

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA**

**Church Council**

**MINUTES**

**June 27, 2022**

**Prepared by the  
Office of the Secretary**



**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES  
June 27, 2022**

The 111th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) convened electronically at 2:00 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 (*excused*)

**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	Ms. Cherrish Holland
The Rev. Marcus A. Bigott	Mr. James J.F. Jennings
The Rev. Nicholas M. Billardello III	Mr. David M. Lenz
Ms. Susan Boxberger	The Rev. Tara R. Lynn
Ms. Lisa Burk ( <i>excused</i> )	Mr. Keoni Newman
The Rev. William H. Callister	Mr. Joseph T. Nolte
The Rev. Karn S. Carroll	Mr. Gary A. Pederson
Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman	Mr. William D. Rice
Ms. Alyssa J. Cobb	The Rev. Ricardo Rivera ( <i>excused</i> )
Mr. Ismael E. Danforth ( <i>excused</i> )	Mr. Noah F. Roux ( <i>excused</i> )
Ms. Divine ( <i>excused</i> )	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 ( <i>excused</i> )
The Rev. Daniel W. Gerriettes	Ms. Sonja Wolfe
The Rev. Emily C. Hartner	Ms. Merritt G. Zesinger ( <i>excused</i> )

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

Bp. Brenda K. Bos, Region 2	Bp. Patricia J. Lull, Region 3 ( <i>excused</i> )
Bp. Sue J. Briner, Region 4	Bp. Paula J. Schmitt, Region 8
Bp. Yehiel Curry, Region 5	Bp. Pedro M. Suárez, Region 9
Bp. Christopher deForest, Region 7	Bp. Shelley R. Wickstrom, Region 1
Bp. Donald M. Kreiss, Region 6	

***Churchwide Staff Resource People:***

Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel  
Ms. Aja M. Favors, associate general counsel  
Ms. Victoria Flood, director for Mission Support  
The Rev. N. Keith Fry, executive for Office of the Secretary administration  
The Rev. Philip C. Hirsch, executive director for Christian community and leadership  
Ms. Marit E. Johnson, official documentation manager  
Mr. Nick Kiger, associate director for Mission Support

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCH COUNCIL  
June 24, 2020**

**MINUTES, page 2**

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The Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director for service and justice  
Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe, executive for synod relations  
Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, executive for governance

**Separately Incorporated Ministries:**

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

**Ethnic-Specific Ministry Associations:**

Mr. Roberto Lara, president of the Asociación de Ministerios Latinos de la ELCA

## CALL TO ORDER AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

(Agenda I.A.)

Mr. Carlos E. Peña, interim vice president of the ELCA and chair of the Church Council, called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. (CDT). Agenda items were distributed electronically before the meeting.

Interim Vice President Peña asked the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, to open the meeting with prayer.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The vice president called for discussion. A member moved to strike the recommended action under Agenda I.C.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** To strike the first recommended action under Agenda I.C. ~~“To affirm and support the actions of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton related to the Sierra Pacific Synod.”~~

The council member expressed her opinion that the recommended action was out of sequence and that council members should hear the presiding bishop’s update on the Sierra Pacific Synod before voting to affirm the actions taken.

There being no further discussion, the chair called for the vote on striking the first item from the agenda.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Carried:** To strike the first recommended action under Agenda I.C. ~~“To affirm and support the actions of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton related to the Sierra Pacific Synod.”~~

Vice President Peña declared that the motion had passed, then called for the vote on adoption of the amended agenda.

**VOTED:**

**CC22.06.18** To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

## UPDATE ON MATTERS RELATED TO SIERRA PACIFIC SYNOD

(Agenda I.B.)

Presiding Bishop Eaton reviewed the sequence of events leading up to the Sierra Pacific Synod’s 2022 Synod Assembly and thanked Vice President Peña for his leadership during that assembly. Before the 2022 Sierra Pacific Assembly took place, the Sierra Pacific Synod Council took a vote of confidence in support of former bishop Megan M. Rohrer and published its support for the former bishop online. While the Sierra Pacific Listening Team report included items of concern regarding former bishop Rohrer’s conduct, Presiding Bishop Eaton expressed her opinion that there was not enough substantive evidence to bring disciplinary charges; instead, she had asked former bishop Rohrer for their resignation.

During the course of the 2022 Sierra Pacific Assembly, additional information about former bishop Rohrer’s conduct was brought to the presiding bishop’s attention. At the same time, the Sierra Pacific Synod Council voted that former bishop Rohrer should resign and began negotiating a severance package.

Presiding Bishop Eaton indicated to the Church Council that she was exploring bringing disciplinary charges and outlined the disciplinary process described in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. She also noted some inaccuracies in the Listening Team report. She reported that the Rev. Claire S. Burkat, who served as bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod from 2006–2018, has agreed to serve as interim bishop of the Sierra Pacific Synod. She will begin her service on July 10, 2022.

Council members engaged in discussion. Discussion included questions and clarifications around the discipline process and expression of a desire to have important updates on matters like this more regularly.

## MEMORANDUM AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LATINÉ COMMUNITY OF THE ELCA

(Agenda I.C.)

Vice President Peña, presented a memorandum from the Asociación de Ministerios Latinos de la ELCA (Latino Ministries Association of the ELCA). He introduced Mr. Roberto Lara, president of the Asociación de Ministerios

MINUTES, page 4

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Latinos de la ELCA. Mr. Lara also served as a member of the listening team that had gathered information regarding the situation in the Sierra Pacific Synod.

Mr. Lara noted that the memorandum was from Latiné leaders across the ELCA, including the Asociación de Ministerios Latinos de la ELCA, Latinx Lutheran Leadership (L3), the Estrategia Latina Committee of the ELCA, Latiné Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEMs), churchwide staff members, and the Conference of Bishops. The memorandum laid out three proposals: a call for disciplinary charges against the Rev. Megan M. Rohrer, a public apology to the community of Misión Latina Luterana (now Iglesia Luterana Santa María Peregrina) along with an anti-racism commitment during the first plenary session of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, and the creation of a diverse ELCA Crisis Management Team. The recommendation also included the exploration of a Racial Justice Ombudsman Office.

Secretary Rothmeyer moved the following motion:

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** To urge the Churchwide Assembly Planning Team, in consultation with the Church Council and the leaders of the ELCA Latiné community, to find ways to incorporate into the 2022 Churchwide Assembly a public apology from this church to the Latiné community and a public commitment to anti-racism.

Vice President Peña asked for discussion.

Mr. Lara clarified that the recommendation for an ombudsperson would be an independent ombudsperson whose work would be funded through the churchwide organization. Church Council members also engaged in discussion on the call for a public apology.

Following discussion, Vice President Peña called for the vote.

**VOTED:**

**CC22.06.19** To urge the Churchwide Assembly Planning Team, in consultation with the Church Council and the leaders of the ELCA Latiné community, to find ways to incorporate into the 2022 Churchwide Assembly a public apology from this church to the Latiné community and a public commitment to anti-racism.

Secretary Rothmeyer moved the following motion:

**Moved;**

**Seconded:** To receive the request to explore creation of the position of a Racial Justice Ombudsperson;  
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.

A council member offered an amendment:

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Carried:** 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.

The amendment carried. Vice President Peña called for discussion of the amended motion.

Ms. Judith Roberts, senior director for diversity, equity, and inclusion, noted that this motion would expand the work of the existing task force the Church Council had called for at the April 2022 meeting.

There being no further discussion, the chair led the vote on the amended item.

**VOTED:**

**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.**

A council member moved to reconsider the struck action of affirmation (Agenda I.C.).

**Moved;**

**Seconded:**

To reconsider the struck action of affirmation.

“To affirm and support the actions of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton related to the Sierra Pacific Synod.”

The council member explained he had wanted to hear the report before taking action on the struck motion. Following further discussion, the chair called for the vote on the motion to reconsider.

**Move;**

**Second;**

**Carried:**

**Move to reconsider the struck action of affirmation.**

**“To affirm and support the actions of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton related to the Sierra Pacific Synod.”**

Vice President Peña reminded council members that the item for reconsideration was “To affirm and support the actions of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton related to the Sierra Pacific Synod.”

A council member offered an amendment. Following discussion, the vice president called for the vote on the amendment.

**Moved;**

**Seconded**

**Carried:**

**To affirm ~~and support~~ the actions of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton related to the Sierra Pacific Synod**

Another council member offered a substitute amendment; following discussion the chair called for the vote.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

**Carried:**

**To ~~affirm the actions receive with gratitude today’s report~~ of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and officers of this church related to the Sierra Pacific Synod.**

The vice president called for the vote on the amended motion.

**VOTED:**

**CC22.06.21**

**To receive with gratitude today’s report of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and officers of this church related to the Sierra Pacific Synod.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The 111th meeting of the Church Council adjourned at 3:51 p.m. (EDT) on Monday, June 27, 2022.