce George generously gave of his time to attend the meeting in person and offered significant guidance and instruction around tried and true best practices of managing a prospect pipeline. The goals for gift and asset expansion are aggressive and require a focused approach and strict accountability toward supporting significant asset and gift development growth.

Notable among the marketing activities this year was the development and publication of the Foundation's [2023 annual report](#), which was distributed on May 14, 2024. This year's report was expanded to include information on gift planning, high-level data on the Foundation's growth, and a more in-depth impact story. In addition, *Insights*, a quarterly publication of the Foundation, was sent to approximately 8,500 constituents, which included subscribers, Foundation partner organizations, synod leaders, and congregational lay leaders. The ELCA Foundation continues to hold its quarterly investor webinars to keep clients and interested prospects updated on the status of the Ministry Growth Fund. Between 125 and 150 participants attend each event.

Total assets under management in the Ministry Growth Fund have increased nearly 18% year over year, totaling \$1.126 billion at September 30, 2024, and up just over 12% year to date. Net new deposits through September total \$2.7 million. It should be noted that net new deposits in 2023 were \$29.3 million, the highest level since 2014, which may account for the lower level of net new deposits this year.

Distributions to ministry from realized gifts total roughly \$7.9 million for the first half of the year. Over half of the proceeds—\$4.3 million—was paid out to churchwide programs.

Gifts and managed assets developed during the first two quarters totaled \$46.6 million. Planned gifts developed accounted for \$32.8 million during the first half, with \$9 million earmarked for churchwide programs.

**ELCA Foundation Digest of Board Actions**

**Submitted by:** Annette Shoemaker, Interim President and CEO

**Date of Board Meeting:** September 20, 2024

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

VOTED AND APPROVED:

FO.24.09.02 To approve the updated Distribution Policy Statement and Distribution Rate Setting Method for the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust – Ministry Growth Fund.

VOTED AND APPROVED:

FO.24.09.03 To elect/reaffirm 2025 Officers and Committee Chairs.

**Category 3:** *(Other Procedures and board actions.)*

None

## Portico Benefit Services Report

*Submitted by Stacy Kruse, Chief Operating & Financial Officer*



Oct. 15, 2024 — In August we announced Chris Johnson as president and CEO. He began his tenure Oct. 7 and I've resumed my role as Portico CFO/COO. Chris and I have been working together to create a seamless transition. Chris brings much to the table including his connection to the church, his extensive business background and education, and particularly his work with adjacent organizations. Serving as interim president and CEO gave me a wider perspective and a deeper appreciation for all of the moving parts that comprise Portico. I'm grateful for the support and partnership I received during this time. It was an honor to serve.

### Initial Findings of Benefits reExamined

We had a strong response rate to our Benefits reExamined survey and are now conducting additional listening sessions via online focus groups, interviews, and testing events to gather deeper insights. It is clear that affordability and flexibility are two of the most important features for both Portico members and sponsoring employers. Our members rely on their benefits and expressed that their benefits continue. We greatly value your support as we discern, seek approval, and communicate future changes to take effect in 2026. I will share more at the Church Council meeting.

### New Health Plan Option: Value Copay

The Value Copay option was added to the Traditional Benefits Program for 2025 in response to member requests for an option that is, as the name suggests, copay-based. This option allows members to more easily budget their routine care. Value Copay is within the ELCA-endorsed cost-sharing range. Details are available on myPortico to help members decide if this option is right for them. Value Copay has a base price between Gold+ and Silver+ with the same prescription drug copays and coinsurance as Gold+ with an optional FSA.

Because most office visits are copay-based, members have more control over their costs. It's important to note that deductibles still apply for services that don't have a copay. Copays range from \$0 to \$125 depending on the service. Deductibles are \$2,500 individual and \$5,000 family. The combined out-of-pocket limits are higher than Gold+ and Silver+. Value Copay is best suited for members who prefer to pay for certain health care visits and laboratory tests with predictable, manageable copays.

### Roth Effective Jan. 1, 2025

Starting Jan. 1, 2025, a Roth contribution option will be available for all members in the ELCA Retirement Plan eligible to contribute. Sponsoring organizations should confirm that their payroll manager, system, or vendor is ready to manage these withholdings starting Jan. 1. Members received educational information over the summer and fall and should consult with a tax professional or a Portico Financial Planner if they have interest in the Roth option.

### 2025 Rates Announced for the ELCA Health Plan

**ELCA-Medicare Primary Health Plan:** Significant plan design changes to the Economy option have led to a large decrease in the contribution rate for 2025. The monthly cost for our non-sponsored retirees went from \$140 to \$83 a month. This is a savings of 40%.

For those enrolled in ELCA Medicare-Primary Premium, Economy, or Standard options, Part D catastrophic coverage has changed. In 2025, once members reach an out-of-pocket cost of \$2,000, they will pay \$0 for plan-covered Part D drugs.

We are seeing an unusually high number of health care networks end their contracts with Humana for 2025. Our preferred provider organization (PPO) plan gives ELCA Medicare-Primary members the freedom to get care in- or out-of-network. As a result, members are not affected if their provider leaves the Humana network, if the provider accepts Medicare and agrees to bill Humana — and most do. Although most provider contract negotiations are resolved without disruption to patient care, we are considering other options to ensure continuous and consistent care for our members in the future.

**ELCA Primary Health Benefits:** To stabilize price increases for ELCA–Primary members we drew on excess plan reserves we’d accrued over the years. When possible, we’ve joined with other Church Benefits Association partners to negotiate and secure future large-group pricing from our vendors. Therefore the 2025 rate increase continues to be lower than the PricewaterhouseCoopers Health Research Institute’s group and individual projected medical cost increases of 7.5 – 8%. The 2025 rate reflects a 4% baseline contribution rate increase for both ELCA-Primary and ELCA Medicare-Primary Standard benefit options for sponsored members. In addition to the baseline increase, contribution rates may also increase approximately 2 – 3% annually due to a member’s age and adjust when the member’s compensation or health coverage level changes (that is, when the member chooses to enroll their spouse and/or children).

## **Billing Updates Underway**

This summer, Portico launched the new Excel view of the bill on EmployerLink. This allows our sponsoring employers to filter information in different ways, to know which member(s) and products they are paying for, and to keep accurate and current records of these payments. Because the Explanation of Payment (EOP) step was often skipped by employers that paid other than the billed amount, the EOP function was updated to be required before payment can be submitted. This has increased bill paying accuracy, timely allocation, and gives organizations the ability to create a digital paper trail. Adapting to change can take time. To support the change, we’ve communicated the updates via multiple channels, created training videos, and educated our Regional Representatives and Customer Care team on how to help employers with this new system.

## **Government Chaplain Plan Termination**

In August, Portico’s Board of Trustees voted to support the termination of the ELCA Supplemental Retirement Plan for Government Chaplains. This change is on the November Church Council agenda for approval. In recent years, there have been very few applicants, and none have been found to be eligible for benefits under the plan.

## **Benefit Eligibility for Congregations Who Leave**

Congregations that disaffiliate with the ELCA may still be able to participate in Portico’s benefits. This option stems from a 2009 joint decision of the Conference of Bishops, Church Council, and our Board of Trustees. This decision preserves our benefits program scale and is consistent with our values of respect, collaboration, and stewardship.

## **We’re on Instagram!**

Portico uses Facebook and LinkedIn to stay engaged with members and sponsoring employers. To extend our reach, especially to our members in their 20s and 30s, we launched our Instagram channel this summer. Instagram followers will see the people who make up Portico and hear personal stories and tips about how to use their benefits.

**Portico Benefit Services Digest of Board Actions**

**Submitted by:** Christopher T. Johnson, President and CEO

**Meeting Dates:** August 1-2, 2024 and November 7-8, 2024

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit which require Church Council approval.)*

**August 2024 Resolutions/Actions**

**Approved** the Resolution to Terminate the ELCA Supplemental Retirement Plan for Government Chaplains and ELCA Supplemental Retirement Trust for Government Chaplains.

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

**August 2024 Resolutions/Actions**

Portico Benefit Services' proposed plan amendment changes include six plans as listed below and have received the approval of the Board of Trustees at the meeting on August 2, 2024.

**PLAN AMENDMENTS**

**Approved** plan amendments as recommended by the Services & Solutions Committee.

**ELCA Disability Benefits Plan**

Adding additional terms to ensure Social Security Disability Insurance benefits and other government benefits are used to offset the ELCA monthly disability payment

Section 5.02

Adding an additional provision for cessation of benefits

Section 5.08

**ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan**

Adding a separate appeal process for the fully insured life insurance product

Sections 9.04

**ELCA Retirement Plan**

Reducing the age a Member and Alternate Payee can annuitize

Section 9.07

Broadening the terms in Appendix A to allow for additional grant funding programs

Appendix A

SECURE 2.0 allows earnings on member contributions to be used for hardship distributions and permits de minimis financial incentives

Sections 9.04, 12.20

**ELCA Retirement Savings Plan**

SECURE 2.0 allows earnings on member contributions to be used for hardship distributions and permits de minimis financial incentives

Sections 9.04, 12.23

**ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan**

SECURE 2.0 allows earnings on member contributions to be used for hardship distributions

Section 8.04

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

**August 2024 Resolutions/Actions**

**Approval** of the Resolution Regarding the Retention of RSM as Independent Auditor for the Year Ending 12/31/2024.

**November 2024 Resolutions/Actions**

**Received** the 3Q2024 Portico Benefit Services Management Report.

**Approved** minor revisions to the Committee Charter and Calendars for the Investment and Corporate Social Responsibility Committee and Services & Solutions Committee.

**Approved** there will be no increase in President's annual compensation for 2025.

**Approved** the 2025 Annual Budget.

**Approved** the 2025 Annuity Adjustment, Dividend and Interest-Crediting Rate.

**Approved** the partial slate of trustee nominees to be elected by the Churchwide Assembly in 2025.

**Approved** the resolution of Bylaws Section 9.4 Signature Authority.

**Approved** the resolution for 2025 Housing Allowance for Cunningham, Schibler, Lynn, and Schroeder.

**Approved** the resolution for 2025 Employee Housing Allowance All-Inclusive.

**Approved** the resolution for 2025 General Housing Allowance.



## **Publishing House of the ELCA (Augsburg Fortress Publishers) Report**

*Submitted by Tim Blevins, President and CEO*

The activities of Augsburg Fortress Publishers complement the goals of the ELCA churchwide organization. We join in seeking a common purpose: to activate each of us to invite more people into the way of Jesus and discover together community, justice, and love. This summary highlights recent activities in our two publishing areas, Congregational Resources and Books, and in the ministry as a whole, toward the pursuit of this vision.

### ***Congregational Resources***

Through our Augsburg Fortress and Sparkhouse resources, we remain focused on helping congregations thrive. Over the summer we had many opportunities to engage with our customers to showcase our resources and learn more about how we can continue to best serve them. We hosted and/or exhibited at:

- The ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, where we hosted daily poetry readings and gave away 3400 mini workbooks by Sparkhouse author and poet Joe Davis
- American Guild of Organists in San Francisco
- Five Augsburg Fortress Music Clinics in St. Paul, Columbia, Philadelphia, Columbus, and Chicago, featuring clinicians Mark Sedio and David Cherwien
- The Association of Lutheran Church Musicians on the campus of Valparaiso University
- St. Olaf's Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts

Also of note:

- In August we published the first two titles in our new "For the Sake of the World" series: *ReEngaging ELCA Social Teaching on the Church in Society* and *ReEngaging ELCA Social Teaching on Abortion*. This ongoing series invites us to consider how ELCA social statements and social messages can guide our faith and deepen our moral discernment regarding today's complex ethical issues.
- Early this fall we launched a Synod Advocate program, with 50 synods already signed on to receive free books and resource curation.
- In mid-October we released pew and gift editions of the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue) Bible and made this new updated edition also available to SundaysandSeasons.com subscribers.

### ***Books***

Fortress Press, long a vital part of this church's publishing efforts, seeks to advance scholarship and resource church leaders both in the ELCA and beyond. Our consumer book imprints, Broadleaf Books (youth and adult) and Beaming Books (children), offer avenues by which we extend our mission beyond the church and higher education to the broader society. As we plan for new titles, we consistently seek to expand contributions by authors who are Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. This sampling of published titles from the last six months illustrates the range of subjects and authors in these categories.

FORTRESS PRESS ([fortresspress.com](http://fortresspress.com))

*The Africana Bible, Second Edition.* Hugh R. Page, general editor.

*True to Our Native Land, Second Edition: An African American New Testament Commentary.*

*Funding Forward: A Pathway to More Sustainable Models for Ministry.* Grace Duddy Pomroy.

*A Revolutionary Jesus: Violence and Peacemaking in the Kingdom of God.* Jesse P. Nickel.

**BROADLEAF BOOKS** (broadleafbooks.com)

*The Violent Take It by Force: The Christian Movement That Is Threatening Our Democracy.*

Matthew D. Taylor.

*How to Love a Forest: The Bittersweet Work of Tending a Changing World.* Ethan Tapper.

*This Sweet Earth: Walking with Our Children in the Age of Climate Collapse.* Lydia Wylie-Kellermann.

*Plenty Good Room: Co-creating an Economy of Enough for All.* Andrew Wilkes.

**BEAMING BOOKS** (beamingbooks.com)

*We Are a Class.* Rob Sanders and Hannah Abbo.

*Abuelo's Flower Shop.* Jackie Morera and Deise Lino.

*If My Hair Had a Voice.* Dana Marie Miroballi and Patricia Grannum.

*All About Grief.* Lora-Ellen McKinney and Sophia Touliatou.

Also of note:

Fortress Press and Broadleaf Books in August hosted a two-part webinar called “Breaking Point: Tracing the Roots of White Christian Nationalism and How We Can Resist,” which featured panelists/authors Rev. Angela Denker, Greg Jarrell, Bradley Onishi, Amanda Tyler, Pamela Cooper-White, John Fanestil, Aaron Scott, and Matthew D. Taylor.

<https://www.augsburgfortress.org/webinars/WCNwebinar>

***Organizational Matters***

As previously reported, after 18 years of dedicated service, CFO John Rahja retired on June 30. The organization is now capably served by Kristina Borsch, VP of Finance, and by VP of Operations Elissa Hansen, both of whom received new titles and inherited new responsibilities as part of this staff transition.

Effective July 1, Andrew DeYoung was promoted to Publisher, Books. In this role Andrew leads the editorial and marketing teams for all three book imprints. In August, Deacon Laura Gifford was promoted to the role of Editor-in-Chief of Fortress Press. Laura’s academic credentials, deep appreciation for the legacy of Fortress Press, thorough grounding in Lutheran scholarship, her steady leadership style, and her work in the ELCA and full communion partner communities all make her an ideal fit for this role.

This summer the Congregational Resources team welcomed a new resource developer who will focus on Lutheran confirmation curriculum development, and a new marketing communications specialist.

Lastly, something changed on October 1—our name. The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—the official name of our parent organization—is reverting to our previous “doing business as” name of **Augsburg Fortress Publishers**. With this change, we return to a name that has wide recognition and resonance within the ELCA and beyond, and that connects us to our roots as an always-reforming publishing ministry that responds to our rapidly changing world. What **isn’t** changing is our commitment as your denominational publisher: to create substantive and innovative materials to support congregations in communicating the good news of God’s liberating grace.

Thank you for your continuing interest and support! If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [blevinst@augburgfortress.org](mailto:blevinst@augburgfortress.org).

**Augsburg Fortress Publishers Digest of Board Actions**

**Submitted by:** Tim Blevins, President and CEO

**Date of Board Meeting:** June 14, 2024

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval.)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

Voted to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting in open session. (PH.24.06.01)

Voted that the Board of Trustees of 1517 Media, expresses deep appreciation and extends warm thanks to John Rahja for his nineteen years of faithful service as the Chief Financial Officer of this important ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (PH.24.06.02)

**Executive Session actions**

Voted to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting in executive session. (PH/ES.24.06.01)

Voted that the 1517 Media 2025 operating budget be approved as presented. (PH/ES.24.06.02)

**Executive Session actions (virtual vote on 07/22/24 not associated with a meeting)**

Voted that the Board of Trustees of 1517 Media, the publishing house of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, hereby approves the formation of a Search and Succession Committee to be led by the current Chair of the Board of Trustees and comprised of the following members:

1. Linda Brown
2. Fred Halvin, Committee Chair
3. Lilly Kimmelshue
4. Joy Moore
5. Sue Rothmeyer
6. Cheryl Williams. (PH/ES.24.07.03)

**Virtual vote on 08/20/24 not associated with a meeting**

Voted that the Board of Trustees of the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America removes Luther Snow from service on the Board of Trustees. (PH.24.08.03)

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None



## **Women of the ELCA Report**

*Submitted by Jennifer Hockenbery, Interim Executive Director*

The work of the churchwide staff of Women of the ELCA is to support the organization's participants as they live out the mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

The past six months have been a time of transition for the organization.

In April 2024, the Executive Board and the staff met in person in Des Moines to preview the city and its amenities as they began planning for the 2026 Triennial Convention and Gathering. As part of this meeting there was a celebration of the work of Linda Post Bushkofsky, who had announced her plans to retire in June of this year.

In July 2024, I began as the Interim Executive Director of Women of the ELCA with the task of seeing the organization through the transition period and providing opportunities for members and non-members to weigh in on the strengths and opportunities of the organization in order to create a strategic plan for the next phase of Women of the ELCA.

There have been listening and speaking opportunities to do this work with staff, board members, and Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) presidents. In addition, board members, SWO presidents, and staff have carried these opportunities into SWO conventions and regional retreats and workshops. In addition, the staff has been working with the Office of the Treasurer of the ELCA in order to get a better understanding of the finances of the Women of the ELCA and a path to repaying all debts owed to the ELCA.

Part of this financial path includes the goal of completing the \$1 million campaign for Katie's Fund 2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years by June 13, 2025. In the summer of 2025, grant applications will become available for participants to apply for money for innovative new ministries. Non-participants in Women of the ELCA might consider making a gift to the campaign in honor of a woman in their life who benefitted from the community of women of the ELCA. Gifts can be made online at [welca.org/donate](http://welca.org/donate) or sent by mail to Women of the ELCA, ELCA Gift Processing Center, PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.

Importantly, during the transition period, the many ministries of Women of the ELCA have continued including the work in Mission and Discipleship. This year, \$45,000 in scholarships have been awarded to lay women and those attending seminaries and \$15,000 has been awarded in grants for projects related to the health initiative *Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls*. In addition, thousands of quilts have been sewn and donated to Lutheran World Federation by Women of the ELCA. *Gather Magazine* continues to serve its over 30,000 subscribers with excellent Bible studies, articles, and features. Women in congregations across the US have regular meetings at churches, coffee shops, and breweries to study the Bible together using the resources provided from *Gather*. The editors seek popular established scholars as well as new writers to feature in their magazine, and many popular ELCA writers were featured first in *Gather* magazine.

On-line opportunities for resources and fellowship have continued. The once-a-month BOLD CAFÉ dinners have had strong attendance around the themes of Friendship, Dialogue across Difference, New

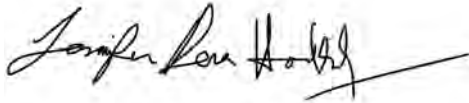
Beginnings, and Welcoming non-Lutherans. Blogs that speak about the need for rest for women, the importance of welcoming all people as they are, a focus on mental health and well-being, the dangers of domestic violence, and the celebration of Hispanic Heritage month, among other topics are posted each week. An active social media presence posts prayers, letters from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, information presented by individual Women of the ELCA, and meditations. There are over 26,800 followers on Facebook and 3,875 followers on Instagram. Over 6,000 people subscribe to receive Daily grace meditations to their email mailboxes.

Two members of the staff, Eva Yeo and Gabriela Contreras, and president of the Executive Board Myrna Wells-Ulland attended the ELCA Youth Gathering, in a promotional area in the Adult Leaders space promoting Women of the ELCA publications, *Gather* magazine and Boldcafe.org, promotion of the 2026 Triennial Gathering and membership. Over 160 names and addresses were collected with an online form and 140 new subscribers were added to the Bold Connections e-newsletter list. Importantly, staff interacted with youth, leaders, and other ELCA churchwide attendees to build inclusive community across all our ministries.

Plans are underway for the Women of the ELCA's own Triennial Gathering, planned for 2026 in Des Moines, Iowa. This gathering, like that for the youth, is designed to uplift, inspire, and enrich the lives of participants as they are held in loving community.

To learn more about Women of the ELCA and its varied ministries, visit its primary website or the websites of its magazines, *Gather* or Café, and subscribe to the organization's monthly e-newsletter Bold Connections.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Hockenbery", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Jennifer Hockenbery  
Interim Executive Director of Women of the ELCA

**Women of the ELCA Digest of Board Actions**

**Submitted by:** Jennifer Hockenbery, Interim Executive Director

**Date of Board Meeting:** April 19-20, 2024; Des Moines, Iowa.

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

Voted to adopt the executive director draft job description, allowing the interim executive director transition team to move forward. (EB/WO 2024.04.15)

Voted that the churchwide executive board encourages the WELCA staff to explore various ways of increasing awareness and promoting resources and tools to grow membership through special units, such as WELCA campus. (EB/WO 2024.04.20)

Voted to approve the revival of the Racial Justice Advocacy Network to further the Women of the ELCA's anti-racism work and facilitate the sharing of resources throughout the network; and  
That the Racial Justice Advocacy Task Force work with Jennifer DeLeon, ELCA Director for Racial Justice to present remote programming regarding walking with our siblings of color when they go to the polls for voting. (EB/WO 2024.04.21)

Voted to refer discussing the handout from Diakonia on Christian Nationalism to the Racial Justice Advocacy Task Force. (EB/WO 2024.04.22)

Voted that the Racial Justice Advocacy Task Force work with Jennifer DeLeon, ELCA Director for Racial Justice to present remote programming regarding walking with our siblings of color when they go to the polls for voting. (EB/WO 2024.04.23)

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None

**October Executive Board Meeting:** *held virtually October 19, 2024*

The minutes have not yet been prepared by the Board Secretary.

Women of the ELCA executive board members discussed finances including a plan to pay back the debt owed to the ELCA intercompany balance for the 2023 Triennial; they approved a balanced budget for the 2026 Triennial that includes a virtual rather than in-person Convention.

The board moved to issue an apology to those harmed by the elections process at the 2023 triennial convention in Phoenix, Arizona and to announce a series of recommendations concerning nominations and voting at the next Triennial. The board will be meeting in November, December to finalize the 2025 budget, and continue with strategic planning in this interim year.

## **Mission Investment Fund (MIF) Report**

*Submitted by Eva M. Roby, President and CEO*

For the past several years, the economy has presented three pervasive challenges: inflation, escalating interest rates, and market volatility. These factors have exerted considerable strain on all financial institutions, including MIF. However, MIF has been able to navigate these hurdles by relying on the resilience we have built over the years through sound asset/liability management, risk assessment, and strategic decision-making. The economic landscape continues to shift, however, and a notable change was the interest rate cut enacted by the Federal Reserve in September. We remain cautiously optimistic, as the Federal Reserve has signaled that additional rate reductions are to come.

Our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan continues to be our beacon, and we remain committed to the long-term goals set forth therein. In keeping with our strategic plan, we have made excellent progress on our 2024 Key Strategic initiatives. I would like to highlight two of them in particular.

Our modernization initiative continues at a fast clip. Since the last report, we have implemented four new systems, with more to come. We expect to launch our new core banking system early next year. These upgrades will equip us to serve our customers with greater efficiency and responsiveness.

In addition, we have made significant strides toward our strategic goal of creating an alliance between MIF and the ELCA Federal Credit Union in order to expand financial (banking) services to individuals and ministries. Some of you may recall that the creation of such an alliance was introduced to you in November 2022, after MIF had adopted its current strategic plan. This alliance represents the alignment of MIF and the ELCA Federal Credit Union to offer a seamless experience in the eyes of the customer/member, while remaining separate entities. Recognizing that many synergies exist between our organizations and that we can increase our impact by harnessing our strengths, our vision is to expand the financial wellbeing of our entire community, investing in the growth of the church, and advancing the mission of the ELCA. MIF's modernization project is an important foundation for the development of this alliance. As we move our modernization project toward completion in 2025, we will at the same time enter the build phase for this alliance, with a targeted launch date of mid-to-late 2026. We are excited about the potential of this alliance to serve the church and our communities, and we look forward to sharing periodic updates with you.

Going forward, we know that challenges remain ahead. However, new opportunities are also ahead. Therefore, our priority will be maintaining our long-standing history of financial stability, to ensure that we are ready to capitalize on these opportunities and grow stronger than ever.

Eva M. Roby  
President & CEO

**Mission Investment Fund (MIF) Digest of Board Actions**

**Submitted by:** Eva Roby, President and CEO

**Date of Board Meeting:** October 24, 2024

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval.)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

- Approved:
  - Revisions to certain Key Results in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan
  - The 2025 MIF Financial Plan

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None





Jenifer K. Ward, Ph.D., President

November 1, 2024

Dear ELCA Church Council,

In addition to the business that Luther College brings when we convene the Corporation, we are happy to share the following updates, the chief among which is the election of the next president of Luther College. I signaled earlier in the year that I intended to retire in 2025, and the College launched a national search for my successor. On October 18, the Board of Regents announced the selection of Dr. Bradley Chamberlain, currently the Luther College Provost, to serve as the twelfth president of the College. He will take office in early February, and I will stay on as Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives through 2025. We are grateful that he has accepted this call.

In other news, Pastor Melissa Bills and Director for International Admissions Jon Lund attended the ELCA Youth Gathering this summer and found it to be a valuable opportunity to connect with prospective students and with Luther College alumni and friends.

College Ministries has been contributing a faith-based voice to campuswide civic engagement programming this semester, including sponsoring a collaborative reflective art project ("Hearts for Peace"), hosting a brown-bag lunch conversation on the ELCA draft social statement on Civic Life and Faith, planning an Election Day communion service and hosting an Election Day reflection room for individual meditation and self-care.

Finally, Luther College continues to maintain a robust chapel pattern on campus, and this year we are seeing marked increases in chapel attendance, participation, and enthusiasm.

As this will be my last convening of the Luther College Corporation before the presidential transition, I want to express my gratitude for the relationship that Luther College shares with the ELCA. Having done confirmation study as an adult while a faculty member at Gustavus Adolphus College, I can say that landing on the Lutheran bridge between faith and learning has been a transformative part of my higher education (and life) journey.

Soli Deo Gloria,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenifer K. Ward".

President Jenifer K. Ward

**Luther College Meeting of the Corporation  
ELCA Church Council Meeting  
Sunday, November 17, 2024 at 10:15 a.m.**

Since the last report shared at the Church Council on November 11, 2023, Luther has welcomed and reappointed the following individuals to its Board of Regents and asks for ratification of their appointments by the Luther College Corporation:

***I. Ratification of Election of Regents***

***Recommended Action by the Corporation:***

To ratify the action of the Board of Regents of Luther College in electing the following individuals to the Board:

- Mike Anderson (North Liberty, IA)

*and*

To ratify the action of the Board of Regents of Luther College in electing the following individuals to the Board for second four-year terms:

- Mark Larson (Rochester, MN)
- Willie Davismckennie (Mundelein, Ill.)

*and*

To ratify the action of the Board of Regents of Luther College in electing the following individuals to the Board for third four-year terms:

- Michael Osterholm (Minneapolis, MN)

***II. Amendment to Articles V and VII of the Luther College Articles of Incorporation***

***Recommended Action by the Corporation:***

To ratify the action of the Board of Regents of Luther College to (a) amend Article 5.01 of the Luther College Articles of Incorporation, to define the registered agent of the Luther College corporation as the individual who holds the title of President of the College, and (b) amend Article 7.04 of the Luther College Articles of Incorporation to provide the Board of Regents with more flexibility to establish the term of the College's President to allow for circumstances where a fixed 4-year term is not in the best interests of the College and to make clear that the Board may renew the term of any particular College President.

- Attached as Exhibit A is a "marked" version of the revisions to Articles 5.01 and 7.04.
- Attached as Exhibit B is "clean" version of the revised Articles 5.01 and 7.04.
- Attached as Exhibit C is a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Luther College Board of Regents approving the revisions to Articles 5.01 and 7.04 of the Luther College Articles of Incorporation.

**Draft Bylaw Amendments**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE V**

**Principal Office and Registered Agent**

**5.01.** The location of the principal office of the corporation shall be 700 College Drive, Decorah, Iowa. ~~The name of its current registered agent at such address is Jenifer K. Ward.~~ The registered agent at such address shall be the individual who holds the title of President of the College.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE VII**

**Management and Control**

**7.04.** The President of the College shall be elected by the Board of Regents ~~for a term of four (4) years~~ and shall be an active member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or another local Christian community of faith. Except in exceptional circumstances where the Board of Regents consents by resolution to a different term, the President of the College's term shall be four (4) years in length, subject to the Board of Regents' ability to extend and renew any term at its discretion. A newly elected president must have an appreciation for the importance of higher education in the Lutheran tradition and a commitment to Luther College as leader among the colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**Luther College Articles of Incorporation**

**REVISED ARTICLE V**

**Principal Office and Registered Agent**

**5.01.** The location of the principal office of the corporation shall be 700 College Drive, Decorah, Iowa. The registered agent at such address shall be the individual who holds the title of President of the College.

**REVISED ARTICLE VII**

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**Luther College  
Board of Regents Resolutions**

The undersigned, Chair of the Board of Regents of Luther College (the “College”), hereby certifies that the Board of Regents of the College (the “Board”) adopted the following Resolutions on October 25, 2024.

WHEREAS, the College is a non-profit corporation which is accountable through its membership and Board subject to the non-profit corporation law of the State of Iowa;

WHEREAS, the College, through its membership and Board, adopted the College’s Articles of Incorporation (“Articles”), among other purposes, in order to comply with the laws of the State of Iowa regarding best practices and organizational structure;

WHEREAS, the Board desires to amend the College’s Articles to change the College’s Registered Agent to reflect the College’s updated organizational structure; and

WHEREAS, the College’s Articles require that the College’s President shall have a 4-year term and do not contemplate clearly the renewal of a term; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to amend the College’s Articles to provide the Board with more flexibility in setting the appropriate length of the term of the College’s President to allow for circumstances where a fixed 4-year term is not in the College’s best interests and also to make clear that the Board may renew any term; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to change the Articles’ provisions regarding its Registered Agent and to authorize related actions.

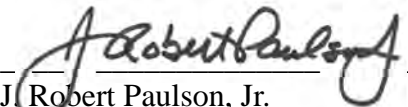
THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, that the changes to the provisions of the attached Articles are hereby adopted and approved, subject to submission to the College’s membership for further approval;

RESOLVED, that the Statement of Change of Registered Agent, attached hereto, is hereby approved and submitted to the College’s membership for further approval; and

RESOLVED, that the proper representatives of the Board and the College are hereby authorized and directed to execute such documents and to take such actions as they may deem advisable or desirable for the purposes of adopting and implementing the above Resolutions.

Date: October 25, 2024

  
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J. Robert Paulson, Jr.  
Chair, Luther College Board of Regents