



Summary of Church Council Meeting November 9–12, 2023

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met in Chicago November 9–12, 2023.

The Church Council took action on the following:

- in response to the granting of a leave of absence to Presiding Bishop Eaton, named the Rev. Michael Burk to serve as presiding bishop *pro tempore*
- re-elected Ms. Lori S. Fedyk as treasurer of the ELCA for a six-year term beginning Feb. 1, 2024
- elected the Rev. Benjamin B. Bergren [2D] to the Church Council for a term ending August 2025 to replace the Rev. Karn Carroll, who had resigned
- in response to a memorial from the Northwest Washington Synod, approved a continuing resolution allowing for a pre-identification process for the election of the presiding bishop
- authorized formation of a task force to assist the churchwide organization in exploring needed changes to budget work and priorities
- deferred reconsideration of selected passages in the “Message on End-of-Life Decisions” until after the 2023–2024 social message development cycle
- ratified amendments to synod constitutions
- approved amendments to various corporate social responsibility documents
- received reports and approved actions related to the following Churchwide Assembly actions and synod resolutions:
 - “Disability Status to Persons Experiencing Mental Illness” (*no changes recommended by Portico*)
 - “Voting Rights and D.C. Statehood”
 - “Equity and Clarity in the Mission Development Process” (*update requested for Spring 2024*)
 - “Salary Equity in the ELCA” (*updates requested through the Task Force to Study Educational Debt*)
 - “Motion I: Nominations and Elections Process” (*task force to be appointed*)
 - “Improvements to Online CWO Directory”
 - “Structured Process for the Pre-Assembly Identification of Nominees for the Election of a Presiding Bishop” (*continuing resolution passed*)
 - “Roth Tax Option for ELCA Leaders” (*update requested for Spring 2024*)
 - “Proposing Peace”
 - “Expanded Response: Climate Displaced Persons”
 - “LGBTQIA+ Presence among ELCA Governing Bodies” (*postponed until after reconsideration of this church’s teaching on bound conscience*)
 - “Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation” (*update requested for Fall 2024*)
 - “Including Creation Care” (*update requested for Fall 2024*)
 - “Supporting Vulnerable Youth” (*update requested for Fall 2024*)
 - “Providing for Ordination of Candidates Serving as Interim Pastors” (*referred to the Task Force on On-Leave-from-Call and Specialized Ministry*)
 - “Restoration of Language to the Constitution for Synods” (*update requested for Fall 2024*)
 - “Full Funding for Churchwide Ministries” (*update requested for Spring 2025*)
- received reports and approved actions related to the following previous actions of the Church Council:
 - “Creation of a Racial Justice Ombudsperson Position” (*update requested for 2024*)
 - “Recommendations for the Current Discipline Process” (*referred to the Task Force on On-Leave-from-Call and Specialized Ministry*)
- approved a 2024 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$68,083,962
- approved a 2024 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$26,000,000, provided the January 31, 2024, fund balance is in excess of \$10 million
- approved the report of the ELCA Audit Committee concerning the financial statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2023
- approved alignment and focus of fundraising priorities

- approved the accounting firm to conduct the audit of the 2023 fiscal year
- allocated two additional voting members for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to each of the following:

Alaska Synod (1A)	West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H)
Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C)	Caribbean Synod (9F)
Slovak Zion Synod (7G)	
- approved a motion to require racial justice education at each Church Council meeting
- acknowledged the Order of Lutheran Franciscans as an Independent Lutheran Organization relating to the Christian Community and Leadership home area
- approved an amendment to churchwide organization personnel policies to establish Indigenous Peoples Day as a holiday for the churchwide organization
- elected members of the boards of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary, Mosaic, Inc., and National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc.; elected a member of the advisory board of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary at California Lutheran University; and elected a member of the ELCA Foundation board of trustees
- elected the Rev. Andrew Taylor as a member of the Committee on Appeals to complete the term of the late Rev. Paul Blom
- approved amendments to the ELCA Participating Annuity Trust and the ELCA Retirement Plan relating to references to the “Bridge Fund”
- ratified amendments to the Bylaws of Wartburg Theological Seminary
- approved minutes of the Spring 2023 meeting for the Church Council and ratified actions taken by the Executive Committee of the Church Council

The Church Council received/engaged in the following:

- a prayer vigil for peace in the Holy Land hosted by the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
- an update on the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church
- an update on and discussion of churchwide organization priorities, including the Future Church: God’s Love Made Real initiative
- reports and updates from the home areas and teams of the churchwide organization
- reports and updates from officers and committees of the Church Council
- a report from the Conference of Bishops
- an update on innovation projects
- a report on the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility audit of ELCA governing documents
- an update on the ELCA’s Peace Not Walls Campaign
- an update on the 50th anniversary of ELCA World Hunger
- discussion of women in ministry
- a report of synods that amended their constitutions in accord with amendments to recommended provisions of the *Constitution for Synods* approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly
- the College Corporation meeting for Luther College
- learning about the work of the separately incorporated ministries (Portico Benefit Services, 1517 Media, ELCA Foundation, Mission Investment Fund, and Women of the ELCA)
- personal reflections on faith from council members
- process observations offered by council members
- ecumenical greetings from The Episcopal Church
- worship, prayer, Bible study, and fellowship