



Nov. 15, 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 (Nov. 10–13, 2022)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill., Nov. 10–13, 2022. The following is a summary of Church Council actions along with background information.

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**1. APPOINTMENTS TO CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEES FOR THE 2022–2025 TRIENNium**

*Background:*

At its August 2022 meeting, the Church Council ratified provisional membership for the five standing committees of the Church Council: Budget and Finance; Christian Community and Leadership; Faith, Society, and Innovation; Legal and Constitutional Review; and Service and Justice [CC22.04.02].

Following the elections at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, newly elected Church Council members indicated their committee preferences. At its September 2022 meeting, the Executive Committee completed its review of the requests and recommended ratification by the Church Council during the first plenary session of its November 2022 meeting [EC22.09.24].

The appointments are as follows:

- **Budget and Finance Committee:** The Rev. Lisa Ahlness, the Rev. Heather Brown, Mr. Rindra Josoa, and Deacon Kari Olsen.
- **Legal and Constitutional Review Committee:** The Rev. Leroy Cannon, Mr. Mitch McCartney, and Ms. Jennifer Trom.

- **Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee:** Ms. Jamie Brueschoff, the Rev. Gwendolyn King, Ms. Olivia Martin-Call, and Mr. Ethan Miller-Perez.
- **Christian Community and Leadership Committee:** Ms. Sheena Foster, Mr. Hans Giller, Mr. Joel Miller, and Ms. Linda Rivera.
- **Service and Justice Committee:** Ms. Kristy Henriksen, Mr. Iván Perez, and Ms. Andraine Sinaga.

New members of the Board Development Committee for the 2022–2025 triennium were approved by the Executive Committee [EC22.10.27b]. The persons appointed were: The Rev. Heather Brown, Mr. Hans Giller, and Ms. Linda Rivera.

Resource Development Committee appointments will come to a future Executive Committee meeting. Appointments for the Audit Committee will come through the Budget and Finance Committee.

**Church Council action:**

**To ratify the appointments to the Church Council standing committees for the 2022–2025 triennium.**

## **2. SYNOD VISITS BY CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS**

*Background:*

Since its November 2005 meeting, the Church Council has committed itself to building relationships with the churchwide organization and synods, congregations, and institutions and agencies.

At its November 2007 meeting, the Church Council voted [CC07.11.65]:

To recall that, concerning changes in governance of this church, the 2005 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA05.06.21]: “To encourage greater interaction of members of the Church Council with synodical councils and synodical assemblies in their respective areas”;

To urge members of the Church Council to accept this responsibility and interact with their own synods and their partner synods in various ways, including attending at least one Synod Council meeting per year and participating in Synod Assemblies, especially in years when a synod is considering nominations to the Church Council; and

To note that expenses for attending Synod Council meetings and Synod Assemblies will be reimbursed by the churchwide organization in accordance with the ELCA travel policy.

Members of the Church Council now make the commitment, as available, to be in contact with specific synods during the triennium. Current [suggested commitments](#) are listed in “Other Documents” of the November 2022 Church Council materials. A summary of reports of these contacts is available under “Other Documents” as well.

Members of the Church Council were invited to review the commitments during the November 2022 meeting. After the review is complete, the document will be revised and distributed.

**Church Council action:**

**To acknowledge the commitment of the Church Council to have greater interaction of members of the Church Council with synod councils and synod assemblies in their respective areas;**

**To urge members of the Church Council to accept this responsibility and interact with their own synods and assigned synods in various ways, including attending at least one Synod Council meeting per year and participating in a Synod Assembly, especially in a year when a synod is considering nominations to the Church Council; and**

**To note that expenses for attending Synod Council meetings and Synod Assemblies will be reimbursed by the churchwide organization in accordance with the ELCA travel policy.**

## **3. ELECTIONS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*Background:*

At the first meeting after a Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council elects new members to its Executive Committee. Three new members in the following categories needed to be elected:

- One member in the category: Lay Person of Color/Primary Language other than English
- One member in the category: Rostered Man
- One member in a category to be determined by the Executive Committee following the election of the Lay Person of Color/Primary Language other than English.

**Church Council action:**

**To elect the Rev. Marcus Bigott, Mr. Keoni Newman, and Ms. Tracey Beasley to terms ending in 2025 on the Executive Committee of the Church Council.**

## **4. APPROVAL OF AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**

*Background:*

The Audit Committee reported the following activity:

At the July 12, 2022, Audit Committee meeting, the external auditors, Crowe LLP presented a preliminary draft of the financial statements of the ELCA for the year ended January 31, 2022. They included an “unmodified” opinion that the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the ELCA as of January 31, 2022, and the changes in its net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. The opinion also contains an Emphasis of Matter paragraph stating that this is an audit of the Churchwide Organization of the ELCA and not a reflection of the entire ELCA. At this meeting the Audit Committee voted to approve the auditors’ report on the financial statements for the year ended 1/31/21.

The committee performed all other duties and responsibilities in compliance with its Charter and Checklist. No exceptions were noted.

At the November 9, 2022, Audit Committee meeting, Management reviewed the interim financial results through September 30, 2022.

Crowe LLP, the external audit firm, presented the Audit Service Plan and fees for the year ended January 31, 2023. Crowe noted a 7% increase in fees for this year. The committee approved the audit service plan and fees and recommends the Budget and Finance Committee approve the engagement of Crowe LLP to perform the audit service plan for the churchwide organizations’ year ending January 31, 2023.

Forvis LLP, the internal audit firm, presented the internal audit report for the period ended September 30, 2022. Forvis also presented the internal audit plan for the year ending January 31, 2024. The audit committee approved the plan and internal audit report.

The committee received and approved Forvis internal audit plan for 2023. The proposed fees for the engagement were \$94,000, although their hours were reduced from 600 to 470 in order to stay in line with their original proposed fees for 2022 – 2024 of \$94,000 per year for Churchwide Administrative Offices.

The committee received a report from Jon Beyer, Executive for Information Technology, updating the committee on the ELCA information security program.

The committee met in separate executive sessions with Crowe LLP, Forvis LLP and the Treasurer.

***Church Council Action:***

**To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing its review of the audited financial statements for the churchwide organization’s fiscal year ended January 31, 2022.**

**5. MISSION DEVELOPMENT FUND POLICY**

***Background:***

In 2006, the Church Council approved the establishment of a Mission Development Fund (MDF) as seed money for new and innovative ministries and in support of priorities at the request of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Treasurer.

VOTED:

CC06.11.38

To approve the establishment of a new temporarily restricted fund, the Mission Development Fund, to reside in the Foundation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The source of the funds will be unrestricted bequests and trusts income received in excess of the budgeted amount, after covering any shortfall in other current income categories, in any fiscal year. Additional consideration will be given to the cash balances available for the ELCA to meet its cash management policies. The transfer of such income shall be authorized by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Treasurer. The fund will be used as seed money for new and innovative ministries and in support of churchwide priorities at the request of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Office of the Treasurer and the Foundation of the ELCA and in collaboration with the Cabinet of Executives. Expenditures from the Mission Development Fund in an amount greater than \$1 million shall require action by the Church Council.

Several revisions to the MDF policy were approved by the Budget and Finance Committee at its July 2022 meeting and forwarded to Church Council for action.

***Church Council Action:***

**To approve the revisions to the 2006 Church Council Action CC06.11.38 for the Mission Development Fund as presented in the “Mission Development Fund Policy.”**

**6. POST-RETIREMENT MEDICAL BENEFITS**

***Church Council Action:***

**To transfer the excess liability in the amount of \$622,977.90 which represents the excess accrual for Post-Retirement Medical Benefits to the Designated Fund for Budgeted Operations Support.**

## **7. COMPLETION OF COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND**

### *Background:*

At the April 2020 Church Council meeting, a special appeal in response to COVID-19 was approved as a fundraising effort of this church. [CC20.04.09]

The fundraising effort successfully raised \$2,112,429 to support this church's congregations, synods, and other affiliated ministries that had been negatively impacted by the pandemic. No new monies are coming in for the appeal and there are other urgent fundraising priorities, so the recommendation was to close the COVID-19 special appeal.

### *Church Council Action:*

**To approve the completion of the special appeal in response to COVID-19; and**

**To thank this church's members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and other institutions and agencies for their generous support.**

## **8. REVISIONS TO THE ELCA GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL**

### *Background:*

At the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, a bylaw was adopted that allowed the Church Council to designate categories for advisory members to have voice but not vote at Council meetings. This necessitates amendments to the ELCA Governance Policy Manual.

In accordance with the manual, "Proposed amendments shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Secretary in advance of presentation for action to the Church Council. Any Church Council member, liaison bishop, or churchwide staff member may suggest amendments by submitting proposals to the Executive Committee. Amendments will be adopted by majority vote of the Church Council and become effective immediately upon adoption."

### *Church Council Action:*

**To approve the revisions to the ELCA Church Council Governance Policy Manual; and**

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

## **9. BYLAW AMENDMENTS FOR PORTICO BENEFIT SERVICES**

### *Background:*

The Church Council is responsible for approving Portico Benefit Services amendments that involve a significant change in policy or a significant change in cost or benefits and shall approve trust amendments initiated by Portico Benefit Services ["Portico"].

Pending Portico's Board of Trustees approval, the proposed changes are to be considered by the Church Council.

### *Church Council Action:*

**To approve the proposed amendments to the Restated Bylaws of the Board of Pensions of the ELCA as listed in the "Portico Bylaws Changes Nov. 2022" document.**

## **10. BYLAW AMENDMENT FOR LENOIR-RHYNE UNIVERSITY**

### *Background:*

In August 2022, the Lenoir-Rhyne University Board of Directors approved a bylaw amendment that was fully supported by the chair of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS) Advisory Council. The proposed amendments are submitted for approval by the Church Council in accordance with ELCA bylaw 8.21.02. The proposed amendment replaces the university president with the vice president of mission, engagement, and innovation as the *ex-officio* voting member on the LTSS Advisory Council (p. 15).

### *Church Council Action:*

**To approve the amended bylaws of Lenoir-Rhyne University.**

## **11. AMENDMENTS TO THE METROPOLITAN CHICAGO SYNOD CONSTITUTION**

### *Background:*

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...."

### *Church Council Action:*

**To ratify the amendments in the constitution of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, with the exception of the following provisions:**

- S6.04.03.

- S9.05.
- S9.06.
- S9.07.
- S10.01.02.
- S10.01.03.

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

## **12. BYLAW AMENDMENT FOR UNITED LUTHERAN SEMINARY**

### *Background:*

The United Lutheran Seminary Board of Trustees reviewed several bylaw amendments. Those amendments include removing gender-specific terms (pronouns), which leads in certain cases to rephrasing; adding clarifying language; further codifying Shared Governance; and removing language related to the Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation. In the case of the latter, the board’s Governance, Infrastructure, and Policy Committee felt it appropriate to remove the entire second paragraph in Chapter 3 as unnecessarily specific.

### *Church Council Action:*

To approve the amended bylaws of United Lutheran Seminary.

## **13. ASSESSMENT AND FEASIBILITY OF SOCIAL MESSAGE PROCESSES**

### *Background:*

At this time, there are three pending requests for social messages, two of which come from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. It is the recommendation of the director for theological ethics to delay action on these requests until the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting. A social message on climate care is in process which fully occupies the churchwide organization staffing and churchwide capacity until brought to Church Council for consideration in Spring 2023. Further, it has not been possible to do the groundwork or assessment necessary to bring a clear recommendation regarding all the pending requests. Such assessment and recommendation are anticipated by the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting.

### *Church Council Action:*

To defer the questions of developing social messages on U.S. national gun policy or on child abuse and protection and of considering the authorization of a revision of the “Message on Homelessness” (1990) until the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting to allow for a careful and thorough assessment of each issue, staff capacity, and finances; and

To request that the secretary of this church notify the synods of this action.

## **14. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DOCUMENTS**

### *Background:*

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 one new social criteria investment screen.

### *Church Council Action:*

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:

- Sustainability Issue Paper
- Domestic Access to Capital Issue Paper
- Genetics Issue Paper;

To approve the “Privatized Immigration Detention Social Criteria Investment Screen;” and

To request that the original issue papers be archived for historical and research purposes.

## **15. POLICIES FOR SYNOD-AUTHORIZED WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES**

### *Background:*

In accordance with ELCA Constitution bylaw 10.01.04, “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 such as developing ministries, preaching points, or chapels as related to the synod and part of the synod’s life and mission.”

The [2003 policy](#) is in conflict with current practice and later policy documents, so the recommendation was to repeal the policy and develop a new one.

### *Church Council Action:*

To repeal the 2003 “Policy on Criteria for Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities;” and

To direct the Christian Community and Leadership home area, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, to consider a new policy to be reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and approved by the Church Council.

## 16. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Background:*

The minutes of the Church Council meetings on Mar. 31–Apr. 2, 2022, June 27, 2022, and Aug. 7, 2022 were provided to council members electronically on Church Council Microsoft Teams.

The minutes of the council’s Executive Committee meetings on Mar. 31–Apr. 2, 2022, Apr. 26, 2022, June 28, 2022, Aug. 7, 2022, Sept. 13, 2022, and Oct. 13, 2022, were provided electronically to members on Church Council Teams.

Council members were invited to 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). Proper corrections were entered into the protocol copies of the minutes.

**Church Council Action:**

To approve the minutes of the Mar. 31–Apr. 2, 2022, June 27, 2022, and Aug. 7, 2022 meetings of the Church Council; and

To ratify actions of the council’s Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the Mar. 31–Apr. 2, 2022; Apr. 26, 2022; June 28, 2022; Aug. 7, 2022; Sept. 13, 2022; and Oct. 13, 2022, meetings.

## 17. ISSUANCE OF CHURCH COUNCIL LETTERS OF CALL

*Background:*

In 2008, the Church Council acted to grant the secretary of this church the authority to issue letters of call on behalf of the Church Council for those calls listed in the *Tables of Sources of Calls* for which the Church Council is described as the calling body:

VOTED: EN BLOC  
CC08.04.19

To authorize the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to issue letters of call on behalf of the Church Council for ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers, in accordance with the Sources of Calls tables in Chapter 7 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*;

To note that this action supersedes Church Council action CC87.06.03; and

To request that the secretary annually report letters of call issued under this authorization.

In order to more closely parallel the process for issuance of letters of call by synod councils and congregations, and to ensure that authority for calls is more broadly shared by the Church Council, the secretary recommended that this responsibility be given to the Executive Committee. This action rescinds the earlier authority granted to the secretary.

**Church Council Action:**

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to issue letters of call on behalf of the Church Council for rostered ministers in accordance with the *Tables of Sources of Calls* in Chapter 7 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

To note that this action supersedes Church Council action CC08.04.19.

## 18. CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

*Background:*

The Church Council has the responsibility for electing people to fill terms on boards of the 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 is also to elect nominees to a vacancy on a board or committee of the churchwide organization.

**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: Mr. DeWayne A. Cook.

**Church Council Action:**

To re-elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a term beginning Jan. 1, 2023, and expiring Dec. 31, 2028: Ms. Elizabeth L. Jones.

**Church Council Action:**

To elect to the advisory board of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University to a term beginning July 1, 2022, and expiring June 30, 2025: The Rev. Stephen D. Wachtman.

**Church Council Action:**

To elect to the Committee of Hearing Officers to a six-term beginning November 2022: Mr. Arundel T. Clarke.

**Church Council Action:**

To elect to the Mission Investment Fund Board of Trustees to a term expiring in August 2025: Mr. Randall S. Foster.

**Church Council Action:**

To elect to the Board of Directors of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. for a renewable four-year term beginning in March 2023 and concluding March 2027: The Rev. Michael J. Vinson.

**19. REVISIONS TO THE FY23 SPENDING AUTHORIZATION**

*Background:*

The ELCA constitution includes a Churchwide Assembly (CWA) action which authorizes the Church Council to revise (or establish, as applicable) spending authorizations. This includes changes to spending authorizations that were previously approved by the Churchwide Assembly. Last April, the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) approved and forwarded to Church Council (CC), who approved, a 3-year income projection (2023 – 2025) and a one-year spending authorization (2023) for approval. This was then recommended to the CWA for approval in August. The budgets were approved as recommended by the CWA.

However, since April, events/actual results have occurred which have resulted in the recommendation from staff that the approved 2023 budgets be considered for modification.

**Church Council Action:**

To revise the 2023 fiscal year current fund spending authorization from \$68,814,000 to \$68,429,562; and  
To revise the 2023 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization from \$22,869,000 to \$25,250,000.

**20. AUDIT OF THE 2022 FISCAL YEAR**

*Background:*

The Budget and Finance Committee recommended that the Church Council approve the engagement of Crowe LLP to perform the audit service plan for the churchwide organizations' year ending January 31, 2023.

**Church Council action:**

To approve the engagement of Crowe LLP to perform the audit service plan for the churchwide organization's year ending January 31, 2023.

**21. REVISION OF CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEE CHARTERS**

*Background:*

In accordance with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and ELCA Church Council Governance Policy Manual, the charters of the Church Council Committees describe the responsibilities, composition, protocols, and meeting agendas of the committees.

**Church Council action [two-thirds approval]:**

To approve the revised committee charters; and  
To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.