

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA**

**Church Council**

**MINUTES**

**Sept. 27, 2021**

**Prepared by the  
Office of the Secretary**



**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES  
Sept. 27, 2021  
Conference Call**

The 108th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was convened electronically as a special meeting at 7:00 p.m. Central Daylight Time (CDT).

**ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING**

The following people were present for all or part of the meeting:

***Voting members***

**Officers:**

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop  
Mr. Carlos E. Peña, interim vice president  
Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary  
Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer

**Chair of the Conference of Bishops:**

The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew, bishop of the New Jersey Synod (*excused*)

**Church Council:**

Mr. Kevin Anderson	The Rev. Pamela J. Hoh ( <i>excused</i> )
Ms. Tracey A. Beasley ( <i>excused</i> )	Ms. Cherrish Holland
The Rev. Marcus A. Bigott	Mr. James J.F. Jennings
The Rev. Nicholas M. Billardello III ( <i>excused</i> )	Mr. David M. Lenz
Ms. Susan Boxberger	The Rev. Tara R. Lynn
Ms. Lisa Burk	Mr. Keoni Newman ( <i>excused</i> )
The Rev. William H. Callister	Mr. Joseph T. Nolte
The Rev. Karn S. Carroll ( <i>excused</i> )	Mr. Gary A. Pederson
Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman	Mr. William D. Rice
Ms. Alyssa J. Cobb	The Rev. Ricardo Rivera
Mr. Ismael E. Danforth ( <i>excused</i> )	Mr. Noah F. Roux
Ms. Divine	Ms. Valerie J. Shaw
The Rev. Joanne E. Engquist	Mr. Loren A. Solberg
Ms. Kerry A. Fehrman	The Rev. Kjersten L. Sullivan
The Rev. Dena M. Gable	Ms. Loni Taylor
The Rev. Daniel W. Gerriettes	Ms. Sonja Wolfe
The Rev. Emily C. Hartner ( <i>excused</i> )	Ms. Merritt G. Zesinger ( <i>excused</i> )

***Representatives of the Conference of Bishops:***

Bp. Sue J. Briner, Region 4	Bp. Patricia J. Lull, Region 3
Bp. H. Jeffrey A. Clements, Region 5	Bp. Pedro M. Suárez, Region 9 ( <i>excused</i> )
Bp. Barbara J. Collins, Region 8 ( <i>excused</i> )	Bp. Andrew A. Taylor, Region 2
Bp. Donald M. Kreiss, Region 6 ( <i>excused</i> )	Bp. Shelley R. Wickstrom, Region 1

***Churchwide Staff Resource People:***

Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel  
Ms. Aja M. Favors, associate counsel  
The Rev. N. Keith Fry, executive for Office of the Secretary administration  
The Rev. Philip C. Hirsch, executive director for Christian Community and Leadership  
The Rev. Louise N. Johnson, executive for administration  
Ms. Marit E. Johnson, official documentation manager  
The Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director for Service and Justice  
Ms. Mikka McCracken, executive director for Innovation  
Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, executive for governance  
Mr. Joseph W. Schmidt, administrative services coordinator

**MINUTES, page 2**

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**Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force:**

Mr. Vance Blackfox, co-chair of the task force and desk director for American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations  
The Rev. Jessica R. Crist, co-chair of the ELCA Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Table  
Ms. Jennifer G. DeLeon, director for racial justice  
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious engagement and theological discernment  
The Rev. Richard A. Magnus, co-chair of the task force  
Ms. Christine K. Mangale, program director for the Lutheran Office for World Community (*excused*)  
The Rev. Carmelo Santos, director for theological diversity and ecumenical and inter-religious engagement

**Separately Incorporated Ministries:**

The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, president, Portico Benefit Services

**Ethnic Specific Ministry Association:**

The Rev. Khader El-Yateem, representative, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage  
Ms. Sherie Seifert, president, European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice

**CALL TO ORDER AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

(Agenda I.A.)

Agenda items were distributed electronically in advance of the meeting.

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, interim vice president of the ELCA and chair of the Church Council, called the special meeting of the Church Council to order at 7:00 p.m. (CDT) and asked the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, to open the meeting with prayer.

A motion was made to adopt the agenda.

There being no discussion, the chair called for the vote.

**VOTED:**

**CC21.09.13 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.**

**ELECTION: CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINEE**

(Agenda I.B.1.)

Ms. Patricia Kluetz, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin [5I], resigned from the Church Council Sept. 7, 2021. Secretary Rothmeyer declared a vacancy and invited the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin Synod Council to nominate a lay woman. The synod council nominated Ms. Kerry A. Fehrman. If elected, she would fulfill the remainder of Ms. Kluetz's term ending in 2025.

There being no discussion, the chair called for the vote.

**CC21.09.14 To elect Ms. Kerry A. Fehrman, Wausau, Wisconsin [5I], to the Church Council for a term ending 2025.**

**“A DECLARATION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA TO AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE”**

(Agenda I.B.1.)

*Background:*

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery “to offer a statement of repentance and reconciliation to native nations in this country for damage done in the name of Christianity.” [CA16.02.04]

*Church Council action:*

Vice President Peña invited the Rev. Richard A. Magnus and Mr. Vance Blackfox, co-chairs of the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force, to present the proposed document, “A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to American Indian and Alaska Native People.”

Pastor Magnus expressed gratitude to churchwide staff and task force members for their collaboration on the document. He reviewed the development process and read relevant sections.

The Rev. Jessica R. Crist, co-chair of the ELCA Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Table and task force member, noted that the declaration document was a next step in a larger process. Other projects are in development to continue the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Mr. Blackfox highlighted the importance of this document which will aid work taking place in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Following discussion, the chair called for the vote.

**CC21.09.15 To adopt “A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to American Indian and Alaska Native People” as a statement of repentance and reconciliation to native nations in this country for this church’s damage done in the name of Christianity;**

**To thank the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force for their diligence in preparing the statement; and**

**To encourage congregations, synods and the churchwide organization to find ways to share this statement broadly.**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCH COUNCIL  
Sept. 27, 2021**

**MINUTES, page 4**

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Vice President Peña declared “A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to American Indian and Alaska Native People” adopted.

Presiding Bishop Eaton reviewed resources and initiatives related to the declaration that are in development, including worship resources, American Indian and Alaska Native Reflections on Luther’s Small Catechism, and a worship service with tribal leaders. The ELCA joins The Episcopal Church, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Anglican Church of Canada in a group called Churches Beyond Borders to work ecumenically on the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Mr. Blackfox thanked Church Council members for passing the declaration and shared reflections of how this commitment will give hope and encouragement to American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Vice President Peña announced that the declaration will be shared widely on Indigenous People’s Day, October 11, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The special meeting of the Church Council adjourned at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 27, 2021.