

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
April 15-17, 2021
Virtual Meeting

AGENDA

Participants

Voting Members

Mr. Kevin Anderson	Ms. Cherrish Holland
Bp. Tracie Bartholomew	Mr. William Horne, Vice President
Ms. Tracey Beasley	Mr. Jim Jennings
Pr. Marcus Bigott	Ms. Pat Kluetz
Pr. Nick Billardello	Mr. David Lenz
Ms. Susan Boxberger	Pr. Tara Lynn
Ms. Lisa Burk	Mr. Keoni Newman
Pr. Bill Callister	Mr. Joe Nolte
Pr. Karn Carroll	Mr. Gary Pederson
Ms. Cheryl Chatman	Mr. Bill Rice
Ms. Alyssa Cobb	Pr. Ricardo Rivera
Mr. Ismael Danforth	Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, Secretary
Ms. Divine	Mr. Noah Roux
Bp. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop	Ms. Valerie Shaw
Pr. Joanne Engquist	Mr. Loren Solberg
Ms. Lori Fedyk, Treasurer	Pr. Kjersten Sullivan
Pr Dena Gable	Ms. Loni Taylor
Pr. Daniel Gerrietts	Ms. Sonja Wolfe
Pr. Emily Hartner	Ms. Merritt Zesinger
Pr. Pamela Hoh	

Liaison Bishops

Bp. Shelley Wickstrom	Bp. Donald Kreiss
Bp. Andy Taylor	Bp. John Macholz
Bp. Patricia Lull	Bp. Barbara Collins
Bp. Sue Briner	Bp. Pedro Suárez
Bp. Jeffrey Clements	

Resource People

Operations: Office of the Presiding Bishop

Pr. Wyvetta Bullock, Retired Executive for Administration
Ms. Victoria Flood, Director, Mission Support
Ms. Jocelyn Fuller, Senior Director, Strategic Communications
Pr. Louise Johnson, Executive, Administration
Ms. Rhondean Johnson, Executive, People and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Mr. Nick Kiger, Associate Director, Mission Support
Ms. Kathryn Lohre, Executive, Ecumenical and Inter Religious Relations and Theological Discernment
Ms. Judith Roberts, Senior Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Pr. Carmelo Santos, Director, Theological Diversity and Engagement (*excused*)
Ms. Kathy Summers, Executive Director, Development
Ms. Rachel Wind, Executive, Philanthropy
Pr. Roger Willer, Director, Theological Ethics

Operations: Office of the Secretary

Mr. Thomas Cunniff, General Counsel
Ms. Aja Favors, Associate General Counsel
Pr. Keith Fry, Executive, Office of the Secretary Administration
Ms. Marit Johnson, Manager, Official Documentation
Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe, Executive, Synod Relations and Natural Systems Coordinator
Ms. Jodi Slattery, Executive, Governance

Christian Community and Leadership (CCL)

Pr. Philip Hirsch, Executive Director
Ms. Evelyn Soto, Senior Director, Resources and Relationships
Deacon John Weit, Executive, Worship

Innovation (INN)

Ms. Mikka McCracken, Executive Director
Ms. Deborah Coe, Executive, Research, Information, and Data

Service and Justice (SJ)

Pr. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, Executive Director
Ms. Mary Campbell, Program Director, AMMPARO

Separately Incorporated Ministries

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, Executive Director, Women of the ELCA
Ms. Kathy Summers, President, ELCA Foundation
Mr. Tim Blevins, President and CEO, 1517 Media
Pr. Martin Seltz, Publisher, 1517 Media
Ms. Eva Roby, President and CEO, Mission Investment Fund
Pr. Jeffrey Thiemann, President and CEO, Portico Benefit Services

Press

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, Strategic Communications

Ecumenical Guests

Pr. Judy Knopf, Moravian Church in North America
Dr. Steven Nishibayashi, The Episcopal Church
Pr. Rachel Birkhahn-Rommelfanger, The United Methodist Church
Pr. Kyle Tau, The United Methodist Church
Ms. Elona Street Stewart, Presbyterian Church in America

Ethnic Specific Ministry Association Guests

Pr. Joan Conroy, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association, president
Pr. Khader El-Yateem, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, president
Ms. Jennifer DeLeon, Latino Association, president
Pr. Russell Meyer, European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice, president
Pr. Gigie Sijera-Grant, Asian and Pacific Islander Lutheran Association, president
Pr. Lamont Wells, African Descent Lutheran Association, president

PLENARY SESSION ONE

[Microsoft Teams Meeting Link](#)

April 15, 2021

2 – 4 p.m. CDT

I.A Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda

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

CC ACTION

Recommended:

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

I.B Adoption of the Standing Rules

The Church Council will conduct its business in this virtual meeting using standing rules. The document highlights deadlines for removal from *en bloc* and new business, instructions for Church Council members on how to ask a question or make a comment during the meeting, and the process for voting. The standing rules can be found [here](#).

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To adopt the standing rules for the Spring 2021 Church Council meeting.

I.C Report from the Presiding Bishop

The presiding bishop will provide a 20-minute verbal update and an additional 10 minutes will be available for questions. The written report from the presiding bishop can be found [here](#).

I.D Report from the Vice President

The written report from the vice president can be found [here](#). This 10-minute time is available for any questions for the vice president.

I.E Report of the Executive Committee

I.E.1 Response from Portico Benefit Services on ELCA Disability Offset Policy for Dependents

At the fall 2020 Church Council meeting, the Church Council received the response from Portico Benefit Services [Portico] on the ELCA Disability Offset Policy for Dependents and acted to refer the resolution back to Portico. [CC20.11.30]

To thank the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin for its resolution regarding “ELCA Disability Offset for Dependents;”

To receive the report and recommendation from Portico Benefit Services on this resolution;

To refer the resolution to Portico Benefit Services for a recommendation, pursuant to 17.20.02.c. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*, on a proposed change to the “ELCA Disability Offset Policy for Dependents” which excludes Social Security Disability Insurance paid to dependent children of disabled members from the offsets to the disability benefits paid to the disabled member; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

At its March 16 meeting, the Executive Committee discussed the response and recommendation from Portico. The [presentation](#) can be found in the Public Current Meeting channel under the Executive Committee folder.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To receive the report and recommendation from Portico Benefit Services regarding a proposed change to the “ELCA Disability Offset for Dependents” to exclude Social Security Disability Insurance paid to dependent children of disabled members from the offsets to the disability benefits paid to the disabled member;

To affirm Portico’s recommendation not to change the ELCA Disability Offset for Dependents;

To encourage Portico to fund health coverage, retirement contributions, and survivor benefits, consistent with the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits and this church’s social teachings; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

I.F Report from the Secretary

The written report from the secretary can be found [here](#). This 10-minute time is available for any questions for the secretary.

I.G Report from the Conference of Bishops

The chair will provide a 5-minute verbal update and an additional 5 minutes will be available for questions. The written report from the chair of the Conference of Bishops can be found [here](#).

7 p.m. CDT

Informal Fellowship

ELCA Church Council Chat: A time for information conversations, catching up with fellow Council faces, and reconnecting amid a disconnected year!

[Zoom Meeting Link:](#)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89054705422?pwd=WFhldEFWM0RZKzdCSWJiQ1VBWTUwQT09>

Meeting ID: 890 5470 5422

Passcode: 236181

Friday, April 16

- Morning Church Council Committees Meet (*various times; meeting links sent separately*)
- 12 p.m. CDT **Deadline for Removal of Items from *En Bloc*** (*send request to Sue.Rothmeyer@elca.org*)
Deadline for New Business (*send request to Sue.Rothmeyer@elca.org*)
- 1 p.m. CDT Legal Briefing (*executive session; a separate Microsoft Teams meeting link was sent*)

PLENARY SESSION TWO
[Microsoft Teams Meeting Link](#)

April 16, 2021
2 – 4 p.m. CDT

II.A Reflections: Future Church

Presiding Bishop Eaton will frame this reflection time. Meeting participants will break into small groups for conversations. There is 25 minutes allotted for this time.

II.B Report of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

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

II.C Report of the Committee on Appeals

In accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 20.21, the Committee on Appeals establishes definitions and guidelines, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline of officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations.

At its Fall 2020 meeting, the Church Council received an update on the revisions to the *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*. requested “that the Domestic Mission unit and the Committee on Appeals engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops to seek further information and guidance regarding the needs of bishops to apply discipline as described in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, reporting that information to the Executive Committee of the Church Council at its October 2020 meeting.” [CC20.03.05]

Members of the Committee on Appeals met with the Conference of Bishops at their Spring 2021 online meeting to receive further input for the committee's work on the document. At the Oct. 15, 2020 meeting, the Executive Committee received an update from the chair of Committee on Appeals, Murray Sagsveen.

At this meeting, Murray Sagsveen, chair, Fritz Fowler, vice chair, and Cheryl Meinschein, secretary, will provide a 15-minute verbal update and an additional 15 minutes will be available for discussion. The report from the Committee on Appeals and the revised [Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline](#) can be located in the [Committee on Appeals folder](#) of Church Council Microsoft Teams.

More information about Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline can be found on [ELCA.org](#).

II.D Report of the Planning and Evaluation Committee

The following report is provided by the Planning and Evaluation Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee's meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Updates provided to the committee can be located in the [Planning and Evaluation Committee folder](#) of Church Council Microsoft Teams.

II.E Consideration of Items Removed from *En Bloc*

II.F *En Bloc* Approval of Certain Items

The following *en bloc* resolution includes agenda items that will be considered on the last day of the Church Council meeting. Inclusion of these items in the *en bloc* action reflects a judgment that these

items are relatively non-controversial in nature and may not require plenary discussion and a separate vote.

Each of the items is noted as [*En Bloc*] in [En Bloc Items](#), [Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions](#), [Responses to Previous Church Council Actions](#), and [Responses to Synod Council Actions](#).

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

CC ACTION

Recommended:

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

7 p.m. CDT Informal Conversation on Various Topics (*Links below*)
8 p.m. CDT Topics repeated

Authentic Diversity Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://csp-edu.zoom.us/j/84328689676?pwd=YWJtdVITZVpZVkrR2MVRnNGNyUIVYUT09>

Meeting ID: 843 2868 9676

Passcode: 443097

Sanctuary Church Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://lssmn-org.zoom.us/j/81207893966>

Meeting ID: 812 0789 3966

Definitions and Guidelines Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83906888495?pwd=dU8wZ2xmdVFWUmtFTUhaUEplMFMwdz09>

Meeting ID: 839 0688 8495

Passcode: 856414

PLENARY SESSION THREE

[Microsoft Teams Meeting Link](#)

April 17, 2021

10 a.m. – 12 p.m. CDT

III.A. Morning Devotion on Migration

Mary Campbell, program director, AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities), will offer a morning devotion based on migration.

III.B Report of the Program and Services Committee

The following report is provided by the Program and Services Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee's meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the [Program and Services Committee folder](#) of Church Council Microsoft Teams.

III.B.1 Sanctuary church body definition and guidelines

At the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the voting members declared the ELCA a sanctuary church body. It also requested the Church Council to "provide guidance for the three expressions of this church about what it means to be a sanctuary church body..." [CA19.03.07]

In consultation with churchwide units and other groups, the AMMPARO Sanctuary Team has overseen the process of developing guidelines. The [report](#) can be located in the Program and Services Committee folder.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To recognize that the ELCA's ministry as a sanctuary church body is a public witness that calls ELCA members to value the dignity of each human being made in God's image;

To thank the churchwide staff for the development of additional resources that provided education and discernment around sanctuary;

To encourage an understanding of the word 'sanctuary' that is rooted in the principles of walking alongside, or accompanying, immigrants and refugees while acknowledging that the word 'sanctuary' has no legal or universally accepted definition; and

To affirm the guidance provided in the "ELCA Sanctuary Church Guidelines" for ways congregations, synods and churchwide organization can accompany and support the ministry of sanctuary.

III.C Report from the Treasurer

The treasurer will provide a 15-minute verbal update and an additional 5 minutes will be available for questions. The written report from the treasurer can be found [here](#).

III.D Report of the Budget and Finance Committee

The following report is provided by the Budget and Finance Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee's meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the [Budget and Finance Committee folder](#) of Church Council Microsoft Teams.

Revised April 16, 2021

III.D.1 Update to Mission Support Experiment

At its November 2020 meeting, the Church Council acted to end the Mission Support Experiment on Jan. 31, 2022 [CC20.11.33b]. The one-year extension allowed those synods in the experiment to continue budget projections for the coming fiscal year as the Church Council prepares to receive final reports and recommendations in 2021, in accordance with the process outlined in the April 2019 Church Council action [CC19.04.13].

- To request for final data/report from Mission Support Experiment Synods to be presented at the April 2021 Church Council meeting;
- To request Mission Support Experiment synods to prepare two scenarios for their FY 2022 budget (Continue or End); and
- To request a final report and decision from the Budget and Finance Committee to be presented for action at the November 2021 Church Council meeting.

The first step in that process was for Church Council to receive a final data/report from the Mission Support Experiment Synods at the April 2021 Church Council meeting. [CC20.11.33b]

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To receive the final data/report from the Mission Support Experiment Synods (Lower Susquehanna, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Nebraska, New England, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast);

To urge the churchwide organization and the synods to incorporate the learnings from the mission support experiments into future collaboration, as appropriate; and

To encourage the formation of a project team (including bishops, churchwide organization staff, and others) to discuss future strategies for mission support sharing between synods and the churchwide organization, including discussion on how revenue received from congregations can best be shared to support the ministries of this church.

III.E Report of the Committee on Appeals

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To approve the revised version of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, effective immediately, but applicable only to conduct occurring (or alleged to occur) after the date of adoption of this resolution;

To confirm that the version of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, as in effect immediately prior to the adoption of this resolution, shall be applied to conduct that occurred (or is alleged to have occurred) on or prior to the date of adoption of this resolution; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make any necessary non-substantive editorial corrections.

III.F New Business

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Southwestern Texas Synod as outlined in the “4E SWTX CBCR Ratification” document.

PLENARY SESSION FOUR

[Microsoft Teams Meeting Link](#)

April 17, 2021

2 – 4 p.m. CDT

IV.A Reflections: Future Church

Presiding Bishop Eaton will frame this reflection time. Meeting participants will break into small groups for conversations. There is 45 minutes allotted for this time.

IV.B “Indigenous Perspective in Our Country” Primer

Church Council member, Loni Taylor, will provide a 10-minute introductory presentation, followed by a five-minute opportunity for questions.

IV.C Report of the Temporary Select Committee on Committees

At its April 2019 meeting, the Church Council requested the “Executive Committee establish a process to assess the existing committee structure and future needs for Church Council, and for recommendations to be presented by the April 2021 Church Council meeting.” [CC19.04.06]

During a number of meetings in 2019, the Executive Committee discussed the assessment process and at its November 2019 meeting it established a temporary committee “to assess the existing committee structure and future needs for Church Council in accomplishing its governance role” and requested a final report and recommendation be presented by the April 2021 Church Council meeting. [EC19.11.43]

The following report is provided by the Temporary Select Committee on Committees. The committee has developed two proposals for Church Council input. The proposals are in the [Temporary Select Committee on Committees](#) folder. The committee asks for feedback at this meeting to determine the best path forward. The intention is to provide final recommendations to the November 2021 meeting.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To authorize an extension of a revised committee structure for Church Council to be presented to the November 2021 Church Council meeting.

IV.D Report of the Board Development Committee

The following report is provided by the Board Development Committee.

IV.E Unfinished Business

IV.F Sending Word and Prayer

Adjournment