

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
**CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**April 20, 2023**  
**Proposed Schedule**  
**All Times are Central Time Zone**

**Thursday, April 20**

3:00 p.m. Executive Committee, [MS Teams Link](#)

**5:30 p.m.** *Deadline for New Business* (send request to [Sue.Rothmeyer@elca.org](mailto:Sue.Rothmeyer@elca.org))  
*Deadline for Removal of Items from En Bloc* (send request to [Sue.Rothmeyer@elca.org](mailto:Sue.Rothmeyer@elca.org))

5:00 p.m. **PLENARY SESSION ONE, [MS Teams Link](#)**  
Gathering Word and Prayer/Call to Order (5:00 – 5:10)  
Adoption on Standing Rules  
Report from the Presiding Bishop (5:10 – 5:20; Q&A 5:20 – 5:25)  
Report of the Executive Committee (5:25 – 6:40)

- Action on nominations to Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church
- Action on exchangeability proposal of the diaconate with The Episcopal Church
- Action on task force regarding disciplinary concerns of rostered ministers of color

*10-minute break*  
Report from the Treasurer (6:50 – 7:00)  
Report of the Budget and Finance Committee (7:00 – 7:10)  
Report of the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee (7:10 – 7:20)

- Action on social message on climate crisis

Consideration of Items Removed from *En Bloc* (7:20 – 7:30)  
*En Bloc* Approval of Certain Items  
New Business (7:30 – 7:40)  
Legal Briefing (*Executive Session*) (7:40-7:55)  
Closing Prayer/Adjournment

### **Standing Rules for April 2023 Church Council Meeting**

The following standing rules will serve to facilitate the work of the ELCA Church Council at its April 2023 meeting. Relevant portions of the ELCA Constitution and the *ELCA Church Council Governance Policy Manual (GPM)* are provided as background.

#### ***Background Information:***

##### **Members of the Church Council**

###### *Church Council Voting Members*

**14.31. The voting members of the Church Council shall consist of the four churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and at least 32 and not more than 45 other persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly.**

###### *Advisory Members*

**14.32.01. The Church Council shall have as liaison members nine synod bishops, each elected by the Conference of Bishops to one four-year term. One bishop shall be elected from each region.**

**14.32.02. Liaison members of the Church Council shall have voice but not vote.**

**14.33.A22. The Church Council shall have as advisory members each president, or the designated representative of the president, of the ELCA ethnic associations, as well as a representative of Reconciling Works. Advisory membership of the Church Council shall be reviewed each triennium.**

**14.41.02. Liaison bishops, ecumenical guests, and other advisors to the Church Council may serve as advisory members to the council's committees with voice but not vote.**

###### *Visitors/Guests*

*GPM, p. 19:*

*In accordance with the Open Meetings policy, visitors are welcome to attend open sessions of meetings of the Church Council or its committees, but they do not have voice or vote. At the discretion of the chairperson and within the constraints of the agenda, the chairperson may invite comments or call upon visitors to speak. When a matter on the agenda is pending, debate and discussion ordinarily will take place among Church Council members before comments from visitors are invited.*

*Members of the Church Council, staff and guests share the responsibility to maintain good order and to not disrupt meetings. To assist in maintaining good order, persons in the meeting space are requested to mute electronic devices and to refrain from behavior that disrupts the meeting. Electronic*

*recording or live-streaming of Church Council or committee meetings is not authorized without prior permission of the chairperson.*

### **Meeting Procedures**

**14.12.02. The Church Council shall use parliamentary procedure in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, unless otherwise ordered by the council.**

*GPM, pg. 16: In accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, the Church Council may meet in executive session, either when indicated on the agenda or upon adoption of a motion to enter executive session. Prior to beginning an executive session, the chairperson shall identify which staff members and others are invited to participate in the executive session. If actions are taken in executive session that may be publicly disclosed, the chair will report those actions when the Church Council returns to open session. If confidential minutes are taken in executive session, they will remain confidential unless authorized for public distribution by the Executive Committee.*

### *En Bloc Resolution*

The responses to certain churchwide assembly actions, synod council actions, and previous Church Council actions may be approved by an *en bloc* resolution. In addition, Church Council committees may place recommendations *en bloc*. *En bloc* resolutions requiring two-thirds vote of the voting members present will follow the proper voting procedures.

### ***Standing Rules:***

#### *Voting Procedures*

Voting normally will take place using a separate link through a voting form or poll app. For council members who do not have access to the link, they may submit their vote electronically to a designated person. As directed by the chair, voting may also take place through a voice vote.

#### *Obtaining the Floor*

In plenary sessions of the Church Council, the voting members have prior right to obtain the floor, unless the chair determines that it is in the best interests of the council to call upon a liaison bishop, advisory member, a churchwide staff member, or another individual with voice. Voting members may indicate their intention to speak by using the "Raise hand" feature in Microsoft Teams. Once a voting member has been called upon, the member should click on "Lower hand." The conversation or chat window is not to be used for comments or questions during the meeting.

#### *Questions of Privilege*

Questions of privilege that relate to the council as a whole may be raised in the course of the meeting by using the "Raise hand" feature. These would include such concerns as technical issues or emergencies of various sorts. Questions of personal privilege that are not urgent and do not relate to the Church Council as a whole are out of order. Requests for time in plenary session for questions of personal privilege (e.g.,

personal announcements, comments on matters not on the agenda, reflections on the meaning of votes after they are taken) must be submitted electronically to Joseph Schmidt at [Joseph.Schmidt@elca.org](mailto:Joseph.Schmidt@elca.org). The chair may allow such matters to be addressed at a later time.

#### *En Bloc Agenda and Deadlines*

To call for separate consideration of an item in *en bloc* or to submit new business, a voting member must submit notification electronically to the secretary of this church ([Sue.Rothmeyer@elca.org](mailto:Sue.Rothmeyer@elca.org)) prior to the established deadline, Thursday, April 20, 2023, 5:30 p.m. (CDT).

#### *Technical Details*

Plenary sessions will be recorded for minutes purposes only. The recordings will not be made public. Electronic recording or live-streaming of Church Council or committee meetings is not authorized without prior permission of the chairperson.

Microphones should be muted unless a person is speaking or presenting.

Church Council members are encouraged to use video and may wish to use a virtual background or blur their background for privacy purposes. All other meeting participants are asked to turn their video off to conserve bandwidth, unless they are invited to speak or present, at which time the individual is encouraged to turn on the video.

The conversation or chat window will be disabled for the meeting. If enabled for a specific purpose, the conversation or chat window should be used solely for that purpose.

Proposal for Exchangeability of the Diaconate:  
The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Endorsed by the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee  
January 11, 2023

**Proposal:** An interpretation of *Called to Common Mission* (2000),<sup>1</sup> hereafter “CCM,” in light of the ELCA’s institution of an ordained diaconate (ELCA Churchwide Assembly action, August 2019):

- 1) Based on CCM ¶15 and ¶21, The Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) mutually recognize each other’s order of deacons as authentic.
- 2) Based on CCM ¶14, the ELCA continues to acknowledge the authenticity of deacons in TEC. Based on CCM ¶15, TEC now acknowledges the authenticity of deacons/rostered ministers of Word and Service of the ELCA and its predecessor bodies.
- 3) Based on CCM ¶22, TEC and the ELCA acknowledge that each other’s deacons may validly serve in each other’s liturgies. TEC and the ELCA mutually recognize each other’s deacons as interchangeable for occasional ministry or extended service in counterpart ministries and joint ministry settings, subject to the approval of their respective bishops. We propose that the full communion *Orderly Exchange* guidelines for pastors and priests<sup>2</sup> be amended to include exchangeability of deacons.
- 4) Based on CCM ¶9, TEC and the ELCA renew their pledge to jointly undertake “continuing exploration, renewal, and reform”<sup>3</sup> for the purpose of deepening the opportunities for diaconal word and service in both communions and in our full communion relationship.

**Commentary:**

*Historical Background*

In 2001, TEC and the ELCA acknowledged the authenticity of each other’s episcopal and presbyteral orders through their full communion agreement, *Called to Common Mission*.<sup>4</sup> An impediment remained to full exchangeability for one group: Episcopal deacons and their Lutheran diaconal counterparts as then rostered. The Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee addressed the exchangeability of TEC deacons and the ELCA rosters of Word and Service several times after the adoption of CCM but was unable to reach a solution. Since one group (TEC) was viewed as ordained and the other (ELCA) as consecrated or commissioned lay ministers, the gap was too great to bridge.

The ELCA 2016 Churchwide Assembly changed the church’s polity and ecclesiology by unifying its three rostered ministries of word and service<sup>5</sup> into one roster of deacons, and the ELCA 2019

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<sup>1</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Episcopal Church USA, *Called to Common Mission* (2000), [download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Called\\_To\\_Common\\_Mission.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Called_To_Common_Mission.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *The Orderly Exchange of Pastors and Priests Under Called to Common Mission: Principles and Guidelines*, [http://lutheran-episcopal.org/documents/orderly\\_exchange.pdf](http://lutheran-episcopal.org/documents/orderly_exchange.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> CCM ¶9.

<sup>4</sup> CCM ¶14, 15, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Deaconesses, Associates in Ministry and Diaconal Ministers.

Churchwide Assembly confirmed that the entrance rite for this unified order would be ordination. Many ELCA deacons received from the former rosters of Word and Service were consecrated or commissioned with a laying-on of hands by a bishop; some were not, under former liturgical practices. Recognizing the diaconal character of all the former rosters of Word and Service in the ELCA and its predecessor bodies, the ELCA received them into the ELCA's roster of ordained deacons. The ELCA's ordination rite for deacons now includes a laying-on of hands by a bishop. The ELCA's actions have now brought the ELCA's diaconate into congruence with TEC's diaconate. The theological impediments to full exchangeability of TEC and ELCA deacons have now been removed.

Under our full communion partnership, TEC is now invited to recognize the authenticity of all these ELCA deacons in the future. There is historical precedent in the broader Anglican Communion and in TEC for this reception: both the recommendations of the Lambeth Conference in 1968<sup>6</sup> and the canonical resolutions of the Episcopal Church General Convention in 1970<sup>7</sup> provided for the reception of (consecrated) deaconesses into the order of deacons. Neither implemented additional requirements for deaconesses to be made deacons or distinguished between those consecrated deaconesses who were "grandmothered in" as deacons and those ordained after the new canon's passage.

*Bringing the Diaconate Into Full Communion*

***Building upon the full communion agreement and over 20 years of living into common mission together, this proposal recognizes and celebrates that our two churches now hold a common theology and ecclesiology for recognition and exchangeability of ELCA and TEC deacons.***

TEC and the ELCA now hold a common vision of the diaconate. Both envision their deacons as equipping the *diakonia* (service rooted in the word of God) of the church as a whole; this *diakonia* of all believers<sup>8</sup> is one of the primary goals of CCM. TEC and the ELCA jointly affirmed in CCM that "all members of Christ's church are commissioned for ministry through baptism."<sup>9</sup> Both churches' theology of the diaconate is grounded in the sacrament of baptism. The diaconate is the order to which the church confers responsibility for reminding the people of God that a call to active *diakonia* constitutes a Christian baptismal identity. "The deacon symbolizes the service of Jesus Christ to which we are all called in baptism," declares a paper presented in 2017 to the ELCA Entrance Rite Discernment Group.<sup>10</sup> Deacons and laypeople together serve roles of worship leadership, providing yet another opportunity to highlight the

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<sup>6</sup> *The Lambeth Conference 1968: Resolutions and Reports* (SPCK and Seabury Press, 1968), 39, 105-106.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: Otherwise Known as the Episcopal Church, Held in Houston, Texas, From October Eleventh to Twenty-Second, Inclusive, in the Year of Our Lord 1970, With Constitution and Canons* (New York: 1970), 249, 270-71, 769-70.

<sup>8</sup> See Craig L. Nesson, "A Lutheran Theology for *Diakonia* in North American Contexts," in Godwin Ampony, et al., *International Handbook on Ecumenical Diakonia* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2021), 283-4.

<sup>9</sup> CCM ¶16.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon Lathrop, "Diaconal Ministry: The Entrance Rite Question, Reflections From a Consideration of Symbolic Meaning and Ritual Practice," [bit.ly/3GDZm5x](https://bit.ly/3GDZm5x)

intersections of the church and the world. Both groups have experienced a maturing of diaconal identity and an increase in diaconal vocations.

The ELCA and TEC have together come to a place where they were called to be over two decades ago, when they entered into full communion. Each church has evolved in its understanding and practice of the diaconate, and now we have come to convergence in this ministry. In Canada the Waterloo Declaration of 2001, which established full communion relations between the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), similarly commits those two churches “to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry.”<sup>11</sup> With the final action in 2022 affirming the “Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion” among the ACC, the ELCIC, the ELCA and TEC,<sup>12</sup> these four churches have further committed themselves to “establish policies and procedures to facilitate exchange of ministry” across the continental border of Canada and the U.S., including the possibility of the exchange of deacons.<sup>13</sup>

Under the U.S. full communion agreement, *Called to Common Mission*, we hereby propose that TEC and ELCA approve each other’s deacons to serve liturgically and to serve under call in each other’s parishes and other ministry contexts under the same principles of *Orderly Exchange* that govern pastors/priests:

This orderly exchange of [deacons] is for the sake of participation in the mission of God and can be an important sign of our unity in Christ. Exchangeability, as part of common ecumenical commitment to collaborate as members of the one body of Christ, can enhance shared ministry and mission by encouraging more flexible, responsive and effective placement of [deacons]. Thus, orderly exchange encourages those in our churches responsible for ministerial placement to invite the service of [deacons] available in other churches and make use of their gifts; it encourages [deacons] in each church to respond to such invitations or, where appropriate, to express their openness to serve in another church.<sup>14</sup>

“As our churches live in full communion,” states *Called to Common Mission*, “our ordained ministries will still be regulated by the constitutional framework of each church.”<sup>15</sup> Nothing in this proposal would require any change in the two churches’ differing polities around the ordination of priests/pastors. EC may continue the practice of ordination to the transitional

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<sup>11</sup> Anglican Church of Canada, “Called to Full Communion (The Waterloo Declaration),” 2001, [www.anglicancommunion.org/media/102184/waterloo\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/102184/waterloo_declaration.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> The Episcopal Church, “Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Relations of Full Communion,” April 1, 2022, [www.episcopalchurch.org/eir/memorandum-of-mutual-recognition-of-relations-of-full-communion/](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/eir/memorandum-of-mutual-recognition-of-relations-of-full-communion/)

<sup>13</sup> A process for enabling the transferability of deacons between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has not yet been formally pursued.

<sup>14</sup> This quote is from the 2021 proposed revision of *Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Pastors and Priests*.

<sup>15</sup> CCM ¶18.

diaconate prior to ordination to the priesthood, whereas the ELCA may continue its practice of direct ordination of pastors into the office of Word and Sacrament.

*Called to Common Mission* states, “both churches acknowledge that the diaconate, including its place within the threefold ministerial office and its relationship with all other ministries, is in need of continuing exploration, renewal, and reform, which they pledge themselves to undertake in consultation with one another.”<sup>16</sup> Exchangeability of calls will deepen the theology and practice of *diakonia* in both churches and may facilitate a deepening dialogue on *diakonia* with other ecumenical partners’ expressions of diaconate as well.

This recognition and declaration of exchangeability will provide the following opportunities:

- a) The preparation of TEC and ELCA deacons will be enhanced by mutual sharing of competencies, educational resources and processes for formation. Well-established educational institutions in both traditions offer excellent programs and certifications specifically designed for diaconal ministry.
- b) The ELCA and TEC will want to coordinate their respective guidelines for call and deployment. Diaconal exchangeability under this agreement will be enhanced by careful attention to:
  - Assessment of equivalencies in areas of specialization, where applicable.
  - Training in the liturgical practices of the hosting church.
  - Addressing divergent policies and practices regarding compensation.
- c) Given that TEC and the ELCA have different liturgical roles for deacons, “a spirit of graciousness and commonality,”<sup>17</sup> pastoral sensitivity and clarity of expectation are encouraged, especially in planning ecumenical events.
- d) The deacon should be rooted in the community of worship in order to live into the fullness of their diaconal identity as those ordained to ensure that the people of God fulfill their own diaconal responsibilities.

Our churches are called to common mission, to work together to reveal our unity in Christ,<sup>18</sup> linking the church and the world. We are part of a global and ecumenical movement of the Spirit that is opening the ears of the church to the desperate cries of the world and pushing us beyond our Sunday-morning gatherings back out into the world in cross-shaped *diakonia*. As an order rooted in mission, a shared diaconate will advance CCM’s witness. Coordinating our expressions of *diakonia* will be a gift to the whole church and will offer a more coherent witness to the world. Collaborative diaconal ministries focused on the world’s needs will serve both churches’ outreach in the post-pandemic evangelism environment.

As our shared understanding of the diaconate continues to evolve, the role of deacons is becoming more clearly focused not only on service among the poor, the weak, the sick and the

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<sup>16</sup> CCM ¶19.

<sup>17</sup> *Guidelines & Worship Resources for the Celebration of Full Communion: Lutheran – Episcopal* (2001), [bit.ly/3ivvDUE](http://bit.ly/3ivvDUE)

<sup>18</sup> The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), Eucharistic Prayer D, p. 375.

lonely but also on justice and advocacy on their behalf; not only on interpreting the needs, concerns and hopes of the world but also on teaching and equipping others for ministry; and not only working under the authority of the bishop but also providing leadership within the councils of church and society alike. This is our common diaconal mission: for the Spirit to use us as participants in and means for God's mission of hope, healing and reconciliation in God's beloved world.

Roster of the Diaconate Implementation Team (2021-2022)

Deacon Mitzi Budde, Chair (ELCA deacon, member of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee)

The Rev. Deacon Maylanne Maybee (Anglican Church of Canada deacon, Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission representative)

The Rev. Deacon Lori Mills-Curran (Episcopal deacon, former executive director of the Association for Episcopal Deacons)

Deacon John Weit (ELCA deacon, ELCA executive for worship)

The Rev. William Gafkjen (ELCA bishop, Indiana-Kentucky Synod; chair of the ELCA Word and Service task force)

The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee (Episcopal bishop, Diocese of Milwaukee) (until Oct. 31, 2022)

## **Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color Spring 2023**

### **Background**

At the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the Strategic Authentic Diversity (STAD) Task Force presented recommendations to increase representation of persons of color and to improve equitable outcomes. The Strategic Authentic Diversity Task Force emphasized the experiences of persons of color and whose primary language is other than English—it was not at the exclusion of other historically marginalized identities—including discrimination based on gender, ability, sexual orientation, or social status.

[\*The Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity\*](#) document developed by the STAD Task Force and adopted by the 2019 assembly [CA19.05.21] provides a working definition of authentic diversity; gives a theological frame to further guide the ELCA; emphasized the actions of truth telling and racial healing; calls for structural accountability across the three expressions; examine this church's theological education and ongoing leadership development of leaders of color; and reflects upon this church's relationships with full communion, ecumenical, and interreligious partners best practices toward racial equity. Finally, the document proposes a set of recommendations in each of these areas.

As it relates to discipline, *The Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity* document specifically calls for greater transparency and greater structural accountability across the three expressions.

Leaders of color:

- Often feel alone and isolated in navigating discipline matters.
- Experience conflict and discrimination at the congregation, synod and churchwide.
- Often believe they are treated differently than white counterparts.
- Rostered Ministers of Color have high visibility within ethnic specific communities. Disciplinary actions do not only impact the individual. Loss is experienced as collective communal grief.

Rostered ministers of color often rely on the support and expertise of their communities when navigating disciplinary actions. They often reach out to churchwide ethnic specific staff, ethnic associations, director for racial justice, and the People Solutions home area (formerly human resources) for guidance. Currently, there is no formal process of reporting or tracking communications between churchwide, synods, leaders, and congregations. Quite often, rostered ministers of color are within the minority of representation when engaging with synod leadership. Cultural differences, historic realities of race and racism, positions of power and privilege may create miscommunication and distrust of the discipline process.

Recommendations for structural accountability regarding call:

*The Office of the Presiding Bishop create an office(r) for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The primary functions of this office will be (a) to equip and support leaders at all levels of the church to understand, speak out about, and act against discrimination based on race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or social status, and (b) to receive reports of harassment and discrimination and to investigate such claims, working in conjunction with functioning areas such as marketing, legal counsel, and human resources. This office will also assess the organization's current representation and recruitment of persons of color, persons whose primary language is other than English, and other protected classes.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> [Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity.pdf \(elca.org\)](#), p. 8.

Current Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) functions within People Solutions Area of Operations:

- The function of DEI resides within People Solutions Area of Operations. The work focuses on creating a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the churchwide organization through talent management, leadership development, and policies in alignment with DEI churchwide programmatic goals.
- People Solutions team serves as a resource for synods and provides consultation on human resource related matters as needed.
- People Solutions team regularly receives reports of collective grief from churchwide organization staff representing persons of color and or whose primary language is other than English.
- The DEI team is reviewing data tracking resources with Holistic, an external partner which specializes in DEI data tracking.

The Spring 2022 ELCA Church Council approved the following action [CC22.04.04]:

- To authorize the creation of 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;
- 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 the 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), the Office of the Secretary (i.e., general counsel), and the Service and Justice home area (i.e., ethnic-specific ministries); and
- To request a report with possible recommendations be provided to the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting.

At its June 2022 meeting [CC22.06.20] and the November 2022 meeting, the ELCA Church Council received reports on a request to explore the creation of a Racial Justice Ombudsperson and “encouraged the continued conversation within the Task Force Addressing Disciplinary Concerns of Leaders of Color” [CC22,11.34.x].

The task force was directed to review the current process for discipline, consider a process for community healing and grief, consider the creation of a staffing position within the churchwide organization, learn from full communion partners, and bring forward recommendations for implementation through churchwide. Below are the findings of the task force.

Congregation Experiences of Historically Marginalized Leaders:

- Issues are not necessarily discipline in nature as outlined by [Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline 2021.pdf \(elca.org\)](#).
- Leaders are often put into vulnerable situations that don’t account for race or other aspects of their identity.
- Power dynamics exists within congregations manifesting in offensive actions in the form of microaggressions, implicit biases and discrimination.
- Focus is often on behavior of rostered ministers but not necessarily the congregation.
- Rostered minister is often alone in the process without allies.

- Churchwide staff, ethnic associations, other synod bishops, and separately incorporated ministries are sought out for guidance.

**Synod Bishop Response to Congregation and Rostered Ministers:**

- Synod bishop is often called in when congregation conditions imperil the effectiveness and function of the ministry.
- Synod office is called in when there is no other resolve at the congregation level.
- Informal process as first step—synod bishop seeks to resolve before using formal discipline process.
- Formal synod process includes an advisory panel or consultation committee selected by the bishop, which makes recommendations to all parties.
- Synods may address discipline concerns without sharing with churchwide.
- Each synod has its own misconduct policy, and some have information posted on their website. One example is the [Minneapolis Area Synod of the ELCA \(mpls-synod.org\)](https://www.mpls-synod.org)
- Churchwide may provide legal advice to synod bishops.
- Often pastors resign from a congregation and bishops help negotiate terms of departure.
- If recommended, a discipline hearing committee can be formed.
- Formal discipline could result in removal from the roster.
- Up to 3 years granted for on leave from call with possible extensions.

**Churchwide Response to Discipline:**

- Outlined in [Constitutions Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA.pdf](#), Ch. 20.
- Very few discipline actions come to churchwide organization, a total of 21 in 35 years.
- Office of the Secretary has a legal obligation to facilitate hearings.
- Very detailed process that includes a synod investigation and a hearing panel.
- Committee on Discipline acts as a “jury pool” of 24-36 persons. Representational principles included and is comprised of synod discipline pool and churchwide pool.
- Committee on Appeals has 6 rostered ministers and 6 lay persons.

**Recommendations for the Current Discipline Process:**

1. Micro and macroaggressions are part of the daily lived reality of historically marginalized people. Predominantly white congregations and members are not always aware of the impact of racism and other forms of oppression have on rostered ministers. Antiracism and antibias training should be expected for every congregation and especially for congregations that call leaders from historically marginalized groups.
2. Discipline functions informally and formally. Synods should utilize consultation as the first step in the process. Formal discipline actions would be the last resort.
3. Rostered ministers could request someone of their same background to be present during consultations. Could potentially be an ombudsperson or a member of a group of trained leaders/advocates.
4. Cultural competency, antibias, and antiracism training should be required for pools of leaders who serve on discipline panels, Committee on Appeals, and for synod leaders etc. Training could be provided after committees are formed. Potentially offered by churchwide staff to ensure consistency of content. Also incorporate trainings into budgets.

5. Each synod has its own process for investigating misconduct or disciplinary concerns. Some synods indicate this information on their synod website. Need to have some understanding of uniformity of the process across all synods. Synods should share reports of matters relating to discipline with churchwide.

The typical duties of an ombudsman are to investigate complaints and attempt to resolve them, usually through recommendations (binding or not) or mediation. An ombudsperson sometimes also aims to identify systemic issues leading to poor service or breaches of people's rights.

### **Recommendations regarding the creation of an ombudsperson position/office:**

This task force supports the creation of an ombudsperson/office to help this church more faithfully demonstrate equity and justice in its dealings with rostered ministers, especially those within communities of color and LGBTQIA+ communities.

As this position/office is being considered, the following questions and issues should be addressed:

1. Where will this position/office be located in the churchwide organization structure?
2. What will be the areas of focus for this position/office?
  - a. Training and education (prevention)
  - b. Advice and accompaniment (guiding rostered ministers, bishops, and others as they navigate challenging situations)
  - c. Oversight and appeal (receiving and investigating complaints and working for resolution and adjudication)
  - d. Information and reporting (gathering data on allegations of discrimination experienced by rostered ministers and making recommendations for systemic changes)
3. How will rostered ministers have access to this position/office?

This task force also recognizes that situations in which conflict exists between a rostered minister and their congregation and/or the bishop's office or others are often complex, sensitive, and multi-faceted. Care and attention will need to be given to balance the demands of transparency, confidentiality, and integrity. Above all, this position/office should be dedicated to promoting reconciliation, healing, justice, and growth.

### **Recommendations for Revisions to the Roster Manual of the ELCA:**

Many situations involving conflict between a rostered minister and a congregation are resolved without ever using the formal discipline process. Sometimes a bishop is allowed to remove a rostered minister from the ELCA roster (or recommend such a removal) without using a formal process of any sort. While synod councils and bishops are charged with oversight and management of the various rosters of rostered ministers, additional checks and balances are needed to prevent abuses of the current system. While some have argued for a more frequent use of the discipline process, the task force believes that these recommended changes would allow for more due process without resorting to the discipline process.

All the proposed changes would result in the bishop being required to inform the rostered minister of the recommendation they are making on their roster status and to allow the rostered minister to make a personal statement to the synod council (or a committee) prior to the synod council taking action.

Recommendations will be sent to the task force on specialized ministry and On Leave From Call status. All these changes to the Roster Manual would require that the ELCA bylaws be changed first (which cannot occur until the 2025 Churchwide Assembly), as the manual cannot be out of alignment with the governing documents of the ELCA.

***Proposed changes:***

Page 31, under “Definition and criteria for on leave from call status” section:

(see also page 66, items 4 and 5 for Ministers of Word and Service)

Current language:

4) If a rostered minister requesting on-leave-from-call status desires to make a personal statement relative to the request, the Synod Council may, at its discretion and in the manner of its determination, allow for a personal appearance by the rostered minister to the Synod Council (or its designated committee).

5) On-leave-from-call status is not automatically granted. Action granting or denying leave from call is to be taken by the Synod Council [ELCA constitutional provision 20.17., bylaw 7.31.07., and †S8.12.i.9. in the Constitution for Synods] upon endorsement by the synod bishop. A committee may be designated by the bishop to evaluate applications and bring recommendations to the Synod Council through the synod bishop for action.

Proposed language:

4) The bishop shall make a recommendation to the synod council whether to grant or deny on-leave-from-call status, and the bishop shall inform the rostered minister of the nature of their recommendation prior to the synod council taking action. This recommendation will normally occur within 90 days of the bishop receiving the request for on-leave-from-call status from the rostered minister. If the bishop recommends that the rostered minister not be granted on-leave-from-call status, they shall inform the rostered minister that they have the right to make a personal statement to the Synod Council (or its designated committee) before it acts on the bishop’s recommendation. The rostered minister will be given a reasonable amount of time to respond to this notification.

5) On-leave-from-call status is not automatically granted. Action granting or denying leave from call is to be taken by the Synod Council [ELCA constitutional provision 20.17., bylaw 7.31.07., and †S8.12.i.9. in the Constitution for Synods] within 90 days of receiving a recommendation from the synod bishop. A committee may be designated by the bishop to evaluate applications and bring recommendations to the Synod Council through the synod bishop for action.

Page 35, Policy and procedures related to retired status (see also page 70 for W & S):

Current language:

c. The synod bishop shall determine whether the minister of Word and Sacrament (Service) is eligible for retired status and whether, in the bishop’s sole discretion, to recommend to the Synod Council that such roster status be granted. If the synod bishop does not endorse the request, the bishop shall report the decision to the Synod Council, in executive session if deemed necessary. If the synod bishop does endorse the request, the Synod Council shall determine, in its discretion, whether to grant retired status.

Proposed language:

c. The synod bishop shall determine whether the minister of Word and Sacrament (Service) is eligible for retired status and whether to recommend to the Synod Council that such roster status be granted, and the bishop shall inform the rostered minister of the nature of their recommendation prior to the synod council acting. This recommendation will normally occur within 90 days of the bishop receiving the request for retired status from the rostered minister. If the bishop recommends that the rostered minister not be granted retired status, they shall inform the rostered minister that they have the right to make a personal statement to the Synod Council (or its designated committee) before it acts on the bishop’s recommendation. The rostered minister will be given a reasonable amount of time to respond to this

notification. If the synod bishop does endorse the request, the Synod Council shall determine, in its discretion, whether to grant retired status.

Also,

Current language:

e. A minister of Word and Sacrament (Service) who has been granted retired status shall retain that roster status until (1) the minister is no longer on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Service), (2) the minister accepts a call, or (3) the Synod Council revokes retired status upon recommendation of the synod bishop. Such revocation of a minister's retired status may occur only upon a two-thirds vote of the Synod Council, present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting.

Proposed language:

e. A minister of Word and Sacrament (Service) who has been granted retired status shall retain that roster status until (1) the minister is no longer on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament (Service), (2) the minister accepts a call, or (3) the Synod Council revokes retired status upon recommendation of the synod bishop. The bishop shall inform the rostered minister of any recommendation to remove them from the roster prior to the synod council taking action, and they shall inform the rostered minister that they have the right to make a personal statement to the Synod Council (or its designated committee) before it acts on the bishop's recommendation. The rostered minister will be given a reasonable amount of time to respond to this notification. Revocation of a minister's retired status may occur only upon a two-thirds vote of the Synod Council, present and voting at a legally called and conducted meeting.

**Next Steps**

Kathryn Lohre, executive, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations and Theological Discernment, reached out to the ELCA's full communion partners and requested information about their work and processes. The full communion responses varied and were viewed in light of polity and structural differences. The responses will be helpful in assisting the ELCA as it considers designing the position of an ombudsperson. Full communion partners are available to share resources and consultation in support of the ELCA.

A draft of this report was presented to the Spring 2023 Conference of Bishops. It was suggested that the Conference of Bishops have time to review the report and provide additional input. The work of this task force has concluded with the above recommendations to be shared with the Conference of Bishops. A new table will be formed with Conference of Bishops and leaders from this task force. An update from that table is anticipated to be shared with Church Council at its Fall 2023 meeting.

## **Addendum**

### Task Force Members Addressing Disciplinary Concerns

**Judith Roberts**, co-convener, Sr. Director for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, ELCA

**Jennifer DeLeon**, co-convener, Director for Racial Justice, ELCA

**Sharei Green**, contract staff support for the Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity Task Force

**Grace El -Yateem** is a member of the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH). Grace is also a member of the Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity Advisory Team.

**Sheena Foster** serves on the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Council, is a consultant and a member of Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington, D.C.

**Aubrey Thonvold** is the Executive Director of ReconcilingWorks.

**Roberto Lara** is the president of the Asociación de Ministerios Latinos de la ELCA and serves as Assistant to the Bishop of Metropolitan New York Synod for Communications & Development.

**Randy Foster** is the former vice president for the Southwest California Synod, member of the ELCA Strategic Planning team. He also served as a member of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly Memorials Committee and former member of 2019 Churchwide Assembly Reference and Counsel Committee.

**Mark Hollabaugh**, PhD, is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Hovland, Minnesota. He is a retired astronomy and physics professor. He served on the 2022 Churchwide Assembly Memorials Committee.

**Rev. Lamont Wells** is the national president of the Africa Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA) and serves as a member of the Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity Advisory Team.

**Rev. Priscilla Austin** serves as a member of the Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity Advisory Team. She serves as Pastor at Imanuel Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington.

**Rev. Fritz Fowler** is the Lead Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansdale, Pennsylvania. He served as the vice chair of the Committee on Appeals from 2020 to 2022. His six-year term on the committee ended at the close of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

#### Conference of Bishops:

**Bishop Paul Erickson** serves as bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod. He is the former Director for Evangelical Mission in the St. Paul Area Synod.

#### Resource Staff:

**Deacon Sue Rothmeyer**, Secretary, ELCA

**Rhondean Johnson**, Executive, People and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, ELCA

**Thomas Cunniff**, General Counsel, ELCA

**Aja Favors**, Associate General Counsel, ELCA

**Kathryn Lohre**, Executive, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations & Theological Discernment, ELCA

**Rev. Nicolette Peñaranda**, Program Director for African Descent Ministries, ELCA

**SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES**  
**For the Period Ending January 31, 2023**

	2022 ACTUAL	2022 BUDGET	2021 ACTUAL	Year-to-Date Variance	
				ACTUAL vs. BUDGET Favorable/ (Unfavorable)	CURRENT YEAR vs. PRIOR YEAR Favorable/ (Unfavorable)
<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>					
Mission Support	38,727,560	40,000,000	40,613,722	(1,272,440)	(1,886,162)
Other	23,207,732	23,015,906	25,991,148	191,826	(2,783,416)
<b>TOTAL UNRESTRICTED</b>	<b>61,935,292</b>	<b>63,015,906</b>	<b>66,604,870</b>	<b>(1,080,614)</b>	<b>(4,669,578)</b>
TOTAL Designated and Restricted Funds Released	806,427	2,800,244	798,871	(1,993,817)	7,556
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE AND SUPPORT</b>	<b>62,741,719</b>	<b>65,816,150</b>	<b>67,403,741</b>	<b>(3,074,431)</b>	<b>(4,662,022)</b>
<b>LESS TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>59,203,111</b>	<b>66,466,419</b>	<b>59,361,217</b>	<b>7,263,308</b>	<b>158,106</b>
<b>NET REVENUE OVER (UNDER) EXPENSES</b>	<b>3,538,608</b>	<b>(650,269)</b>	<b>8,042,524</b>	<b>4,188,877</b>	<b>(4,503,916)</b>

**REVENUE SUMMARY**  
**For the Period Ending January 31, 2023**

UNRESTRICTED	2022	2022	2021	Year-to-Date Variance	
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL	ACTUAL vs. BUDGET Favorable/ (Unfavorable)	CURRENT YEAR vs. PRIOR YEAR Favorable/ (Unfavorable)
Mission Support	38,727,560	40,000,000	40,613,722	(1,272,440)	(1,886,162)
Direct Gifts	6,720,329	6,253,000	6,142,628	467,329	577,701
Investment Income	1,368,653	2,228,990	3,411,710	(860,337)	(2,043,057)
Bequests and Trusts	3,869,713	2,400,000	5,135,498	1,469,713	(1,265,785)
Endowment	3,441,574	3,714,152	3,282,544	(272,578)	159,030
Rent	1,786,642	1,794,764	1,820,705	(8,122)	(34,063)
Service Level Agreements/Other	2,052,053	1,700,000	2,795,336	352,053	(743,283)
Missionaries	1,815,578	2,290,000	1,713,426	(474,422)	102,152
YAGM	653,191	1,135,000	189,301	(481,809)	463,890
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	-	-
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>61,935,292</b>	<b>63,015,906</b>	<b>66,604,870</b>	<b>(1,080,614)</b>	<b>(4,669,578)</b>
<b>TOTAL Designated and Restricted Funds Released</b>	806,427	2,800,244	798,871	(1,993,817)	7,556
<b>Net Operating Revenue and Support</b>	<b>62,741,719</b>	<b>65,816,150</b>	<b>67,403,741</b>	<b>(3,074,431)</b>	<b>(4,662,022)</b>
	-	-	-	-	-

**ACTUAL EXPENSES VS. SPENDING AUTHORIZATION**  
**For the Period Ending January 31, 2023**

	<u>Actual</u> <u>Expenses</u>	<u>Spending</u> <u>Authorization</u>	<u>Variance</u> <u>Favorable</u> <u>(Unfavorable)</u>	<u>Percent of</u> <u>Budget</u>
<b>Home Areas</b>				
Christian Community & Leadership	19,892,977	22,602,044	2,709,067	88.01%
Service and Justice	10,829,925	12,544,376	1,714,451	86.33%
Innovation	539,976	1,971,917	1,431,941	27.38%
Operations	25,079,070	26,403,082	1,324,012	94.99%
Presiding Bishop	10,801,050	11,868,849	1,067,799	91.00%
Treasurer	9,207,400	9,315,306	107,906	98.84%
Secretary	5,070,621	5,218,928	148,307	97.16%
<b>OTHER</b>				
General Treasury	609,604	690,000	80,396	88.35%
Depreciation	2,251,559	2,255,000	3,441	99.85%
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<u>59,203,111</u>	<u>66,466,419</u>	<u>7,263,308</u>	<u>89.07%</u>
	-	-		

## EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA ELCA WORLD HUNGER SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENSE For the Period Ending January 31, 2023

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL VS. BUDGET	FY22 TOTAL BUDGET
<b>BEGINNING BALANCE</b>	13,693,783			
<b>Income</b>				
Direct Giving	19,090,048	20,000,000	(909,952)	20,000,000
Endowments and Donor Requested Payments	956,436	750,000	206,436	750,000
Bequests & Trusts/Misc *	2,847,311	1,500,000	1,347,311	1,500,000
Release of Bequest Income	-	415,000	(415,000)	415,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>22,893,795</b>	<b>22,665,000</b>	<b>228,795</b>	<b>22,665,000</b>
<b>Expense</b>				
Service and Justice:				
Domestic Program	5,612,127	6,246,593	(634,466)	6,246,593
International Program	14,110,282	15,844,143	(1,733,861)	15,844,143
Witnessing in Society	1,633,415	1,600,000	33,415	1,600,000
Fundraising Allocation Expense	2,085,382	2,295,965	(210,583)	2,295,965
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>23,441,206</b>	<b>25,986,700</b>	<b>(2,545,495)</b>	<b>25,986,700</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>(547,411)</b>	<b>(3,321,700)</b>	<b>2,774,290</b>	<b>(3,321,700)</b>
<b>ENDING BALANCE</b>	<b>13,146,372</b>			

\* Bequest and trusts income will be recognized as received; however, spending of Bequest and trusts income will be deferred until the following fiscal year, beginning with FY19.

13,146,371.99

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**PRELIMINARY AND UNAUDITED**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 2023 Proposed Income Adjustments - April 2023						
	2021	2022	2023			
	Actual	Actual	Approved by CWA	November Adjustments	April 2023 Adjustments	Proposed Budget
<b>Current Fund Budget</b>						
Mission Support	\$ 40,613,722	\$ 38,727,560	\$ 39,150,000	\$ (650,000)	\$ (500,000)	\$ 38,000,000
Direct Gifts/Other Temp Restr	6,142,628	6,720,329	7,251,000	249,000	-	7,500,000
Investment Income	3,411,710	1,368,653	2,101,000	(500,000)	250,000	1,851,000
Bequests & Trusts	5,135,498	3,869,713	2,400,000	200,000	250,000	2,850,000
Endowment	3,282,544	3,441,574	3,364,000	(100,000)		3,264,000
Rent	1,820,705	1,786,642	1,301,000			1,301,000
Service Level Agreements/Other	2,795,336	2,052,053	2,204,000			2,204,000
<b>Total Unrestricted</b>	<b>\$ 63,202,143</b>	<b>\$ 57,966,524</b>	<b>\$ 57,771,000</b>	<b>\$ (801,000)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 56,970,000</b>
Global Mission Missionaries	1,713,426	1,815,578	2,337,000	(337,000)		2,000,000
Global Mission - YAGM's	189,301	653,191	1,156,000	(119,000)		1,037,000
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	-		1,500,000
<b>Other Gifts</b>	<b>\$ 3,402,727</b>	<b>\$ 3,968,769</b>	<b>\$ 4,993,000</b>	<b>\$ (456,000)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 4,537,000</b>
<b>Total Unrestricted</b>	<b>\$ 66,604,870</b>	<b>\$ 61,935,293</b>	<b>\$ 62,764,000</b>	<b>\$ (1,257,000)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 61,507,000</b>
Designated Funds Released	\$ -	\$ -	5,117,000	400,000		5,517,000
Restricted Funds Released: Japan/Int'l Women Leaders	798,871	806,427	933,000	-		933,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 67,403,741</b>	<b>\$ 62,741,720</b>	<b>\$ 68,814,000</b>	<b>\$ (857,000)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 67,957,000</b>

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ELCA World Hunger 2023 Proposed Budget Revisions - April 2023						
	2021	2022	2023			
	Actual	Actual	Per Churchwide Assembly	Approved in November 2022	Adjustments	April 2023 Request
<b>ELCA WORLD HUNGER</b>						
Direct Gifts	\$ 20,762,496	\$ 19,090,048	\$ 20,119,000	\$ 20,500,000		\$ 20,500,000
Endowment	855,201	956,436	750,000	750,000		750,000
Bequests and Miscellaneous	1,306,360	2,847,311	1,500,000	1,500,000		1,500,000
Release of Bequest income		-	500,000	2,500,000	1,520,000	4,020,000
<b>Total ELCA World Hunger Income</b>	<b>\$ 22,924,057</b>	<b>\$ 22,893,795</b>	<b>\$ 22,869,000</b>	<b>\$ 25,250,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,520,000</b>	<b>\$ 26,770,000</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>						
<b>Service &amp; Justice</b>						
<i>WH Domestic Program (part of S &amp; J)</i>	\$ 3,101,633	5,612,127		5,001,036	520,000	5,521,036
<i>WH International Program (part of S &amp; J)</i>	14,522,312	14,110,282		16,271,454	1,000,000	17,271,454
<i>WH Witnessing in Society (part of S &amp; J)</i>	1,654,291	1,633,415		1,722,510		1,722,510
<i>WH Fundraising (part of S &amp; J)</i>	2,076,483	2,085,382		2,255,000		2,255,000
<b>Total ELCA World Hunger Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 21,354,719</b>	<b>\$ 23,441,206</b>	<b>\$ 22,869,000</b>	<b>\$ 25,250,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,520,000</b>	<b>\$ 26,770,000</b>

***Ad Hoc* Committee related to guidance on a process for public repentance and a churchwide day of confession and repentance regarding the sins of patriarchy and sexism  
Update for the April 20, 2023 Church Council**

Through implementing resolutions relating to *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*, the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly resolved, in part:

17. To direct the ELCA Church Council to establish a process for public repentance regarding the sins of patriarchy and sexism and establish a churchwide day of confession and repentance no later than the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (*Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*, p. 83).

This *ad hoc* committee is responsible to fulfill these responsibilities on behalf of the ELCA Church Council. The *ad hoc* committee is composed of the following members:

Ms. Tracey Beasley, chair, Executive Committee  
Pastor Tara Lynn, Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee  
one member of the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee, TBD  
Bishop Ann Svennungsen, former social statement task force member  
Pastor Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, former social statement task force member

Supporting staff members for the *ad hoc* committee:

Jodi Slattery, Office of the Secretary  
John Weit, Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Jennifer Baker-Trinity, Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Kathryn Lohre, Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Mary Streufert, Office of the Presiding Bishop

As of March 8, 2023, the chairs of the *ad hoc* and Faith, Society, and Innovation Committees and supporting staff members are working on identifying the final committee member/s to be appointed.

Two online meetings for the spring of 2023 and an in-person meeting for November 2023 are in the planning stages.

**Mary J. Streufert, Director for Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment,  
On behalf of Ms. Tracey Beasley, chair, ELCA Church Council *ad hoc* committee**

1 **A Recommended Proposed ELCA Social Message on ....**  
2

3 **Earth's Climate Crisis**  
4

5 "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it."

6 —Psalm 24:1<sup>1</sup>  
7

8 "God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living  
9 creature that is with you, for all future generations.'" —Genesis 9:12  
10

11 In the Scriptures, God assigns a sacred responsibility to human beings: we are to care for  
12 and keep God's creation for future generations.  
13

14 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) first addressed this calling three  
15 decades ago by pairing environmental justice with social justice in *Caring for Creation: Vision,*  
16 *Hope, and Justice.*<sup>2</sup> That statement emphasizes the goodness of all creation, humanity's kinship  
17 with other creatures, and the Holy Trinity's promise for the fulfillment of all creation (Ephesians  
18 1:10). It also names climate change as a central environmental issue, one the ELCA has  
19 addressed to varying degrees since 1993.<sup>3</sup>  
20

21 Thirty years later, many across the globe recognize with urgent clarity that climate  
22 change poses grave dangers to present and future generations. For example, the Lutheran  
23 World Federation has emphasized how care for creation is a core Christian calling and that  
24 climate change is a threat to justice and human rights.<sup>4</sup>  
25

26 With this social message the ELCA provides facts, raises questions, draws on its own  
27 social teaching, and identifies convictions that expansively address caretaking for Earth's  
28 climate. At the heart of this social message lies the claim that climate change presents  
29 humanity with a kairos moment; that is, a critical moment in time when God is leading us into  
30 decisive action.  
31

32 This social message is rooted in our duty to be responsible caretakers of God's creation.  
33 It is motivated by that responsibility and by hope. Though the climate has always been subject  
34 to some change, the facts show how dramatic global warming depends on human practices.  
35 With God's help humanity can turn from the present course, take loving and just action, and  
36 live more harmoniously within God's beautiful and verdant creation.  
37  
38

39 **1. How are Christians called to care for creation?**

40 The foundational creation stories in Genesis 1-2 express God’s love for creation and how  
41 God commands humans to participate in the creation God declares good. (See especially  
42 Genesis 1:14-31 and 2:4-15. (Available online at  
43 <https://www.bible.com/bible/2016/GEN.1.NRSV>)  
44

45 Genesis 1 uses liturgical poetry to show us the beauty and goodness of each element  
46 of creation. God’s first act of creation is abundant, life-sustaining light. Wondrously, the sun  
47 delivers enough energy every hour to supply humanity’s energy needs for a year.<sup>5</sup> The sun, the  
48 earth, the atmosphere (“firmament”), the oceans, and all biological organisms, including  
49 humans and all species of plants and animals—each is declared beautiful and good in itself.  
50

51 Genesis 1 portrays God creating the sun and moon with the task to rule (regulate and  
52 order) day and night. Similarly, God commands the seas and the earth to bring forth and sustain  
53 every kind of creature. Each kind—fish, bird, mammal, reptile, insect, and all others—has its  
54 own fertility and call to be fruitful, to multiply, and to fill the earth (Genesis 1:24-25).  
55

56 As God transforms the earth from barrenness toward abundance, God chooses to make  
57 human creatures on the same day God creates other mammals—their kin. These human  
58 creatures share some tasks of the sun and the moon (to regulate and order the earth) and  
59 some tasks of the seas and earth (to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth) (Genesis 1:28).  
60

61 God creates human beings as interdependent with the whole creation and grants  
62 humans special responsibility as innovative stewards to contribute to the flourishing of  
63 creation. It is in this sense that the human species is created “in the image of God” (Genesis  
64 1:27). The “*imago dei*” is the human vocation, our calling, to participate in what God is already  
65 doing for the earth—respecting and promoting the flourishing of creation.<sup>6</sup>  
66

67 God’s charge for humans to “have dominion over” and “subdue” the earth (Genesis  
68 1:26, 28) has been woefully misunderstood and misused to justify rapacious economic  
69 exploitation, human subjugation, and racist notions of manifest destiny.<sup>7</sup> That interpretation  
70 betrays and undermines why God creates and how God acts in the Scriptures.  
71

72 Both the Creator’s model of dominion in Genesis and the example of our Lord Jesus  
73 teach us to serve others rather than dominate and degrade them. Created from the earth’s dust  
74 (Genesis 2:7), human beings are given the responsibility to keep or care for the earth *just as*  
75 God keeps and cares for us (Numbers 6:24-26). The Hebrew word *shamar*, translated as “keep,”  
76 means to protect and sustain Earth’s life for future generations.

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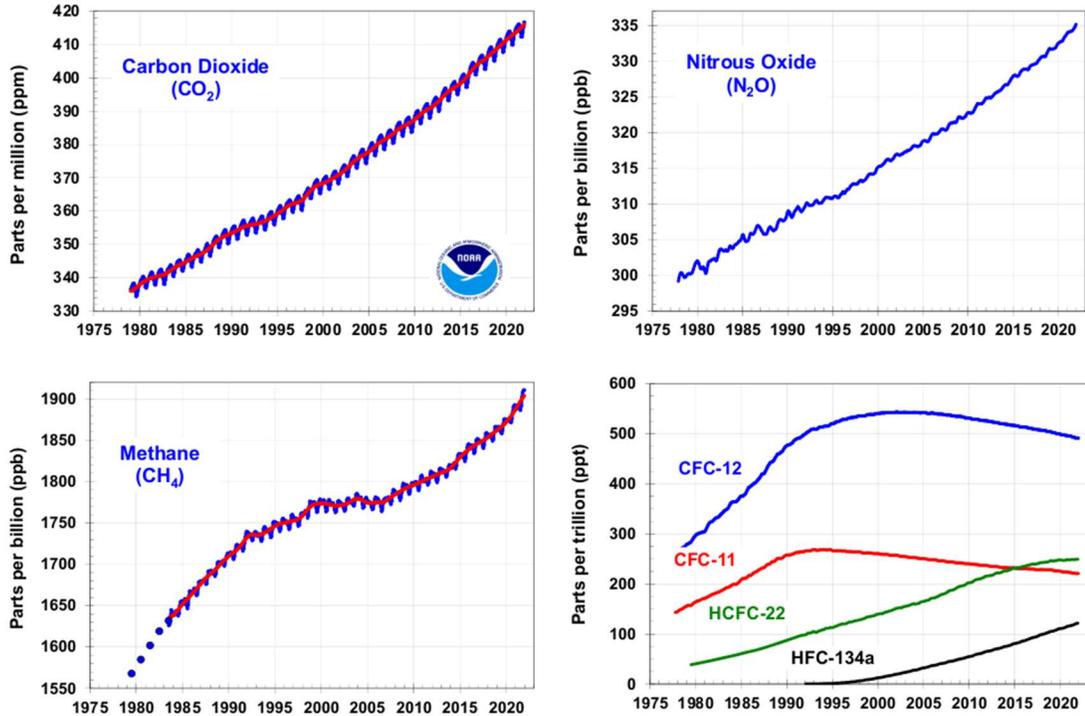
Today this call to participate in God’s care for creation presents a particularly significant responsibility. Like the portrayal of sin’s entrance into creation in Genesis 3, the ELCA’s social statement *Caring for Creation* reminds us that “[humans] have rebelled and disrupted creation.”<sup>8</sup> That disruption today is painfully evident in changes to Earth’s atmosphere producing floods, heat waves, droughts, and other climate and weather anomalies at historic rates that bring suffering to habitats and communities around the world.

**2. How are changes in Earth’s atmosphere affecting our climate and life on Earth?**

Viewed from space, Earth’s atmosphere appears as a very thin and iridescent blue line around the circumference of the planet. Over billions of years, this miraculous shield has fostered a wondrous explosion of life on the land, in the sea, and in the air while also protecting life from dangerous forms of solar radiation.

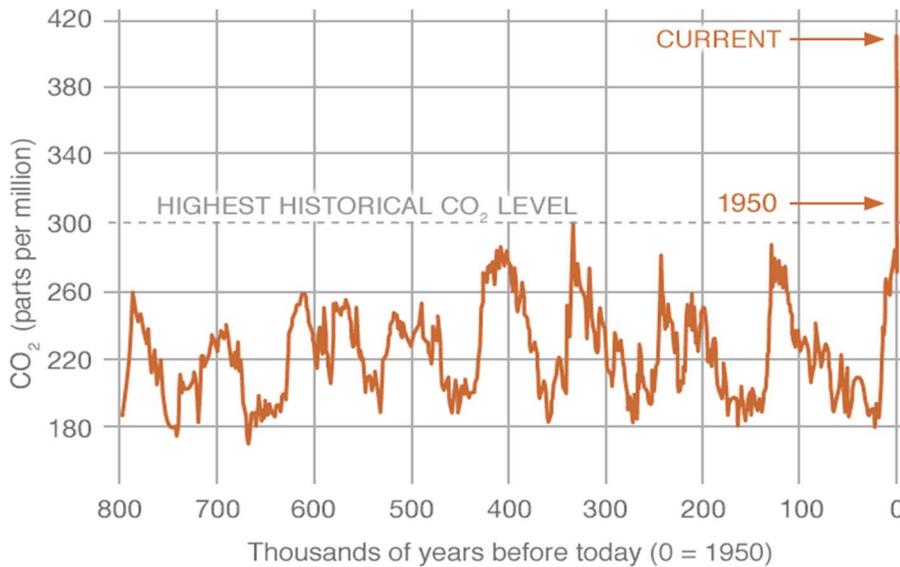
Scientists attribute these conditions that are conducive to life to the “greenhouse effect.” Various gases in the atmosphere—water vapor, carbon dioxide, ozone, methane, and nitrous oxide—retain some of the heat from the sun that strikes Earth and bounces back to space. As a result, the average temperature of Earth during all of human civilization has been around 57 degrees Fahrenheit (14 degrees Celsius). Without the thin blanket provided by these greenhouse gases Earth’s temperature would be -0.4 degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius ).<sup>9</sup> Scientists also warn that *if* the nations of the world continue to burn fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) that emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, temperatures will rise faster than most species can adapt.

The combustion of fossil fuels has powered most of the global economy for over 200 years and has permitted remarkable advances in food production, medicine, transportation, and consumer goods. Today’s crisis is that the concentration of carbon dioxide in Earth’s atmosphere is now higher than at any other time in the last 3.6 million years.<sup>10</sup> Not only are current global emissions of carbon dioxide increasing, but the rate of emission is also accelerating. The same is true for methane and nitrous oxide emissions. A sign of hope, however, is found in the decline of certain gases used in refrigeration (CFC-11 and CFC-12), because of regulations that were imposed after the U.S. signed the Montreal Protocol to protect Earth’s ozone layer.<sup>11</sup> (See Figure 1.)



**Figure 1: Global Average Abundances of the Major, Well-mixed, Long-lived Greenhouse Gases—Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Nitrous Oxide, and Refrigerant Gases**  
 Source: [NOAA's Annual Greenhouse Gas Index](#) (updated spring 2022)

In June 2022 global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide reached a record 419 particles per million (ppm).<sup>12</sup> (See Figure 2.)



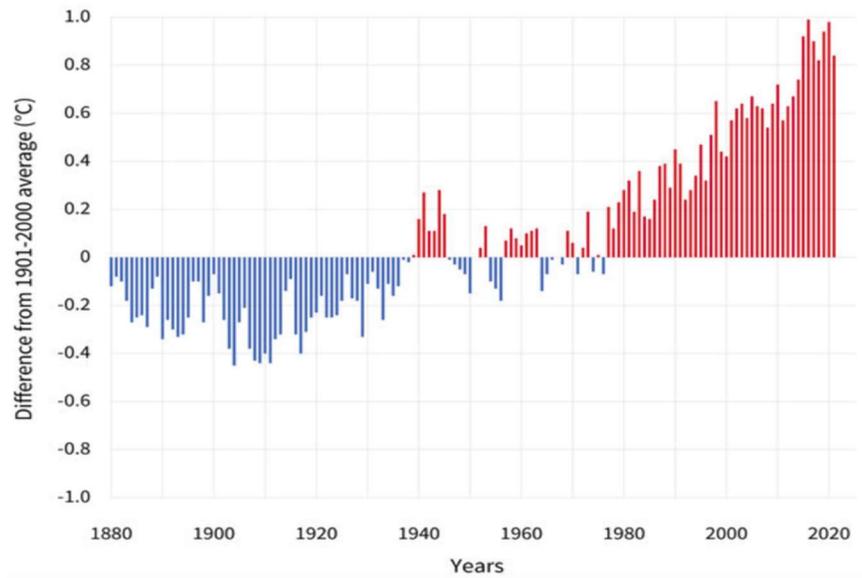
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 122

123 **Figure 2: Carbon Dioxide—Proxy (Indirect) Measurements (From Ice Cores)**

124 **Source:** [NASA, Global Climate Change: Key Indicators](#)

125  
126 The increasing concentrations of these greenhouse gases cause Earth to retain more  
127 and more heat from the sun, which has led to an increase in global warming and related climate  
128 change. According to the most recent Assessment Report (AR6) issued by the United Nations  
129 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Earth’s global surface temperature has  
130 increased by around 1.9 degrees Fahrenheit (1.1 degrees Celsius ) since 1850.<sup>13</sup> (See Figure 3.)



132 **Figure 3. Global Average Surface Temperature (1880-2020)**

133 **Source:** [NOAA, Climate Change: Global Temperature](#) (updated June 2022)

134  
135  
136 This rate of warming is unprecedented over at least the last 12,000 years. Earth hasn’t  
137 been this hot since long before human civilization, at least 125,000 years ago.<sup>14</sup> Not  
138 surprisingly, evidence of this warming is visible all over the world.

139  
140 Ice sheets in the Arctic and on Greenland are melting at an accelerating rate. At the  
141 same time, glaciers are melting and retreating almost everywhere around the world,  
142 jeopardizing drinking water sources for nearly two billion people.<sup>15</sup>

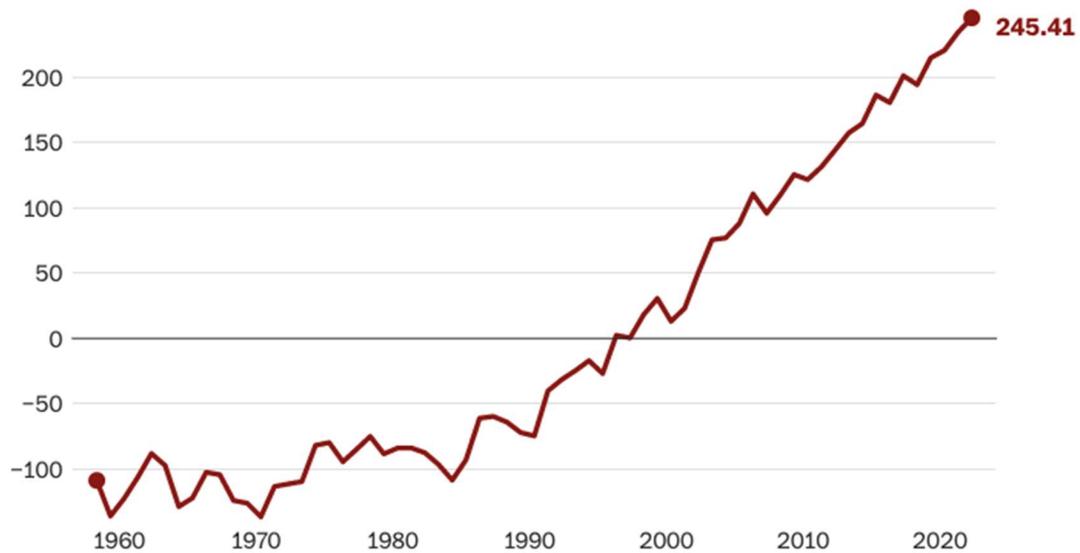
143  
144 This increase in freshwater melting, combined with the expansion of seawater due to  
145 warmer temperatures, is also raising global sea levels at an accelerating rate.<sup>16</sup> These rising seas  
146 imperil one billion people who live less than 10 meters above current high tide lines, and this  
147 will likely produce millions of climate refugees.<sup>17</sup>

149 The warmer temperatures that result from global warming also pose grave public health  
150 risks. This is especially true for those who suffer from the “heat island effect” in cities with few  
151 green spaces, those who can’t afford air conditioning, those who work outdoors, or those who  
152 experience homelessness. The overwhelming majority of people who experience these negative  
153 health outcomes have low incomes and tend to be Black people, Indigenous people, and other  
154 people of color.

155  
156 This climate change also dramatically increases the frequency and intensity of extreme  
157 weather events such as droughts, floods, hurricanes, and wildfires, with huge losses of life and  
158 property, reduced agricultural yields, and costly disruptions to society.

159  
160 Of course, climate care doesn’t affect only human beings. Across the globe, changing  
161 ecosystems are hastening the extinction of many plant and animal species. This is especially  
162 true in Earth’s oceans, which have stored 90% of the excess heat to date and suffered  
163 significant coral bleaching, acidification, and adverse impacts on marine species. (See Figure 4.)  
164

Heat content in the upper 2000 meters of the ocean in zettajoules ( $10^{21}$  joules), relative to the 1981-2010 average.



Source: Cheng et al, Advances in Atmospheric Sciences, 2023.

CHRIS MOONEY / THE WASHINGTON POST

165  
166 **Figure 4. A New Record High for Ocean Heat in 2022<sup>18</sup>**

167  
168 The impacts of global warming and climate change grow only more severe with each  
169 passing year.

170

171 **3. Are we facing a critical moment with regard to Earth’s climate?**

172 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was formed in 1988 to provide  
173 governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate  
174 policies. Comprehensive scientific assessment reports are published by the IPCC every six to  
175 seven years. These reports are the product of an open and transparent review by experts and  
176 governments around the world.<sup>19</sup> In 2018 the IPCC issued a special report warning that the  
177 impacts of climate change could become catastrophic for human civilization if global warming  
178 exceeds a rise of 1.5 degrees Celsius (27 degrees Fahrenheit).<sup>20</sup>

179  
180 The IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report, published in 2021, warns that “global surface  
181 temperature will continue to increase until at least mid-century under all emissions scenarios  
182 considered. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless  
183 deep reductions in [carbon dioxide] and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming  
184 decades.”<sup>21</sup>

185  
186 According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), given the current  
187 rate of greenhouse gas emissions, the world will experience a global temperature rise of 2.7  
188 degrees Celsius by the end of this century.<sup>22</sup> Even if all the nations that signed the United  
189 Nations 2015 Paris Agreement follow through on their commitments,<sup>23</sup> warming is still  
190 projected to reach 2.4 degrees Celsius.<sup>24</sup> Recall that Earth has warmed 1.1 degrees Celsius (1.9  
191 degrees Fahrenheit) since 1850; *we face another 1.3 to 1.6 degrees Celsius (2.3-2.9 Fahrenheit)*  
192 *over the next seven decades*, with warming projected to continue increasing at the end of the  
193 21st century.

194  
195 Justifiably alarmed by this information, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres  
196 declared the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report a “code red for humanity.” In a statement issued  
197 with the report he wrote: “The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable:  
198 greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and  
199 putting billions of people at immediate risk.”<sup>25</sup>

200  
201 From a standpoint of faith, it is reasonable to conclude that the climate crisis is, indeed,  
202 a kairos moment.

203  
204 The ancient Greeks had two words for “time.” *Chronos*, or regular time, referred to our  
205 usual sense of time as ordinary, quantitative, and sequential. *Kairos*, or critical time, in contrast,  
206 referred to an unusual moment that is extraordinary, qualitative, and decisive. In the Greek  
207 New Testament, authors used *kairos* “to emphasize a special moment of time when God visits

208 [God’s] people to offer them a unique opportunity for repentance and conversion, for change  
209 and decisive action. It is a time of judgment. It is a moment of truth, a crisis.”<sup>26</sup>

210  
211 In the New Testament the word *kairos* most often refers to a decisive moment when all  
212 were called to repent, believe in the gospel, and follow Jesus. In Christian theology, however,  
213 the concept is not confined to this salvific context. In other decisive moments, such as the  
214 Reformation period (1517-1580), Christians have used “kairos” to name God’s urgent call for  
215 decisive action in history.<sup>27</sup>

216  
217 Confronted by the challenges posed by climate change and other environmental  
218 problems such as species extinction and loss of biodiversity, some Christians today draw upon  
219 “kairos” not only to express the decisive moment of call from God but also to remind believers  
220 God acts in that call to empower hope and action:

221  
222 [W]e use the Greek word *kairos* to describe a moment in time, often a brief  
223 moment in time, which has eternal significance. ... For the human race as a  
224 whole, there is now a *kairos*, a decisive time in our relationship with God’s  
225 creation. We will either act in time to protect life on earth from the worst  
226 consequences of human folly, or we will fail to act.<sup>28</sup>

227  
228 **4. How should Christians begin to respond to this kairos moment?**

229 As the science related to global warming and climate change has become more  
230 definitive and persuasive, many across the globe are raising increasingly anguished cries.

231  
232 Many of us in the ELCA contribute to and/or volunteer for organizations, such as  
233 Lutheran Disaster Response and the International Committee of the Red Cross, that have  
234 diligently responded to the devastation caused by wildfires in the West, tornadoes in the  
235 Midwest and Southeast, and flooding throughout the country, caused by severe storms and  
236 hurricanes. Scientists say these natural disasters have intensified due to global warming and  
237 climate change.

238  
239 It is frightening and disheartening to learn that growing numbers of farm workers and  
240 livestock are dying from heat stress in the United States and around the world.<sup>29</sup> Some of us  
241 work outdoors or know others who do, and we all rely on farmers who plant, cultivate, and  
242 harvest the food we take for granted. Some of us live in states along the southern U.S. border  
243 where rapidly growing numbers of desperate people seek safety and opportunity in our country  
244 as they flee the consequences of increasing ecological devastation in their countries of origin.

245

246 In addition, some who need the income from fossil fuel extraction, or who work for  
247 companies that extract that fuel to power our economy, feel vilified or disregarded. They often  
248 feel this most strongly from those who argue urgently for a just transition to clean energy and  
249 rapid decreases in greenhouse gas emissions.

250  
251 Others who live next to oil refineries, coal-fired power plants, natural gas production  
252 and distribution facilities, plastic manufacturers, and freeways feel disregarded, disrespected,  
253 and ignored, even as they breathe in noxious emissions from these facilities.

254  
255 All around us are voices crying out for help and transformation.

256  
257 The disruption of creation and these diverse voices make clear that human beings have  
258 failed to live out their vocation to be good and caring “keepers” of creation. Living in right  
259 relationship with God and creation begins with confession and repentance.

260  
261 As God’s people we are called to confess:

- 262 ● Our failure to consider the interests of future generations.
- 263 ● Our disregard for the victims of environmental injustice.
- 264 ● Our insufficient concern for the welfare of other species facing extinction.
- 265 ● Our personal complicity through high-carbon lifestyles.
- 266 ● Our dismissive disdain for those with whom we disagree.

267  
268 The ELCA teaches that, though sin has personal dimensions, “sin is ... also collective or  
269 communal. Sinful humans create structures, organizations, and societies that perpetuate sin,  
270 sometimes unintentionally. This is called ‘structural sin.’”<sup>30</sup> Colonialism and industrialization are  
271 two structural factors responsible in large measure for the social and ecological woes we face  
272 today.

273  
274 Some of us have benefited from these structural forces at the expense of others who  
275 live with the consequences in degraded landscapes and polluted conditions. “In our liturgy, we  
276 name this systemic reality in the confession: ‘We are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.’  
277 Once we understand our own participation in this systemic harm, we can identify it as sin,  
278 confess it, and, through the grace and strength of God, begin to act differently.”<sup>31</sup>

279  
280 **5. What insights from ELCA social teaching are helpful?**

281 **Law, Gospel, and the Role of Government.** Our Lutheran tradition says God pursues the  
282 flourishing of life actively in human society in two ways—through the gospel and the law.

283

284 As Redeemer of the world, God works through the church to proclaim the gospel and to  
285 promote mercy and reconciliation through proclamation of the word and administration of the  
286 sacraments. As Creator of the world, God uses civil authorities to restrain evil, establish a  
287 modicum of justice, and promote the common good through rule of law and use of reason.  
288

289 Given the systemic nature of the climate crisis, government and public policy are both  
290 key. Lutherans believe “government remains God’s gift because it is intended to do what  
291 churches, families, individuals, and businesses cannot do on their own: protect and coordinate  
292 the well-being of individuals, communities, and creation.”<sup>32</sup> The litmus test for government  
293 action is whether our neighbor is being served and whether justice is being done.  
294

295 **Three Dimensions of Climate Justice.** What constitutes justice is not always self-evident,  
296 however. Figuring out what constitutes justice in the context of climate change is even more  
297 complicated because it involves at least three interlocking dimensions.  
298

299 First is the question of *intragenerational* justice. That is, how should society distribute  
300 fairly among present generations the burdens associated with reducing greenhouse gas  
301 emissions (mitigation) and grappling with the costly impacts of climate change (adaptation)?  
302 Second is the question of *intergenerational* justice. That is, how can we best respect and defend  
303 the interests of future generations of our and other species and the integrity of the ecological  
304 systems upon which life depends? Finally, there is the matter of *intersectional* justice. That is,  
305 how does climate justice intersect with historical injustices related to race, class, and gender?  
306

307 **Four Moral Principles.** The 1993 ELCA social statement *Caring for Creation* identifies four moral  
308 principles to help us discern what justice requires in these three dimensions: participation,  
309 solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability. These four principles, used across several ELCA social  
310 statements, are directly relevant to ethical discussions about the climate crisis.  
311

312 For example, the principle of *participation* stresses that all forms of life are important  
313 and that their interests must be heard and respected in decisions that affect their lives. At a  
314 minimum this means “our church may be a place where differing groups can be brought  
315 together, tough issues considered, and a common good pursued.”<sup>33</sup>  
316

317 The principle of *solidarity* highlights the kinship and interdependence of all forms of life  
318 and encourages support and assistance for those who suffer. *Caring for Creation* emphasizes  
319 that “this church will ... be in solidarity with people who directly face environmental hazards  
320 from toxic materials, whether in industry, agriculture, or the home. We will insist on an  
321 equitable sharing of the costs of maintaining a healthy environment.”<sup>34</sup>

322 The principle of *sufficiency* means “meeting the basic needs of all humanity and all  
323 creation.”<sup>35</sup> Insofar as the norm of sufficiency emphasizes fairness and repudiates wasteful and  
324 harmful consumption, it represents one dimension of distributive justice. “Sufficiency charges  
325 us to work with each other and the environment to meet needs without causing undue burdens  
326 elsewhere.”<sup>36</sup>

327  
328 Finally, the principle of *sustainability* values “the capacity of natural and social systems  
329 to survive and thrive together over the long term.”<sup>37</sup> Widespread poverty plaguing present  
330 generations is not just or sustainable; in addition, we must recognize that sustainability  
331 obviously requires “a larger scope of accountability to future generations.”<sup>38</sup>

332  
333 **Prioritize the Poor and Vulnerable.** A moral commitment implied by these four principles and  
334 thoroughly grounded in ELCA social teaching is *the ethical priority for the most vulnerable and*  
335 *marginalized*. For example:

336  
337 God stands in judgment of those in authority who fall short of their  
338 responsibility, and is moved with compassion to deliver the impoverished from  
339 all that oppresses them: “Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the  
340 right of the lowly and the destitute” (Psalm 82:3). The rich are expected to use  
341 wealth to benefit their neighbors who live in poverty here and throughout the  
342 world.<sup>39</sup>

343  
344 Our neighbors include “all people and creation throughout the world.”<sup>40</sup> Christians have a  
345 prophetic obligation “to identify the power of sin present in social structures, and to advocate  
346 in hope with poor and powerless people.”<sup>41</sup> One of the greatest injustices wreaked by climate  
347 change is how, across the globe, those living in poverty have contributed the least to produce it  
348 and yet bear its greatest consequences.

349  
350 **The Precautionary Principle.** Finally, ELCA social teaching brings to bear on the climate crisis  
351 what has come to be called “*the precautionary principle.*” “When human activities may lead to  
352 morally unacceptable harm that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, action shall be taken to  
353 avoid or diminish that harm.”<sup>42</sup> This is a sound basis for heeding the warnings of scientists and  
354 reducing emissions through public policy and international cooperation, as well as through  
355 personal and corporate responsibility.

## 356 357 **6. How does the ELCA teach that climate change should be addressed?**

358 From these ethical insights emerge the following convictions regarding the challenges  
359 posed by global warming and climate change.

360 This church acknowledges that some in our church don't think the church or people of  
361 faith should get involved in politics. ELCA teaching takes a more nuanced view: "Taking partisan  
362 stances is not the church's role, but 'politics' has to do with negotiating how the benefits and  
363 burdens of living in a society are shared."<sup>43</sup> In a democracy, Christians share political  
364 responsibility. The ELCA encourages Christians to participate in the affairs of government.

365  
366 The principle of participation authorizes this church's advocacy—speaking alongside  
367 and with those who are marginalized—including for creation itself, since it has no voice in the  
368 halls of power. This happens when "members speak out individually or as part of activist  
369 groups. It also includes the public witness coordinated by the advocacy offices of the ELCA or of  
370 Lutheran partner nongovernmental organizations."<sup>44</sup> Members of our church have a moral  
371 obligation to be engaged in setting the direction of our country as we live out our vocation to  
372 care for God's creation.

373  
374 We must be guided by both courage and humility as we pursue these faithful endeavors.  
375 On the one hand, we need to summon the courage to face the climate crisis and the perils it  
376 poses to human civilization as well as the diversity of life on Earth. On the other hand, we need  
377 to exercise humility regarding how best to address these perils.

378  
379 We can agree on ends but disagree on means. Well-intentioned people can disagree  
380 about what constitutes the better part of moral action. We must deliberate and collaborate  
381 together because we cannot solve the problem individually or as a single institution. Moral  
382 deliberation and action together are essential to our identity as a church.

383  
384 We also need patience and fortitude. The challenges posed by global warming and  
385 climate change are the consequence of human activities since the Industrial Revolution.  
386 Systemic changes take time and require careful deliberation to avoid unintended  
387 consequences.

388  
389 Guided by these insights, this church puts forward the following convictions to guide  
390 discernment and actions toward the challenges posed by the climate kairos:

- 391  
392 A. The ELCA calls upon individuals, agencies, organizations, corporations, and governments  
393 *to pursue goals, set policies, and establish practices that:*  
394 ● Affirm the overwhelming scientific evidence that the current rise in emissions  
395 and related global warming has been caused by human activity.  
396 ● Invite and engage all stakeholders to develop climate change solutions that are  
397 appropriate to their locale and adequate to the challenges we face.

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- 435
- Promote a just transition from fossil fuels to a clean energy future that leaves no one behind, through public investments in economic development and job retraining programs.
  - Prioritize allocation of resources to those who bear the least responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions but already experience disproportionately its costly impacts.
    - Foster restorative justice by fully funding the United Nations [Green Climate Fund](#) and significant funds for U.S. victims of environmental injustice within “frontline communities.”
  - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the rate scientists project will keep global warming below 2.0 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) and as close as possible to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
    - Include an interim U.S. target of 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 2030.
    - Affirm differing but increasingly ambitious reduction targets for signatories of the Paris Agreement.
  - Support mitigation strategies to achieve this goal, including:
    - Increased regulation of the sources of greenhouse gas emissions.
    - Increased access to and incentives for home weatherization, energy efficiency, renewable energy systems, building electrification, and the electrification of transportation to reduce household energy burdens.
    - New and expanded state and federal clean-energy standards.
    - Carbon-pricing approaches that successfully mitigate regressive impacts on low- and moderate-income households while also effectively reducing emissions.
    - Improved forest management practices that reduce deforestation and promote biodiversity through afforestation (tree planting) in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
    - Increased incentives for long-lasting soil carbon sequestration and other regenerative practices on farms and ranches, such as silvopasture,<sup>45</sup> managed grazing, perennial staple crops, tree intercropping, regenerative annual cropping, conservation agriculture, and abandoned farmland restoration.<sup>46</sup>
    - Dietary and other personal lifestyle changes that result in fewer greenhouse gas emissions, such as eliminating food waste, composting, adopting plant-rich diets, building and utilizing bicycle infrastructure, carpooling, and promoting walkable communities.<sup>47</sup>

- 436 ● Support strategies that enable adaptation to climate change, including:  
437 ○ Protection of coastal wetlands.  
438 ○ Sustainable agroforestry.  
439 ○ Decentralized renewable energy ownership, production, and distribution.  
440 ○ Securing and protecting the land rights of Indigenous peoples.  
441 ○ Increased and improved public transit.<sup>48</sup>  
442
- 443 B. Likewise, this church *rejects beliefs, goals, and policies that:*  
444 ● Dismiss the fact that the world’s industrialized nations are responsible for the  
445 vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions since the dawn of the Industrial Era,  
446 or the fact that current per capita emissions in the United States are three times  
447 higher than the global average.<sup>49</sup>  
448 ● Prioritize economic impacts on present generations without considering social,  
449 economic, or ecological consequences for future generations.  
450 ● Foment political conflict through the distortion of scientific research and  
451 misrepresentation of the intentions of opponents.  
452 ● Disregard the intersectional nature of climate change and vilify those who work  
453 in the fossil fuel industry rather than directing criticism toward those who have  
454 the power to change the systems and policies that limit or dictate our energy  
455 choices.  
456 ● Perpetuate the disproportionate burden borne by those whose communities  
457 host industries that produce harmful pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.  
458 ● Adopt a self-serving or defeatist perspective since these perpetuate the unjust  
459 status quo and avoid moral responsibility for climate change.  
460
- 461 C. In addition, the ELCA will *raise searching questions about goals and policies that:*  
462 ● Result in toxic wastes posing grave dangers to present and future generations.  
463 ● Rely exclusively on technological solutions to reduce emissions and/or to address  
464 Earth’s energy imbalance.<sup>50</sup>  
465 ● Refuse to consider how climate change imperils financial investments or how  
466 investments in fossil fuel companies perpetuate and exacerbate climate change.  
467
- 468 D. Finally, the ELCA *challenges all expressions of this church to:*  
469 ● Promote creation care through preaching, worship, and educational  
470 programming.<sup>51</sup>  
471 ● Consider adopting congregational commitments to creation care, for example,  
472 by becoming a Creation Care Covenant Congregation via Lutherans Restoring  
473 Creation<sup>52</sup> and/or becoming a Cool Congregation via Interfaith Power & Light.<sup>53</sup>

- 474 ● Provide pastoral care to those struggling with “climate anxiety” and other  
475 related mental health concerns, especially our youngest people.<sup>54</sup>
- 476 ● Witness publicly to the climate crisis and “walk the talk” by:
  - 477 ○ Achieving the same levels of greenhouse gas reduction that we urge the
  - 478 U.S. government to pursue.
  - 479 ○ Investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy systems.
  - 480 ○ Reviewing how ELCA landholdings can be used to sequester carbon,
  - 481 promote biodiversity, and/or encourage other life-giving relationships
  - 482 with creation.
  - 483 ○ Becoming “anticipatory communities” that model climate resiliency (e.g.,
  - 484 emergency shelters, cooling spaces, community gardens).
- 485 ● Demonstrate our care for creation via our budgeting and investment of church
- 486 funds—including screening fossil fuel stocks or engaging in shareholder activism
- 487 regarding such funds.
- 488 ● Promote scientific literacy and instruction about global warming and climate
- 489 change in all our educational institutions.
- 490 ● Engage in legislative advocacy at all levels of government, individually and
- 491 collectively.
- 492 ● Join with ecumenical, interfaith, and secular partners working to address the
- 493 climate crisis.<sup>55</sup>
- 494 ● Engage in acts of community organizing to build stronger relationships and more
- 495 resilient communities that can take action to create meaningful climate solutions
- 496 and help people understand that they have the power to make lasting change.<sup>56</sup>
- 497

### 498 **Conclusion: Where do we find hope and power for facing climate change?**

499 Our planet has a fever, and this climate crisis is a kairos moment. Just as Martin Luther’s  
500 career reflected “a dynamic of protest and reform matched to a keen sense of *kairos*,” all  
501 Christians are called to face the climate crisis in a similar way.<sup>57</sup>

502  
503 As members of this society, we would do well to heed the insight of Dr. Martin Luther  
504 King Jr., whose words in his time resonate for us as we confront the climate crisis today:

505  
506 We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum  
507 of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still  
508 the thief of time.... Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous  
509 civilizations are written the pathetic words, Too late.”<sup>58</sup>

510

511 Our church, then, views the present reality and the future we are moving into with  
512 grave concern but also is empowered by a vision of flourishing and hope as God’s invitation to  
513 join God’s action toward healing the earth. The recent social statement *Faith, Sexism, and*  
514 *Justice* summarizes this vision well:

515  
516 We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America believe God’s intention  
517 revealed through the Scriptures is that all people have life abundantly and  
518 flourish. From creation to redemption in the Christian story, the Scriptures reveal  
519 God’s intention of abundant and flourishing life for creation, including for human  
520 beings. ... The Book of Revelation speaks of the healing of the nations and closes  
521 with a vision of new heavens and earth as the ultimate outcome of God’s resolve  
522 (Revelation 22:1-2). This church believes the triune God intends creation to  
523 flourish and is ever at work so that all people may thrive.<sup>59</sup>  
524

525 We believe God yearns and strives for Earth’s ecological well-being and we trust that  
526 “God’s faithfulness alone sustains the Church and renews our faith, hope, and love.”<sup>60</sup> As God’s  
527 people we address the climate crisis with active hope rather than paralyzing despair. “Captured  
528 by hope, we proclaim that God has made peace with all things through the blood of the cross  
529 (Colossians 1:15-20), and that the Spirit of God, ‘the giver of life,’ renews the face of the  
530 earth.”<sup>61</sup>  
531

532 May the Holy Spirit renew this church’s sense of emergency and empower us to faithful  
533 and fervent action in this kairos moment.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Biblical references throughout this social message are from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE).
- <sup>2</sup> ELCA social statement [Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice](#) (1993): 11.
- <sup>3</sup> See [“Caring for Creation: Climate Change,”](#) issue paper for ELCA Corporate Social Responsibility, approved by the ELCA Church Council, November 2021 [CC21.11.25].
- <sup>4</sup> [“Climate Justice,”](#) Lutheran World Federation.
- <sup>5</sup> Quirin Schiermeier et al., [“Energy Alternatives: Electricity Without Carbon,”](#) *Nature* 454 (2008): 816-23.
- <sup>6</sup> ELCA social statement [Genetics, Faith and Responsibility](#) (2003): 10.
- <sup>7</sup> [“A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to American Indian and Alaska Native People”](#) (2021), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- <sup>8</sup> [Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice](#) (1993): 3.
- <sup>9</sup> [“Global Warming,”](#) NASA Earth Observatory, June 3, 2010.
- <sup>10</sup> [“Despite Pandemic Shutdowns, Carbon Dioxide and Methane Surged in 2020,”](#) NOAA Research News, April 7, 2021.
- <sup>11</sup> [“About Montreal Protocol,”](#) United Nations Environment Programme.

- <sup>12</sup> [“The NOAA Annual Greenhouse Gas Index,”](#) Global Monitoring Laboratory, updated spring 2022. See also Valérie Masson-Delmotte et al., “Summary for Policymakers” in [Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis](#) (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2021): 8, A.2.1.
- <sup>13</sup> Valérie Masson-Delmotte et al., “Summary for Policymakers,” *ibid.*: 5, A.1.2.
- <sup>14</sup> For changes in global surface temperature, reconstructed from paleoclimate archives, see Valérie Masson-Delmotte et al., “Summary for Policymakers,” *ibid.*: 6, panel (a).
- <sup>15</sup> J.S. Mankin et al., [“The Potential for Snow to Supply Human Water Demand in the Present and Future,”](#) *Environmental Research Letters*, 10(11), 1-10.
- <sup>16</sup> [“How Do We Know Climate Change Is Real?,”](#) NASA Global Climate Change.
- <sup>17</sup> Scott A. Kulp and Benjamin H. Strauss, [“New Elevation Data Triple Estimates of Global Vulnerability to Sea-level Rise and Coastal Flooding,”](#) *Nature Communications* 10, article 4844 (2019).
- <sup>18</sup> Chris Mooney and Brady Dennis, [“Oceans Surged to Another Record-high Temperature in 2022,”](#) *Washington Post*, Jan. 11, 2023.
- <sup>19</sup> [“About the IPCC,”](#) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). According to NASA, “the vast majority of actively publishing climate scientists—97 percent—agree that humans are causing global warming and climate change.” See [“Do Scientists Agree on Climate Change?,”](#) NASA Global Climate Change.
- <sup>20</sup> Valérie Masson-Delmotte et al., “Summary for Policymakers” in [Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C](#), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018.
- <sup>21</sup> Valérie Masson-Delmotte et al., “Summary for Policymakers” in [Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis](#) (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2021): 14, B.1.
- <sup>22</sup> [“Emissions Gap Report 2021,”](#) United Nations Environment Programme, Oct. 26, 2021.
- <sup>23</sup> [“The Paris Agreement,”](#) United Nations Framework on Climate Change.
- <sup>24</sup> [“Global Temperatures: Evaluating Progress Toward the Paris Agreement,”](#) Climate Action Tracker, updated Nov. 9, 2021.
- <sup>25</sup> [“Guterres: The IPCC Report Is a Code Red for Humanity,”](#) United Nations, Aug. 9, 2021.
- <sup>26</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, ed., *The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church*, rev. 2nd ed. (Skotaville Publishers and William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987): 2. Cited in Robert McAfee Brown, ed., *Kairos: Three Prophetic Challenges to the Church* (Eerdmans Publishing, 1990): 26. See also Barbara R. Rossing and Johan Buitendag, [“Life in Its Fullness: Ecology, Eschatology and Ecodomy in a Time of Climate Change,”](#) *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, vol. 76, no. 1. (2020).
- <sup>27</sup> See Daniel Weidner, [“Prophetic Criticism and the Rhetoric of Temporality: Paul Tillich’s Kairos Texts and Weimar Intellectual Politics,”](#) *Political Theology* 21:1-2 (2020): 71-88.
- <sup>28</sup> Bartholomew I of Constantinople, “Symposium VII: ‘Arctic: The Mirror of Life,’” Orthodox Fellowship of the Transfiguration, Sept. 12, 2007, pg. 3.
- <sup>29</sup> [“Heat Stress Prevention,”](#) Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, farmworkers die from heat-related illness at a rate 20 times greater than that of the entire U.S. civilian workforce. See also Bill Chappell, [“Days of Intense Heat Have Killed Thousands of Cattle in Kansas,”](#) NPR/Wisconsin Public Radio, June 16, 2022.
- <sup>30</sup> ELCA social statement [Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action](#) (2019): 38.
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> ELCA social message [“Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy”](#) (2020): 2.
- <sup>33</sup> [Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice](#) (1993): 6.
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.* The principle of solidarity supports intragenerational transfers of resources from the rich to the poor so that they can adapt to climate change both now and in the future, but it also calls present generations to make sacrifices for future generations as a matter of intergenerational ethical

responsibility (see pp. 11-12). See also ELCA social statement [Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](#) (1999): 15.

<sup>35</sup> [Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice](#) (1993): 7.

<sup>36</sup> [Ibid.](#)

<sup>37</sup> [Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](#) (1999): 14.

<sup>38</sup> ELCA social statement [Genetics, Faith and Responsibility](#) (2003): 22. The principle precludes shortsighted emphases on economic growth that fundamentally harms Earth's climate now and in the future, but it also excludes any approaches to climate policy that do not address the fact that three billion people in the world currently lack access to modern energy sources for cooking and heating their homes. See Max Roser, "[Energy Poverty and Indoor Air Pollution: A Problem As Old As Humanity That We Can End Within Our Lifetime](#)," Our World in Data, July 5, 2021.

<sup>39</sup> ELCA social statement [Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](#) (1999): 6.

<sup>40</sup> [Ibid.](#): 4.

<sup>41</sup> ELCA social statement [Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective](#) (1991): 3.

<sup>42</sup> [Genetics, Faith and Responsibility](#) (2003): 27, footnote 41.

<sup>43</sup> ELCA social message "[Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy](#)" (2020): 2.

<sup>44</sup> [Genetics, Faith and Responsibility](#) (2003): 25.

<sup>45</sup> Silvopasture integrates trees, pasture, and foliage into a single system. Incorporating trees into agriculture improves land health and increases carbon sequestration. See "[Silvopasture](#)," Project Drawdown.

<sup>46</sup> "[Table of Solutions](#)," Project Drawdown.

<sup>47</sup> [Ibid.](#)

<sup>48</sup> Isabella Suarez, "[5 Strategies That Achieve Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Simultaneously](#)," World Resources Institute, Feb. 10, 2020.

<sup>49</sup> See "[CO<sub>2</sub> and Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)," "[Per Capita CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions](#)," and "[Cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions](#)," Our World in Data.

<sup>50</sup> [Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice](#) (1993): 12. See also ELCA social statement [Genetics, Faith and Responsibility](#) (2003): 18.

<sup>51</sup> For example: [ELCA Caring for Creation Today](#), [ELCA Creation Care Ambassadors program](#), and [Lutherans Restoring Creation](#).

<sup>52</sup> "[What Can We Do?](#)," Lutherans Restoring Creation.

<sup>53</sup> "[Cool Congregations](#)," [Interfaith Power & Light](#).

<sup>54</sup> See Sarah E.O. Schwartz et al., "[Climate Change Anxiety and Mental Health: Environmental Activism as Buffer](#)," *Current Psychology*, Feb. 28, 2022, and "[New APA Poll Reveals That Americans Are Increasingly Anxious About Climate Change's Impact on Planet, Mental Health](#)," American Psychiatric Association, Oct. 21, 2020.

<sup>55</sup> For example, [Creation Care Collective](#), [Interfaith Power & Light](#), [GreenFaith](#), and [Citizens' Climate Lobby \(CCL Lutheran Action Team\)](#).

<sup>56</sup> [Organizing for Mission](#) and "[15 Steps to Create Effective Climate Communications](#)," Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

<sup>57</sup> Larry Rasmussen, "[Waiting for the Lutherans](#)," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 37:2 (April 2010): 86.

<sup>58</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., "A Time to Break Silence," in James Melvin Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991): 243.

<sup>59</sup> [Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action](#) (2019): 2, 14-15.

<sup>60</sup> [Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective](#) (1991): 8.

<sup>61</sup> [Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice](#) (1993): 5.

## **FAQ on the Recommended Social Message on Earth's Climate Crisis**

### **Specific FAQs on Church Council Action**

*Prepared for Church Council by the Rev. Dr. Roger A. Willer, Director for Theological Ethics, Office of the Presiding Bishop*

#### **What is the action for consideration coming before the Church Council at its April 20 meeting?**

To adopt "Earth's Climate Crisis" as a social message of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

#### **What is the project?**

In November 2021, the ELCA Church Council acted to: “authorize the development of a social message on climate change, in light of existing social teaching and in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018). . . .”

[CC21.1125m1] (Social message development typically happens within a year; this process was delayed due to staff capacity factors.)

#### **Who recommended this text?**

While members of the Conference of Bishops and you as Church Council had opportunities to review the Proposed message and propose amendments, this recommended text was acted on at the April 3 meeting of Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee in its role of overseeing work carried out by staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop. This is the text they recommend.

#### **Why are the line numbers different than the version I looked at in mid-March?**

Several aids or notes for the review process have been removed from the document now that it is ready for Church Council action. The most notable is removal of the Genesis text inset that was on page two. (A link is provided in its place.) This is the text, then, that will become the social teaching of this church, (Of course, line numbers will be removed, copy edits made, and a final standard design.)

### **Background FAQs**

#### **Refresh my memory, what are social messages?**

Social messages are topical documents adopted by the ELCA Church Council to focus attention and action on timely matters of social concern to the church and society. They are used to address pressing contemporary concerns in light of the prophetic and compassionate traditions of the scriptures and Lutheran thought. They may elaborate and focus ELCA teaching and policy but must be in congruence with previously adopted teaching and policy positions, especially from social statements. (In this case see *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, Justice* (1993) at [www.elca.org/socialstatements](http://www.elca.org/socialstatements).) Social messages draw attention to specific topics, and they encourage moral discernment, thoughtful address, and action.

#### **What was the participation level during the Comment period (Sept. 15 to Dec. 8, 2022)**

This comment period was a robust one when compared to many others, with three major participants groups.

- Nearly 500 individuals filled out the online survey—typical is 250. Overall, nearly 4 out of 5 respondents gave high or very high marks to each section and the draft as a whole. The survey results are available in a full, public report at [www.elca.org/climatecare](http://www.elca.org/climatecare).
- 50+ individuals provided extended comments by email, roughly twice the typical.
- A group of reviewers representing a variety of perspectives and consistent with ELCA diversity commitments were involved during the eight-month writing process.

**How was the Proposed text developed?**

The Director for Theological Ethics worked with a writing contractor, the Rev. Dr. Jim Martin-Schramm, retired professor and specialist on environment ethics from Luther College. They were assisted throughout the entire process by members of a reviewers group, which consulted on initial drafts and the final Draft text that was published September 15. This “first circle” of reviewers included: Ms. Regina Banks, Pr. Dave Brauer-Rieke, Dr. Kiara Jorgenson, Pr. Mark Narum, Mr. Immanuel Retamoza, Ms. Kyra Reumann, Dr. Barbara Rossing, Pr. Booker Vance, and Pr. Inge Williams.

After the close of the comment period in December, the director worked with the contractor to develop a revised text in light of overall patterns of response. A revised draft text was shared with the reviewers group for their input and, after further change, shared in February with the Conference of Bishops. The Conference of Bishops Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee gave the text a final close review and Church Council members had a chance to review during March. This Proposed Social Message represents the result of these careful efforts to hear public comment and work with reviewers to craft the Recommended text for Church Council consideration. Please note the message has not had a final copy edit; this is always done after adoption but before publication.

*En Bloc* Items

**I. Budget and Finance Committee**

**A. FY 2022 Operating Performance**

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

To approve the establishment of a Church Council designated fund, entitled Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, in the amount of \$300,000, to be used to cover the costs of meetings and other resources.

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

To add \$1.7 million to the Budgeted Operations Support designated fund to provide support for future budgetary needs.

**II. Executive Committee**

**A. Redesignation of Endowment Funds**

From time to time, the intended purpose of the distributions of an endowed gift are no longer possible as the ministry is no longer operational, the ELCA may no longer be in partnership with the intended organization, etc. If a change is necessary and the ELCA Church Council is not listed as the decision maker on originating documentation, staff's priority is to reach out to the donor and next of kin to see if they would agree to a proposed recommended successor beneficiary. Should staff not be able to connect with the donor and next of kin, the endowment agreement names either the ELCA Foundation Board of Trustees or the ELCA Church Council as the governing body with authority to make changes where the law allows. ELCA churchwide staff will provide a recommendation that best aligns with the original donor intent and secondarily, churchwide organizational priorities.

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

To approve the naming of successor beneficiaries of the distributions from the following endowment funds to the new areas as described below:

*E270660 - Institute Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos Chicago, Ill*

**Recommendation:** To name Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida en Argentina y Uruguay (IELU) as the successor beneficiary of the Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos Endowment Fund.

**Rationale:** This fund was established to support theological education at the Instituto Superior de Educación Teológica (ISEDET) in Argentina. After the closing of ISEDET, the Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida en Argentina y Uruguay (IELU) developed a training program under the leadership of Dr. Mercedes García Bachmann (OT Professor at ISEDET). These funds will continue to assist IELU in the formation of its leaders in collaboration with the Universidad Pedagógica, the recipient of ISEDET Theological Library, which IELU continues to access for the formation of its leaders. Leadership of the Service and Justice home area of the churchwide organization recommend that this endowment begin distributing to IELU given the fact that ISEDET is no longer in existence.

***E270634 – The Vincent L. and Annette L. Myers Memorial Endowment Fund***

**Recommendation:** The endowment names Stand With Africa as a beneficiary. The Stand With Africa initiative concluded in 2009. Staff kept the account open to receive additional gifts for a number of years (which is consistent with the churchwide organization existing practices because this church is still doing the work of seeking to eradicate hunger, address HIV/AIDS, and seek conflict resolution in Africa via ELCA World Hunger programming). It is time to close this initiative completely. At its March 17, 2023, meeting the ELCA Foundation Board of Trustees approved the recommended action to name ELCA World Hunger as the successor beneficiary of this endowment to support the ELCA’s work in Africa. Staff propose the ELCA Church Council concur with this decision.

**B. Authorization to Amend Repurpose of Endowment Funds**

The churchwide organization is currently performing a review of all endowments benefiting the churchwide organization to ensure donor intent is still being met along with alignment to churchwide organizational priorities. To ensure alignment with donor intent and organizational spending, staff believe that the Budget and Finance Committee, which also includes resource staff from development, is best suited to review these requests for changes in named beneficiaries on an ongoing basis.

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

**To authorize the Budget and Finance Committee on behalf of the Church Council to approve recommendations from churchwide staff of successor beneficiaries for various endowments benefitting the churchwide organization, based on recommendations from the Resource Development Committee.**

**III. Legal and Constitutional Review Committee**

**A. Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies**

Additional paid holidays were added to Section 6.5. The updated Personnel Policies reflect the changes and revisions can be found [here](#).

Employees of the churchwide organization of the ELCA are expected to read, understand, and comply with the Personnel Policies of the Churchwide Organization, which are adopted by the Church Council in accordance with 14.21.06.

**CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

**Recommended:**

**To approve the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies; and  
To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.**

**B. Mission Investment Fund Supplemental Retirement Plan**

The Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (“MIF”), a separately incorporated ministry of the ELCA, presented the MIF Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan (MIF SERP) for adoption by the ELCA Church Council at its November 2020 meeting. The MIF SERP provides tailored retirement distributions to key executives in addition to those provided by the standard

retirement savings plan. Revisions are now needed to the plan. These revisions were prepared by outside counsel and reviewed by both the MIF corporate and compliance counsel and ELCA general counsel.

The revisions to the MIF SERP can be found [here](#).

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To approve the revised Mission Investment Fund Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan.**

**IV. Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee**

**A. Assessment and Feasibility of Social Message Processes**

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 move forward with authorizing the development of one of the social message requests and to delay action on the other two requests until after the 2023-24 social message development cycle.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To authorize the development of a social message on the epidemic of gun-related trauma in the U.S. with attention to the cluster of issues underlying it, such as national gun policy, personal security, growing community violence, public health, and social perplexity in light of existing social teaching and in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018).**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To maintain as pending the request for consideration of developing a social message on child abuse and child protection and the request of a substantive revision of the “Message on Homelessness” (1990) to be assessed by the Theological Discernment team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop for possible recommendation to the Church Council following the 2023-24 social message development cycle.**

**V. Service and Justice Committee**

**VI. Christian Community and Leadership Committee**

**VII. Other Items**

**A. Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the Church Council meeting on [Nov. 10-13, 2022](#) have been provided to council members electronically on Church Council Microsoft Teams.

The minutes of the council’s Executive Committee meetings on [Nov. 10-13, 2022](#), [Dec. 13, 2022](#), [Jan. 17, 2023](#), [Feb. 14, 2023](#), and [March 23, 2023](#) have been provided electronically to members on Church Council Teams. Minutes for the Feb. 21, 2023 and March 14, 2023 meeting held in executive session were added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary

Please 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](mailto:Keith.Fry@elca.org)). Proper corrections will be entered into the protocol copies of the minutes. Such corrections need not be raised in the plenary session in connection with the approval of the minutes.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To approve the minutes of the Nov. 10-13, 2022 meeting of the Church Council; and  
To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the Nov. 10-13, 2022, Dec. 13, 2022, Jan. 17, 2023, Feb. 14, 2023, Feb. 21, 2023, March 14, 2023, and March 23, 2023 meetings.**

**B. Church Council Nominations and Elections**

The Church Council has the responsibility for electing people to fill terms on boards of Separately Incorporated Ministries (SIM), 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.

Biographical information is provided in [Biographies](#).

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To elect to the advisory board of directors of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at Lenoir-Rhyne University to a term beginning June 1, 2023, and expiring May 31, 2027: The Rev. Philip A. Bouknight, Ms. Sandra R. Cline, the Rev. Rachel L. Connelly, Deacon Adrainne J. Gray, Mr. LaMont J. Johnson, and the Rev. Franklin Eric Wester.**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To elect to the board of directors of Luther Seminary to a term beginning July 1, 2023, and expiring June 30, 2027: Ms. Charlotte Haberaecker and Mr. Paul Siegele.**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a term beginning April 20, 2023, and expiring Dec. 31, 2029: The Rev. Emily Harkins Norris.**

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To elect to the advisory board of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary at California Lutheran University to a term beginning June 1, 2023, and expiring June 1, 2026: The Rev. Erik Utto-Galarneau.**

## Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions

### 1. Gun Violence Advocacy

*Churchwide Assembly action [CA22.01.05e]*

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Oregon Synod, Northwestern Ohio Synod, and Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod concerning gun violence;

To reaffirm this church's social teaching to address the broad issues of violence in society as called for in "Message on Community Violence" (1994);

To reaffirm this church's sense of urgency for advocacy for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (expired in 2004), including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013 and expanded background checks and other measures to increase gun safety;

To reaffirm that ELCA social policy does not reject gun ownership or the recreational activities associated with guns as morally wrong; and

To refer to the Witness in Society team in the Service and Justice home area for implementation and a report of the continuing advocacy efforts related to gun violence and universal background checks to the Church Council at its Spring 2023 meeting.

*Response from the Service and Justice Home Area (April 2023)*

The Service and Justice home area addresses gun violence in a manner consistent with ELCA social teaching through the education and advocacy work of the Witness in Society team in the Washington DC office, state advocacy ministries, and through the Corporate Social Responsibility program.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton works with the ELCA Public Messages Working Group to determine opportunities for timely communication with members of Congress regarding "this church's sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013" and "this church's long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales." Messages of the Presiding Bishop are often released alongside an advocacy action alert to the ELCA advocacy network to encourage Lutherans and others to write their own letters to members of Congress. While difficult in a state of "divided government" our hope is that there will be political will to address these concerns before the end of the 2023-2025 legislative session.

On May 26, 2022, Presiding Bishop Eaton issued a pastoral message in support of the [March for Our Lives](#) march in Washington, DC and similar marches across the country, providing a teaching moment for the ELCA about responding to community violence.

On June 25, 2022, Congress passed and the US President signed into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (P.L. 117-159), the first major gun reform legislation in nearly three decades. The new law makes changes to the acquisition of firearms. It includes funding directed to identifying and addressing mental health as well as school safety provisions. The ELCA supported this legislation. The [National Association of Counties](#) produced a blog that included a synopsis of provisions included in the new law.

Equally as important as this church's federal advocacy efforts, the ELCA's robust State Public Policy Network works on state-based legislative opportunities. Following are just a few examples of those important efforts.

#### Pennsylvania

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-PA (LAMPa) will work to advance Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) legislation, also known as "red flag" laws, allow family and police to petition judges to temporarily confiscate firearms from a person at risk of harming himself or others. That person would get an expedited hearing before a judge and could have their firearms seized for three months to a year. The

legislation would grant police a search warrant to take a person's guns if there is probable cause they haven't been relinquished. LAMPa will also share within its network any federal advocacy alerts created by the DC advocacy office regarding gun violence.

### Colorado

The Rocky Mountain Synod has partnered with The Episcopal Diocese of Colorado to support the March for Our Lives movement. Lutheran Advocacy has equipped advocates in ELCA congregations with theological and moral formation resources around gun violence prevention, particularly for the sake of engaging [Colorado Faith Communities United to End Gun Violence](#). Advocacy staff continue to monitor the progress of various bills addressing gun violence, extreme risk protection policies, and other public safety-oriented issues in the Colorado General Assembly each year.

### Washington

Faith Action Network in Washington state has been working in coalition on legislation to prevent gun violence for more than a decade. With the leadership of the statewide Alliance for Gun Responsibility, the Faith Action Network has been supporting the passage of bills through the state legislature. In 2022, there was a successful advocacy effort on bills restricting high-capacity magazines, banning weapons in public locations such as school board meetings and election-related facilities, and closing the ghost guns loophole. In the 2023 legislative session, the Faith Action Network is working on three bills that have some momentum:

- prohibiting the sale, manufacture, transport, and import (but not possession) of assault weapons in Washington, while allowing reasonable exemptions for law enforcement and the military;
- requiring the firearms industry to establish, implement, and enforce reasonable controls; and
- requiring a comprehensive background check, safety training, and waiting period to purchase a firearm in the state of Washington.

With multi-faith communities, the Faith Action Network gathers in vigil when a mass shooting occurs, and pledges to work harder for comprehensive reforms at the state and national level.

### CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

#### **Recommended:**

**To receive the response on “Gun Violence Advocacy” from the Witness in Society team in the Service and Justice home area;**

**To commend the continued advocacy efforts being implemented across this church related to gun violence and universal background checks; and**

**To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.**

## **2. Salary Equity in the ELCA**

### *Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.11]*

To receive with gratitude the memorial on “Salary Equity in the ELCA” from the Delaware-Maryland Synod;

To refer the memorial to the Church Council to consider commissioning a study of pay gaps for rostered ministers in the ELCA, particularly as they relate to women, people of color, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQIA+ community, and to consider using such a study not only for the purposes described in this memorial but also for the study of inequitable compensation of clergy of color previously called for by the Church Council (CC19.06.23.), for the Quality of Call Initiative for Women in Ministry, for the study of educational debt, and for such other purposes as might serve the needs of this church;

To encourage Portico Benefit Services and the Churchwide organization to make appropriate changes to their bylaws and data privacy policies in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of compensation patterns for rostered ministers;

To replace the “Current gross compensation” question from the Rostered Minister Profile with “Minimum Compensation for Next Call;”

To amend the “Current Health Benefits” question to read “Needed Health Benefits;” and  
To remove the “Current Retirement Contribution” question from the Rostered Minister Profile.

*Executive Committee Action [EC22.09.23b4]*

To refer the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action on “Salary Equity in the ELCA” to the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Christian Community and Leadership home area, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from Christian Community and Leadership and the Office of the Secretary (November 2022)*

As the memorial from the Delaware-Maryland Synod pointed out, there is evidence that across society and in churches there exist pay gaps that affect equity for women, people of color, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, people who are marginalized or living in poverty, and the LGBTQIA+ community. One serious difficulty the ELCA faces in determining the extent to which inequity exists in compensation for rostered ministers, however, is that data on compensation has been extremely difficult to come by. The churchwide organization holds no data on compensation for rostered ministers. While Portico Benefit Services has salary and retirement contribution data for those rostered ministers who are sponsored in its plans, there are challenges that have hindered sharing of data, including the fact that Portico is bound by federal privacy laws as a fiduciary agent, as well as the reality that it has been bound by its own bylaws and policies that protect the privacy of plan participants. There is the additional complication that, while a large majority of rostered ministers are sponsored through Portico, it is likely that a number of those who serve smaller congregations or those with fewer financial resources are not sponsored, and thus would not be included in any information that Portico might be able to share. Furthermore, Portico does not maintain ethnicity data on its members, and the data in the churchwide database of rostered ministers is often incomplete concerning ethnicity. Neither Portico nor the churchwide organization maintain information on rostered ministers’ identification as LGBTQIA+, gender is recorded primarily on the binary with the possibility of a rostered minister to report gender only as “other,” and no information on disabilities is tracked by the churchwide organization for ministers on the active rosters.

Conversation has begun about the study called for by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly and how the churchwide organization can most efficiently and effectively gather information that will serve the needs of the various studies already underway or about to get underway (as listed in the assembly’s action) that intersect with questions of compensation and equity. Adam DeHoek, ELCA congregation statistics analyst, will serve as a liaison to help ensure that there are efficiencies in data collection and reporting and that the various groups are sharing information across the studies. A timeline for the study will be reported at the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting.

Portico has asked for bylaw changes that the Church Council is being asked to approve at this meeting that would allow it to share compensation data for sponsored rostered ministers, which has been a challenge for such research in the past. The churchwide organization is working on data sharing policy revisions, and, working with Information Technology (IT), is completing a new quarterly report that will give Portico more of the information they need and that will allow for data matching to enable the churchwide organization to pull useful conclusions from compensation data provided by Portico.

The various changes to the Rostered Minister Profile (RMP) compensation questions that the assembly called for have been addressed and are currently in production for release in the very near future.

*Church Council action [CC22.11.34.v.]*

To receive the progress report on “Salary Equity in the ELCA” from the Office of the Secretary;

To request a report on the consideration of a study identified in the memorial by the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting; and

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

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (April 2023)*

In 2020, compensation information was collected from participants in the study on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the ELCA which provided some data for a pay gap analysis. This fall, the ELCA Task Force to Study Educational Debt plans to collect updated compensation information as part of a quantitative survey of ELCA rostered ministers. Collecting the most relevant and actionable information will require the collaboration of several existing and forming task forces and study committees, including Urban Ministry, Justice for Women, Quality of Call Initiative, and the Candidacy Working Group. The hope is to realize efficiencies by gathering information in a single survey that will intersect with the work of these and other groups

whose perspectives will inform the research questions about gaps in compensation and what information will be most beneficial to collect. Adam DeHoek, program director for Resourceful Servants and congregation statistics analyst, will coordinate this effort.

Enhanced data sharing with Portico Benefit Services from the churchwide organization has begun, with a preliminary quarterly report having been sent to Portico in recent days that will allow them to improve the accuracy of data matching and analysis and that sets the stage for enhanced mutual sharing of data in the future, subject still to any legal limitations within which Portico must operate.

All of the other items specified in the Churchwide Assembly action have been implemented.

**CC ACTION** *[EN BLOC]*

**Recommended:**

**To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary on “Salary Equity in the ELCA” to consider a study;**

**To affirm the timeline and commissioning of a single survey about inequitable gaps in compensation for rostered ministers in the ELCA; and**

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

## Responses to Synod Actions

### 1. LGBTQ+ Programming for Events

*Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2022]*

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted the social statement *Human Sexuality: A Gift and Trust* in 2009, providing guidance on how to live with our LGBTQ+ neighbors; and,

WHEREAS, the ELCA adopted in 1995 a social policy resolution that “gay and lesbian people, as individuals created by God, are welcome to participate fully in the life of the congregations” of the ELCA; and,

WHEREAS, the gatherings of the church (including, but not limited to, the National Youth Gathering) often include pre- gathering events or in-gathering sessions focused on specific communities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in assembly direct the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Council to request the ELCA Church Council direct the appropriate churchwide offices to develop LGBTQ-focused and LGBTQ-specific programming for use as pre-gathering events and in-gathering sessions whenever the gatherings of the church include such sessions for other communities.

*Executive Committee Action [EC22.06.19c6]*

To refer the “LGBTQ+ Programming for Events” resolution from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in the Christian Community and Leadership home area for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from the Christian Community and Leadership home area (November 2022)*

Tammy Jones-West, interim program director for the ELCA Youth Gathering, has been apprised of this request for a pre-gathering of LGBTQIA2S youth. A response can be expected in first quarter 2023 for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering.

*Church Council action [CC22.11.34.aa]*

To receive the timeline on “LGBTQ+ Programming for Events” from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;

To request a response by the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting on LGBTQ-specific programming for pre-gathering events and in-gathering sessions for other communities; and

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

*Response from the Christian Community and Leadership home area (April 2023)*

The Youth Gathering Leadership Team (in consultation with some youth leaders in the LGBTQIA+ community) reviewed the memorial and decided on having space for LGBTQIA+ Youth and their allies during the Interactive Learning time of the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

A pre-gathering for LGBTQIA+ youth was considered and believed to be too risky for youth who have not come out to everyone and would force a choice between MYLE, TABLE and a third event that would have overlapping identities.

The Rostered Ministers Gathering has no capacity this year for any pre-event gatherings. Workshops are welcome for any proposed with a LGBTQ-focus.

The Christian Community and Leadership home area will continue to review events going forward to meet the memorial's intent.

### **CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

#### **Recommended:**

**To receive the response on “LGBTQ+ Programming for Events” from the Christian Community and Leadership home area and to encourage consideration of the development of LGBT-focused sessions for churchwide events as appropriate whenever the churchwide organization gatherings include such sessions for other communities; and**

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

## **2. Council of Nicaea 1700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

*Slovak Zion Synod (7G) [2023]*

WHEREAS, the year 2025 will mark the 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council of the Church, commonly known as the Council of Nicaea; and,

WHEREAS, the sainted members of this council produced certain pronouncements of the faith that, being faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures and of Christian truth, became the rule and norm of the entire Christian Church, foremost among them the Nicene Creed; and,

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Confessions declare that we “unanimously hold and teach, in accordance with the decree of the council of Nicaea” (AC 1), and that we “pledge ourselves to [the ecumenical symbols]” which were “accepted as the unanimous, catholic, Christian faith and confessions of the orthodox and true church” (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Rule and Norm, 3), etc.; and,

WHEREAS, the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America likewise states that this church accepts, teaches, and confesses the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this church (2.04); and,

WHEREAS, we believe the teaching of the ancient church has much to teach us about the meaning of Holy Scripture and the apostolic faith, and aids the increase in the unity of the Church; and,

WHEREAS, the Nicene Creed is the norm and rule of faith for the many Eastern, Oriental, and Western Christian Churches; and,

WHEREAS, this anniversary will be the first such centenary of the council since the wider reception of the modern ecumenical movement that has occurred in the last century; and,

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed to “manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives” (4.02.f) and “fostering Christian unity by participating in ecumenical activities, contributing its witness and work and cooperating with other churches which confess God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (4.03.e); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Slovak Zion Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to acknowledge and celebrate this anniversary with thanksgiving to Almighty God who gives the Church its unity; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council communicate to the Church Council the request that, in the interim, the Office of the Presiding Bishop arrange for the development of resources to assist congregations and synods in observing this anniversary, especially in ecumenical settings, and encourage study of the Nicene Creed and canons as an opportunity for deepening Lutheran identity and as an impetus to nourish ecumenical relationships between churches and congregations.

*(Note: Discussion regarding this resolution included a willingness and consensus in the Slovak Zion Synod to facilitate the compilation of such a resource, in consultation with the presiding bishop’s office, to be made available to the whole church. Discussion also recognized a desire that full-communion partner churches and ELCA companion churches be made aware of these efforts and be invited to do similar work.)*

*Executive Committee action [EC23.02.05]*

To refer the “Council of Nicaea 1700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary” resolution from the Slovak Zion Synod to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for a report or timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (April 2023)*

This resolution is received by the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop (OPB) with gratitude to the Slovak Zion Synod for its faithful recognition of this historic and forward-looking opportunity to reaffirm this church’s Lutheran self-understanding and ecumenical commitments.

The intention of the OPB is to lift up and invite the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to connect with the global initiatives being planned by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Both bodies are in the process of developing resources (for

local and global contexts), scholarship (books and articles), events (online and in person) and initiatives through which the member churches will engage together. In due time, staff will be able to roll out a clear plan for how the ELCA might utilize these compiled resources in this church's context and with ecumenical partners. Proceeding in this way allows for the ELCA to embody the ecumenical commitments of Christians going back to the ancient ecumenical councils and lived out today through the one ecumenical movement.

The WCC has publicly posted its initial [planning](#) toward “a year of reflection and renewal,” which will include a worldwide Faith & Order conference, worship resources, study group resources, a study program, public webinars, books, creative opportunities for online and local engagement, and links with other commemorations. The LWF is currently working with its Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) partners, which includes the Catholics, but also the three global communions that affirmed the JDDJ in 2017: Methodist, Anglican and Reformed – as well as Orthodox partners, on common ecumenical commemorations that will include resources for member church and local engagement.

As staff awaits these developments from the WCC and LWF and engages in further conversation with this church's ecumenical partners in the US and North America, the offer of the Slovak Zion Synod to contribute to the ELCA's engagement is noted. The initiators of the resolution are welcome to connect directly with Kathryn Lohre, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations & theological discernment in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

#### **CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

##### **Recommended:**

**To receive the response on “Council of Nicaea 1700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary” resolution from the Office of the Presiding Bishop;**

**To commend the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations team in its efforts to lift up and engage ELCA congregations and synods in observing this anniversary by distributing and contextualizing resources from World Council of Churches and Lutheran World Federation as encouragement to study the Nicene Creed and canons, and as an opportunity for deepening Lutheran identity and ecumenical witness;**

**To welcome the Slovak Zion Synod to connect with Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and**

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

### **3. LGBTQIA+ Presence among ELCA Governing Bodies**

*Upstate New York Synod (7D) [2022]*

RESOLVED, that the Upstate New York Synod Council respectfully requests that the Church Council of the ELCA adopt a continuing resolution setting a goal of having an intentional and dedicated LGBTQIA+ presence among the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees.

*Executive Committee action [EC22.12.34b]*

To refer the “LGBTQIA+ Presence among ELCA Governing Bodies” resolution from the Upstate New York Synod to the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (April 2023)*

The Office of the Secretary is in ongoing conversation with colleagues in Theological Discernment concerning this request and will present an update to the Church Council at the November 2023 meeting.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the timeline on “LGBTQIA+ Presence among ELCA Governing Bodies” resolution from the Office of the Secretary and to anticipate a response at the November 2023 Church Council meeting; and**

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

**4. Amend Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21.**

*Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2023]*

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Area Synod has need to appoint interim ministers of Word and Service to fill congregational ministry vacancies where the particular gifts of a minister of Word and Service are appropriate and needed; and

WHEREAS, Continuing Resolution 7.44.A19.b. 1.5 grants authority to synod councils to appoint interim ministers of Word and Sacrament; and

WHEREAS, Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21. does not currently grant authority to synod councils to appoint interim ministers of Word and Service; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Area Synod deeply appreciates and learns from the gifts and talents of ministers of Word and Service;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Saint Paul Area Synod Council requests that the Church Council amend Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21. by inserting the following into b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service:

*1.5 Interim deacon Synod Council*

*Executive Committee action [EC23.03.10]*

To refer the “Amend Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21.” resolution from the Saint Paul Area Synod to the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (April 2023)*

The Office of the Secretary will bring this question of amending continuing resolution 7.74.A21. before the Roster Committee and the Leadership Committee of the Conference of Bishops for discernment. As the amendment might require a bylaw change, a report and recommendations will be provided to the Church Council at the November 2024 meeting.

**CC ACTION** [EN BLOC]

**Recommended:**

**To receive the timeline on “Amend Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21.” resolution from the Office of the Secretary and to anticipate a response at the November 2024 Church Council meeting; and**

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

## **Responses to Previous Church Council Actions**

### **A. Review of ELCA Response Team**

*Church Council action [CC22.06.20]*

....

To review the role and membership of the ELCA Response Team.

*Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (April 2023)*

The Administrative Team reviewed the role and current membership of the ELCA Response Team.

The team's purpose is as follows:

- 1) Maintain integrity and effectiveness of ELCA programs;
- 2) Minimize negative publicity and, whenever possible, use the situation to the best public relations advantage for the ELCA;
- 3) Ensure the flow of accurate and helpful information within and outside the ELCA; and
- 4) Provide support and guidance to synod staff when a synod is managing a crisis.

These people comprise the core membership of the ELCA Response Team:

- Executive, Governance (co-convener)
- Senior Director, Strategic Communications (co-convener)
- General Counsel
- Executive, Synod Relations

Additional people are included in the team as needed to respond to a crisis. The team's work is to discuss and determine a strategy for an ELCA response that has looked at the issue from a variety of perspectives and to inform the audience(s) who need to know.

Following the review of the role and membership of the ELCA Response Team, the Administrative Team decided not to make any changes.

### **CC ACTION [EN BLOC]**

#### **Recommended:**

**To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and affirm the decision of the Administrative Team of the churchwide organization concerning the review of the ELCA Response Team.**

## Update – SAWC Model Constitution

At the November 2022 Church Council meeting, Christian Community and Leadership (CCL) staff reported to the CCL Committee of the Church Council our intentions to update the model constitution for our Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities (SAWCs.) This update is to address concerns from our new start communities and to bring the guiding governing documents up to speed with lived realities. Following that meeting, we consulted with Office of the Secretary staff, including our general counsel, Tom Cunniff. We were surprised to learn that the only requirements of SAWCs within the ELCA Constitution are an adherence to the Confession of Faith (Chapter 2) and the Statement of Purpose (Chapter 4.) With other matters we do not require church council approval to make changes to the SAWC model constitution. The only approval necessary is at the home area (CCL) level. Additionally, these are not constitutions, but bylaws patterned after the ELCA's congregational model constitution.

With this new knowledge, we do not need the approval of the CCL Committee or the full council in order to adopt and implement new bylaws to recommend to our synods for SAWCs. However, we do feel that because this impacts our church so widely that continued conversation and feedback are appropriate. Therefore, we will include updates as they are made and incorporate feedback as received. Below is the current summary.

### High Level Changes Made to SAWC Documents

**Timeline:** There has been an “unwritten timeline” of how quickly SAWCs develop. The initial SAWC grants are three years and the larger narrative around SAWCS is they need to start and organize in three years. This document extends the timeline to 8 to 10 years includes clear decision points and key conversations. The timeline also helps continue moving SAWCs through conversations about what model of ministry is appropriate.

**Metrics:** This document provides direction for SAWCs as well as curious questions that can be used in supervision, visioning, and in formal reviews. The document acknowledges that additional contextual metrics will likely be added anchored in the vision for the SAWC. The goal was to move metrics beyond only worship attendance & money.

**SAWC Bylaws:** These four documents replace the former Model SAWC Constitution that was filed for the majority of SAWCs. These documents were created to be used across the developmental stages of a SAWC. Additionally, because these governing documents are not considered constitutions in the eyes of the ELCA, we changed the name to bylaws to draw a clearer distinction.

For each of the documents, a confession of faith was written that captures the ideas in documents named in the model constitution but the documents are not named. Additionally, a commitment to work for racial justice and renounce white supremacy has been incorporated into the Confession of Faith.

Finally in each document, there is a clear purpose named for a SAWC that includes Word & Sacrament & Service.

- SAWC Bylaws - Early Life
  - Intended for communities just getting started or those beginning without a core group of leaders.
  - This document makes provision for the leadership team of the SAWC to be a synod appointed Steering Team.
  - The participants of the SAWCs have been named and include guests, engaged, committed, and confirmed.
- SAWC Bylaws – Emerging Leaders
  - Intended for communities who have a core group of leaders and it moves decision making locally.

- The document makes provision for the leadership team of the SAWC to be the Local Steering Team.
- With local decisions, it gives parameters for annual meetings including that committed participants have voice, confirmed have vote.
- SAWC Bylaws – Developing
  - This is intended for communities formalizing leadership and beginning to move towards organizing.
  - This document is organized like the model constitution.
  - This document make a provision for the SAWC to have more voice in decisions like the call process.
- SAWC Bylaws – Strategic SAWC
  - These bylaws are intended for a community that is important to the witness of the synod, but will never organize.
  - The purpose is to give more agency to the local community including decisions around real estate and amending bylaws. The call process remains a synod call vote but with significant community input.
  - These bylaws include daggered items that cannot be changed as bylaw changes will be made following the process of congregations.

Employees are responsible for having their work in a satisfactory condition before leaving on vacation and for coordinating with other employees regarding coverage during their absence.

Employees who leave employment with the ELCA will normally be paid for accrued and unused vacation up to the maximum accrual specified above.

#### **6.4. Paid Personal Days**

Three paid personal days are allowed on an annual basis. Persons employed on Jan. 1 or who begin employment with the churchwide organization during January, February, March, or April will be eligible for three personal days for that year. Persons who begin employment during May, June, July, or August will be eligible for two personal days for that year. Persons who begin employment during September, October, or November will be eligible for one personal day that year. All personal days must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. Unused personal days do not accrue and may not be carried forward to the following year. Employees will not be paid for unused personal days upon termination of employment. Personal days will be prorated for part-time regular employees based on the ratio of their regularly scheduled hours to a 40-hour week.

#### **6.5. Paid Holidays**

The Churchwide Office will be closed on the days listed below:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**Maundy Thursday (does not include staff of the Mission Investment Fund)**

Good Friday

**Easter Monday (does not include staff of the Mission Investment Fund)**

Memorial Day

Juneteenth

Independence Day

Labor Day

**Week of Thanksgiving (does not include staff of the Mission Investment Fund)**

**Thanksgiving Day (staff of the Mission Investment Fund)**

**Friday after Thanksgiving Day (staff of the Mission Investment Fund)**

Christmas Eve Day

Christmas Day

Full-time regular employees will receive their regular rate of pay for eight hours for each paid holiday. Part-time regular employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week will receive holiday pay based on the ratio of their regularly scheduled hours to a 40-hour week.

A holiday falling on Saturday will normally be observed on the preceding Friday. A holiday falling on Sunday will normally be observed on the following Monday.

If an employee's religion requires the observance of a holiday other than those listed above and the employee is scheduled to work on that day, appropriate arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis to accommodate the situation.

#### **6.6. Compassionate Leave**

An employee who must be absent because of the death of a member of their immediate family may be allowed a paid absence of up to five working days. The definitions of "immediate family" and "children" in Section 6.19 apply for purposes of this Section 6.6..

**MISSION INVESTMENT FUND  
SUPPLEMENTAL EXECUTIVE RETIREMENT PLAN**

This [Mission Investment Fund](#) Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan (~~the “Plan”~~) is made and entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, ~~2020~~, 2023 ([the “Effective Date”](#)), by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the “Church”).

RECITALS

Effective ~~as of~~ January 1, 2021 (~~the “Effective Date”~~), ~~the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the “Church”) hereby adopts this~~ [adopted the](#) Mission Investment Fund Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan (the “[Prior Plan](#)”) exclusively for the benefit of certain employees of the Church who provide services to the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (“MIF”).

[Effective as of the Effective Date, the Church hereby amends and restates the Prior Plan into this Mission Investment Fund Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan \(the “Plan”\).](#)

The terms of this Plan are intended to be exempt from Section 457(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”), pursuant to Code Section 457(e)(11). The benefits provided under the terms of this Plan are intended to constitute a short-term deferral, within the meaning of Subsection (b)(4) of Treasury Regulation Section 1.409A-1. The Plan is intended to be an unfunded arrangement maintained by the Church for members of a select group of management or highly compensated employees, ~~as set forth in Department of Labor Regulations Section 2520.104-23~~, performing services for the MIF, [and is intended to constitute a “church plan,” as defined in Section 3\(33\) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended \(“ERISA”\).](#)

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**SECTION 1**  
**DEFINITIONS**

Whenever used in the Plan, the following terms shall have the meanings set forth below and, when such meaning is intended, the initial letter of the word is capitalized. Capitalized words which are not defined herein have the meaning set forth in the Participant's Participation Agreement.

1.1 "Accrued Benefit" means the benefit to which the Participant is entitled at any given time and which is defined in the Participant's Participation Agreement.

1.2 "Additional Projected Life Expectancy" shall have the meaning set forth in the Participant's Participation Agreement, if applicable.

~~1.3~~ "Administrator" ~~The means the Church is the Administrator of the Plan.~~ However, the Church, acting through its Church Council, has delegated authority over administration of this Plan to the Presiding Bishop. The Presiding Bishop will act on behalf of the Church as the Administrator of the Plan and to oversee the day-to-day administration of the Plan in accordance with such authority, except to the extent otherwise delegated as described herein.

~~1.3~~ "Base Salary" ~~means the annual base compensation payable to the Participant by the Church for the calendar year of death or Separation from Service, as applicable. Base Salary shall be determined before any reduction for deferrals or contributions by the Participant with respect to any Church sponsored benefit plan (including any qualified retirement plan or cafeteria plan).~~

1.4 "Beneficiary" means the person the Participant has designated in the most recent designation filed with the MIF; provided, that if no designated person is alive and no successor Beneficiary has been designated and is alive, the term "Beneficiary" shall mean (a) the spouse of the deceased Participant; (b) if no spouse is alive, the surviving children of the deceased Participant; or (c) if no children are alive, the legal representative of the deceased Participant's estate.

1.5 "Benefit Payment Date" has the meaning set forth in the Participant's Participation Agreement.

1.6 "Change in Control" has the meaning set forth in the Participant's Participation Agreement.

1.7 "Church" means the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

1.8 "Committee" ~~With means, with~~ respect to the participation ~~by~~ and any benefits under the Plan for the President/~~CEO and Chief Executive Officer~~ of the MIF, the ~~Committee will be the~~ Presiding Bishop ~~With; and, with~~ respect to all other Participants, the ~~Committee will be the~~ President/~~CEO and Chief Executive Officer~~ of the MIF and any other individual designated as a member of the Committee by the Presiding Bishop.

1.9 "Deemed Account" means the bookkeeping account maintained on behalf of the Participant, if applicable, which reflects the sum of amounts credited pursuant to Section 2 of this Plan, as reduced by any payments previously made to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary under this Plan (except that in no event shall any offset to an Accrued Benefit for prior distributions under this Plan serve to duplicate any reduction already reflected in the Deemed Account for such prior distributions).

1.10 “Deemed Earnings” means the amount, determined in the discretion of the Committee, which is credited from time to time to the Participant’s Deemed Account, if applicable. If the value of the Participant’s Deemed Account is used by the Committee in its discretion to purchase an investment, the Committee may take the deemed earnings and losses on such investment into consideration in determining “Deemed Earnings.” If the amount credited is not attributable to an actual investment, “Deemed Earnings” shall not exceed a reasonable rate of interest, determined in accordance with Treasury Regulation Section 31.3121(v)(2)-1(d)(2)(i)(C).

1.11 “Defined Compensation” means the annual base compensation (excluding benefits (and any imputed income thereon), expenses, amounts paid under this Plan, variable pay, bonuses, any reportable portion of the Participant’s car allowance, any non-cash compensation, and payments for unused paid time off) payable to the Participant by the Church for the calendar year in which the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable. For purposes of this Plan, “annual base compensation” shall include any minister’s housing allowance described in Section 107 of the Code. Defined Compensation shall be determined before any reduction for deferrals or contributions by the Participant with respect to any Church sponsored benefit plan (including any qualified retirement plan or cafeteria plan).

~~4.11~~1.12 “Disability” and “Disabled” ~~—A Participant will be considered Disabled or to have a Disability if means~~ the Participant is disabled and eligible for long-term disability benefits under the Employer’s Long-Term Disability Plan, as from time to time in effect.

~~4.12~~1.13 “Final Benefit Payment Date” has the meaning set forth in the Participant’s Participation Agreement.

~~4.13~~1.14 “For Cause” means the Participant: (a) fails to materially perform the duties assigned to the Participant; (b) engages in conduct that materially impairs the interests of the MIF; (c) materially breaches the terms of any employment agreement between the Participant and the Church or the MIF; (d) commits a felony of any nature, commits any crime acting in the Participant’s capacity as an officer of the MIF, or commits any crime that reflects adversely on the Church or the MIF; (e) fails to adhere to any written policies of the Church or the MIF of which the Participant has reasonable notice; (f) engages in a material act of dishonesty, disloyalty, or fraud with respect to the MIF, auditors, or any of the MIF vendors, contributors, beneficiaries, or employees; (g) grossly mismanages the financial concerns of the MIF; (h) is determined to have caused damage to the Church or the MIF as a result of the Participant’s actions or reputation in the community; (i) loses any required bond; or (j) engages in conduct which is in violation of the Participant’s common law duty of loyalty or other fiduciary duty to the Church or the MIF. Whether an event constituting “For Cause” exists shall be determined in the discretion of the Administrator.

~~4.14~~1.15 “Good Reason” means the Participant’s Separation from Service following the initial existence of one or more of the following conditions arising without the Participant’s consent:

- (a) a material diminution in the Participant’s base compensation;
- (b) a material diminution in the Participant’s authority, duties, or responsibilities;
- (c) a material diminution in the authority, duties, or responsibilities of the supervisor to whom the Participant is required to report or, for a Participant who reports jointly to the Board of Trustees of the MIF and the Presiding Bishop, a requirement that the Participant report to another employee instead of reporting directly to the Board of Trustees of the MIF or the

Presiding Bishop;

(d) a material diminution in the percentage of the budget over which the Participant retains authority; or

(e) a material change in the geographic location at which the Participant must perform services.

Within 60 days following the initial existence of a condition described in (a) through (e) above, the Participant must provide written notice to the Church of the existence of the condition, and the Church must fail to remedy the condition within 30 days of receipt of such notice (or, if such condition is not susceptible to cure within such 30-day period, the Church has not taken all reasonable steps to cure the condition). Within 30 days of the end of the 30-day cure period, the Participant must Separate from Service with the Church. If the Participant does not Separate from Service with the Church within such 30-day period, the Participant will not have incurred a Separation from Service for Good Reason.

~~4.15~~4.16 “Highest Average Total Compensation” means the annual average of the Defined Compensation and variable (annual incentive) compensation paid to the Participant by the Church during the Participant’s five (5) full consecutive calendar years of employment (or, if less than five, the number of consecutive years during any part of which the Participant was employed) with the Church during which the Participant’s annual compensation was ~~the greatest. For purposes of this Plan, “compensation” shall include any minister’s housing allowance described in Section 107 of the Code and shall exclude benefits, expenses, amounts paid under this Plan, any reportable portion of the Participant’s car allowance, and payments for unused paid time off, and~~greatest. Defined Compensation and variable (annual incentive) compensation shall be determined before any reduction for deferrals or contributions by the Participant with respect to any Church or MIF sponsored benefit plan (including any qualified retirement plan or cafeteria plan).

~~4.16~~4.17 “Life Expectancy Table” means the life expectancy table used by the Social Security Administration to calculate an individual’s life expectancy pursuant to the calculator located at [ssa.gov/OACT/population/longevity.html](https://ssa.gov/OACT/population/longevity.html) at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable, or, if the calculator is not in existence at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable, the life expectancy table used by the Social Security Administration to determine projected life expectancies at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable.

~~4.17~~4.18 “MIF” means the Mission Investment Fund of the Church.

~~4.18~~4.19 “Offsets” shall mean:

(a) any payments previously made or otherwise payable to the Participant or the Participant’s Beneficiary under this Plan,

(b) the Participant’s vested account balance attributable to contributions by the Church or the MIF (excluding any contributions made on behalf of the Participant based on the Participant’s election to defer a portion of the Participant’s compensation) under any tax-qualified or non-tax-qualified deferred compensation arrangement (other than this Plan) sponsored by the Church or the MIF, including, but not limited to, any 401(k) or 403(b) plan, and the present value at the interest rate and the mortality table used in any tax-qualified or non-tax-qualified defined benefit retirement plan (as applicable) sponsored by the Church or the MIF for calculating lump sum distributions of any vested accrued benefit under the plan (all such plans collectively referred

to as the “Deferred Compensation Arrangements”),

(c) any distributions previously paid to the Participant under the Deferred Compensation Arrangements which are attributable to contributions by the Church or the MIF (excluding any contributions made on behalf of the Participant based on the Participant’s election to defer a portion of the Participant’s compensation), and

(d) the Participant’s Projected Social Security Benefit, assuming commencement at Social Security Retirement Age and no further cost of living adjustments beyond Social Security Retirement Age.

All Offsets (other than the Projected Social Security Benefit) will be determined as of the date the Accrued Benefit becomes payable.

~~1.19~~1.20 “Participant” means members of a select group of management or highly compensated Church employees, ~~as set forth in Department of Labor Regulations Section 2520.104-23, performing performing at least fifty percent (50%) of their working~~ services for the MIF, designated as eligible to participate in the Plan and notified of selection by receiving a Participation Agreement, including the President and ~~CEO of~~Chief Executive Officer of the MIF and any other Church employee performing ~~at least fifty percent (50%) of their working~~ services for ~~the~~ MIF selected by the President and ~~CEO of MIF that meet the Department~~Chief Executive Officer of ~~Labor Regulations criteria~~the MIF.

~~1.20~~1.21 “Participation Agreement” means the written agreement evidencing the Participant’s participation in the Plan ~~and the terms and conditions of such participation, which Participation Agreement shall be executed by the Participant and the Administrator.~~ Participation Agreements ~~shall may~~, in the discretion of the Administrator, ~~containset forth~~ terms and conditions ~~consistentthat supplement, but do not conflict~~ with the terms and conditions of the Plan; ~~provided, however, that any term or condition of a Participation Agreement that would adversely affect the Plan’s compliance with applicable law shall be null and void.~~

~~1.21~~1.22 “Plan” means this Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan, as may be amended from time to time.

1.23 “Presiding Bishop” means the individual determined to be the presiding bishop in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Church.

1.24 “Projected Social Security Benefit” ~~means the product of~~has the meaning set forth in the Participant’s Participation Agreement, as applicable.

~~(i) the Participant’s projected monthly Social Security benefit determined pursuant to the “Social Security Quick Calculator” (expressed in future (inflated) dollars at the Participant’s Social Security Retirement Age) located at <http://ssa.gov/OACT/quickcalc/>, or, if that website is not in existence at the time that the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable, the Participant’s projected monthly Social Security benefit as determined by the Social Security Administration at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable (expressed in future (inflated) dollars at the Participant’s Social Security Retirement Age), multiplied by~~

~~(ii) 12, multiplied by~~

~~the Participant’s additional projected life expectancy (in years and fractions thereof) at Social~~

~~Security Retirement Age pursuant to the Life Expectancy Table.~~

1.25 “Separation from Service” or “Separate from Service” means separation of the Participant from the service of the Church within the meaning of Treasury Regulation Section 1.409A-1(h).

1.26 “Social Security Retirement Age” means the age upon which the Participant becomes entitled to begin receiving full (normal) Social Security retirement benefits pursuant to the “Retirement Planner Chart” located at <https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/agereduction.html> at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable, or, if the Retirement Planner Chart is not in existence at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable, the Social Security Act and applicable federal regulations.

## **SECTION 2** **CREDITING OF DEEMED ACCOUNT**

2.1 The Participant’s Deemed Account shall be credited with a principal amount as set forth in the Participation Agreement.

2.2 The Participant’s Deemed Account shall be credited with Deemed Earnings as may be determined from time to time in the discretion of the Committee.

## **SECTION 3-** **FORFEITURE OF ACCRUED BENEFIT**

3.1 In the event the Participant Separates from Service with the Church for any reason other than death, Disability, or an event described in Section 4.2 or 4.3 of this Plan prior to a Benefit Payment Date, the Participant’s unpaid Accrued Benefit shall be forfeited, and no further payment shall be made under this Plan to the Participant or the Participant’s Beneficiary.

3.2 If the Participant ceases providing services to the MIF due to a transfer from the MIF to another position within the Church, the Participant’s unpaid Accrued Benefit shall be forfeited, and no further payment shall be made under this Plan to the Participant or the Participant’s Beneficiary.

## **SECTION 4-** **PAYMENT OF BENEFIT**

4.1 Subject to Section 3 of this Plan, if the Participant is serving as an employee of the Church upon the attainment of any Benefit Payment Date, as set forth in the Participant’s Participation Agreement, the Participant’s Accrued Benefit shall be payable pursuant to Section 7 below, with payment made ~~within thirty (30) days~~ as soon as practicable following the Benefit Payment Date.

4.2 Subject to Section 3 of this Plan and notwithstanding anything in this Plan to the contrary, in the event a Change in Control occurs, and within the 24-month period following the date of the Change in Control, the Participant:

- (a) Separates from Service for Good Reason, or
- (b) Separates from Service due to a termination by the Church other than For Cause,

on a date (other than a Benefit Payment Date) which occurs before the Final Benefit Payment Date, the Participant's Accrued Benefit shall be payable as set forth in Section 7 below within ~~30~~60 days following the date on which the Participant Separates from Service.

4.3 Subject to Section 3 of this Plan and notwithstanding anything in this Plan to the contrary, in the event the Participant:

- (a) Separates from Service for Good Reason, or
- (b) Separates from Service due to a termination by the Church other than For Cause,

on a date (other than a Benefit Payment Date) which occurs before the Final Benefit Payment Date and at a time other than within the 24-month period set forth in Section 4.2 of the Plan following a Change in Control, the Participant's Accrued Benefit shall be payable as set forth in Section 7 below within ~~30~~60 days following the date on which the Participant Separates from Service.

4.4 The benefit to which the Participant may become entitled under this Plan will not be subject to reduction following the occurrence of a Change in Control.

## **SECTION 5** **DEATH BENEFIT**

5.1 Subject to Section 3 of this Plan, upon the death of the Participant prior to the Final Benefit Payment Date, the Church shall pay the Accrued Benefit to the Participant's Beneficiary pursuant to Section 7 below within ~~30~~60 days of the Participant's death, provided the Participant is serving as an employee of the Church on the date of death.

5.2 If, subsequent to the death of the Participant, the Participant's Beneficiary dies while entitled to receive benefits under this Plan and no other Beneficiary listed under Subsection (a) or (b) of Section 1.4 of this Plan is alive, the balance of the Accrued Benefit to which the Participant was entitled which has not been distributed pursuant to this Plan shall be paid by the Church to the personal representative of the deceased Beneficiary's estate rather than the personal representative of the deceased Participant's estate, within 30 days of the Beneficiary's death.

## **SECTION 6** **DISABILITY**

Subject to Section 3 of this Plan, if the Participant Separates from Service as a result of a Disability prior to the Final Benefit Payment Date, the Church shall pay the Participant the Accrued Benefit pursuant to Section 7 below within ~~30~~60 days of the Participant's Separation from Service.

## **SECTION 7** **FORM OF PAYMENT; RELEASE OF CLAIMS**

~~The payment of an Accrued Benefit~~7.1 Form of Payment. Subject to the terms and conditions of the Plan and any Participation Agreement, including Section 7.2 below, the payment of an amount to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary shall be in the form of a lump sum to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary, as applicable.

7.2 Release of Claims. Notwithstanding anything in this Plan or any Participation Agreement to the contrary, the Church shall not be obligated to make any payment to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary pursuant to Section 4.2, 4.3, 5, or 6 of this Agreement unless the Participant (or the Participant's Beneficiary, as applicable) has timely executed and delivered to the Church (and not revoked) a separation agreement, which will include a general waiver and release of all claims against the Church and the MIF, including a release of claims under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended ("ADEA"), in a form satisfactory to the Church (the "Release"), no later than the period specified in the Release. The Participant (or the Participant's Beneficiary) acknowledges and agrees that payment hereunder is adequate and valuable consideration for the waiver of any claims under the ADEA and is a payment to which the Participant (or the Participant's Beneficiary) would not otherwise be entitled under any plan or program of the Church absent the agreement to waive any and all claims under the ADEA. Payment shall be made as soon as practicable following the effective date of the Release. If any payment subject to Code Section 409A is contingent on the delivery of the Release and could occur in either of two calendar years, the payment will occur in the later year.

## **SECTION 8** **LIMITATION OF RIGHTS**

Neither this Plan nor participation in this Plan shall give the Participant or other person any right or claim except to the extent that the right is specifically fixed under the terms of this Plan. The establishment of this Plan shall not be considered an employment contract with the Participant and shall not be construed to give the Participant a right to continued employment with the Church or continued service to MIF or to interfere with the right of the Church to terminate the Participant's employment.

## **SECTION 9** **INTERPRETATION OF PLAN**

Any determinations, approvals, or actions that are performed or taken by the Presiding Bishop, the Administrator, the Committee, the MIF, or the Church shall be deemed to be performed in the sole discretion of such entity. The Administrator retains the right to determine, at its discretion, eligibility for benefits and to construe, at its discretion, all terms of this Plan and all facts surrounding claims for benefits under this Plan and to determine questions arising in the administration, interpretation, and application of this Plan, with the determination and construction being final and binding; accordingly, benefits under this Plan shall be paid only if the Administrator decides in its discretion that an applicant is entitled to benefits.

## **SECTION 10** **CLAIMS PROCEDURES**

10.1 The claims procedures of this Section 10 of this Plan, including the rules related to requesting a review of a denied claim, must be exhausted prior to initiating any legal action.

10.2 (a) Any person who believes that he or she is entitled to a benefit under this Plan shall have the right to file with the Administrator a written notice of claim for the benefit. The decision on the claim shall be made by an agent designated by the Administrator to review and issue a determination on the claim. In the event the claim is denied, a notice of denial shall be furnished to the claimant within 90 days after the notice is filed (and ~~under special circumstances as set forth in Department of Labor Regulation Section 2560.503-1(f)(1) 180 days~~), in the event the Administrator needs more time to review the claim, 180 days. Any delay in arriving at a decision shall not adversely affect benefits payable under a granted claim and the failure to pay interest on the value of the Participant's Deemed Account during the processing of a claim shall not be

deemed to be an adverse effect attributable to delay.

- (b) The written notice of denial shall set forth:
  - (1) the specific reason for the denial;
  - (2) specific reference to the pertinent Plan provisions on which the denial is based;
  - (3) a description of any additional material or information necessary for the claimant to perfect the claim and an explanation of why the material or information is necessary; and
  - (4) an explanation of this Plan's claim review procedure set forth in Plan Section 10.3, applicable time limits, and a statement of the claimant's right to bring a civil action ~~under Section 502(a) of ERISA~~ following an adverse benefit determination on review.

10.3 (a) Any person who makes a claim that is denied under Plan Section 10.2 shall have the right to appeal the denial of his or her claim to the Administrator for a full and fair review at any time within 60 days after the claimant receives written notice of the denial. In the event of an appeal, the Administrator shall afford the claimant or his or her duly authorized representative the opportunity:

- (1) to review documents relevant to the claim and be provided, upon request and free of charge, access to all documents relevant to the claim;
- (2) to submit issues and comments in writing to the Administrator; and
- (3) to discuss such documents and issues with the Administrator.

(b) On review, the Administrator shall take into account all comments, documents, records, and other information submitted by the claimant relating to the claim, without regard to whether such information was submitted or considered in the initial benefit determination.

(c) The final decision of the Administrator shall be made not later than 60 days after its receipt from the claimant of a request for review, unless special circumstances, such as the need to hold a hearing, require an extension of time for processing, in which case a decision shall be made as soon as possible but not later than 120 days after receipt of the request for review and only after appropriate notice to the claimant of the extension is given before the end of the initial 60-day period.

- (d) The decision on review shall be made in writing and shall set forth:
  - (1) the specific reason(s) for the decision;
  - (2) the specific references to Plan provisions on which any adverse determination is based;
  - (3) a description of the claimant's right to receive, upon request and free of

charge, reasonable access to, and copies of, all documents, records, and other information relevant to the claim; and

(4) a statement of the claimant's right to bring an action ~~under Section 502(a) of ERISA~~ following an adverse benefit determination on review.

10.4 Before legal action may be brought against the Church or the MIF, all claims procedures in this Section 10 of this Plan must be exhausted. No legal action may be commenced against the Church or the MIF more than 90 days after the Administrator's decision on review pursuant to Plan Section 10.3.

## **SECTION 11** **LIMITATION OF ASSIGNMENT AND PAYMENTS TO LEGALLY INCOMPETENT** **DISTRIBUTE**

11.1 No benefit which is payable under this Plan to any person will be subject in any manner to anticipation, alienation, sale, transfer, assignment, pledge, encumbrance, or charge, and any attempt to anticipate, alienate, sell, transfer, assign, pledge, encumber, charge, or otherwise dispose of the same will be void; and no benefit will in any manner be subject to the debts, contracts, liabilities, engagements, or torts of any person, nor will it be subject to attachment or legal process for, or against, the person, and the same will not be recognized under this Plan, except to such extent as may be required by law.

11.2 If any person who is entitled to any benefit under this Plan becomes bankrupt or attempts to anticipate, alienate, sell, transfer, assign, pledge, encumber, charge, or otherwise dispose of his or her benefit under this Plan, then the payment of the benefit in the event the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary is entitled to payment will, in the discretion of the Administrator, cease and terminate and in that event the payor will hold or apply the payment for the benefit of the person, his or her spouse, children, other dependents, or any of them in any manner and proportion as the Administrator determines.

11.3 Whenever any benefit which is payable under this Plan is to be paid to or for the benefit of any person who is then a minor or determined to be incompetent by qualified medical advice, the payor need not require the appointment of a guardian or custodian, but will be authorized to cause the payment to be made to the person having custody of the minor or incompetent, or to cause the payment to be made to the minor or incompetent without the intervention of a guardian or custodian, or to cause the payment to be made to a legal guardian or custodian of the minor or incompetent if one has been appointed or to cause the payment to be used for the benefit of the minor or incompetent.

## **SECTION 12** **AMENDMENT AND TERMINATION**

12.1 Unless the Administrator and the Participant mutually agree to extend the term of this Plan, all obligations to pay benefits under this Plan shall terminate immediately following the earliest of (a) payment of the Accrued Benefit on the Final Benefit Payment Date, (b) payment of the Accrued Benefit due upon the Participant's Separation from Service or death, ~~or~~ (c) if no Accrued Benefit is payable to the Participant, the Participant's Separation from Service, or (d) the date this Plan is terminated in accordance with Section 12.2 below.

12.2 The Administrator shall review this Plan on a regular basis and in the event that the Participant continues employment beyond the Final Benefit Payment Date, changes status, or changes responsibilities. The Church and the Participant may mutually agree at any time by written instrument to modify, suspend, amend, withdraw, or terminate this Plan in whole or in part. The Church may amend

this Plan without the Participant's consent to the extent necessary or appropriate to comply with applicable law or regulation.

### **SECTION 13** **FUNDING**

13.1 All benefits under this Plan shall be paid directly from the general funds of the Church or the MIF, and no special or separate fund shall be established and no other segregation of assets shall be made to assure payment. Neither the Participant nor the Participant's Beneficiary shall have any right, title, or interest whatsoever in or to any investments which the Church or the MIF may make to aid it in meeting its obligations hereunder. Nothing contained in this Plan, and no action taken pursuant to its provisions, shall create or be construed to create a trust of any kind, or a fiduciary relationship, between the Church or the MIF and the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary. [Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Church or the MIF may establish a "rabbi" grantor trust with respect to its obligations under this Plan.](#)

13.2 To the extent that any person acquires a right to receive payments hereunder, such rights shall be no greater than the right of an unsecured creditor of the Church or the MIF. Any investment acquired by the Church or the MIF in connection with the liabilities assumed hereunder shall not be deemed to be held in trust for the benefit of the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary or to be considered security for the performance of the obligations of the Church or the MIF, but shall be, and remain, as to this Plan, a general, unpledged, unrestricted asset of the Church or the MIF.

### **SECTION 14** **MISCELLANEOUS**

14.1 If the Church or the MIF chooses, in its discretion, to purchase a life insurance policy or policies to assist in the funding of any obligations under this Plan, or to purchase a "key ~~man~~ person" life insurance policy or policies on the life of the Participant, the Participant may, within ~~45~~60 days of a Separation from Service, purchase the life insurance policy or policies from the Church or the MIF, assuming the terms of the insurance policy or policies allow it (or them) to be sold to the Participant, for the greater of the premiums paid by the Church or the MIF on the life insurance policy or policies or the cash surrender value of the life insurance policy or policies on the date of the Participant's Separation from Service. [Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event the key person life insurance policy or policies provide for term life insurance, the Church or the MIF may transfer the policy or policies to the Participant upon Separation from Service without cost, assuming the terms of the insurance policy or policies allow it \(or them\) to be transferred to the Participant.](#)

14.2 This Plan shall be binding upon any successor of the Church, and any successor shall be deemed substituted for the Church under the terms of this Plan. As used in this Plan, the term "successor" shall include any person, firm, corporation, or other business entity which at any time, whether by merger, purchase, or otherwise, acquires all or substantially all of the assets or the mission of the Church.

14.3 The Church, at its discretion, may recover, or "claw back," any amounts previously paid pursuant to this Plan if, following payment to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary of all or any part of the Accrued Benefit, the [Presiding](#) Bishop subsequently becomes aware that circumstances existed on the date of payment that could reasonably have been grounds for the Church to have Separated the Participant from Service For Cause. The exercise of the clawback and repayment provisions of this Section is subject to the [Church Presiding Bishop \(or his or her delegate\)](#) providing notice of exercise within ninety (90) days of the [Presiding](#) Bishop becoming aware of the circumstances that could reasonably have been grounds for the Participant's Separation from Service For Cause. In addition,

notice of the Church's demand for repayment must be given no later than twenty-four (24) months following payment of the Accrued Benefit.

14.4 No employee of the Church or the MIF, member of the Church Council or the Board of Trustees of the MIF, or member of any committees thereof shall be subject to any liability with respect to his or her duties under this Plan unless the person acts fraudulently or in bad faith. To the extent permitted by law and the Church's governing documents, the Church shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless any employee of the Church or the MIF, each member of the Church Council or the Board of Trustees of the MIF, and any committees thereof, and any other officer or agent of the Church or the MIF with duties under this Plan, who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party, to any threatened, pending, or completed proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, by reason of the person performing his or her duties under this Plan.

14.5 Neither the Church nor the MIF guarantees, promises, or implies any particular tax consequences as a result of the Participant participating in this Plan. It shall be the sole obligation of the Participant, or the Participant's Beneficiary, to pay any and all taxes imposed on the Participant (including any excise taxes, fees, or penalties) due now or in the future on benefits received under this Plan, whether or not the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary has received a cash benefit under this Plan at the time the taxes become due. In the event of regulatory changes impacting the tax treatment of this Plan or of benefits under this Plan, or in the event that the Internal Revenue Service reviews this Plan for compliance with or exception from applicable tax laws, the Administrator will assist the Participant in obtaining tax counsel as it shall determine, in its discretion, is necessary and appropriate.

14.6 Nothing contained herein shall be deemed to exclude the Participant from any pension, defined contribution, insurance, health, vacation, sick leave, or other benefit to which the Participant might be, or might become, entitled to as a result of the Participant's relationship with the Church or the MIF.

14.7 This Plan shall be subject to and construed under the laws of the State of Minnesota, to the extent Minnesota law is not preempted by federal law.

## **SECTION 15**

### **COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW**

15.1 Amounts payable under this Plan are intended to comply with the short term deferral exception from Code Section 409A, specified in Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-1(b)(4) (or any successor provision), and shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the applicable exception. To the extent that any amounts payable in accordance with this Plan are subject to Code Section 409A, or Code Section 457(f), this Plan shall be interpreted and administered in such a way as to comply with Code Section 409A to the maximum extent possible. In the event this Plan becomes subject to Code Section 409A and the applicable guidance issued thereunder and fails to satisfy the short-term deferral exception to the application of Code Section 409A (as defined in Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-1(b)(4)), and if the Church consummates a sale, transfer, merger, or other transaction of the Church wherein the surviving entity has any stock which is publicly traded on an established securities market or otherwise (within the meaning of Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-1(i)(1)), then the rules regarding specified employees (as defined in Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-1(i)) in Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-3(i)(2) shall apply.

15.2 This Plan is intended to constitute a "church plan," as defined in Section 3(33) of ERISA. In the event the Plan fails to qualify as a church plan, this Plan shall be interpreted and administered in such a way as to comply with ERISA to the maximum extent possible.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Church has caused this [indenturePlan](#) to be executed as of the day and year first above written.

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Elizabeth Eaton

Title: Presiding Bishop

**MISSION INVESTMENT FUND  
SUPPLEMENTAL EXECUTIVE RETIREMENT PLAN**

This Mission Investment Fund Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan is made and entered into this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023 (the “Effective Date”), by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the “Church”).

RECITALS

Effective January 1, 2021, the Church adopted the Mission Investment Fund Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan (the “Prior Plan”) exclusively for the benefit of certain employees of the Church who provide services to the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (“MIF”).

Effective as of the Effective Date, the Church hereby amends and restates the Prior Plan into this Mission Investment Fund Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan (the “Plan”).

The terms of this Plan are intended to be exempt from Section 457(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”), pursuant to Code Section 457(e)(11). The benefits provided under the terms of this Plan are intended to constitute a short-term deferral, within the meaning of Subsection (b)(4) of Treasury Regulation Section 1.409A-1. The Plan is intended to be an unfunded arrangement maintained by the Church for members of a select group of management or highly compensated employees performing services for the MIF, and is intended to constitute a “church plan,” as defined in Section 3(33) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended (“ERISA”).

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**SECTION 1**  
**DEFINITIONS**

Whenever used in the Plan, the following terms shall have the meanings set forth below and, when such meaning is intended, the initial letter of the word is capitalized. Capitalized words which are not defined herein have the meaning set forth in the Participant's Participation Agreement.

1.1 "Accrued Benefit" means the benefit to which the Participant is entitled at any given time and which is defined in the Participant's Participation Agreement.

1.2 "Additional Projected Life Expectancy" shall have the meaning set forth in the Participant's Participation Agreement, if applicable.

1.3 "Administrator" means the Church. However, the Church, acting through its Church Council, has delegated authority over administration of this Plan to the Presiding Bishop. The Presiding Bishop will act on behalf of the Church as the Administrator of the Plan and to oversee the day-to-day administration of the Plan in accordance with such authority, except to the extent otherwise delegated as described herein.

1.4 "Beneficiary" means the person the Participant has designated in the most recent designation filed with the MIF; provided, that if no designated person is alive and no successor Beneficiary has been designated and is alive, the term "Beneficiary" shall mean (a) the spouse of the deceased Participant; (b) if no spouse is alive, the surviving children of the deceased Participant; or (c) if no children are alive, the legal representative of the deceased Participant's estate.

1.5 "Benefit Payment Date" has the meaning set forth in the Participant's Participation Agreement.

1.6 "Change in Control" has the meaning set forth in the Participant's Participation Agreement.

1.7 "Church" means the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

1.8 "Committee" means, with respect to the participation by and any benefits under the Plan for the President and Chief Executive Officer of the MIF, the Presiding Bishop; and, with respect to all other Participants, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the MIF and any other individual designated as a member of the Committee by the Presiding Bishop.

1.9 "Deemed Account" means the bookkeeping account maintained on behalf of the Participant, if applicable, which reflects the sum of amounts credited pursuant to Section 2 of this Plan, as reduced by any payments previously made to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary under this Plan (except that in no event shall any offset to an Accrued Benefit for prior distributions under this Plan serve to duplicate any reduction already reflected in the Deemed Account for such prior distributions).

1.10 "Deemed Earnings" means the amount, determined in the discretion of the Committee, which is credited from time to time to the Participant's Deemed Account, if applicable. If the value of the Participant's Deemed Account is used by the Committee in its discretion to purchase an investment, the Committee may take the deemed earnings and losses on such investment into consideration in determining "Deemed Earnings." If the amount credited is not attributable to an actual investment, "Deemed

Earnings” shall not exceed a reasonable rate of interest, determined in accordance with Treasury Regulation Section 31.3121(v)(2)-1(d)(2)(i)(C).

1.11 “Defined Compensation” means the annual base compensation (excluding benefits (and any imputed income thereon), expenses, amounts paid under this Plan, variable pay, bonuses, any reportable portion of the Participant’s car allowance, any non-cash compensation, and payments for unused paid time off) payable to the Participant by the Church for the calendar year in which the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable. For purposes of this Plan, “annual base compensation” shall include any minister’s housing allowance described in Section 107 of the Code. Defined Compensation shall be determined before any reduction for deferrals or contributions by the Participant with respect to any Church sponsored benefit plan (including any qualified retirement plan or cafeteria plan).

1.12 “Disability” and “Disabled” means the Participant is disabled and eligible for long-term disability benefits under the Employer’s Long-Term Disability Plan, as from time to time in effect.

1.13 “Final Benefit Payment Date” has the meaning set forth in the Participant’s Participation Agreement.

1.14 “For Cause” means the Participant: (a) fails to materially perform the duties assigned to the Participant; (b) engages in conduct that materially impairs the interests of the MIF; (c) materially breaches the terms of any employment agreement between the Participant and the Church or the MIF; (d) commits a felony of any nature, commits any crime acting in the Participant’s capacity as an officer of the MIF, or commits any crime that reflects adversely on the Church or the MIF; (e) fails to adhere to any written policies of the Church or the MIF of which the Participant has reasonable notice; (f) engages in a material act of dishonesty, disloyalty, or fraud with respect to the MIF, auditors, or any of the MIF vendors, contributors, beneficiaries, or employees; (g) grossly mismanages the financial concerns of the MIF; (h) is determined to have caused damage to the Church or the MIF as a result of the Participant’s actions or reputation in the community; (i) loses any required bond; or (j) engages in conduct which is in violation of the Participant’s common law duty of loyalty or other fiduciary duty to the Church or the MIF. Whether an event constituting “For Cause” exists shall be determined in the discretion of the Administrator.

1.15 “Good Reason” means the Participant’s Separation from Service following the initial existence of one or more of the following conditions arising without the Participant’s consent:

- (a) a material diminution in the Participant’s base compensation;
- (b) a material diminution in the Participant’s authority, duties, or responsibilities;
- (c) a material diminution in the authority, duties, or responsibilities of the supervisor to whom the Participant is required to report or, for a Participant who reports jointly to the Board of Trustees of the MIF and the Presiding Bishop, a requirement that the Participant report to another employee instead of reporting directly to the Board of Trustees of the MIF or the Presiding Bishop;
- (d) a material diminution in the percentage of the budget over which the Participant retains authority; or
- (e) a material change in the geographic location at which the Participant must perform services.

Within 60 days following the initial existence of a condition described in (a) through (e) above, the Participant must provide written notice to the Church of the existence of the condition, and the Church must fail to remedy the condition within 30 days of receipt of such notice (or, if such condition is not susceptible to cure within such 30-day period, the Church has not taken all reasonable steps to cure the condition). Within 30 days of the end of the 30-day cure period, the Participant must Separate from Service with the Church. If the Participant does not Separate from Service with the Church within such 30-day period, the Participant will not have incurred a Separation from Service for Good Reason.

1.16 “Highest Average Total Compensation” means the annual average of the Defined Compensation and variable (annual incentive) compensation paid to the Participant by the Church during the Participant’s five (5) full consecutive calendar years of employment (or, if less than five, the number of consecutive years during any part of which the Participant was employed) with the Church during which the Participant’s annual compensation was greatest. Defined Compensation and variable (annual incentive) compensation shall be determined before any reduction for deferrals or contributions by the Participant with respect to any Church or MIF sponsored benefit plan (including any qualified retirement plan or cafeteria plan).

1.17 “Life Expectancy Table” means the life expectancy table used by the Social Security Administration to calculate an individual’s life expectancy pursuant to the calculator located at [ssa.gov/OACT/population/longevity.html](https://ssa.gov/OACT/population/longevity.html) at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable, or, if the calculator is not in existence at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable, the life expectancy table used by the Social Security Administration to determine projected life expectancies at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable.

1.18 “MIF” means the Mission Investment Fund of the Church.

1.19 “Offsets” shall mean:

(a) any payments previously made or otherwise payable to the Participant or the Participant’s Beneficiary under this Plan,

(b) the Participant’s vested account balance attributable to contributions by the Church or the MIF (excluding any contributions made on behalf of the Participant based on the Participant’s election to defer a portion of the Participant’s compensation) under any tax-qualified or non-tax-qualified deferred compensation arrangement (other than this Plan) sponsored by the Church or the MIF, including, but not limited to, any 401(k) or 403(b) plan, and the present value at the interest rate and the mortality table used in any tax-qualified or non-tax-qualified defined benefit retirement plan (as applicable) sponsored by the Church or the MIF for calculating lump sum distributions of any vested accrued benefit under the plan (all such plans collectively referred to as the “Deferred Compensation Arrangements”),

(c) any distributions previously paid to the Participant under the Deferred Compensation Arrangements which are attributable to contributions by the Church or the MIF (excluding any contributions made on behalf of the Participant based on the Participant’s election to defer a portion of the Participant’s compensation), and

(d) the Participant’s Projected Social Security Benefit, assuming commencement at Social Security Retirement Age and no further cost of living adjustments beyond Social Security Retirement Age.

All Offsets (other than the Projected Social Security Benefit) will be determined as of the date the Accrued Benefit becomes payable.

1.20 “Participant” means members of a select group of management or highly compensated Church employees performing at least fifty percent (50%) of their working services for the MIF, designated as eligible to participate in the Plan and notified of selection by receiving a Participation Agreement, including the President and Chief Executive Officer of the MIF and any other Church employee performing at least fifty percent (50%) of their working services for the MIF selected by the President and Chief Executive Officer of the MIF.

1.21 “Participation Agreement” means the written agreement evidencing the Participant’s participation in the Plan and the terms and conditions of such participation, which Participation Agreement shall be executed by the Participant and the Administrator. Participation Agreements may, in the discretion of the Administrator, set forth terms and conditions that supplement, but do not conflict with, the terms and conditions of the Plan; provided, however, that any term or condition of a Participation Agreement that would adversely affect the Plan’s compliance with applicable law shall be null and void.

1.22 “Plan” means this Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan, as may be amended from time to time.

1.23 “Presiding Bishop” means the individual determined to be the presiding bishop in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Church.

1.24 “Projected Social Security Benefit” has the meaning set forth in the Participant’s Participation Agreement, as applicable.

1.25 “Separation from Service” or “Separate from Service” means separation of the Participant from the service of the Church within the meaning of Treasury Regulation Section 1.409A-1(h).

1.26 “Social Security Retirement Age” means the age upon which the Participant becomes entitled to begin receiving full (normal) Social Security retirement benefits pursuant to the “Retirement Planner Chart” located at <https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/agereduction.html> at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable, or, if the Retirement Planner Chart is not in existence at the time the Participant’s Accrued Benefit becomes payable, the Social Security Act and applicable federal regulations.

## **SECTION 2** **CREDITING OF DEEMED ACCOUNT**

2.1 The Participant’s Deemed Account shall be credited with a principal amount as set forth in the Participation Agreement.

2.2 The Participant’s Deemed Account shall be credited with Deemed Earnings as may be determined from time to time in the discretion of the Committee.

**SECTION 3**  
**FORFEITURE OF ACCRUED BENEFIT**

3.1 In the event the Participant Separates from Service with the Church for any reason other than death, Disability, or an event described in Section 4.2 or 4.3 of this Plan prior to a Benefit Payment Date, the Participant's unpaid Accrued Benefit shall be forfeited, and no further payment shall be made under this Plan to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary.

3.2 If the Participant ceases providing services to the MIF due to a transfer from the MIF to another position within the Church, the Participant's unpaid Accrued Benefit shall be forfeited, and no further payment shall be made under this Plan to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary.

**SECTION 4**  
**PAYMENT OF BENEFIT**

4.1 Subject to Section 3 of this Plan, if the Participant is serving as an employee of the Church upon the attainment of any Benefit Payment Date, as set forth in the Participant's Participation Agreement, the Participant's Accrued Benefit shall be payable pursuant to Section 7 below, with payment made as soon as practicable following the Benefit Payment Date.

4.2 Subject to Section 3 of this Plan and notwithstanding anything in this Plan to the contrary, in the event a Change in Control occurs, and within the 24-month period following the date of the Change in Control, the Participant:

- (a) Separates from Service for Good Reason, or
- (b) Separates from Service due to a termination by the Church other than For Cause,

on a date (other than a Benefit Payment Date) which occurs before the Final Benefit Payment Date, the Participant's Accrued Benefit shall be payable as set forth in Section 7 below within 60 days following the date on which the Participant Separates from Service.

4.3 Subject to Section 3 of this Plan and notwithstanding anything in this Plan to the contrary, in the event the Participant:

- (a) Separates from Service for Good Reason, or
- (b) Separates from Service due to a termination by the Church other than For Cause,

on a date (other than a Benefit Payment Date) which occurs before the Final Benefit Payment Date and at a time other than within the 24-month period set forth in Section 4.2 of the Plan following a Change in Control, the Participant's Accrued Benefit shall be payable as set forth in Section 7 below within 60 days following the date on which the Participant Separates from Service.

4.4 The benefit to which the Participant may become entitled under this Plan will not be subject to reduction following the occurrence of a Change in Control.

**SECTION 5**  
**DEATH BENEFIT**

5.1 Subject to Section 3 of this Plan, upon the death of the Participant prior to the Final Benefit Payment Date, the Church shall pay the Accrued Benefit to the Participant's Beneficiary pursuant to Section 7 below within 60 days of the Participant's death, provided the Participant is serving as an employee of the Church on the date of death.

5.2 If, subsequent to the death of the Participant, the Participant's Beneficiary dies while entitled to receive benefits under this Plan and no other Beneficiary listed under Subsection (a) or (b) of Section 1.4 of this Plan is alive, the balance of the Accrued Benefit to which the Participant was entitled which has not been distributed pursuant to this Plan shall be paid by the Church to the personal representative of the deceased Beneficiary's estate rather than the personal representative of the deceased Participant's estate, within 30 days of the Beneficiary's death.

**SECTION 6**  
**DISABILITY**

Subject to Section 3 of this Plan, if the Participant Separates from Service as a result of a Disability prior to the Final Benefit Payment Date, the Church shall pay the Participant the Accrued Benefit pursuant to Section 7 below within 60 days of the Participant's Separation from Service.

**SECTION 7**  
**FORM OF PAYMENT; RELEASE OF CLAIMS**

7.1 Form of Payment. Subject to the terms and conditions of the Plan and any Participation Agreement, including Section 7.2 below, the payment of an amount to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary shall be in the form of a lump sum to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary, as applicable.

7.2 Release of Claims. Notwithstanding anything in this Plan or any Participation Agreement to the contrary, the Church shall not be obligated to make any payment to the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary pursuant to Section 4.2, 4.3, 5, or 6 of this Agreement unless the Participant (or the Participant's Beneficiary, as applicable) has timely executed and delivered to the Church (and not revoked) a separation agreement, which will include a general waiver and release of all claims against the Church and the MIF, including a release of claims under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended ("ADEA"), in a form satisfactory to the Church (the "Release"), no later than the period specified in the Release. The Participant (or the Participant's Beneficiary) acknowledges and agrees that payment hereunder is adequate and valuable consideration for the waiver of any claims under the ADEA and is a payment to which the Participant (or the Participant's Beneficiary) would not otherwise be entitled under any plan or program of the Church absent the agreement to waive any and all claims under the ADEA. Payment shall be made as soon as practicable following the effective date of the Release. If any payment subject to Code Section 409A is contingent on the delivery of the Release and could occur in either of two calendar years, the payment will occur in the later year.

**SECTION 8**  
**LIMITATION OF RIGHTS**

Neither this Plan nor participation in this Plan shall give the Participant or other person any right

or claim except to the extent that the right is specifically fixed under the terms of this Plan. The establishment of this Plan shall not be considered an employment contract with the Participant and shall not be construed to give the Participant a right to continued employment with the Church or continued service to MIF or to interfere with the right of the Church to terminate the Participant's employment.

## **SECTION 9** **INTERPRETATION OF PLAN**

Any determinations, approvals, or actions that are performed or taken by the Presiding Bishop, the Administrator, the Committee, the MIF, or the Church shall be deemed to be performed in the sole discretion of such entity. The Administrator retains the right to determine, at its discretion, eligibility for benefits and to construe, at its discretion, all terms of this Plan and all facts surrounding claims for benefits under this Plan and to determine questions arising in the administration, interpretation, and application of this Plan, with the determination and construction being final and binding; accordingly, benefits under this Plan shall be paid only if the Administrator decides in its discretion that an applicant is entitled to benefits.

## **SECTION 10** **CLAIMS PROCEDURES**

10.1 The claims procedures of this Section 10 of this Plan, including the rules related to requesting a review of a denied claim, must be exhausted prior to initiating any legal action.

10.2 (a) Any person who believes that he or she is entitled to a benefit under this Plan shall have the right to file with the Administrator a written notice of claim for the benefit. The decision on the claim shall be made by an agent designated by the Administrator to review and issue a determination on the claim. In the event the claim is denied, a notice of denial shall be furnished to the claimant within 90 days after the notice is filed (and, in the event the Administrator needs more time to review the claim, 180 days). Any delay in arriving at a decision shall not adversely affect benefits payable under a granted claim and the failure to pay interest on the value of the Participant's Deemed Account during the processing of a claim shall not be deemed to be an adverse effect attributable to delay.

(b) The written notice of denial shall set forth:

- (1) the specific reason for the denial;
- (2) specific reference to the pertinent Plan provisions on which the denial is based;
- (3) a description of any additional material or information necessary for the claimant to perfect the claim and an explanation of why the material or information is necessary; and
- (4) an explanation of this Plan's claim review procedure set forth in Plan Section 10.3, applicable time limits, and a statement of the claimant's right to bring a civil action following an adverse benefit determination on review.

10.3 (a) Any person who makes a claim that is denied under Plan Section 10.2 shall have the right to appeal the denial of his or her claim to the Administrator for a full and fair review at any time within 60 days after the claimant receives written notice of the denial. In the event of an

appeal, the Administrator shall afford the claimant or his or her duly authorized representative the opportunity:

- (1) to review documents relevant to the claim and be provided, upon request and free of charge, access to all documents relevant to the claim;
- (2) to submit issues and comments in writing to the Administrator; and
- (3) to discuss such documents and issues with the Administrator.

(b) On review, the Administrator shall take into account all comments, documents, records, and other information submitted by the claimant relating to the claim, without regard to whether such information was submitted or considered in the initial benefit determination.

(c) The final decision of the Administrator shall be made not later than 60 days after its receipt from the claimant of a request for review, unless special circumstances, such as the need to hold a hearing, require an extension of time for processing, in which case a decision shall be made as soon as possible but not later than 120 days after receipt of the request for review and only after appropriate notice to the claimant of the extension is given before the end of the initial 60-day period.

(d) The decision on review shall be made in writing and shall set forth:

- (1) the specific reason(s) for the decision;
- (2) the specific references to Plan provisions on which any adverse determination is based;
- (3) a description of the claimant's right to receive, upon request and free of charge, reasonable access to, and copies of, all documents, records, and other information relevant to the claim; and
- (4) a statement of the claimant's right to bring an action following an adverse benefit determination on review.

10.4 Before legal action may be brought against the Church or the MIF, all claims procedures in this Section 10 of this Plan must be exhausted. No legal action may be commenced against the Church or the MIF more than 90 days after the Administrator's decision on review pursuant to Plan Section 10.3.

## **SECTION 11** **LIMITATION OF ASSIGNMENT AND PAYMENTS TO LEGALLY INCOMPETENT** **DISTRIBUTE**

11.1 No benefit which is payable under this Plan to any person will be subject in any manner to anticipation, alienation, sale, transfer, assignment, pledge, encumbrance, or charge, and any attempt to anticipate, alienate, sell, transfer, assign, pledge, encumber, charge, or otherwise dispose of the same will be void; and no benefit will in any manner be subject to the debts, contracts, liabilities, engagements, or torts of any person, nor will it be subject to attachment or legal process for, or against, the person, and the same will not be recognized under this Plan, except to such extent as may be required by law.

11.2 If any person who is entitled to any benefit under this Plan becomes bankrupt or attempts to anticipate, alienate, sell, transfer, assign, pledge, encumber, charge, or otherwise dispose of his or her benefit under this Plan, then the payment of the benefit in the event the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary is entitled to payment will, in the discretion of the Administrator, cease and terminate and in that event the payor will hold or apply the payment for the benefit of the person, his or her spouse, children, other dependents, or any of them in any manner and proportion as the Administrator determines.

11.3 Whenever any benefit which is payable under this Plan is to be paid to or for the benefit of any person who is then a minor or determined to be incompetent by qualified medical advice, the payor need not require the appointment of a guardian or custodian, but will be authorized to cause the payment to be made to the person having custody of the minor or incompetent, or to cause the payment to be made to the minor or incompetent without the intervention of a guardian or custodian, or to cause the payment to be made to a legal guardian or custodian of the minor or incompetent if one has been appointed or to cause the payment to be used for the benefit of the minor or incompetent.

## **SECTION 12** **AMENDMENT AND TERMINATION**

12.1 Unless the Administrator and the Participant mutually agree to extend the term of this Plan, all obligations to pay benefits under this Plan shall terminate immediately following the earliest of (a) payment of the Accrued Benefit on the Final Benefit Payment Date, (b) payment of the Accrued Benefit due upon the Participant's Separation from Service or death, (c) if no Accrued Benefit is payable to the Participant, the Participant's Separation from Service, or (d) the date this Plan is terminated in accordance with Section 12.2 below.

12.2 The Administrator shall review this Plan on a regular basis and in the event that the Participant continues employment beyond the Final Benefit Payment Date, changes status, or changes responsibilities. The Church and the Participant may mutually agree at any time by written instrument to modify, suspend, amend, withdraw, or terminate this Plan in whole or in part. The Church may amend this Plan without the Participant's consent to the extent necessary or appropriate to comply with applicable law or regulation.

## **SECTION 13** **FUNDING**

13.1 All benefits under this Plan shall be paid directly from the general funds of the Church or the MIF, and no special or separate fund shall be established and no other segregation of assets shall be made to assure payment. Neither the Participant nor the Participant's Beneficiary shall have any right, title, or interest whatsoever in or to any investments which the Church or the MIF may make to aid it in meeting its obligations hereunder. Nothing contained in this Plan, and no action taken pursuant to its provisions, shall create or be construed to create a trust of any kind, or a fiduciary relationship, between the Church or the MIF and the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Church or the MIF may establish a "rabbi" grantor trust with respect to its obligations under this Plan.

13.2 To the extent that any person acquires a right to receive payments hereunder, such rights shall be no greater than the right of an unsecured creditor of the Church or the MIF. Any investment acquired by the Church or the MIF in connection with the liabilities assumed hereunder shall not be deemed to be held in trust for the benefit of the Participant or the Participant's Beneficiary or to be considered security for the performance of the obligations of the Church or the MIF, but shall be, and remain, as to this Plan, a general, unpledged, unrestricted asset of the Church or the MIF.

**SECTION 14**  
**MISCELLANEOUS**

14.1 If the Church or the MIF chooses, in its discretion, to purchase a life insurance policy or policies to assist in the funding of any obligations under this Plan, or to purchase a “key person” life insurance policy or policies on the life of the Participant, the Participant may, within 60 days of a Separation from Service, purchase the life insurance policy or policies from the Church or the MIF, assuming the terms of the insurance policy or policies allow it (or them) to be sold to the Participant, for the greater of the premiums paid by the Church or the MIF on the life insurance policy or policies or the cash surrender value of the life insurance policy or policies on the date of the Participant’s Separation from Service. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event the key person life insurance policy or policies provide for term life insurance, the Church or the MIF may transfer the policy or policies to the Participant upon Separation from Service without cost, assuming the terms of the insurance policy or policies allow it (or them) to be transferred to the Participant.

14.2 This Plan shall be binding upon any successor of the Church, and any successor shall be deemed substituted for the Church under the terms of this Plan. As used in this Plan, the term “successor” shall include any person, firm, corporation, or other business entity which at any time, whether by merger, purchase, or otherwise, acquires all or substantially all of the assets or the mission of the Church.

14.3 The Church, at its discretion, may recover, or “claw back,” any amounts previously paid pursuant to this Plan if, following payment to the Participant or the Participant’s Beneficiary of all or any part of the Accrued Benefit, the Presiding Bishop subsequently becomes aware that circumstances existed on the date of payment that could reasonably have been grounds for the Church to have Separated the Participant from Service For Cause. The exercise of the clawback and repayment provisions of this Section is subject to the Presiding Bishop (or his or her delegate) providing notice of exercise within ninety (90) days of the Presiding Bishop becoming aware of the circumstances that could reasonably have been grounds for the Participant’s Separation from Service For Cause. In addition, notice of the Church’s demand for repayment must be given no later than twenty-four (24) months following payment of the Accrued Benefit.

14.4 No employee of the Church or the MIF, member of the Church Council or the Board of Trustees of the MIF, or member of any committees thereof shall be subject to any liability with respect to his or her duties under this Plan unless the person acts fraudulently or in bad faith. To the extent permitted by law and the Church’s governing documents, the Church shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless any employee of the Church or the MIF, each member of the Church Council or the Board of Trustees of the MIF, and any committees thereof, and any other officer or agent of the Church or the MIF with duties under this Plan, who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party, to any threatened, pending, or completed proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, by reason of the person performing his or her duties under this Plan.

14.5 Neither the Church nor the MIF guarantees, promises, or implies any particular tax consequences as a result of the Participant participating in this Plan. It shall be the sole obligation of the Participant, or the Participant’s Beneficiary, to pay any and all taxes imposed on the Participant (including any excise taxes, fees, or penalties) due now or in the future on benefits received under this Plan, whether or not the Participant or the Participant’s Beneficiary has received a cash benefit under this Plan at the time the taxes become due. In the event of regulatory changes impacting the tax treatment of this Plan or of benefits under this Plan, or in the event that the Internal Revenue Service reviews this Plan for compliance with or exception from applicable tax laws, the Administrator will assist the Participant in obtaining tax counsel as it shall determine, in its discretion, is necessary and appropriate.

14.6 Nothing contained herein shall be deemed to exclude the Participant from any pension, defined contribution, insurance, health, vacation, sick leave, or other benefit to which the Participant might be, or might become, entitled to as a result of the Participant's relationship with the Church or the MIF.

14.7 This Plan shall be subject to and construed under the laws of the State of Minnesota, to the extent Minnesota law is not preempted by federal law.

**SECTION 15**  
**COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW**

15.1 Amounts payable under this Plan are intended to comply with the short term deferral exception from Code Section 409A, specified in Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-1(b)(4) (or any successor provision), and shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the applicable exception. To the extent that any amounts payable in accordance with this Plan are subject to Code Section 409A or Code Section 457(f), this Plan shall be interpreted and administered in such a way as to comply with Code Section 409A to the maximum extent possible. In the event this Plan becomes subject to Code Section 409A and the applicable guidance issued thereunder and fails to satisfy the short-term deferral exception to the application of Code Section 409A (as defined in Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-1(b)(4)), and if the Church consummates a sale, transfer, merger, or other transaction of the Church wherein the surviving entity has any stock which is publicly traded on an established securities market or otherwise (within the meaning of Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-1(i)(1)), then the rules regarding specified employees (as defined in Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-1(i)) in Treasury Regulations Section 1.409A-3(i)(2) shall apply.

15.2 This Plan is intended to constitute a "church plan," as defined in Section 3(33) of ERISA. In the event the Plan fails to qualify as a church plan, this Plan shall be interpreted and administered in such a way as to comply with ERISA to the maximum extent possible.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Church has caused this Plan to be executed as of the day and year first above written.

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Elizabeth Eaton  
Title: Presiding Bishop

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#	SYNOD	DATES	ELECTION	CW REP
1E	Oregon	5/20/2023		Amy Reumann
7A	New Jersey	5/13/2023		Amy Reumann
7D	Upstate New York	6/2/23-6/3/23		Amy Reumann
1F	Montana	6/1/23-6/3/23		Barbara Lund
6C	Indiana-Kentucky	6/10/2023		Bishop Eaton
8D	Lower Susquehanna	6/2/23-6/3/23		Bishop Eaton
4A	Nebraska	6/2/23-6/3/23		Christopher Otten
8A	Northwestern Pennsylvania	6/9/23-6/10/23		Christopher Otten
8H	West Virginia-Western MD	5/20/2023		Christopher Otten
3D	Northwestern Minnesota	6/3/2023		Daniel Kirschbaum
5H	Northwest Synod of Wisc	4/29/2022		Daniel Kirschbaum
2C	Pacifica	5/5/23-5/6/23		Iain Chester
7E	Northeastern Pennsylvania	6/1/23-6/3/23		Iain Chester
4D	N.Texas - N. Louisiana	4/28/23-4/29/23		Javier Goitia Padilla
5F	Northeastern Iowa	6/9/23-6/10/23		Jill Beverlin
7C	Metropolitan New York	5/5/23-5/6/23		Jodi Slattery
9B	North Carolina	6/2/23-6/3/23		Jodi Slattery
1A	Alaska	4/28/23-4/30/23		John Weit
3A	Western North Dakota	6/2/23-6/4/23		John Weit
8B	Southwestern Pennsylvania	6/16/23-6/17/23		Judith Roberts
9C	South Carolina	6/8/23-6/10/23		Judith Roberts
5I	East-Central Synod of Wisc	5/20/2023		Keith Fry
8F	Delaware-Maryland	6/9/23-6/10/23		Keith Fry
8G	Metropolitan Washington, DC	6/3/2023		Keith Fry
3F	Southwestern Minnesota	6/9/23-6/10/23		Kevin Jacobson
3G	Minneapolis Area	4/28/23-4/29/23		Kevin Jacobson
5J	Greater Milwaukee	6/2/23-6/3/23		Kevin Jacobson
3I	Southeastern Minnesota	5/6/2023		Kimberly Vaughn
6E	Northeastern Ohio	5/12/23-5/13/23		Kimberly Vaughn
9D	Southeastern	6/2/23-6/4/23		Kimberly Vaughn
4B	Central States	6/3/2023		Kristen Opalinski
5D	Southeastern Iowa	5/15-5/16 online, 5/20 in person		Kristen Opalinski
8C	Allegheny	6/17/2023		Kristen Opalinski
3B	Eastern North Dakota	6/3/23-6/4/23		Lamont Wells
1C	Southwestern Washington	5/5/23-5/6/23		Lisa Heffernan
5G	Northern Great Lakes (Finegan)	5/18/23-5/20/23	X	Lori Fedyk
6B	North/West Lower Michigan	5/7/23-5/9/23		Lori Fedyk
9E	Florida-Bahamas (Suarez)	6/8/23-6/10/23	X	Lori Fedyk
3H	Saint Paul Area	5/12/23 - 5/13/23		Louise Johnson
5A	Metropolitan Chicago	6/3/2023		Louise Johnson
5K	South-Central Synod of Wisc	5/20/2023		Louise Johnson
6F	Southern Ohio	6/3/2023		Mary Ann Schwabe

7F	Southeastern Pennsylvania	5/5/23-5/6/23		Mary Streufert
4F	Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast	5/19/23-5/20/23		Nick Kiger
5B	Northern Illinois	6/16/23-6/17/23		Nick Kiger
2B	Southwest California	6/1/23-6/3/23		Nicolette Penaranda
2E	Rocky Mountain	5/16/23-5/18/23		Phil Hirsch
3C	South Dakota	6/2/23-6/3/23		Phil Hirsch
8E	Upper Susquehanna	6/16/23-6/17/23		Phil Hirsch
4E	Southwestern Texas	4/22/23 in person, 5/6/23 Zoom		Ruben Duran
7B	New England	6/9/23 - 6/10/23		Ruben Duran
2D	Grand Canyon	6/8/23-6/10/23		Sara Cutter
3E	Northeastern Minnesota	4/28/23-4/30/23		Sara Cutter
5E	Western Iowa	4/21/23-4/22/23		Sue Rothmeyer
1D	Northwest Intermountain (Kuempel)	4/28/23-4/30/23	X	Sue Rothmeyer
4C	Arkansas-Oklahoma (Girlinghouse)	5/5/23-5/7/23	X	Sue Rothmeyer
9A	Virginia (Humphrey)	6/8/23-6/11/23	X	Sue Rothmeyer
2A	Sierra Pacific	9/15/23-9/17/23	X	Sue Rothmeyer
5C	Central/Southern Illinois (Roth)	3/25 Zoom, 6/1/23-6/3/23	X	Victoria Flood
5L	La Crosse Area	6/9/23-6/11/23		Victoria Flood
6A	Southeast Michigan (Kreiss)	5/18/23-5/20/23	X	Victoria Flood
1B	Northwest Washington	NO ASSEMBLY		N/A
6D	Northwestern Ohio	NO ASSEMBLY		N/A
7G	Slovak Zion	NO ASSEMBLY		N/A
9F	Caribbean	NO ASSEMBLY		N/A

### **Church Council Member Synod Visit Reports**

**Name:** Mitch McCartney

**Synod Visited:** Southeastern Iowa Synod

**Visit Date:** Dec. 10, 2022

**Purpose of Visit:** Synod Council Meeting

***What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?***

The synod is preparing for a Synod Revival scheduled for the spring to have a day of faith and fellowship with people from across the synod. It is scheduled to serve as a replacement for the synod assembly, which will primarily be a business meeting and be held online on a separate day.

***How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?***

I reported to the synod council on the actions of the Church Council at its fall meeting and was able to answer questions regarding our work on the formation of the CRLC (Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church) and the work being done on policy related to synod-authorized worshipping communities.

**Name:** Hans W. Giller

**Synod Visited:** Indiana-Kentucky Synod

**Visit Date:** Jan. 14, 2023

**Purpose of Visit:** Synod Council Meeting (Zoom)

***What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?***

The synod has had the opportunity to bring about disaster relief by helping two communities in Kentucky that were affected by natural disasters. One community experienced a tornado and the other was affected by flooding. The synod has continued to make an impact by setting up a fund to continue to help these communities.

One member mentioned that he was grateful that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod partnered with the Southern Ohio Synod to fund the ELCA Foundation Gift Planner to serve these synods. Another member shared that she feels blessed that this synod truly supports, accepts, and provides opportunities for Deacons of Ministry. She reported that some deacons in other synods don't feel the same way.

***How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?***

I was pleased to have spent this time with the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Council. I think that they were grateful to have this opportunity to reconnect with the ELCA Church Council. They used to have a member who sat on the council and during that time felt very connected. They invited me to other council meetings and to the upcoming synod assembly.

A concern that I heard may not be unique to this synod. They are dealing with a couple congregations that are talking about disassociation. Mostly from misinformation and concerns that the ELCA is "too liberal." They had a conversation about the bishop's attempt to address the misinformation.

**Name:** Mitch McCartney

**Synod Visited:** Western Iowa Synod

**Visit Date:** Jan. 21, 2023

**Purpose of Visit:** Synod Council Meeting

***What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?***

The synod council talked about the challenge of a congregational split in the town where synod assembly will be held this year. One of the joys and opportunities we discussed is how area congregations have rallied around the smaller contingent that has remained with the ELCA and how the new resulting congregation is showing its faith and spirit in the community. The presence of the synod in that community at its assembly will allow us to surround this faithful group with prayer and care and be a witness to the community.

***How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?***

I reported to the Synod Council on the actions of the Church Council at its fall meeting and was able to answer questions regarding our work on the formation of the CRLC (Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church). I was also able to connect with some individuals referred to me by synod council members and answer their questions as well.

**Name:** Joel Miller

**Synod Visited:** La Crosse Area Synod

**Visit Date:** Feb. 18, 2023

**Purpose of Visit:** Participate in the synod yearly retreat to develop priorities for the Synod Council in 2023 as a representative of ELCA Church Council.

***What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?***

The synod council was energized, and everyone was positive and focused on doing the work of the synod with Christ at the center. The campus minister Ben Morris was there and active and he offered great insight into current Gen Z traits and needs. The activity to identify needs and priorities was built with consensus and everyone participated. Our bishop and staff are relatively new, but the day was very fulfilling, and their leadership was a big reason for the success.

***How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?***

I was able to introduce myself as a representative of the ELCA and expressed that churchwide is invested and connected to the synod. I was also able to encourage their desire to engage new, young, and diverse people as a priority.

I was surprised to hear the underlying belief that “the synod doesn’t care about the rural churches” and the feeling that the bigger more metropolitan churches were favored over rural ones. I am a member of a bigger church and wasn’t aware of this dynamic locally.

Overall, I was welcomed and participated, and it was a great sharing experience.

**Name:** Loren Solberg

**Synod Visited:** Northwestern Minnesota Synod

**Visit Date:** Feb. 25, 2023

**Purpose of Visit:** Synod Council Meeting (Zoom)

***What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?***

It was great to connect for the first time with the Northwestern Minnesota Synod via a ZOOM meeting. I was able to establish continued meeting dates and be able to continue communications with the synod leadership. Although they are headquartered in Moorhead, they frequently meet in Bemidji which is more centralized to the synod. It also is much closer for me to attend in person if time permits.

***How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?***

The members were interested in the issues that the Church Council are addressing, especially the CRLC (Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church). Related questions were how the membership was to be selected. They suggested that the recommendations from the bishops and synod vice-presidents be honored. They were also interested in how the effort to grow the ELCA with one million new, diverse, and young members was being implemented and how the program was being financed.

We also discussed the progress of developing the social statement on Civic Life and Faith. I updated the members on the progress and the commitment this coming summer to hold several opportunities for the congregations to react to the draft proposed document. They were very interested in helping to establish meeting times and places. As a liaison member of the social statement study task force, I am committed to accommodate their request as best as I can.

**Name:** Susan Boxberger

**Synod Visited:** Central States Synod

**Visit Date:** March 10-11, 2023

**Purpose of Visit:** Member of Central States Synod Council (last official meeting)

***What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?***

Seeing the decrease in congregational giving, which directly affects benevolence to the synod, is depressing. In addition, our synod has been faced with some pretty sticky congregational situations (pastoral misbehavior, clergy shortage, congregations wanting to leave the ELCA, etc.). The joy comes in seeing the faithful service of synod staff and volunteers. Our treasurer (who happens to be my congregation's treasurer as well) and our wonderful Bishop Susan Candea do a fabulous job of working through crises and difficulties and making sure that everything stays all about God and spreading the Word.

We heard from our campus ministers about what they have going on and what challenges they face. They're struggling to emerge from the pandemic (as are many congregations) and to meet the needs of the students they serve. Later, in planning for our synod assembly, it was decided to make campus ministries the recipient of assembly offerings, and that decision felt good and right.

***How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?***

There's something about the land acknowledgement at the beginning of our meetings, which helps us to feel connected to the wider church. I think it's knowing that it's also done at gatherings of other congregations and groups across the ELCA.

Many of our congregations are struggling to recover from damage done during the pandemic. The "culture wars," which are currently prevalent in our society, are especially affecting our rural congregations, who tend to be more conservative in their views. I don't believe this is unique to the Central States Synod.



## Spring 2023 Churchwide Organization Annual Report

### Priorities of the Churchwide Organization

#### History

Budgets are expressions of mission and, as such, they invite the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to be clear about its priorities: What will the church fund? What will it staff? What will it stop doing? While Future Church laid out a clear vision, a compelling goal and three priorities, it layered these on top of existing priorities. There was minimal effort to determine what the church should stop doing. In the ELCA's efforts to shift 10% of its work toward engaging newer, more diverse, and younger people, leadership discovered that the ELCA is facing understandable resistance. Staff of the churchwide organization (CWO) is already overtaxed and underfunded with respect to earlier priorities and mandates and at a loss about how to shift work and budgets toward this new initiative. How can the organization stop doing things that it has been charged to do by the Churchwide Assembly (CWA), are requested by the Conference of Bishops (COB), or are identified in the constitution as a purpose/priority? These questions are exacerbated as the ELCA faces declining revenue projections.

#### Moving Forward

Part of the work of Future Church will be to determine, narrow and focus those priorities in order to ensure that the ELCA can live faithfully and sustainably into the vision of the church. The church together needs to determine which of the many important priorities will get its fullest attention and resources.

Leadership is proposing that the organization:

1. Identify and provide estimated timelines and budgets for:
  - a. Outstanding CWA memorials
  - b. Outstanding churchwide organization priorities from past strategic planning processes
  - c. Other outstanding mandates, programs or priorities (such as Future Directions 2025)
2. Review the current constitutional mandates and priorities, including existing staff and program budgets.
3. Determine CWO priorities as they relate to resources and infrastructure based on No.1 and No. 2.
4. Work with the Church Council (CC) on outlined priorities and identify what the ELCA will NOT do as a church, which includes (but is not limited to) the CWO, the COB and the CC.

### **Future Church**

In addition to the work of engaging newer, more diverse and younger people is the clear call to listen and learn from CWO staff, synods, congregations and partners who are effectively engaging in this work. Additionally, the ELCA must simultaneously embrace infrastructural concerns, changing culture, innovation and evaluation. This is and continues to be the work of Future Church.

First, the CWO is through the first phase of a three-year, donor-funded process with key consultants from the Barna Group and Fuller Seminary. The goal of this work is to move forward with engaging one million, newer, more diverse and younger people. Phase 1, the listening and learning phase, has provided the CWO with key observations and ideas to focus and shape testing. Phase 2, the research and strategy phase, will be a deep dive into the findings through a variety of design sprints and initiative investments. The CWO has assembled two teams of key stakeholders that represent the breadth of the church. These teams, the Transformational Team and Multigenerational Advisory Group, will work with the feedback and larger teams to create, inspire and push out ideas and strategies for the ELCA's work in Future Church. The creation of these teams and the buy-in of these stakeholders into this movement is crucial to the project's success.

A few weeks ago, the Transformational Team and Multigenerational Advisory Group (composed of key ELCA stakeholders that include members of diverse backgrounds, rostered ministers and lay leaders, key CWO staff and others active in moving the church forward) met at the Lutheran Center in Chicago to talk about this work, debrief from the findings in phase 1, and sit together in prayerful and faithful discernment about where God is calling this church. The conversations were full of life, ideas, energy and a sense that the ELCA is moving in the right direction. With their input the CWO is moving forward confidently into phase 2, aligning this in the larger movement of the future of the church and unveiling an official name for the project. Staff is looking forward to continued collaboration with this group.

Finally, there are multiple strategic experiments underway. As the ELCA's funding, ability and capacity to engage new learning grows, leadership is recognizing the importance of discerning and tracking these efforts. ELCA leadership is in the process of forming a team of staff members who will identify sources of funding, identify strategic experiments and partners, and discern which experiments to engage.

### **Truth and Healing Movement**

Starting the week after Easter and running through Advent 2023, the Office of the Presiding Bishop will launch an initiative across the ELCA that calls for awareness and engagement in Indigenous history and issues. The initiative will include several churchwide commemorations and opportunities for individuals, congregations, synods and ministries to engage in. More information will be released in the coming month.

CWA passed the "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery" in 2016. The Church Council adopted "A Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People" in 2021, which the CWA reaffirmed in 2022. And now with this initiative, the Office of the Presiding Bishop is inviting the whole church into engagement.

### **INNOVATION**

The Innovation home area is expanding! The addition of staff members will aid in developing a culture of innovation inside and beyond the churchwide organization. The added staff will also guide and share the work of innovation across the church as the ELCA seeks to learn what is effective for activating those within the church and engaging new people.

The [Congregations Lead Initiative](#) is a two-year program that gathers a cohort of congregations from across the ELCA to discover new and useful ministry innovations. In November, leaders from the 40-plus congregations that are a part of this cohort met in person for the first time. In the past year, teams of three to seven people from each congregation have immersed themselves in their communities by actively listening to their neighbors' joys and challenges.

From this initial listening the congregations have identified local problems, ideated possible solutions and have now begun to test their new ideas. From getting to know their [neighbors over a meal](#), to intergenerational worship, to [holistic community centers](#), congregations have tried over 40 different experiments. The cohort will now begin to explore tools for evaluating and scaling its experiments in the coming months.

### **OPERATIONS**

#### **Worship**

The Worship team, now residing in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, oversees the development and review of worship resources intended for use throughout this church as well as planning worship for the churchwide organization and events. In 2023, work continues on the 2022 Churchwide Assembly memorial "Holy Communion Practices in Unusual Circumstances and in Pandemic Times" and the resolution "Addressing Anti-Semitism in Lectionary Readings," with responses due in 2024.

## **Information Technology (IT)**

### Operational Improvements

There were three improvements that really stood out in the last year to highlight. An Adaptive Planning tool was launched for budgeting, planning and forecasting to improve budgeting effectiveness and operational efficiency. The unit also enhanced security controls in support of the move to remote/hybrid work. And IT held the first electronic elections for vice president and the first common ballot at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

### Digital and Online Enhancements

Security enhancements to Form A & C and Find a Person digital tools were made. IT is preparing to launch a digital ministry grant program through funds received from ELCA partners Vanco and Tithe.ly. IT also launched a new [ELCA Resource Catalog](#) to provide a better user experience for those ordering resources. Last fall the team conducted design sprints to imagine a new seeker-centered website for the ELCA that will be built in 2023. And IT is excited to be launching a new email marketing and online giving platform to improve communications effectiveness and digital fundraising.

### Data and Analytics

A unified data platform and data lake (a central storage repository that holds data from various sources in its original form) were built for enhanced data analytics. IT was also able to enhance the ELCA's online trend reports and create fundraising pipeline reports for the Development team.

## **Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations**

### Ecumenical Dialogues

The ELCA-Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Dialogue met in person twice, looking at local case studies of common mission and ministry, as well as using ecumenical texts to identify areas of theological convergence. The goal of this dialogue is to define a new ecumenical relationship.

Round XIII of the U.S. Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue launched in December 2022, dedicated to a “mutual exploration and learning about the holy order/office of ministry as understood in the Catholic and (ELCA) Lutheran traditions, with special attention to the distinctive role of episcopate in each tradition.” The report of Round XII, on teaching authority, will be published later this year by Fortress Press. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton offered a [pastoral message](#) on Jan. 1 following the death of Pope Benedict XVI.

### Full Communion

A “Proposal for Exchangeability of the Diaconate” will come before the Conference of Bishops and Church Council this spring. Endorsed by the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee in January 2023, this proposal is the fruit of long-term work between the churches to deepen their life together in full communion, as expressed in the agreement Called to Common Mission.

### Inter-Religious Resources

Two significant inter-religious resources were published in 2022. “[ELCA Pastoral Guidelines for Ministry in a Multi-Religious World](#)” provides theological guidance and practical recommendations for specific occasions such as prayer services and crisis or tragedy response based on the inter-religious policy statement. “[Preaching and Teaching ‘With Love and Respect for the Jewish People’](#)” builds on “A Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community” and provides support for avoiding anti-Jewish interpretations of difficult passages in Scripture.

## **Theological Discernment**

### Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment

What was formerly "Justice for Women" was changed to "Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment" (GJWE), which aligns with the Lutheran World Federation. GJWE serves the global church, empowers theological engagement in the ELCA, and advances collaborative understanding and action on gender justice and its intersections with other forms of justice.

The Lutheran World Federation Assembly in September 2023 will include a women's pre-assembly, supported by GJWE through a steering committee. Pre-assembly participants will identify themes, commitments and actions for the global communion's strategic planning for the next seven years, and through engagement with participants in the youth and the men's pre-assemblies.

Together with Trinity Lutheran Seminary, GJWE provides support to the ELCA Womanist Theology Initiative. In October 2022, this initiative had its first in-person meeting with members from synods, seminaries and the churchwide organization.

GJWE offered online sessions for churchwide staff to assist them in applying the implementing resolutions of *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* that pertain to their portfolios. In cooperation with racial justice, GJWE has begun to engage ongoing work with the Church Council.

### Racial Justice

The work of Racial Justice provides leadership and support through the churchwide organization and in partnership with synods to promote effective strategies toward racial justice within and across the church and with ecumenical partners, utilizing an intersectional approach.

This includes staff leadership in support of "A Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People," the ongoing implementation of the ELCA's Strategy for Authentic Diversity, and the Task Force for Addressing Disciplinary Concerns. This also includes engagement through the AMMPARO executive committee and its annual gathering, which was held in December 2022 in Yuma, Ariz., and San Diego, Calif. Lastly, Racial Justice provides staff consultation to the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice (EDLARJ).

Racial Justice resourcing to synods has included the training of volunteers to be facilitators for "[Now is the Time: A Study Guide for ELCA Declaration to People of African Descent](#)." This was done in collaboration with ELCA Young Adults, Women of the ELCA and EDLARJ.

### Theological Diversity

Significant work was invested to develop meaningful opportunities for theologically diverse biblical learning at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. This included a [theological presentation](#) during the assembly and online [pre-assembly Bible studies](#) featuring a diversity of ELCA pastors, professors and theologians. Theological Diversity also provides theological support for internal intersectional work on combating white supremacy and with ecumenical partners, such as the National Council of Churches' Faith & Order White Supremacy Working Group.

Leadership for creation care and climate justice work is also infused with theological diversity. This is happening internally through initiatives such as the [Certificate in Climate Justice and Faith | Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary \(plts.edu\)](#), now available in [Spanish](#); the ecumenical conference on [Faith and Climate Justice in Puerto Rico](#); and externally through various partnerships, including [ecoAmerica's Blessed Tomorrow Faith Leaders Roundtable](#) where staff is working on launching a seven-year campaign to intentionally address the climate crisis from a faith-rooted perspective.

## **Theological Ethics**

### Developing and Using ELCA Social Teaching

The ELCA is recognized for its commitment to developing, augmenting and using a body of social teaching. Social teaching governs the institutional life and witness of the ELCA and provides guidance for its members. This year's development work focuses on provision for a study curriculum (released in January, comment period until Oct. 15, 2023) and a draft social statement (late fall 2023) from the ELCA Task Force for Studies on Civic Life and Faith.

A social message on the climate crisis was prepared for consideration at the April 2023 Church Council meeting. The council will also consider a recommendation on which of three requests for social messages might be developed during the next yearly cycle. The possibilities are gun violence in the U.S., child abuse and protection, or a reconsideration of the social message on homelessness.

A task force to lead reconsideration of two aspects of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (as authorized by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly) will be selected and begin work in 2024, but preliminary staffing arrangements are expected near the end of 2023.

In support of the ELCA's commitment to communal discernment, the [Journal of Lutheran Ethics](#) will publish six issues and the Lutheran Ethicists' Network met in January 2023.

## **Strategic Communications**

This year Strategic Communications will begin transitioning *Living Lutheran* to a full online storytelling engine featuring new ways of reaching people, providing a more economical and far-reaching approach for us to engage with a broader audience. People will start to see the team employing these ways throughout the year, with videos, audio stories, podcasts, live events and more. This transition will also include more robust social media and more opportunities for user-generated content with the potential for greater engagement with Lutherans and non-Lutherans alike.

On Dec. 6, 2022, the team launched an online platform for people discerning a call to leadership in the ELCA. [Journi.Faith](#) is the only place in the ELCA where almost all information about being a leader in the church exists together. Using the Spiritual Gifts Assessment quiz, the site provides the relevant content to users: whether that is being a camp counselor, finding a Lutheran university, wondering about the candidacy process or nearly everything else. In the first few months, the site has grown to over 700 subscribers.

## **Development**

Overall, 2022 was another year when members of the ELCA showed incredible generosity. Year-end numbers have yet to be finalized, but ELCA members are clearly committed to the ministries that this church does together — feeding the hungry, raising up leaders, responding to disasters and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ around the world. Despite economic challenges that impact individuals, congregations and synods in different ways, the church showed up — especially in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Nearly \$12.5 million was raised from 29,000 gifts, which meant this church could immediately and robustly respond to its siblings in Christ who have been impacted by this crisis. Finally, the team is grateful to the six synods that have collectively shared \$2.2 million in special gifts above and beyond Mission Support last year. This generosity has profoundly impacted the church's ability to sustain and strengthen its ministries. To the whole church, Development staff says thank you and thanks be to God!

## Mission Support

A vital element for Mission Support is the sharing of stories across the church — especially stories of faith, generosity and making a positive difference. To strengthen and grow a network of people equipped to listen for, engage with and share these stories, the Mission Support team — together with synod leaders —

has reimaged the Mission Interpretation Ministry and renamed it Storytelling Engagement. In 2023 there will be opportunities for training and growing this network, especially among synod leaders.

One key resource for highlighting the ministries that Mission Support makes possible is “Stories of Faith in Action” (SOFIA). The newest set of stories shared through this resource is now available at [SOFIA \(livinglutheran.org\)](https://livinglutheran.org). Please read and share these stories to learn more about how all ELCA members, through sharing Mission Support, make a positive difference, from a new-start ministry in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula to theological education support for Lutheran evangelists in Rwanda.

Staff from the Mission Support team work with synod staff and other synod leaders — including synod council members — to provide information and assistance for workshops, trend analyses, resources and strategy development related to Mission Support. Over the past year the Mission Support team worked directly with 26 synods in this capacity while also providing overall communication and best practices with all 65 synods.

### Congregational Stewardship and Generosity

\$3,251,904 is the total giving from the ELCA’s Most Generous Congregations in 2022. This represents a 13.7% increase from 2022 projections. Over \$3.18 million in gifts were given last year to churchwide ministries (ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Global Mission, Fund for Leaders and Where Needed Most) by the congregations considered most generous to those ministries (the Most Generous Congregations network). That giving exceeded the projection for the year by 11%. Of the total given, \$1.75 million (55%) went directly to the churchwide organization and \$1.43 million (45%) was given to the churchwide organization through the congregations’ synods. The total revenue received will increase and those percentages will adjust once the year’s final revenues are counted.

The team began the acquisition of a great stewardship ministry resource, “6 Weeks on Money,” in Q4 2022 and will complete the acquisition in Q1 2023. “6 Weeks on Money” is a six-week personal financial course that helps participants analyze how their values align with their pocketbook. It helps people foster a healthy relationship with money while decreasing debt, increasing savings, improving planning and budgeting, building financial literacy, and strengthening investment. “6 Weeks on Money” starts and ends with generosity. The course has been field-tested by several synods and numerous congregations. It will give the ELCA a new stewardship resource that meets existing and future needs. Over time the team will enhance the content with a particular focus on diversity, equity and inclusion and on reaching new, young and diverse people. Staff will expand use of the resource in the ELCA and with other full communion partners, customizing it to create a unique Lutheran/Reformation perspective on generosity.

The ELCA’s partnership with the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving continues:

- In fall 2022 and winter 2023 staff offered free stewardship webinars to synods and congregations across the ELCA. Combined attendance was over 125 participants, and the recordings were shared broadly.
- In the fall staff offered Cultivating Generous Congregations (CGC) webinars to 34 leaders of 12 congregations from four synods (South Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, and New Jersey).
- In January staff offered a second Executive Certificate in Religious Fundraising (ECRF) course to a cohort of 32 ELCA leaders. They include one bishop, three assistants to bishops, three directors for evangelical mission, 10 parish rostered ministers and 15 specialized ministry leaders (serving with Lutheran Campus Ministry or Lutheran Outdoor Ministry as chaplains or as other ministry directors).
- Thanks to the ELCA’s preferred-partner agreement with Lake Institute, staff are now offering four webinars a year and can offer CGC and ECRF online. Moreover, the team is offering ECRF to ELCA participants at a significant savings over the regular cost of the course through Lake’s “public offerings.” Consequently, seven other participants (one bishop, five parish rostered ministers and one specialized ministry leader) have registered at the ELCA preferred rate for ECRF sessions hosted by others.

- The team plans to renew the partnership with the Lake Institute and to continue providing these forms of stewardship and fundraising training with it.

### Development Services

Development Services continues to see a year-over-year increase in the number of gifts the team processes. In FY22 the gifts-processing team in Development Services helped process over 150,000 revenue transactions. Many of those were gifts for Lutheran Disaster Response's work related to the Eastern Europe crisis.

The Development Services team worked on generating 275-plus communication lists in 2022. These were used for both email and direct-mail communication and helped the team reach almost 600,000 unique ELCA constituents.

Last year was another busy one for the ELCA call center. The team answered more than 13,500 calls from constituents and helped fulfill 2,600 resource orders from the [ELCA resource center](#).

The Development Services team is partnering with IT and Development Communications to implement a new email and online giving platform called Engaging Networks. It will help the ELCA streamline email communication with constituents and provide an enhanced online experience for donors.

### Mission Funding

The Mission Funding team stewarded over \$8.4 million from generous individuals giving to churchwide ministries (ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Global Mission, Fund for Leaders and Where Needed Most) in FY22.

In FY22 the Mission Funding team began supporting strategy for a mid-level giving program under leadership provided by JoeLynn Mulari, Leadership Circle manager. To support the program's strategic goal to inform Leadership Circle donors about the impact of their gifts and provide timely updates about the ministries they support, the Leadership Circle produced the following materials:

- The Leadership Circle Advent Series, which received a positive response from donors and included devotions from ELCA leaders and participants.
- The Leadership Circle website and membership hub, which performed well, with increased web traffic from 2021 to 2022.

Last year marked the 25th anniversary of the ELCA Fund for Leaders (FFL). The ELCA celebrated with a special reception at the Churchwide Assembly as well as some small gatherings in locations where people have historically shown strong support for FFL.

### Development Communications

In FY22, direct mail, email marketing, peer-to-peer programs and monthly giving programs stewarded \$12.5 million in revenue for ELCA churchwide ministries (excluding millions in designated gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response).

The FY22 Giving Tuesday campaign was a success, receiving more than \$400,000 in revenue for ELCA churchwide ministries through ELCA Good Gifts.

Throughout the year special communications focused on the ELCA Fund for Leaders 25th anniversary, highlighting the celebration and increasing fundraising opportunities and results.

Development Communications continues to work with both IT and Development Services on a new email management system and new donation forms to be offered through Engaging Networks, an online nonprofit marketing platform. Scheduled to launch in early 2023, these tools will allow Development Communications to deploy more donor-centric online fundraising strategies, which it expects to drive higher overall revenue through the churchwide organization's primarily online revenue streams.

### Development Operations

The Fund for Leaders operations team assisted applicants and distributed nearly \$3.5 million in seminary scholarships to 375 students, including 66 recipients of the ELCA's new TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) scholarships.

The Events team managed seven major virtual and in-person donor events that engaged more than 2,000 donors in learning about and supporting ELCA ministries.

The Prospect Development team provided regular donor reporting to frontline fundraisers and completed 225 research products, 115 strategy meetings and 66 data projects.

The Corporate and Foundation Relations team built relationships and coordinated solicitations that resulted in nearly \$4 million in funding for ELCA ministries from 30 organizations. The most generous partners were the Lilly Endowment and Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

### **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP (CCL)**

CCL has recently received multiple grants to continue supporting Total Inclusion!, to launch a study engaging congregations that have early childhood centers with their communities, to strengthen the youth ministry network and to transform preaching.

Registration for the Rostered Ministers Gathering (July 17-20 in Phoenix) is now open at [ELCA.org/rmg](https://www.elca.org/rmg). Your support and encouragement are appreciated as the ELCA strives to strengthen the relationships among its rostered ministers.

The Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group (CLDWG) has completed two ELCA-wide studies of the current and future needs of the church with an eye toward reaching those who have been excluded. Both reports will be public soon and the CLDWG will offer hearings in June to gather responses from the wider church.

A working group is reimagining governing documents for synod-authorized worshipping communities (SAWC) and suggested a new category of permanent SAWCs called Strategic SAWCs. Another group is finalizing a renewed process to screen potential mission developers.

The ELCA Chaplaincy's primary focus is on recruitment due to a desperate need for unrestricted federal chaplains who can minister to the needs of all.

### **SERVICE AND JUSTICE**

Service and Justice Global Service teams worked with ELCA companion churches and the ELCA seminaries to identify three International Horizon Internship positions in 2022-23, and there will be three positions in 2023-24. The Horizon Internship Program is an opportunity for ELCA seminarians to learn from leadership of the companion churches.

The African National Ministries and the African Descent Ministries facilitated and accompanied 10 ELCA youth to the All-Africa Youth Congress in Accra, Ghana. *Living Lutheran* has an article [here](#).

The Latin America and Caribbean Desk accompanies the United Evangelical Church in Cuba Lutheran Synod with a farming project that provides livelihood and sustainable food for communities in Cuba that are most vulnerable.

Dec. 9-18, 2022, the AMMPARO team (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) and executive committee, together with more than 50 other pilgrims, traveled nearly 1,000 miles along the U.S. southern border, from El Paso, Texas, to San Diego, as part of the "Journey for Justice" organized by the group Witness at the Border.

Lutheran Disaster Response is at work responding to the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and neighboring Syria to distribute emergency supplies, food, water and shelter. The ELCA's response will continue to evolve as the needs become clearer in the coming months. Lutheran Disaster Response has raised almost \$700,000 since early February 2023.

### **Report from the Conference of Bishops**

The Conference of Bishops (COB) met at Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois from Tuesday afternoon, Feb. 28 through late morning on Saturday, March 4, 2023. Grounded in worship and prayer led by the bishops of Region 2, our time was spent in listening, learning, deliberation, and celebration.

We were joined by a number of ELCA churchwide staff members and guests from some of our Separately Incorporated Ministries (SIMs) and seminaries during our public sessions. We were pleased to have Vice President Imran Siddiqui join us and bring us his vision of strengthening lay leadership across the church.

#### Our agenda included:

- Affirmation of our Relational Agreement.
- A discussion with the Rev. Amy Reumann, senior director for Witness in Society, on Bishops' Ready Benches and how bishops can best engage in advocacy.
- Time to learn more about the intersectionality of racial and gender justice led by Jennifer DeLeon, director for racial justice, and Mary Streufert, director for Justice for Women.
- Conversation on how and when the COB speaks as a conference.
- Reports from Treasurer Lori Fedyk, Secretary Sue Rothmeyer (which included updates on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) process and from the task force regarding the discipline process for rostered ministers of color), and Presiding Bishop Eaton.
- Conversation about Mission Support led by Victoria Flood, senior director of Mission Support, Nick Kiger, director for Mission Support, and the Rev. Tim Brown, director for Congregational Stewardship.
- Extended conversation on the practice of online Holy Communion as directed by a 2022 Churchwide Assembly (CWA) memorial. This conversation is ongoing and is being led by the Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee and Deacon John Weit, executive for Worship.
- Receiving a report from the group of 16 synod bishops who visited the Holy Land in January 2023 that included recommendations for supporting our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land as well as the Palestinian people.
- Time for Affinity Groups to meet around a variety of issues including lay education across the ELCA, global companion relationships, moving people into first calls, language interpretation at synod events, synod administration best practices, managing property issues in synods, and hybrid/remote/in-person work models.
- Committee reports, including an update from Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service about the work of a branding task force.

#### Actions taken included:

- Request that the establishment of a churchwide ombudsperson as described in the report of the Task Force on the Discipline Process not happen at the April Church Council meeting to give more time for the COB and Church Council to consider all the ramifications of such a position.
- Approval of recommendations from the Roster Committee for: extensions to on-leave-from-call status for 21 ministers of Word and Sacrament; exceptions regarding the three-year

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- congregational service requirement for four ministers of Word and Sacrament; a call for unusual ministry for one minister of Word and Sacrament; extension of on-leave-from-call status for one minister of Word and Service; a non-stipendiary call for one minister of Word and Service; and ratification of decisions made between COB meetings by the committee.
- Approval of a letter to be sent from the COB to Senator Robert Menendez, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, asking for the embargo on Cuba to be lifted and diplomatic relations between the US and Cuba be initiated.
  - Agreement on how first-call candidates in the Lily-funded residency program at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Davenport, Iowa will count in the first-call process.
  - Appointment of an ad-hoc team to investigate ways our SIMs (particularly the Mission Investment Fund and the ELCA Foundation) financially support the work of our synods.
  - Endorsement of a recommendation to the Church Council to adopt the interchangeability of the diaconate with The Episcopal Church.

Outside of our business sessions, we bid farewell to bishops whose terms will end before our next meeting: Bishop Michael Girlinghouse and Bishop S. John Roth (Bishop Bob Humphrey was not able to be present); enjoyed a hymn sing; and had an evening to gather with regional colleagues. It is good to be together for these relationship-building times.

As you can see, we had productive and full days together. I hope that our meetings bring glory to God and strengthen our church for the work to which God call us. I believe we are at our best when we can do this with joy and humility.

Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew, New Jersey Synod  
Chair, ELCA Conference of Bishops

### **Report from the Presiding Bishop**

At the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, the decision was taken to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) to “reconsider the statements of purpose for each expression of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism.” [CA22.01.06] This is no small task!

The Commission for a New Lutheran Church, which led to the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, completed its work thirty-five years ago – before Tik Tok, smart phones, and telemedicine. Even MTV was relatively new. The world has changed a lot since then, so it is a good time to take a look at our statements of purpose and principles of organizational structure.

As members of the Church Council, you are aware of the range of reactions to this—excitement, trepidation, a call to tear everything down and then rebuild it, maintain the status quo, and everything else in between. There has even been the suspicion voiced by some that a cabal of churchwide leaders on Higgins Road has already completed the project. (Actually, no.) This April Church Council meeting you will receive the report of the Executive Committee on appointments to the CRLC. This represents at least one hundred hours of work, research, deliberation by the Executive Committee, interviews with prospective candidates, and their references. Care was taken to ensure broad representation. Over four hundred members of the ELCA applied. One thing that became immediately evident was the incredible giftedness of our people and the wide range of representational diversity that exists in this church: age, race, ethnicity, gender expression, varieties of experience, and geography. The four hundred faithful, gifted people who applied demonstrate that we are a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-generational church from every region of the ELCA. We would do well to keep this top of mind when recruiting leadership for every expression of this church. And of course, the Executive Committee individually and as a whole were deep in prayer.

The Church is unique among institutions. It is divine and also very human. It is the only institution on Earth whose reason for being is to preach the gospel in its purity and administer the sacraments according to the gospel. “The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.” (ELCA Constitution 4.01) This is the charge to the newly baptized. Do we always get it right? No. Since, as it has been said, the Church is not an hotel for saints, but a hospital for sinners, there are many things in the long history of the Church, and in the much shorter history of this church, that have caused harm—even deadly harm to people and to the creation.

And yet, God continues to use the church and our branch of it to be an ambassador of hope and keep telling the radical story of grace. We are a both/and church which understands the baptized to be at once saints and sinners. Here is part of an essay by 20<sup>th</sup> century Roman Catholic brother Carlo Carretto, “How baffling you are, Oh Church, and yet how much I love you! How you have made me suffer, and yet how much I owe you! I would like to see you destroyed, and yet I need your presence. You have given me so much scandal and yet you have made me understand what sanctity is. I have seen nothing in the world more devoted to obscurity, more compromised, and more false, and yet I have touched nothing more pure, more generous, more beautiful. How often have I wanted to shut the doors of my soul in your face, and how often I have prayed to die in the safety of your arms.”

That pretty much sums up the beautiful, maddening, sublime, and broken reality of the church and its people. God alone preserves the church and God alone renews it. The work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church is holy work. This is God’s church, not ours. But God, in God’s inscrutable wisdom, continues to “call, gather, enlighten, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common true faith.” (Luther’s Small Catechism) and invites sinners to be the body Christ.

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Jesus said, “Therefore any scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” (Matthew 13:52) We stand at the crossroads of contextuality and catholicity. We bring our lived experience of age, geography, race, ethnicity, gender identity, new to the faith, generations in the faith, “conservative,” “progressive,” rural, urban, suburban, large church, small church, casseroles, hot dishes, tureens. We also confess that we are part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We have treasures that are “old” and we look to the treasures that are “new.” What are adiaphora—not inconsequential or lightly set aside that still enrich our life and witness—and what needs to be renewed.

Let us be in prayer for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. Pray for the members of the CRLC. Pray for openness for God’s Holy Spirit, humility in discernment, and bold trust that God will bless our efforts as we seek to give the Gospel free course in the world.

Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

### Report from the Secretary

Since moving to the triennial Churchwide Assembly schedule beginning in 2013, the year following the assembly was often a quieter year, allowing Office of the Secretary (OS) staff to regroup and catch up. Not this year! Between the actions of the assembly requiring our attention and meetings returning to pre-pandemic norms, OS staff members are moving full speed ahead on a number of projects and assignments.

#### Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC)

The nomination process for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) closed on March 9, 2023. More than 400 unique nominations were received from both the open and synod nomination processes. We give thanks to the synod councils, synod executive committees, and all the individuals who nominated themselves and/or nominated someone else.

In fulfilling the responsibilities of the Church Council related to nominations, the Executive Committee members are reviewing the nominations. The committee will provide a slate of nominees for Church Council's consideration at its April 20 online meeting.

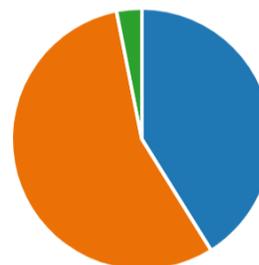
No more than 35 people are to be appointed to the CRLC, which will include at least 60% laypersons. Of the at least 60% laypersons, as nearly as possible, at least 45% will be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45% will be men. Memberships not allocated to women or men may be allocated to people who identify as gender-nonbinary, gender-fluid, women, men, or other genders. Representation of rostered ministers will include both men and women. At least 25% of the CRLC membership are to be persons of color or whose primary language is other than English and the goal is for at least 20% of the members to be age 30 or under. In addition, the CRLC membership will reflect a balance of competencies and the various constituencies and multiple perspectives within the ELCA.

There were 59 synod councils and/or synod executive committees that submitted their 1-2 potential synod nominees. Of those, 108 nominees completed the form. Two people from each region are to be identified from the synod nominations, which means at least 18 members of the CRLC will come from the synod nominees.

The remaining members will be selected from the synod and/or open nominations. The graphs below depict the breakdown of the representational principles from the open nominations (numbers include repeats).

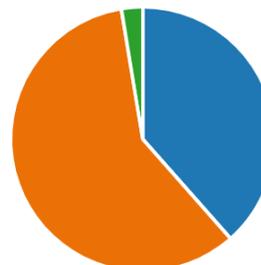
Nominee is a:

● Layperson	157
● Minister of Word and Sacrament	213
● Minister of Word and Service	12



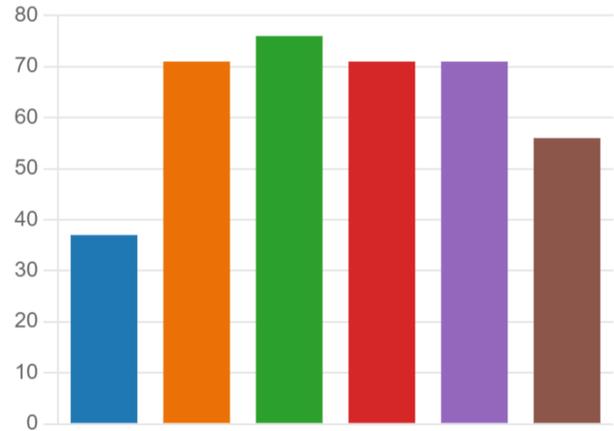
Nominee Gender:

● Woman	147
● Man	225
● Other	10



Nominee Age:

30 or under	37
31-40	71
41-50	76
51-60	71
61-70	71
Over 70	56



Nominee Ethnic Background:

Black [African National]	2
African Descent	30
Arab and Middle Eastern	2
Asian and Pacific Islander	10
Latino	22
American Indian and Alaska Native	4
Other/Unknown	9
White	303

Following the April meeting of the Church Council, all nominees will be notified of the appointments. The Office of the Secretary staff will notify CRLC members of their appointment.

We have contracted with Bishop Susan Johnson, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, to assist us as a consultant and process facilitator for the initial phase of the CRLC’s work. The first in-person meeting of the CRLC will be held at the Lutheran Center, July 13-15. Updates about the CRLC will continue to be available at [www.ELCA.org/CRLC](http://www.ELCA.org/CRLC).

**Task Force on On-Leave-From Call and Specialized Ministry**

The 2022 Churchwide Assembly directed a review of the roster manual, constitutional provisions, and policies related to “interim, transition, bridge, specialized, non-parish-based, and innovative calls, as well as on-leave-from-call status, protocols for removal from the rosters, and communication protocols.” This review is to include the time limits for on-leave-from-call (OLFC), steps for requesting a roster status, an appeal process when a bishop does not recommend granting or continuing a roster status, and the possibility of appeal in another judicatory. The assembly also named a number of specialized ministries to be considered in the review, along with a requirement that rostered ministers be involved who are currently or recently OLFC for a variety of reasons. The task force will consist of 12 members (two bishops, four ministers of Word and Sacrament, two ministers of Word and Service, and four lay members) who will consult with a wide range of constituencies.

**Congregation Reports**

We are grateful for the number of congregations that are submitting Forms A and C. Unfortunately, some encountered glitches in the online system that we’ve been working with our colleagues in IT to resolve. Please continue to urge congregations to submit their reports, as the membership numbers from these reports will be used to allot voting members for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

### **Bishops' Academy**

The 2023 Bishops' Academy was held in Minneapolis in early January in spite of a weather event that caused only a slight schedule delay. The combination of nine presentations, the visit to George Floyd Square and two of the neighborhood congregations which are deeply committed to the work for racial justice, and the celebration of the Epiphany at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church made the academy days a rich experience. One bishop noted that the time spent in Minneapolis was "legendary." Twenty-seven Conference of Bishops members and eight spouses attended the academy along with six churchwide staff members. Thanks to Paul Erickson and the Bishops' Academy Committee for their thoughtful planning and to MaryAnn Schwabe, Jennifer Place, and Dana Adams for making it all happen!

### **Assistants to the Bishop (A2B) Gathering**

The A2B gathering was held at the Hyatt Regency in Minneapolis from March 20-23. The theme for the event was 1 Thessalonians 5:11: *Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.* Because this was the first such gathering since the onset of the pandemic, many of the A2Bs/DEMs (Directors for Evangelical Mission) are new to their roles since the last gathering. 110 A2Bs/DEMs assembled to focus upon topics of interest and application to their areas of ministry, and ample time was allotted to build and renew relationships. An open forum with Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and me provided good opportunity for questions and conversation. We are grateful to the ELCA Mission Investment Fund and Portico Benefit Services which contributed funds to offset the cost of this event.

### **Synod Assembly Season**

Synod assembly season is nearly upon us. All churchwide representatives have been assigned to their respective assemblies. There are seven synods which will hold bishop elections in the spring and one in the fall. Four synods will not meet in assembly in 2023.

### **Attorneys Association**

The ELCA Attorneys Association successfully resumed its biennial meetings after a one-year delay due to the pandemic. More than 30 attorneys gathered in San Diego in November for a long weekend of continuing legal education and community building. Sessions included discussions on discipline in the ELCA, disability claims, updates from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and legal issues surrounding closing of congregations. Bishop David Nagler of the Pacifica Synod generously joined us on Sunday to preach and preside at worship planned by Keith Fry. Tom Cunniff, Aja Favors, and Natalie Young developed program content and activities that were very positively received. We look forward to meeting again in 2024 and are grateful for the support that many of the synod attorneys receive from their synods to attend.

### **Associate General Counsel**

In January, we said a fond farewell to former associate general counsel Aja Favors, who left to pursue a wonderful opportunity with another ministry-based organization. Her knowledge, skill, and love for the church shone through her work with us, and we know you appreciated working with her.

At the same time, we are glad to welcome Paul Irwin as the new associate general counsel. Paul is a U.S. Navy veteran and most recently served as a JAG officer at Naval Station Great Lakes. Originally from Iowa, he is an ELCA member and has degrees from Drake University and the University of Iowa. He is looking forward to getting to work with all of you and to meeting you.

As always, I am extremely grateful to the entire OS staff for their dedication and commitment, and particularly thankful for the leadership team of Dana Adams, Tom Cunniff, Keith Fry, MaryAnn Schwabe, and Jodi Slattery who embody one of my mother's favorite sayings, "Many hands make light work." What a delight it is to know them as both colleagues and friends!

**Addendum A: Church Council Letters of Call Issued in 2022**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Peter K. Hanson	1/1/2022	Pastor	France
Abigail R. Resch	1/3/2022	Candidacy & Leadership Manager, Regions 7 & 8	ELCA
Timothy J. Brown	1/10/2022	Director for Congregational Stewardship	ELCA Foundation
Imani N. Olear	1/31/2022	Director for Evangelical Mission	Upstate New York Synod, ELCA
Gabi S. Aelabouni	2/1/2022	Area Desk Director	ELCA
Adam J. Miller Stubbendick	2/1/2022	YAGM Country Coordinator	Jerusalem
Jordan E. Miller Stubbendick	2/1/2022	YAGM Country Coordinator	Jerusalem
Tammy Jones West	2/7/2022	Interim Program Director	ELCA
Emily A. Wiles	2/7/2022	Program Director	ELCA
Melissa M. Vesco	3/1/2022	Chaplain	US Military
Kurt N. Hagestuen	4/18/2022	Chaplain	US Military
Khader S. Khalilia	5/16/2022	Program Director	ELCA
Kristen C. Rod	5/31/2022	Director for Evangelical Mission	Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA
Laura J. Gifford	6/6/2022	Acquisitions Editor	1517 Media
Aura V. Siguenza Del Aguila	7/1/2022	Director, CTLM	Wartburg Theological Seminary
Edward J. Woodward	7/25/2022	Chaplain	US Military
Matthew G. Zemanick	7/25/2022	Program Director	Lutheran Disaster Response
Steven P. Thomason	8/1/2022	Associate Professor	Luther Seminary
Teresita C. Valeriano	8/1/2022	Program Director	ELCA
Emily G. Rova-Hegener	9/1/2022	Contextual Learning Associate	Luther Seminary
Alexandra C. King	9/26/2022	Chaplain	US Military
Nicole M. Garcia	10/2/2022	Faith Work Director	National LGBTQ Task Force
Timothy J. Schroeder	10/3/2022	Regional Representative	Portico Benefit Services
Kellie L. Lisi	10/9/2022	Director of Community Life & Candidacy	Wartburg Theological Seminary
Philipos G. Ghaly	10/10/2022	Candidacy & Leadership Manager	Region 1, ELCA
Marissa K. Sotos	10/31/2022	Resource Developer	1517 Media
Dara Q. Clifford	11/7/2022	Director of Evangelical Mission	East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA
Rode S. Molla	12/3/2022	Associate Professor	Virginia Theological Seminary

**Addendum B: Churchwide Representatives to Synod Assemblies**

#	SYNOD	DATES	ELECTION	CW REP
1A	Alaska	4/28/23-4/30/23		John Weit
1B	Northwest Washington	NO ASSEMBLY		N/A
1C	Southwestern Washington	5/5/23-5/6/23		Lisa Heffernan
1D	Northwest Intermountain (Kuempel)	4/28/23-4/30/23	X	Sue Rothmeyer
1E	Oregon	5/20/2023		Amy Reumann
1F	Montana	6/1/23-6/3/23		Barbara Lund
2A	Sierra Pacific	9/15/23-9/17/23	X	Sue Rothmeyer
2B	Southwest California	6/1/23-6/3/23		Nicolette Penaranda
2C	Pacifica	5/5/23-5/6/23		Iain Chester
2D	Grand Canyon	6/8/23-6/10/23		Sara Cutter
2E	Rocky Mountain	5/16/23-5/18/23		Phil Hirsch
3A	Western North Dakota	6/2/23-6/4/23		John Weit
3B	Eastern North Dakota	6/3/23-6/4/23		Lamont Wells
3C	South Dakota	6/2/23-6/3/23		Phil Hirsch
3D	Northwestern Minnesota	6/3/2023		Daniel Kirschbaum
3E	Northeastern Minnesota	4/28/23-4/30/23		Sara Cutter
3F	Southwestern Minnesota	6/9/23-6/10/23		Kevin Jacobson
3G	Minneapolis Area	4/28/23-4/29/23		MarieAnne Sliwinski
3H	Saint Paul Area	5/12/23 - 5/13/23		Louise Johnson
3I	Southeastern Minnesota	5/6/2023		Kimberly Vaughn
4A	Nebraska	6/2/23-6/3/23		Christopher Otten
4B	Central States	6/3/2023		Kristen Opalinski
4C	Arkansas-Oklahoma (Girlinghouse)	5/5/23-5/7/23	X	Sue Rothmeyer
4D	N. Texas - N. Louisiana	4/28/23-4/29/23		Javier Goitia Padilla
4E	Southwestern Texas	4/22/23 in person, 5/6/23 Zoom		Ruben Duran
4F	Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast	5/19/23-5/20/23		Nick Kiger
5A	Metropolitan Chicago	6/3/2023		Louise Johnson
5B	Northern Illinois	6/16/23-6/17/23		Nick Kiger
5C	Central/Southern Illinois (Roth)	3/25 Zoom, 6/1/23-6/3/23	X	Victoria Flood
5D	Southeastern Iowa	5/15-5/16 online, 5/20 in person		Kristen Opalinski
5E	Western Iowa	4/21/23-4/22/23		Sue Rothmeyer
5F	Northeastern Iowa	6/9/23-6/10/23		Jill Beverlin
5G	Northern Great Lakes (Finegan)	5/18/23-5/20/23	X	Lori Fedyk
5H	Northwest Synod of Wisc	4/29/2022		Daniel Kirschbaum
5I	East-Central Synod of Wisc	5/20/2023		Keith Fry
5J	Greater Milwaukee	6/2/23-6/3/23		Kevin Jacobson
5K	South-Central Synod of Wisc	5/20/2023		Jodi Slattery

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<b>5L</b>	La Crosse Area	6/9/23-6/11/23		<b>Victoria Flood</b>
<b>6A</b>	Southeast Michigan (Kreiss)	5/18/23-5/20/23	X	<b>Victoria Flood</b>
<b>6B</b>	North/West Lower Michigan	5/7/23-5/9/23		<b>Lori Fedyk</b>
<b>6C</b>	Indiana-Kentucky	6/10/2023		<b>Bishop Eaton</b>
<b>6D</b>	Northwestern Ohio	NO ASSEMBLY		<b>N/A</b>
<b>6E</b>	Northeastern Ohio	5/12/23-5/13/23		<b>Kimberly Vaughn</b>
<b>6F</b>	Southern Ohio	6/3/2023		<b>Mary Ann Schwabe</b>
<b>7A</b>	New Jersey	5/13/2023		<b>Amy Reumann</b>
<b>7B</b>	New England	6/9/23 - 6/10/23		<b>Ruben Duran</b>
<b>7C</b>	Metropolitan New York	5/5/23-5/6/23		<b>Jodi Slattery</b>
<b>7D</b>	Upstate New York	6/2/23-6/3/23		<b>Amy Reumann</b>
<b>7E</b>	Northeastern Pennsylvania	6/1/23-6/3/23		<b>Iain Chester</b>
<b>7F</b>	Southeastern Pennsylvania	5/5/23-5/6/23		<b>Mary Streufert</b>
<b>7G</b>	Slovak Zion	NO ASSEMBLY		<b>N/A</b>
<b>8A</b>	Northwestern Pennsylvania	6/9/23-6/10/23		<b>Christopher Otten</b>
<b>8B</b>	Southwestern Pennsylvania	6/16/23-6/17/23		<b>Judith Roberts</b>
<b>8C</b>	Allegheny	6/17/2023		<b>Kristen Opalinski</b>
<b>8D</b>	Lower Susquehanna	6/2/23-6/3/23		<b>Bishop Eaton</b>
<b>8E</b>	Upper Susquehanna	6/16/23-6/17/23		<b>Phil Hirsch</b>
<b>8F</b>	Delaware-Maryland	6/9/23-6/10/23		<b>Keith Fry</b>
<b>8G</b>	Metropolitan Washington, DC	6/3/2023		<b>Keith Fry</b>
<b>8H</b>	West Virginia-Western MD	5/20/2023		<b>Christopher Otten</b>
<b>9A</b>	Virginia (Humphrey)	6/8/23-6/11/23	X	<b>Sue Rothmeyer</b>
<b>9B</b>	North Carolina	6/2/23-6/3/23		<b>Jodi Slattery</b>
<b>9C</b>	South Carolina	6/8/23-6/10/23		<b>Judith Roberts</b>
<b>9D</b>	Southeastern	6/2/23-6/4/23		<b>Kimberly Vaughn</b>
<b>9E</b>	Florida-Bahamas (Suarez)	6/8/23-6/10/23	X	<b>Lori Fedyk</b>
<b>9F</b>	Caribbean	NO ASSEMBLY		<b>N/A</b>

## Report from the Treasurer

### FY23 Operating Results

The churchwide organization (CWO) of the ELCA ended fiscal year 2022 (1/31/2023) with positive operating results in the unrestricted fund. Despite an inflationary environment coupled with lower congregational attendance and unrestricted giving following the pandemic, reductions in spending resulted in net revenues over expenses of \$2.1 million vis a vis a breakeven budget.

Mission support, which represented approximately 63% of our unrestricted giving in FY22, comes from offerings shared with congregations who keep about 95% for their ministries and share the remainder with synods. Synods keep about 55% of this to support their work and pass along the remainder to CWO. Mission Support for FY22 was 3.2% below budget and 4.6% below the prior year.

This is not to suggest our constituency is not supportive of the work of the church; rather there seems to be a shift toward greater giving for restricted funds (i.e., ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response) rather than support for infrastructure. This is an important consideration as we set our vision and plan for the future.

Direct gifts in support of Where Needed Most were also favorable to plan by 7.5% in part due to special synod gifts of \$1.3 million.

Consistent with global market returns, investment income was below plan and prior year. Support for missionaries and young adults in global mission were also below plan, largely due to fewer participants in the programs which also contributed to some of the expense savings.

Overall spending was a 89% of the spending authorization which generated savings of \$7.2 million.

The combination of ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster revenues resulted in the largest year ever, totaling over \$46.9 million. LDR revenues were over \$24 million, led primarily by over \$12.4 million of support for the crisis in Eastern Europe. The generous support for ELCA World Hunger allowed the organization to provide sustainable development grants in 54 countries and 22 states.

We continue to focus on building the infrastructure to support and innovative culture. The ramp up was slower than planned in FY 22 which also contributed to expenditure savings. The goal of our innovation work is for it to permeate the organization. In addition, to the Innovation home area staff, we have released nearly \$600K from an endowment this year and are beginning work to support innovation projects aimed to focus on young adults and diverse communities. We are working to build websites to engage new people and have begun partnerships with the Barna Group and the Fuller Youth Institute. Our funding for this work comes from the unrestricted budget as well as donors and grants from the Lilly Foundation.

### Adaptive Insights

CWO implemented Adaptive Insights, the budgeting tool within Workday for the FY23 budget. While this was a labor intensive initiative for the entire organization, feedback from cost center managers is that they feel have a much better understanding of their budgets having gone through this process.

## **Report from the Vice President**

Greetings! It has only been a mere number of weeks since we last met during the Church Council Retreat, and it was wonderful to see everyone in the Twin Cities. I am grateful for all the work and effort that you put into our church and our Church Council. And even though we did not conduct business in our Church Council Retreat, we were very busy indeed. I pray that our experiences in going to George Floyd Square, having honest conversations about race, and engaging in open and frank conversation on Saturday and Sunday of the Retreat stay with us and guide us over the next two and a half years. I know that our time together had a profound effect on me.

Since the last time we had a business meeting, my focus shifted from figuring out how does *Robert's Rules of Order* work, to exploring the churchwide organization. I started bothering the Strategic Communications team (and they were very good sports to take a couple Teams meetings with me), talking about how we can leverage ELCA social media to share more widely the work the Church Council is doing. In a few weeks, I should have an official Vice President of the ELCA Facebook page with which to do even further engagement (and if it goes well, they may even trust me with a Twitter account!). Thanks to Jeffery Roberts, social media and online manager, and Candice Buchbinder, public relations manager, for walking me through the work Strategic Communications does, and introducing me to Canva.

Though, fear not, I have not given up on my greater understanding of *Robert's Rules*. When I go on paternity leave for my paying job (more on that below), I intend to take an "Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure" course offered online by the University of Wisconsin. Both Secretary Sue Rothmeyer and Jodi Slattery, executive for governance, have taken this course and recommended it highly to me. I am looking forward to learning about the nooks and crannies of *Robert's*.

During the last few months, I was also approached by the Development team (Rachel Wind, executive for development) who asked if I would be willing to do a "Fireside Chat" for the ELCA Leadership Circle. These are donors who have given over \$1,000 a year to the ELCA. Rachel Wind and I engaged a 30-minute conversation followed by Q&A (although I may have talked too long during the conversation part to have much of a Q&A). I gained a real appreciation for the Development team, which I was not aware of prior to this event. They are coming up with interesting and innovative ways to engage our donors. It also led me to think that for those disappointed in how short the Q&A was, I can leverage the VP Facebook page (as I talked about above) to do my own, open to anyone (though I may be asking for trouble there).

I have also had conversations with Secretary Rothmeyer, Jennifer Place, synod relations support and events manager, and Deacon MaryAnn Schwabe, executive for synod relations, to try to find out how the churchwide organization can help train and support synod vice presidents. Many of our synod vice presidents have not received any formal training for their immensely important work since the pandemic. We believe we may have the outlines of a plan and have begun talks with the Synod Vice President Planning Team to hopefully make plans into reality. Perhaps we can also create a more formalized annual training program for synod vice presidents. At least that is my hope!

Since the last time we had a business meeting together, the Executive Committee of Church Council has spent a lot of time on the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. In December, the Executive Committee approved the nomination procedure. Lots of thanks to the Office of the Secretary for all their work in prepping the questions and the website, and big thanks to Jodi Slattery for answering questions of potential nominees and tracking all the nominations. After the close of the nominations, the Executive Committee divided up the 400 nominations and, working in pairs, focused on narrowing that list down to 50-90 people. After that, we reached out to references and the nominees themselves to help us with the next phase—getting down to no more than 35. This task was not easy by any means. There

were many well qualified people who were nominated; far more than just 35. At this meeting, you will be presented with that final slate of no more than 35 nominees that have been the result of a lot of prayerful work among Executive Committee. This commission has a large task ahead of them and I pray for their work in the next two years.

On a personal note, as many of you know, my wife, Kendall, and I are expecting our second child in May. We are very excited to welcome our daughter around May 1 (though let's pray she's not interested in seeing the world a bit early and comes on April 20!). I should let you know that during this time, it may take me a little longer to respond to emails or messages, but I will respond as soon as I am able. Besides, you may get to see a baby on a Teams call in the future, and that will make waiting on my responses more bearable, right?

Blessings and grace,

Imran Siddiqui  
Vice President, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity Advisory Committee  
Annual Report  
Spring 2023**

The Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD) Advisory Committee meets to prioritize areas of the [How Strategic and Authentic Is Our Diversity Report and Recommendations](#) for engagement with churchwide staff and to create visibility and spaces for the strategy within the synods. Since spring 2021, the advisory committee continues to meet virtually to share updates from their synods and to engage with churchwide staff.

**Leadership Changes**

In October 2022, the Rev. Priscilla Austin became the new convener of the STAD Advisory Committee. Pr. Austin replaces the previous leadership of the Rev. Abraham Allende, bishop emeritus of the Northeastern Ohio Synod. Bishop Yehiel Curry of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod joined the table in August 2022 as the Conference of Bishops liaison to the advisory committee. Judith Roberts serves as co-chair of the advisory committee. Sharei Green serves as staff support to the committee.

**2022-2023 Priority Work of the Advisory Committee**

In September 2022, the advisory committee prioritized the work of the Task Force Addressing Disciplinary Concerns of Leaders of Color and the Task Force to Study Educational Debt. The work of each task force relates to the recommendations named in the STAD document.

Judith Roberts, Sr. Director for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Jennifer DeLeon, Director for Racial Justice, facilitated the work of the Task Force Addressing Disciplinary Concerns of Leaders of Color and historically marginalized groups. The work of this task force stems from the recommendation to “create an office(r) for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The primary functions of this office will be (a) to equip and support leaders at all levels of the church to understand, speak out about, and act against discrimination based on race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or social status, and (b) to receive reports of harassment and discrimination and to investigate such claims, working in conjunction with functioning areas such as marketing, legal counsel, and human resources. This office will also assess the organization's current representation and recruitment of people of color, people whose primary language is other than English, and other protected classes.” ([STAD Report](#), p. 12)

At the current time, the churchwide organizational structure does not have a designated position or process to receive reports of discrimination experienced by rostered ministers of color and/or historically marginalized groups.

Adam DeHoek, Program Director for Resourceful Servants and Congregation Statistics Analysts, is leading the Task Force to Study Educational Debt. The Resourceful Servants initiative promotes the financial wellness of ELCA congregations, rostered ministers, and seminarians. In many cases, attending seminary requires significant financial sacrifices. The impact of these sacrifices can be long-lasting and frequently extends beyond the financial to the psychological and emotional. It cannot be ignored that these issues are more pronounced for people of color. The ELCA Church Council has appointed a 14-person task force to study educational debt among ELCA rostered ministers and propose recommendations to address it. The objective is to bring help and hope to as many ELCA rostered ministers as possible, so they might be able to live out God's calling for their lives. The ELCA Resourceful Servants task force is taking the lead on compensation-related matters from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. This includes communications with Portico Benefit Services. The Quality of Call team remains in conversation with Resourceful Servants to share its needs and objectives and adds to this

task force's intersectional analysis and forthcoming plans, which will address the challenges across the ELCA ecosystem. The task force will provide periodic reports to the Church Council with a final report due in Spring 2025.

### **STAD updates on the ELCA Quality of Call for Women in Ministry**

The churchwide organization work with synods to monitor the duration of the call process for people of color, particularly women of color. The average duration of the call process for white males will serve as a benchmark, and people of color still waiting for call after that amount of time has passed will receive priority. Dr. Mary J. Streufert, director for ELCA Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment, ELCA Quality of Call for Women in Ministry, is leading the Quality of Call for Women in Ministry Initiative.

### **Intersectional Sexism and Candidacy**

*Strategic Goal 4.2 — Collaborate with Region 9 to prepare and implement a prototype plan for engaging and supporting candidacy committees and congregational call committees “to embed and incorporate anti-sexism training and protocols in their ongoing work.”*

*Strategic Goal 4.3 — Collaborate with regional candidacy and leadership managers to prepare candidacy and call committees in regions or synods.*

Designed and facilitated two sessions on intersectional sexism and how to address it in the ELCA candidacy process for Region 5 candidacy committee chairs and synod staff members who work on candidacy, with 12-15 participants. As a result of the Region 5 sessions on intersectional sexism, two synods requested additional training for their candidacy committees. Also, initiated conversations with regional candidacy and leadership managers for future information collection regarding boundaries training for candidates and candidacy committees.

### **Formation Processes in the ELCA SenseMaker®**

*Strategic Goal 1.2 — Support using SenseMaker® in the maximum allowed synods (TBD) per our contract.*

*Strategic Goal 4.7 — Use SenseMaker® and other means to continue to explore the effects of candidacy, internship and first call on pastors who are women.*

SenseMaker® is designed to collect stories from individuals engaged in the formation processes of candidacy, seminary education, internship and first call. The data collected will be used to understand the differences in experience related to gender, race, sexual orientation/identity and the intersectionality of these identity markers. The Candidacy Task Force, through the Rev. Sara Cutter, was consulted.

### **Future Church Engagement**

The advisory committee met with Jackie Baumhover, Future Church, Director for Strategy in January 2023. The first meeting provided a background of various ELCA justice initiatives named by the churchwide assembly in 2019 and 2022 that align with the vision of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity document. The initial meeting was designed to build a connection with the STAD priority areas of work and a larger vision of engaging a million younger, new, diverse people. The STAD Advisory Committee has asked to be included as resources partners in additional efforts of Future Church goals.

### **Partnerships With Full Communion, Ecumenical and Interreligious Partners, and Related Organizations that deepen this church's shared commitment and struggle toward authentic diversity and inclusion in the ELCA's systems, structures, and organizations.**

Over the past year, this work has included several inter-related areas of work and overlapping partnerships—spanning from the local congregation to churchwide. This work has included:

- Compiling information about full communion and other ecumenical partners' DEI audits, including the specific goals defined, the processes utilized, and the firms/consultants used to inform ELCA considerations. This information was shared with the director for racial justice, the Churchwide Assembly Memorials Committee, and the Conference of Bishops.
- Engaging in the [ACT Now to End Racism Initiative](#) of the National Council of Churches (NCC) was uplifted at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly with guest speaker Bishop Vashti McKenzie, Interim General Secretary and President. This work will continue with the newly-launched (February 1) [Journey to Jubilee: Campaign for Reparative Justice and Democracy Reform](#)—a partnership of the NCC and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and through ongoing ELCA staff engagement at the NCC's Reparatory Justice Table, convening tables, and the annual Christian Unity Gatherings that focus on anti-racism.
- Engaging in the World Council of Churches' [Programme to Combat Racism](#). This has included various people providing leadership and participating in public webinars on topics that intentionally marry theological reflection and advocacy. Importantly ELCA was well-represented by Jennifer DeLeon and the Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells in the WCC's ecumenical delegation at the historic first session of the [UN Permanent Forum for People of African Descent](#) where delegates addressed the intersection of racism, Afrophobia, and reparatory justice.
- Participating by invitation in the 2023 annual forum of the Conference of National Black Churches, under the theme, "Confronting the Impact of COVID-19 and the Broader Pandemic of Racism." Presiding Bishop Eaton, Jennifer DeLeon (director, racial justice), and Judith Roberts (senior director, DEI) along with CME Bishop Teresa Jefferson Snorton (NCC chair) participated in a panel moderated by AMEZ Bishop Darin Moore on the topic of "Race and Reconciliation" sharing about the ELCA's journey toward racial justice and healing.
- Engaging through Churches Beyond Borders (the ELCA's newest partnership of full communion) around our common commitments to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and confront the legacies of slavery, including racism and white supremacy. A series of leadership consultations took place throughout the first half of 2022, culminating in a workshop offered by the four churches during the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, with leadership from Vance Blackfox, director, ELCA Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations. Vance created a website of resources to deepen and extend this work at [elca.org/rotdod](http://elca.org/rotdod)
- Providing support and encouragement to the ELCA's full communion partnership with the Moravians regarding their considerations to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and to join ecumenically in this work. This took place in the context of the June 2022 Southern Province Synod, where United Lutheran Seminary President Guy Erwin, who is a member of the Lutheran Moravian Coordinating Committee (LMCC), was attending on behalf of the Office of the Presiding Bishop. In his report, he shared about the ELCA's work and invited the Moravians to join. In response, the Synod passed a proposal to initiate such work among themselves, with the Northern Province, and possibly together with the ELCA.
- Inviting the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, Canon to the Presiding Bishop for Evangelism and Reconciliation (The Episcopal Church), to serve as theologian in residence at the 2023 National Workshop on Christian Unity. Spellers oversees the work for TEC's [Racial Reconciliation](#), so this will be an opportunity for learning more about their specific work and identifying areas of cooperation.
- Inviting and/or encouraging pastors, community leaders, and synod staff and bishops to build and deepen partnerships with Historic Black Churches. One example of this is with the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod, and their cooperation with Bethel AME church, which has included building stronger relations among congregants, accompaniment/advocacy in their quest for reparations for Bethel's church building (which was taken to build the Penguins hockey arena and then returned), rededication of their church, prayer and worship, and pulpit supply and exchange. The focus is on

ready/willing/well-placed leaders to grow from the ground. Pr. Well's examples in campus ministry are also vital.

- Publishing "[ELCA Guidelines for Ministry in a Multi-Religious World](#)," as part of the implementation of "[A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment: A policy statement of the ELCA](#)." These guidelines reflect input from over 2,600 people across the church, and take an intersectional approach to engaging diversity that is not only religious, but also often racial and ethnic. Two committee members also serve as leaders of ELCA ethnic-specific associations.
- Publishing "[Preaching and Teaching 'With Love and Respect for the Jewish People](#)," a guide developed by the ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations to help people avoid anti-Jewish interpretations of difficult Scripture passages, and to lessen and ultimately prevent our complicity in anti-Jewish theology, rhetoric, and action.
- Equipping, connecting, and mobilizing through the [Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign: Standing with American Muslims, Advancing American Ideals](#). This has included providing executive leadership, mobilizing ELCA people in various advocacy efforts to prevent anti-Muslim policies (i.e. the "No Ban Act"), and inviting ELCA people (lay & rostered) to provide leadership and participate in local and online "[Faith Over Fear](#)" trainings as a long-term strategy to countering anti-Muslim bias and bigotry.
- Participating in the National Council of Churches' five inter-religious dialogues (Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Sikh) with people local to those dialogue also participating. The topic in this period has focused on anti-racism and religious nationalism. ELCA participation in these dialogues have intentionally included ELCA people local to where each dialogue is held who are part of inter-religious families or who claim multiple religious practices, and/or people of ethnic-specific communities who have particular experience, wisdom, and insights that are critical for the ELCA's fullest possible participation in these dialogues.
- Improving how ecumenical and inter-religious appointments and nominations, and those requested from bishops, consider and uphold our church's commitments to authentic diversity.

### **ELCA Fund for Leaders**

The churchwide organization recommit monies from the ELCA Fund for Leaders capital campaign to the Educational Grant Program to ensure that such grants are intentionally and appropriately distributed to the communities of color for which they are intended.

While Fund for Leaders (FFL) has not yet made progress in expanding support beyond the MDiv and MA degree to help leaders of color prepare to be teaching theologians of this church, the FFL Director has continued to remind leadership that such a change is within the ministry's purview and that support for advanced degrees was even lifted up in the original documents presented to the 1997 Churchwide Assembly at the Fund's founding. As FFL transitions its Operations staff over to the Christian Community and Leadership (CCL) home area, conversations will be ongoing and gain momentum. The FFL director, the Rev. Marissa Krey, commits to including detailed information about these possibilities in the transition documents she prepares for CCL Leadership.

FFL has made significant progress related to the new TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) Scholarship. FFL supported 66 TEEM students in 2022-2023 with this new scholarship, awarding each of them \$5,000. Of the 80 TEEM applicants, 42% were candidates of color. Per the advisory committee's request, all candidates were awarded the scholarship—as long as they had classes left to take (a few of the applicants were really almost done with the program).

The full-time requirement form was dropped from the FFL's Full Tuition guidelines for the 2023-2024 year. The goal is to have a blind application process, so staff won't know if students are part-time or full-

time as the applicants are selected (unless they happen to mention it in their video essay). Staff will be able to report out on this change later in the year as the application process is ongoing. Staff understand that in the future there may have to be changes to the current application process altogether in order to better accommodate part time students. Therefore, this is only a first attempt at trying to reach this population. Adjustments will be made as needed.

### **Womanist Biblical Interpretation Book Study**

*Strategic Goal 5.5 — Create a continuing education program (CEP) funding source for women who are pastors to advance their abilities to serve, with particular focus on patriarchy, sexism, white supremacy, racism and homophobia.*

*Strategic Goal 6.2.C — Feed the life of faith for pastors who are women through theological engagement and resources. Cultivate courses and certifications in womanist, mujerista, feminist and queer theologies for ELCA seminarians and rostered ministers.*

*Strategic Goal 6.3 — Support an initiative to create a pan-ELCA seminary Certificate in Womanist Theology.*

Supported book study in womanist biblical interpretation, using Dr. Angela Parker's new book *If God Still Breathes, Why Can't I? Black Lives Matter and Biblical Authority*. The book study groups met three times during January and February. Books were purchased for more than 80 women who are ELCA rostered ministers or seminarians participating in the book study. An honorarium was funded for book study facilitators. One member of the Quality of Call team served as a facilitator.

**STAD recommendations:** Develop a plan in partnership with ethnic-specific directors and associations to welcome the gifts, skills, and bodies of work of theologians and lay leaders from marginalized communities, and to promote and distribute the opportunities for learning from the work of theologians, teachers and leaders from marginalized communities.

### **Doctoral-Scholar-in-Residence for Womanist Theologian**

*Strategic Goal 6.4 — Establish and support a pilot two-year doctoral-scholar-in-residence award at Trinity Lutheran Seminary to support women who are BIPOC and who focus on womanist, mujerista, feminist, decolonial and/or queer Lutheran theologies to teach at ELCA institutions.*

Coordinated with Trinity Lutheran Seminary to establish a pilot two-year doctoral scholar-in-residence award to support women of color and who focus on womanist, *mujerista*, feminist, decolonial and/or queer Lutheran theologies to teach and otherwise serve at ELCA institutions.

In partnership with Trinity Seminary, Denise Rector was named as the first recipient of the two-year pilot doctoral-scholar-in-residence award for ELCA women of color in liberative theologies. The pilot residency began in June 2022 to prepare for the academic year of 2022-2023.

*Living Lutheran* published the online article "Doctoral Scholar Residency Supports Theology From Black Women's Perspective." This article shares how the Quality of Call Initiative has partnered with ELCA Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment and the ELCA Womanist Theology Initiative to create the first doctoral-scholar-in-residence award for ELCA women of color.

Denise Rector shared this update on her first semester as the doctoral scholar-in-residence:

*"I am going through a sort of academic formation, which is a really wonderful opportunity. The faculty here at Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University have been so generous with me, from discussing*

*practical syllabus/pedagogy questions to finding effective ways to schedule and focus on academic writing. I've been able to observe how faculty care for students academically and spiritually, and that in itself has been a wonderful experience. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to not only teach but have the teaching inform my dissertation work. That is something several scholars (including the dean here at Trinity) said would happen, and it is truly invaluable. This semester, I am teaching a class that looks at U.S. history told by cultures who have been marginalized by that very history, and how questions of identity, hegemony, and epistemology intersect with theology. Next semester I will teach 'Perspectives in Christian Ethics', which will include focus on womanist and other liberative theologies; ELCA social statements; and writings of ELCA women of color. It is a privilege and an honor to bring these important leaders and topics to students."*

Conversation and planning were initiated to change the residency to a two-person cohort, with alternating first years.

Examples of areas of work from ELCA Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment:

1. The study guide for *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* is intersectional in methodology and presentation.
2. There is collaboration happening with partners at Trinity, Luther, and United seminaries, synod leaders, and the churchwide organization on the ELCA Womanist Theology Initiative. Efforts include:
  - a. Cultivating ecclesial formation and leadership among women of color and girls of color.
  - b. Exploring and supporting a possible pilot certificate or field of study in womanist theology across all ELCA seminaries through course offerings and interest in this field of study and formation.
  - c. Cultivating interest among rostered women in ministry in continuing education in a wide array of liberative theologies (e.g., womanist, *mujerista*, queer, indigenous).
3. The directors for Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment and Racial Justice are collaborating on education and encouragement with the ELCA Conference of Bishops and the ELCA Church Council.
4. The director for Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment is regularly leading workshops on her book, *Language for God: A Lutheran Perspective*, which includes some history on race, sex, and gender theories.

## **Publishing House of the ELCA (1517 Media) Report**

*Submitted by Tim Blevins, President and CEO*

The publishing activities of 1517 Media complement the goals of the ELCA churchwide organization. We join in seeking a common purpose: to activate each of us to invite more people into the way of Jesus and discover together community, justice, and love.

This summary highlights recent initiatives in our two publishing areas, Congregational Resources and Books, and in the ministry as a whole, toward the pursuit of this vision.

### ***Congregational Resources***

Through our Augsburg Fortress and Sparkhouse resources, we remain focused on and dedicated to helping congregations thrive.

**Worship:** We have received a \$50,000 planning grant from the Lilly Endowment as part of its “Nurturing Children through Worship and Prayer” initiative. We are working now with frequent partner Mark Howell of HMR Consulting to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research that will inform our proposal for an implementation grant (phase 2) of up to \$1.25 million over a 5-year period. Eleven focus groups have been conducted so far exploring the topic of children and worship.

In February, we published the *Assembly Song Companion to All Creation Sings*, an essential resource for church musicians, pastors, and others who plan assembly song.

Preparation for Sundays and Seasons 2024 Year B (both the planning guide and the preaching volume) is now underway. Every year this flagship resource family gathers the contributions of more than 150 diverse pastors, deacons, musicians, artists, and seminary professors from across the US and beyond. We are glad to receive your recommendations for future contributors!

*Water & Spirit: Devotions for Lent 2023* was hugely popular—we sold through our entire print run.

**Faith Formation:** We continue to release content in our third series of Sparkhouse Digital content for subscribers to send home with families, an approach we began during the pandemic.

We are thrilled to offer several options for summer to congregations, including intergenerational events, creative arts camps, Families Celebrate Summer cards, and our new VBS, *Operation Restoration: Mending God’s World*, based on the work of the Rev. Daniel Erlander.

We are currently engaged in ongoing research with our external consultant to explore what’s next for Sunday school. As always, we are listening closely to ministry leaders to help us design new resources.

### ***Books***

We continue to expand the output of our several book imprints. Fortress Press, long a vital part of this church’s publishing efforts, seeks to advance scholarship and resource church leaders both in the ELCA and beyond. Our consumer book imprints, Beaming Books (children) and Broadleaf Books (youth and adult) offer avenues by which we extend our mission beyond the church and higher education to the broader society. As we plan for new titles to be released in the coming years, we consistently seek to expand contributions by authors who are Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. This sampling of published titles from the last six months illustrates the range of subjects and authors in these categories.

#### **FORTRESS PRESS ([fortresspress.com](http://fortresspress.com))**

*So That All May Flourish: The Aims of Lutheran Higher Education.* Marcia Bunge, Jason Mahn, and Martha Stortz, eds.

*The Artifice of Intelligence: Divine and Human Relationship in a Robotic Age.* Noreen Herzfeld.

*For Every Matter under Heaven: Preaching on Special Occasions.* Beverly Zink-Sawyer and Donna Giver-Johnston.

*My Burden Is Light: Making Room for Jesus in Preaching.* Craig Satterlee.

**BEAMING BOOKS ([beamingbooks.com](http://beamingbooks.com))**

*I Am Not Afraid: Psalm 23 for Bedtime.* Sandy Eisenberg Sasso and Marta Dorado.

*Wherever You Are.* Glenys Nellist and Sian James.

*Pause, Breathe, Be: A Kid's 30-Day Guide to Peace and Presence.* Megan Borgert-Spaniol and Lauren Kukla.

*God Is Just Like Me.* Karen Valentin and Antonieta Muñoz Estrada.

**BROADLEAF BOOKS ([broadleafbooks.com](http://broadleafbooks.com))**

*The Planet You Inherit: Letters to My Grandchildren When Uncertainty's a Sure Thing.* Larry Rasmussen; foreword by Terry Tempest Williams.

*What Makes You Come Alive: A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman.* Lerita Coleman Brown.

*Preparing for War: The Extremist History of White Christian Nationalism—and What Comes Next.* Bradley Onishi.

*The Embodied Path: Telling the Story of Your Body for Healing and Wholeness.* Ellie Roscher.

***1517 Media Organizational Matters***

Persistent high inflation continues to contribute to the cost of doing business (raw materials, shipping, printer demand) and has also impacted consumer spending. Additionally, we have experienced a precipitous drop in buying by major booksellers, including Amazon. These headwinds are affecting the entire publishing industry, not just 1517 Media. However, we are cautiously optimistic that buying patterns will rebound as Amazon sells down the inventory it acquired to meet the demand for books during the pandemic. Amazon has indicated publicly that it is committed to the book business. Despite these challenges, we remain confident that our Books strategy is working, as our sell-through to consumers remains strong, especially when compared to the trade industry as a whole.

We are several months into two transitions at the senior leadership level. After 28+ years at the helm of the Congregational Resources team, the Rev. Martin Seltz retired just after the new year. The Rev. Suzanne Burke, a 21-year employee whose editorial portfolio has included the Sundays and Seasons family of worship planning resources, has stepped into the role of Publisher for the Congregational Resources team. And in late 2022, Ryan Hemmer assumed the role of Editor in Chief for Fortress Press, following the departure of Will Bergkamp, who now serves as CEO of Friendship Press, publishing partner for the National Council of Churches.

A cross-functional Intercultural Competency Team continues its work to ensure all our colleagues at 1517 Media are equipped and supported in their ongoing development. In November, a statement of 1517 Media's beliefs, values, and commitments related to diversity, equity, and inclusion was shared with all employees, the product of a multi-month working group drawn from across the organization that crafted the statement for review and approval.

We strive to work with partners in ministry across the ELCA as we work together toward the future into which God is calling us. Thank you for your continuing interest and support! If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [blevinst@1517.media](mailto:blevinst@1517.media).

**1517 Media Digest of Board Actions**

**Submitted by:** Tim Blevins, President and CEO

**Date of Board Meeting:** November 3, 2022

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval.)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

Voted to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting in open session.  
(PH.22.11.05)

**Executive Session actions**

Voted to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting in executive session.  
(PH/ES.22.11.03)

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None

## **ELCA Foundation Report**

*Submitted by Annette C. Shoemaker, Interim President and CEO*

2022 was a year of change for the ELCA Foundation. Following the approval of the very first strategic plan in December of 2021, we began taking a hard look at our policies, processes, operations, and infrastructure—some of which had not been updated or upgraded in decades—in an effort to improve client service, create operational efficiencies, and establish good governance procedures to meet the organization’s fiduciary responsibility to our donors and investors.

The first step of the plan was to integrate our new mission, vision, and values statements into communications with stakeholders in order to increase the profile and familiarity of the Foundation’s responsibilities as defined by the ELCA constitution. Next, we began the initial phases of implementation of several important projects. With the help of our Audit Committee, the internal auditors, and several outside consultants, we embarked on an enterprise-wide risk assessment, documented financial policies, and tightened many internal controls.

At the end of 2021, total assets under management exceeded \$1 billion dollars and the Investment Committee determined that the Foundation needed an outside investment consultant with Outsourced Chief Investment Officer (OCIO) capabilities. A nationwide search was conducted and following extensive interviews a final selection of Fund Evaluation Group (FEG) was made. They officially began their service on Jan. 1, 2023, although much work was completed during the fourth quarter of 2022 to transition from the previous consultant.

Through it all work continued around our stated objectives of assisting donors in developing giving plans that will support the current and future work of ELCA ministries; holding and managing endowment assets; and offering pooled investment services for the churchwide organization, synods, congregations, and other ELCA related ministries. Despite the challenges presented by many external factors, e.g., inflation, the war in Ukraine, global warming, etc., which contributed to the volatile market results, over 60 new Ministry Growth Fund accounts were opened and deposits totaled \$30 million.

Development results for total gifts and managed assets in 2022 surpassed 2021 results, generating \$116.1 million and \$107.9, respectively. Planned gifts outpaced last year, \$76.5 million versus \$65.3 million, as gift planners were able to host more in person meetings. Current, and currently funded, gifts lagged compared to 2021, \$10.3 million versus \$14.9 million, and additions to the Ministry Growth Fund edged out last year, \$29.3 million versus \$27.7 million.

Total distributions to ministry during 2022 increased about 17% to \$56.3 million, compared to 2021, which totaled \$48.0 million.

**ELCA Foundation Digest of Board Actions**

**Submitted by:** Annette C. Shoemaker, Interim President and CEO

**Date of Board Meeting:** March 17, 2023

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit which require Church Council approval)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

FO.23.03.02 To replace the Stand With Africa designation in the Vincent L. and Annette L. Myers Memorial Endowment Fund with ELCA World Hunger, restricting the gift to the churchwide organization's work in Africa.

FO.23.03.03 To approve the revised Finance Committee Charter.

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None

## **Mission Investment Fund (MIF) Report**

*Submitted by Eva M. Roby, President and CEO*

### **New Board of Trustees Member**

Mission Investment Fund (MIF) of the ELCA welcomes Randy Foster as a new Trustee. He was elected by the Church Council in November 2022 to fill the vacancy created by a Trustee who was unable to fulfill his term. We are pleased to have him join our board and look forward to working with him.

### **Financial Update**

The most recent year completed brought many challenges, including inflationary pressures, escalating interest rates, and market volatility. Nevertheless, thanks to MIF's strength and stability, our 2022 results indicate a growing and healthy organization that is facilitating the ability of ELCA congregations and ministries to achieve their financial goals.

MIF saw slight growth in loans outstanding to \$582.7 million in 2022. We experienced a 49% increase in new loans issued during the year, funding a total of \$99.7 million in new loans. However, that gain was offset by a trend of an increase in payoffs, particularly in our participation loans. We continue to maintain a high quality loan portfolio, with a delinquency ratio below 2.0%.

Investment obligations decreased to \$559.4 million, in line with industry trends. Financial institutions have seen lower rates of personal savings and decreases in deposit balances as consumers are returning to more typical spending patterns as well as coping with inflation.

Total assets declined to \$776.3 million in 2022 as our investment portfolio experienced a decline in market value during a year of dismal market performance and high volatility. Net assets declined to \$202.9 million. MIF's capital ratio remains strong at 26.14%.

### **Achievements Under the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan**

In 2022, MIF concluded a four-year strategic plan period. We reached or exceeded our goals related to growth, including those for total assets, loans outstanding, investment obligations, and number of ecumenical partner loans. We also maintained our tradition of strength and stability. Along with both a very healthy equity ratio and delinquency ratio, we also reached or exceeded our target related the loans-to-total-assets ratio. We succeeded in the strategic goal around partnership with the ELCA Federal Credit Union, serving congregations and individuals through our collaboration on the Paycheck Protection Program and the Resourceful Servants initiative. Finally, we made great strides in organizational capabilities. A major outcome in this area is the creation of a comprehensive Enterprise Risk Management program.

While space does not permit a full report on all the accomplishments, this brief snapshot will hopefully provide a flavor of the success that MIF was able to achieve under the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan.

### **2023-2026 Strategic Plan**

As we concluded a year of defining our vision, setting direction, and creating strategy to position us for a strong, vibrant future, MIF is setting out in 2023 to employ the strategies of our new strategic plan, which covers the period of 2023-2026. For example, work continues at a steady pace on our modernization project, which encompasses people, processes, and technologies. We are deeply engaged with our System Implementation Partner in contract review, business process review, and workforce readiness assessment. We are also gearing up to execute several other strategic goals, and look forward to serving the church, its members, congregations, and communities through our new and ambitious plan.

Revised April 12, 2023

**Mission Investment Fund (MIF) Digest of Board Actions**

**Submitted by:** Eva Roby, President and CEO

**Dates of Board Meetings:** October 22, 2022 and March 30, 2023

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval.)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

*Oct. 22, 2022 board meeting:*

- Adopted the MIF 2023-2026 Strategic Plan
- Elected Board of Trustees committee chairs and committee members
- Approved:
  - Revisions to the Asset Liability Management Policy
  - Revisions to the Allowance for Loan Losses Policy

*March 30, 2023 board meeting:*

- Approved minor revisions to the 2023-2026 MIF Strategic Plan (addition of key results)
- Approved revisions to the MIF Financial Plan for 2023
- Approved resolutions relating to the issuance, offer, and sale of new offering of investments (i.e., the Offering Circular)
- Elected an additional member to the Governance Committee, on a motion brought by the committee
- Re-elected Eva M. Roby to a four-year term as President and CEO

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None

## Portico Benefit Services Report

Submitted by *The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, President and CEO, [twitter.com/RevJeffThiemann](https://twitter.com/RevJeffThiemann)*



More than ever, I see that success is achieved not by hunkering down, but by a willingness to adapt in a changing environment. For Portico, that means understanding and responding to the changing benefit needs of a changing ELCA workforce.

A key issue for us is declining new member enrollment. As the number of active ELCA congregations has declined, so has the number of Portico members sponsored by ELCA employers. This downward trend is a problem we share across our church.

Portico leverages the collective buying power of our national community to deliver quality, cost-effective benefits to our members—as they serve and in retirement. While our overall membership naturally increases as members who retire or leave employment choose to keep their retirement savings and health coverage with Portico, it's the decline in incoming members that will compromise our ability to secure preferred pricing and may eventually undermine the long-term stability of our plans. To continue serving our mission, we needed to adapt.

In 2017, in the spirit of church together, we expanded our benefit program for social ministry organizations to include the full complement of ELCA benefits and began to offer it to a wider group of ELCA-affiliated social ministry organizations, colleges, and universities. These new partnerships are bringing our benefits to more of those who serve while helping to manage benefit costs for all. And after five years, I can report success—Portico served 9.75% more sponsored members at the end of 2022 than in 2018.

You can help. If you know someone helping to lead an ELCA-affiliated nonprofit organization, please connect us. By embracing change together, we can more fully serve our shared mission.

## New Mental Health Opportunities

The emotional well-being of our leaders continues to be an ongoing concern within the ELCA. Our data confirms that there is continued unmet need for mental health support in our membership. To this end, we continue to enhance our mental health resources for members with ELCA-Primary health benefits.

- Most Learn to Live online mental health programs support a specific mental health issue. **Learn to Live's new Resilience program is preventive**, designed to help members, with or without mental health symptoms, more easily bounce back from life's challenges. Greater resilience, we're told, can strengthen our focus and motivation, job satisfaction and performance, as well as our relationships—with ourselves and others.
- In addition to conventional counseling, our **EAP (employee assistance program) provided by Carelon Behavioral Health now offers Talkspace**, a convenient online counseling and therapy option via text, audio, or video. Members can expect greater access to available providers with shorter appointment wait times.

EAP eligibility has also changed. Recognizing the significant impact those sharing a household can have on each other's emotional well-being, now everyone age 13+ in an eligible member's household—regardless of health plan status—qualifies for up to six EAP counseling sessions per issue per year, at no additional cost.

- Good mental health significantly improves one's ability to make lifestyle changes and manage a health condition. That's why members participating in our **Omada diabetes and hypertension program will also benefit from fully integrated behavioral health support resources**. Omada coaches can integrate, when appropriate, rigorous behavioral health resources and support into a member's care plan.

In the seven days following our Dec. 27 post-Christmas email, 35 members enrolled in Learn to Live's new Resilience program.

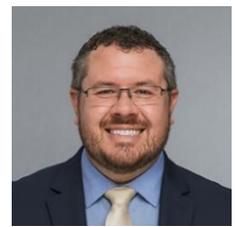
**Lesson:** Well-timed emails describing a specific opportunity get noticed.

## **Please Welcome Two New Regional Representatives**

Portico's regional representatives are known for the positive relationships they cultivate with plan members, congregation leaders, and synod staff. This winter, Portico celebrated the retirements of Barbara Debski and Deacon Terri Endres and their nearly 25 years of combined service at Portico. In addition, we welcomed to the team Reverends Tara Lynn and Tim Schroeder.



*The Rev. Tara  
Lynn*



*The Rev. Tim  
Schroeder*

## **Shaping Our Board for the Future**

As an expanding, future-oriented organization, Portico needs many experts and voices on our board representing younger rostered ministers as well as leaders of Lutheran Services in America organizations and ELCA colleges and universities. At their respective November 2022 meetings, Portico's board recommended and the ELCA Church Council approved a bylaw change which allows for the election of up to three non-voting, voice-only advisors selected for their specific expertise and experience. At Portico's February 2023 board meeting, we used this new provision to add a health care expert as a board advisor.

## **Year-end Market Update**

Last year, the Fed aggressively raised interest rates to tamp down inflation, the kind of aggressive policy moves we've not seen since the early 1980s. Rising interest rates, however, made a challenging environment for both stocks and bonds. While some economic indicators show the worst inflation may be behind us, the Fed remains focused on holding inflation down, so many expect continued interest rate increases in 2023, but at a slower pace and with lower increases.

## **Response to Annuity Adjustment for 2023**

Last November, Portico's Board of Trustees approved a 1.3% decrease to ELCA Participating Annuity monthly payments for 2023—the direct result of significant 2022 market declines. For the roughly 9,000 payment recipients, that averages about \$30/month. Knowing how important annuity payments are, Portico expanded its communications last fall, explaining clearly and with empathy what's changing and why—via letter, email, website, and on social media. Response from payment recipients was more positive than negative, with comments ranging from frustration to appreciation that, with such large market downturns, the decrease wasn't greater.

Since our last decrease 10 years ago, we've worked continuously to reinforce that our goal is income for life, and that variable annuity payments may increase, remain the same, or decrease to help make that happen. Our membership's calm response suggests that they've been listening.

## **Good News Regarding Telehealth Benefit**

As part of the federal government's recent extension of the CARES Act related to telehealth relief through 2024, health plans now have the option to charge those with high-deductible health plan coverage a copay for telehealth services or waive it. Portico's good news: We decided to waive the 98point6 \$5 copay for our ELCA-Primary health plan members with the Silver+ or Bronze+ options through Dec. 31, 2024.

**Portico Benefit Services Digest Board of Actions**

**Submitted by:** The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, President and CEO

**Date of Board Meetings:** February 23-24, 2023

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit which require Church Council approval.)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

**Approved** resolution concerning an additional privatized immigration detention social criteria investment screen.

**Approved** the re-election of the President, the Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, for another four-year term, commencing October 1, 2023.

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

**Approved** the appointment of Judith G. Berg as Board of Trustee advisor.

**Received** the report on 2023 Trustee Conflict or Duality of Interest and Code of Conduct.

**Received** the 4Q2022 Portico Benefit Services Management Report.

## **Women of the ELCA Report**

*Submitted by Linda Post Bushkofsky, Executive Director*

The work of the churchwide staff of Women of the ELCA is to support the organization's participants as they live out the mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. Here are some highlights of activities of the churchwide women's organization:

### **2023 Leadership Event**

Women of the ELCA's annual leadership event occurred online in February of this year. [Living Faithful: Called + Thriving](#) sought to move the organization "faithward" – shifting into leadership that is sustainable with roots that twist and turn while running deep and wide.

### **Daily Grace**

The Daily Grace app, first launched in 2011, will soon be retired. To avoid interruption, those who read Daily Grace via the app are encouraged to [subscribe to receive Daily Grace via email](#).

### **Twelfth Triennial Convention**

The [Twelfth Triennial Convention](#) of Women of the ELCA will be held September 19-21, 2023 in Phoenix, Arizona. Preparations are in full swing.

### **Just Love Gathering**

Following the triennial convention, women will gather for the [Just Love Gathering](#), September 21-24, also in Phoenix. Registration is open.

### **\$1 million campaign for Katie's Fund**

*2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the Next 100 Years* launched on June 11, 2022. It is a campaign to raise \$1 million for the Katharina von Bora Luther Endowment Fund, fondly known as Katie's Fund. The primary communication hub for the campaign is [welca.org/katiesfund](http://welca.org/katiesfund). As part of the kickoff to the campaign, the churchwide organization gave a \$1,000 gift from Katie's Fund to each of the organization's 64 synodical organizations, to be used for one of the three purposes of Katie's Fund: leadership development, global partnership, and living theology. An update on the use of these funds will be shared at the Just Love Gathering.

To learn more about Women of the ELCA and its varied ministries, [visit its primary website](#) or the websites of [Gather magazine](#) or [Café](#). You can also [subscribe](#) to the organization's monthly e-newsletter [Bold Connections](#).