



Apr. 4, 2022

To: Bishops of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Vice presidents of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Secretaries of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Members of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Administrative Team of the churchwide organization
Chief executive officers of separately incorporated ministries
Seminary leaders
From: Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary
Subject: Report of Actions of the Church Council (Mar. 31–Apr. 2, 2022)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois, Mar. 31–Apr. 2. Here is a summary of particular actions along with background information.

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1. CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Background:

At the November 2021 Church Council meeting, the Church Council directed the Board Development Committee to plan for the size and composition of the new standing committees and to forward preliminary committee assignments to the Executive Committee, and for the Executive Committee to review the proposed committee assignments and forward them to the Church Council for ratification [CC21.11.26].

Church Council action:

To ratify the following appointments of continuing members of the ELCA Church Council to Church Council committees for the 2022–2025 time period beginning at the close of the Churchwide Assembly on August 12, 2022:

- Budget and Finance Committee: Tracey Beasley, Kerry Fehrman, Cherrish Holland, Keoni Newman;
Legal and Constitutional Review Committee: Kevin Anderson, Emily Hartner, David Lenz, Noah Roux;
Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee: Divine, Marcus Bigott, Tara Lynn, Loren Solberg; and

- **Christian Community and Leadership Committee:** Nick Billardello, Pamela Hoh, Valerie Shaw, Kjersten Sullivan; and
- **Service and Justice Committee:** Susan Boxberger, Bill Callister, Karn Carroll, Joanne Engquist, Loni Taylor.

Church Council action:

To declare that the newly elected chairs of the Budget and Finance Committee; Christian Community and Leadership Committee; Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee; Legal and Constitutional Review Committee; and Service and Justice Committee shall be members of the Executive Committee of the Church Council beginning at the close of the Churchwide Assembly on August 12, 2022.

2. ADDRESSING EDUCATIONAL DEBT AMONG ROSTERED MINISTERS

Background:

The 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly called for a “comprehensive analysis of current and potential seminary tuition funding sources, with a report and recommendations regarding funding for seminary tuition to be provided to the Church Council by its spring 2021 meeting” [CA19.02.06t].

In spring 2021, in response to this action of the Churchwide Assembly, the Christian Community and Leadership home area provided a report to Church Council, detailing ongoing ELCA initiatives which address seminary tuition concerns, and recommendations around addressing educational debt among seminarians and first call pastors [CC21.04.06w]. The proposal for the creation of a task force expands the recommendations already approved by Church Council to include all rostered ministers.

Church Council action:

To authorize the creation of a task force charged with studying the issue of addressing educational debt among rostered ministers and developing a comprehensive strategy to provide educational debt relief to as many rostered ministers as possible;

To authorize the Executive Committee to appoint members to the task force composed of representation from across the ELCA ecology (e.g., the churchwide organization, synod staff to include bishops and/or directors for evangelical mission, congregations, seminaries, colleges/universities, Mission Investment Fund, Portico Benefit Services, ELCA Federal Credit Union, ELCA Foundation, etc.); and

To request that the first progress reports be provided to the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting and a final report with possible recommendations be provided to the Spring 2025 Church Council meeting.

3. ADDRESSING THE DISCIPLINE CONCERNS OF ROSTERED PERSONS OF COLOR AND/OR WHOSE PRIMARY LANGUAGE IS OTHER THAN ENGLISH

Background:

Following consultation with the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD) Advisory Table and with the Administrative Team, the senior director for diversity, equity and inclusion recommends a task force be authorized to review the current process for discipline and its impact on persons of color and other historically marginalized groups; consider a course of action for community healing and restoration; consider the creation of a staff position within the People Solutions home area and learn best practices from full communion partners. The task force will bring recommendations to the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action:

To authorize the creation of a task force tasked 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;

To authorize the Executive Committee to appoint members to the task force composed of representation from the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity Advisory Table, Conference of Bishops, Committee on Appeals, ethnic specific associations, and churchwide staff from Office of the Presiding Bishop (i.e., Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, director for racial justice, chief diversity officer, senior director for diversity, equity and inclusion), Office of the Secretary (i.e., general counsel), and Service and Justice (i.e., ethnic specific ministries); and

To request a report with possible recommendations be provided to the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting.

4. DECLARATION OF THE ELCA TO THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Background:

“A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment” (1991), “A Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community” (1994) and “A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment” (2019) together form the policy basis for the ecumenical

and inter-religious relations of the ELCA. The Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Muslim Relations developed “A Declaration of the ELCA to the Muslim Community” to articulate this church’s commitments to dialogue in response to Luther’s troubling legacy of anti-Islamic writings, and to publicly affirm this church’s pursuit of friendship and solidarity with our Muslim neighbors.

Church Council action:

To adopt “A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Muslim Community” as a statement on Lutheran-Muslim Relations.

5. DESIGNATED FUNDS AND FY22 SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS

Church Council action:

To approve the establishment of a Church Council designated fund, entitled Campaign Readiness Fund, in the amount of \$3.0 million to be used to assess the feasibility of a fundraising campaign at a future date.

Church Council action:

To add \$1.5 million to the Youth Gathering designated fund, to be used to offset losses incurred by the Youth Gathering related to the cancellation of the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering and to provide start-up support for the future ELCA Youth Gathering events.

Church Council action:

To increase the FY22 spending authorization in the Current Fund by \$650,271, from \$65,816,150 to \$66,466,421.

Church Council action:

To increase the FY22 spending authorization in ELCA World Hunger by \$3,321,700, from \$22,665,000 to \$25,986,700.

6. TRIENNIUM BUDGET PROPOSAL

Background:

The Church Council is responsible for submitting budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorizing expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets [ELCA Constitution 14.21.05.].

Church Council action:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

2023 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2023 current fund spending authorization of \$68,814,000;

To approve a 2023 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$22,869,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to revise the spending authorizations after periodic review of revised income estimates.

2024 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2024 current fund income proposal of \$70,191,000;

To approve a 2024 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$22,930,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

2025 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2025 current fund income proposal of \$71,594,000;

To approve a 2025 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$22,960,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

7. PROCESS FOR PUBLIC REPENTANCE OF PATRIARCHY AND SEXISM

Background:

A working group composed of churchwide staff and Church Council members reviewed implementing resolution number 17 from the *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* social statement. The working group recommended the formation of an *ad hoc* committee to guide a process for public repentance and a churchwide day of confession and repentance.

Church Council action:

To authorize the formation of an *ad hoc* committee tasked with guiding a process for public repentance and a churchwide day of confession and repentance regarding the sins of patriarchy and sexism;

To appoint the following individuals to serve on the *ad hoc* committee: Ms. Tracey Beaseley (chair), Bishop Anne Svennungsen, the Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, and Ms. Sonja Wolfe;

To authorize the Executive Committee to appoint additional members to the *ad hoc* committee; and

To request the *ad hoc* committee provide periodic updates to the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee through at least the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

8. RULES ON GOVERNING DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

Background:

In keeping with bylaws 20.22.14. and 20.24.04. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the Committee on Appeals unanimously approved the amendments to the “Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings” and recommended the amendments for approval by the Church Council. The revisions are non-substantive for clarification and bring language into alignment with the constitution.

Church Council action:

To adopt the amendments to the “Rules Governing Disciplinary Proceedings Against Rostered Ministers and Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.

9. 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

Background:

Each triennium the Church Council submits a recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding proposed “Rules of Organization and Procedure.” Voting members of the assembly act on the rules in the first plenary session.

Church Council action:

To recommend adoption of the following proposed action by the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

To adopt the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that are already in force).

Church Council action:

To authorize the presiding bishop and secretary of this church to prepare further editorial and scheduling revisions that may be found necessary for the Rules prior to their publication in the *Pre-Assembly Report*; and

To report any changes to the Church Council at its August 2022 meeting.

10. RULE FOR 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY HEARINGS

Background:

For the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, the Office of the Secretary proposes holding electronic hearings prior to the assembly. Hearings are non-legislative sessions held to inform assembly voting members of important actions. In accordance with ELCA Constitutional Provision 14.13, the Church Council may adopt the rule. A two-thirds vote is required for adoption of the rule.

Church Council action:

To adopt the rule to hold hearings prior to the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

11. CONTINUING RESOLUTION AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE ELCA

Church Council action:

To adopt the amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as described in “Proposed Amendments–Continuing Resolutions,” effective pursuant to Church Council action CC21.11.26, which calls for full implementation immediately following the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council action:

To adopt, *en bloc*, the following amendment to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*:

19.06.A22. A former full-time or part-time employee shall not be eligible for three years subsequent to such employment for nomination or election to the board of a separately incorporated ministry or committee related to the churchwide unit or office in which the employee served.

12. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTIONS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE ELCA

Background:

Following the November 2021 Church Council meeting, additional amendments to certain bylaws have been identified for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly. The process for adopting bylaw amendments at a Churchwide Assembly is specified in Chapter 22 of the ELCA Constitution.

A two-thirds vote of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly is required for adoption.

Church Council action:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

To adopt, en bloc, the following amendments to the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.31.10. Synod-authorized Ministry. When need exists to render Word and Sacrament ministry for a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not ~~possible~~ *feasible* to provide ~~appropriate pastoral leadership 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 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 ministry. 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.

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

...

Synod 8.E—Upper Susquehanna. The counties of Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Tioga, Union in the ~~state~~ *commonwealth* of PENNSYLVANIA; the congregation Trinity, Luzerne County, and the congregation Zion, ~~Pillow~~, Dauphin County, in the ~~state~~ *commonwealth* of PENNSYLVANIA.

13. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE PORTICO BENEFIT SERVICES RESTATED ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

Background:

Portico Benefit Services executed a new office lease resulting in a change to its registered office location. As a Minnesota corporation, Portico Benefit Services is required to provide its new registered office location to the Secretary of State and in its articles of incorporation.

Church Council action:

To approve the amended Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Board of Pensions of the ELCA—Portico Benefit Services.

14. DEACONS UNIFIED CROSS DESIGN

Background:

The unified cross design concept comes to the Church Council following two years of conversation among deacons, review of existing and comparable symbols used in diaconal ministry around the world, and engagement with potential manufacturers, and designers. This symbol will serve as one of the primary symbols for the ministry of Word and Service in the ELCA.

Church Council action:

To affirm the design concept for a unified cross design for ministers of Word and Service;

To request that the Christian Community and Leadership home area programs for worship and candidacy, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, proceed with executing an agreement with a manufacturer and distributor;

To request that the churchwide organization create appropriate communication to ministers of Word and Service and synods about the process to purchase deacon cross pins; and

To update existing or create new guidance and educational resources related to the symbols of the ministry of Word and Service.

15. ARCHIVING OF CERTAIN SOCIAL POLICY RESOLUTIONS

Background:

Social policy resolutions (SPRs) serve as this church's policy directives until a) replaced by subsequent resolutions, b) rendered moot by subsequent social teaching documents, or c) sent to archive by a Churchwide Assembly. A review for relevance shall be initiated 25 years after adoption. Social policy resolutions are adopted in a particular social context, and this planned review of their continued relevance enables subsequent generations of church leaders to consider whether a resolution should continue to represent the policy of this church.

Church Council action:

To recommend adoption of the following proposed en bloc action by the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

To archive the social policy resolutions identified in the "2022 Archiving of Certain Social Policy Resolutions" document, in accordance with the "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018).

16. CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Background:

The Church Council has the responsibility for electing people to fill terms on boards of Separately Incorporated Ministries (SIMs), 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 also elects nominees to a vacancy on a board or committee of the churchwide organization.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of United Lutheran Seminary to a term beginning July 1, 2022 and expiring June 30, 2025: Mr. Bernie S. Annor and the Rev. Judith Anne Sullivan.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Luther Seminary to a four-year term beginning July 1, 2022, and expiring June 30, 2026: Ms. Maria G. Cowles, Mr. Steven D. Huseh, Mr. Michael M. Jerstad, Ms. Brenda Skelton-Bendtsen, and Mr. Clarence M. Smith.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago to a term beginning Oct. 1, 2022, and expiring Sept. 30, 2024: The Rev. Bridget P. Jones.

Church Council action:

To elect to the advisory board of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary at California Lutheran University to a term beginning in June 2022 and expiring in June 2025: The Rev. Manuel Retamoza, the Rev. John M. Reutter-Harrah, and the Rev. Kirsten Sauey Hofmann.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University to a term beginning July 1, 2022, and expiring June 30, 2025: The Rev. Jack Sullivan, Jr.

17. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Background:

The Church Council nominates individuals for possible election to the Nominating Committee by the Churchwide Assembly, in accordance with 12.51.03. and 19.11.01. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The committee has a range of 12 to 18 members. At least one but no more than three members must be from any of the nine regions of this church. Members serve one six-year term (or until a successor is elected) and are not eligible for re-election.

Church Council action:

To receive the written report of the Office of the Secretary on nominees for the Churchwide Nominating Committee;

To note that bylaw 19.11.01. states in regard to the Nominating Committee: “The Church Council shall place in nomination the names of two persons for each position. The committee shall consist of at least one member but no more than three members from any region. Nominations from the floor shall also be permitted, but each floor nomination shall be presented as an alternative to a specific category named by the Church Council and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Church Council shall set forth the criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor;”

To request, therefore, that the Church Council restrict the tickets to the following: lay woman; lay man (YA); lay man (PC/L); lay man (Region 6); minister of Word and Service (Region 3); minister of Word and Sacrament (PC/L); and minister of Word and Sacrament; and

To request that the Church Council transmit the following slate of nominees to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly:

Churchwide Nominating Committee

Group 1: Lay Woman

- A. Ms. Susan Humphrey, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C)
- B. Ms. Rachel Line, Pacifica Synod (2C)

Group 2: Lay Man (YA)

- A. Mr. Carlos F. Ferrufino, Rocky Mountain Synod (2E)
- B. Mr. Matthew Lang, Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D)

Group 3: Lay Man (PC/L)

- A. Mr. Christopher A. Vergara, Metropolitan New York Synod (7C)
- B. Mr. Nathaniel P. Viets-VanLear, Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A)

Group 4: Lay Man (Region 6)

- A. Mr. Ethan A. Roberts, Southern Ohio Synod (6F)
- B. Mr. George Watson, Southeast Michigan (6A)

Group 5: Minister of Word and Service (Region 3)

- A. Deacon Krista Lind, Saint Paul Area Synod (3H)
- B. Deacon Amanda Randall, South Dakota Synod (3C)

Group 6: Minister of Word and Sacrament (PC/L)

- A. The Rev. Eleanor Dutta, Central States Synod (4B)
- B. The Rev. Kwame Pitts, Upstate New York Synod (7D)

Group 7: Minister of Word and Sacrament

- A. The Rev. Jonathan Hemphill, Southeastern Synod (9D)
- B. The Rev. Bradley E. Schmeling, Saint Paul Area Synod (3H)