



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

October 2023

Dear friends,

Grace and peace to you.

The Executive Committee met and reviewed a document that gives us a vision and focus for our Church Council meetings. The vision is “*Church Council will enable and support the work of the ELCA in a way that is consistent with the ELCA's vision and purpose by utilizing equitable decision-making processes to realize our three priority areas of being a welcoming church, a thriving church, and a connected and sustainable church.*”

For this meeting, the focus is to receive high-level reports on learnings from listening groups, surveys, and pilot programs; to hear from the Administrative Team on the internal strategy of the unique and/or appropriate work of the churchwide organization; and to review and adjust the budget to support the work most important to accomplish the vision of “Future Church: God’s Love Made Real.”

What else will be forthcoming?

- Election of a new Church Council member.
- Conversation on the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church.
- Update on the DEIA audit on the ELCA’s governance documents.
- Consideration of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly voting member allocation.

We also will hold a College Corporation Meeting for Luther College on Saturday, Nov. 11 at 8:30 a.m. Bylaw 8.22.02 of the ELCA Constitution provides multiple ways for a relationship to exist between this church and its colleges and universities, including through a relationship with the Church Council. In constituting the full body of voting members, the Corporation includes the College President, the Regents, and the Church Council. Church Council members are expected to attend this meeting.

As you know, some action items will be *en bloc*. This is to allow time for strategic and generative conversations on other topics. If there is any action you do wish to discuss that is in *en bloc*, please notify Secretary Sue Rothmeyer during the Church Council meeting by Saturday, Nov. 11 at 9 a.m. This is also the deadline for any new business that you wish to add to the Church Council agenda.

The agenda will be posted about two weeks prior to the meeting. If you have questions about any of the matters above, I encourage you to reach out to Jodi Slattery, Jodi.Slattery@elca.org. The documents for the meeting will be found in the Church Council Microsoft Teams within the Files section of the “Public Current Meeting” channel. Please contact Joseph Schmidt, Joseph.Schmidt@elca.org, if you have problems accessing the Teams site.

As we prepare, let's pray for openness to God’s Spirit, humility in discernment, and bold trust that God will bless our work as we seek to give the gospel free course in the world.

God’s peace,

Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop

Report from the Presiding Bishop

As we move toward the end of the calendar year and the beginning of Advent, I am more aware of the changes and shifts in the church and in the world. The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) has launched. A generous gift from a donor family is moving the work of Future Church: God's Love Made Real forward. The hard work of building the next triennium's budget is underway. The *Living Lutheran* is transitioning to an all-digital format. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the refugee resettlement arm of the ELCA, is changing in some disconcerting ways. Lutheran Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger continue to provide support and work toward recovery with domestic and international communities including our ongoing work in Ukraine, South Sudan, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, and Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

At the 2022 Churchwide Assembly the following memorial was adopted: "...To direct the Church Council to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church comprised of leaders of diverse representation from all three expressions that, working in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, shall reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism, and will present its findings and recommendations to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a possible reconstituting convention to be called under the rules for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly." [CA22.01.06] This is significant work both in impact and scope. But the memorial primarily concerns itself with chapters four and five of the constitution and I read..."and all matters pertaining thereunto" to apply to consideration of chapters four and five. The CRLC is doing research, including talking to the synods who brought the memorial to the churchwide assembly to understand their intent, conducting listening sessions, accessing some of the Barna research, and hearing from various constituencies. The commissioners are getting an introduction to the complexities and scope of the churchwide office.

During the Church Council meeting, the Rev. Louise Johnson and members of her team along with representatives from the Barna Research Group will bring you up to date on the work completed, survey results, surveys in process, some early deliverables, and the remaining timeline. Over 11,000 congregants and congregations and close to 800 pastors and deacons responded to the survey. It was interesting to see that we agree that we felt the need to change was urgent, but the ability or willingness to change was less so.

Treasurer Lori Fedyk and her team, the Administrative Team and Advisors, Rachel Wind and her team, and the Budget and Finance Committee are all working on the budget. Information gathered by the Barna research will also be brought to bear. Building the next triennium's budget will necessitate prioritization, something that has proven to be extremely difficult for us. This is not to say that is not important and good. But we cannot continue doing everything we've always done and adding more. Also, an area of work does not need to be housed in the churchwide organization in order to be seen as legitimate or of greater importance. Every churchwide assembly adopts dozens of memorials and resolutions that cost thousands of dollars and require hundreds of hours of time. Chapter five of the ELCA Constitution states, "The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization of this church are independent expressions sharing responsibly in God's mission. In an interdependent relationship, primary responsibility for particular functions will vary among the expressions. *Whenever possible, the entity most directly affected by a decision shall be the principal party responsible for decision and implementation, with the other entities facilitating and assisting...*" (Constitutional Provision 5.01.c.) We are all the ELCA. We do not necessarily need to end programs, but we do need to relocate where the programs are administered.

The *Living Lutheran* will transition from a print edition to a digital platform. This was a difficult decision. The publications of the ELCA's predecessor bodies that form the *Living Lutheran* date back to the early 19th century. We are aware that not all of our members have access to digital media. There is an

element of grief that comes with this change. There is also great pride in the work of writers and editors throughout the decades who contributed to the magazine's publication.

There is a curse of unknown provenance that says, "May you live in interesting times." These are certainly interesting times. We didn't choose them, but here we are. I believe that the Spirit is transforming the church. Each of us carries the mission for a season. May we be faithful in the season God has given to us.

Report from the Vice President

Greetings! It has been quite an eventful few months since last we met during our online business meeting in April! A few days after that meeting, on May 3, 2023, our daughter Miriam Louise Siddiqui was born and after a few days undergoing bilirubin treatment (with the bright blue lights), she has been a completely healthy and happy young baby. Of course, having a new child has taken up quite a bit of time, so she's even shown up at an Executive Committee meeting or two.

Thankfully the powers that be at churchwide offices thought it wise to give me this summer off, regarding being the churchwide representative at synod assemblies. I am very grateful for that but I will be honest, I did really miss going to a synod assembly this summer. I followed as many as I could online and saw some absolutely amazing moments around our church. In the fall, I reached out to those synods that requested me as their churchwide representative and offered to join them virtually, over Zoom. In that way, I've attended (by which I mean I spoke for 20 minutes and took 10 minutes of Q&A) a few synod council meetings and have a few more on my agenda.

Though I did not stay at home the entire summer. I had the wonderful opportunity to be a Central Committee member of the World Council of Churches. In that role, I was able to attend the WCC Central Committee meeting in Geneva, Switzerland in June (don't worry, my parents came down for a couple weeks to help watch the kids!). I was very blessed by the experience. During that week in Geneva, I was able to meet and befriend many different people of many different denominations around the world. It was heartening to see such strong ecumenical work and the strong attempts to do that work with respect and understanding. Lutherans around the world were well represented, including the Moderator of the Central Committee, as well as many of our full communion partners. I would like to thank Ms. Kathryn Lohre (Executive, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations and Theological Discernment, Office of the Presiding Bishop) who was my guide in this world.

I have also been exploring the world of social media engagement. I mentioned last time that I was going to have an official Vice President of the ELCA Facebook page, thanks to the folks in Strategic Communications. I have been spending the summer and fall figuring out how best to engage with folks on Facebook and it has led to pleasant surprises. Social media can be filled with pitfalls, but there are also people looking to engage and connect and people who are passionate about our church and our faith. Our people have made me realize that some of my harsh views of social media may have been somewhat premature, and I look forward to being surprised more and more.

I will also admit that while I did indeed intend to take an Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure course offered online by the University of Wisconsin during my paternity leave, this did not happen. I kind of forgot how time consuming a new little one was (oops). It is most definitely still on my radar and while I may not be the better Roberts Rules person this meeting, perhaps in the future you can see the gains from increased learning.

I have still been working with our synod vice presidents and was happy to attend a virtual New VP Orientation, where Deacon MaryAnn Schwabe, Executive for Synod Relations and Secretary Sue Rothmeyer, along with the Synod Vice President Planning Team did a fantastic job raising and answering questions that new synod vice presidents need to know in order to do their jobs the best they can. I am still dedicated to trying to find out how the churchwide organization can best help train and support synod vice presidents. There will be an in-person meeting of synod vice presidents in March 2024, which I believe will be incredibly beneficial and life giving to those who attend.

Most recently, I was able to spend a few days at the Conference of Bishops, where I connected with some of the bishops around the country, engaged in conversations regarding land use of diminishing congregations, and presented a report (though to be perfectly honest, it was more a rambling). It is always a pleasure to be in the room while our bishops engage in meaningful discussions about how to make our church better.

Speaking of making our church better, I am excited to see each and every one of you and have important conversations regarding the future of our church... and we'll do some business too.

Blessings and grace,
Imran Siddiqui
Vice President, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Report from the Secretary

While many of us experienced the heatwave in Phoenix during the Rostered Ministers Gathering, those of us in the Office of the Secretary are beginning to “feel the heat” metaphorically as we continue to respond to actions from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly and begin in earnest preparations for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

CWA 2025 Voting Member Allocations

As preparations begin for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly (CWA), it is time in the cycle to notify the synods of their voting member allocations so they can elect their voting members. These allocations typically are shared with synods during October of the year following the CWA—thus this is the year. For those newer to the process, ELCA Constitution bylaw 12.41.11. stipulates the distribution of CWA voting members for each synod. Voting members are allotted to synods according to a formula based on the number of congregations in the synod and the number of baptized members reported on the annual congregation report for the previous year. In reviewing the 2022 data, the Office of the Secretary identified an issue with the way in which baptized members are counted. The pattern that has been followed in the past counts all congregations’ baptized members no matter when a congregation last filed an Annual Congregation Report. After discussion with the Conference of Bishops and the Executive Committee of the Church Council, the Executive Committee took action to affirm that the same pattern will be used for the 2025 CWA, but that, beginning with the 2028 CWA and moving forward, baptized membership will be counted *only* for those congregations that have filed an Annual Congregation Report in the three years preceding the allocation year. The allocations for CWA 2025 have now gone out to the synods. In addition, the Church Council has the authority to allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, which it will determine at this November meeting. Please see the action item in the *En Bloc Items*.

Church Council Elections

Sixteen synods will be invited to nominate two individuals in specified categories to be presented to the Churchwide Assembly as a slate for election to the Church Council. I have been in conversation with each of the 16 bishops involved as to preferences for the categories assigned. Following are the synods that will be nominating. A list of assigned categories will be provided in a separate attachment.

Alaska	Pacifica
Arkansas-Oklahoma	Sierra Pacific
Central/Southern Illinois	South Central Wisconsin
Lower Susquehanna	Southeast Michigan
Metropolitan New York	Southern Ohio
Nebraska	Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast
Northwest Intermountain	Virginia
Northwest Minnesota	West Virginia-Western Maryland

DEIA Audit

Neville Reid and his colleagues at the Fox, Swibel, Levin & Carroll law firm have completed the DEIA audit of ELCA governing documents that was called for by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. The full report is being shared with the Church Council, and we have invited Neville to present the results at the meeting. After the Church Council meeting, the results of the audit will be shared with this whole church.

Presiding Bishop Pre-Assembly Identification Process for 2025

In response to memorials from two synods regarding a possible pre-assembly identification process for the election of a presiding bishop, Kevin Anderson, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee (LCRC) of the Church Council, and I had conversations with the liaison bishops during the COB meeting. The Executive Committee and the LCRC will discuss this further at their meetings during the Church Council meeting.

Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

Members of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church gathered online Sept. 21 and 22. Prior to the meeting, commission members conducted interviews with the 10 synods that submitted memorials concerning the creation of the commission. The meeting included learning opportunities on topics such as the ELCA Constitution, racial justice in the ELCA, and current churchwide organization initiatives. Members were also trained on conducting listening events in preparation for the listening phase of their work and the thought-provoking discussions to come. The commission will be meeting again in-person Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 2023.

Task Force on On Leave from Call and Specialized Ministry

The Executive Committee has appointed 12 individuals to serve on the Task Force on On Leave from Call and Specialized Ministry that was mandated by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. Members were selected to address the constituencies and types of experience defined in the action, and represent all regions of this church. The following persons will serve:

Mr. Phillip Allen (Region 2)	Bishop Kurt Kusserow (Region 8)
Mr. Joshua Brodbeck (Region 6)	Deacon Krista Lind (Region 3)
Ms. Yvonne Curtis (Region 7)	The Rev. Gabriel Marcano (Region 4)
The Rev. Amy Diller Guida (Region 9)	The Rev. Katy Miles-Wallace (Region 4)
Bishop Paul Erickson (Region 5)	Deacon Karla Neumann Smiley (Region 1)
Ms. Julie Grindle (Region 7)	
Bishop Constanze Hagmaier (Region 3)	

The initial meeting of the task force will take place Nov. 7, 2023. The task force will be presenting a report to the Conference of Bishops and to the Church Council next fall.

Synod Bishop Elections and Installations

Bishops elected in 2023 were present for the second installment of Bishop Formation in October. Bishop installations have taken place as follows:

Central/Southern Illinois Synod, Bishop Greg Busboom: Saturday, September 23
Northwest Intermountain Synod, Bishop Meggan Manlove: Saturday, October 7
Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod, Bishop Becca Middeke-Conlin: Saturday, October 14
Virginia Synod, Bishop Phyllis Blair Milton: Saturday, October 21
To come: Sierra Pacific Synod, Bishop Jeff Johnson: Saturday, December 9

Newly elected Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops

Bishop Yehiel Curry (Metropolitan Chicago Synod) was elected to a four-year term as chair of the Conference of Bishops and will be joining the Church Council as a member at the March 2024 meeting. Bishop Deborah K. Hutterer (Grand Canyon Synod) was elected to a four-year term as vice chair. Both

terms begin Dec. 1, 2023. Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew (New Jersey Synod) has served as chair of the Conference of Bishops since 2020, and Bishop Patricia A. Davenport (Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod) has served as vice chair since 2020. Leaving the Executive Committee is also Bishop Ann Svennungsen (Minneapolis Area Synod). We are grateful for the faithful service provided by these bishops. The Rev. Amy Current, bishop of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, and the Rev. Lee Miller II, bishop of the Upstate New York Synod, were elected as at-large members of the Executive Committee. The new membership of the committee is as follows:

Bishop Yehiel Curry (*chair*), Bishop Deborah Hutterer (*vice chair*), Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Secretary Sue Rothmeyer, Bishop Amy Current, Bishop Lee Miller, Bishop Pedro Suárez.

Church Council Liaison Bishops

The following bishops will now be serving as liaison bishops to the Church Council:

- Bishop Laurie Jungling (1F) (begins Jan. 1, 2024; ends Dec. 31, 2028)
- Bishop Brenda Bos (2B) (completing Bp. Taylor term; ends Dec. 31, 2025)
- Bishop Craig Schweitzer (3A) (begins Jan. 1, 2024; ends Dec. 31, 2028)
- Bishop Scott Johnson (4A) (begins Jan. 1, 2024; ends Dec. 31, 2028)
- Bishop Amy Current (5D) (completing Bishop Curry's term; ends Dec. 31, 2025)
- Bishop Suzanne Dillahunt (6F) (begins Jan. 1, 2024; ends Dec. 31, 2028)
- Bishop Christopher deForest (7E) (began Jan. 1, 2022; ends Dec. 31, 2025)
- Bishop James Dunlop (8D) (begins Jan. 1, 2024; ends Dec. 31, 2028)
- Bishop Pedro Suárez (9E) (re-elected; began Jan. 1, 2022; ends Dec. 31, 2025)

As always, I am grateful to work with the staff of the Office of the Secretary, and am particularly thankful for the leadership team, including Dana Adams, Tom Cunniff, Keith Fry, MaryAnn Schwabe, and Jodi Slattery. I want to give a particular shout out to Paul Irwin, associate general counsel, who indeed provided good counsel during part one of Tom's well-deserved sabbatical. We manage to provide cooling balm and collegial spunk to and for one another, even as the heat rises!

**Nominees Requested from Synods Nominating for Church Council Elections
at 2025 Churchwide Assembly (Highlighted = Category Identified by Synod)**

1. Alaska Synod (1A) Lay Woman, **PC/L**
2. Northwest Intermountain Synod (1D) Rostered Woman
3. Sierra Pacific Synod (2A) Rostered Man
4. Pacifica Synod (2C) **Lay Woman**
5. Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D) Lay Man
6. Nebraska Synod (4A) Lay Man
7. Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C) Rostered Man
8. Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod (4F) Lay Woman, **LGBTQIA+, PC/L**
9. Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C) Rostered Man
10. South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K) **Lay Man**
11. Southeast Michigan Synod (6A) Lay Woman
12. Southern Ohio Synod (6F) **Rostered Man**
13. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) Lay Man
14. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) Lay Man
15. West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H) Rostered Man
16. Virginia Synod (9A) Lay Woman, **LGBTQIA+, PC/L, YA**

**Report from the Treasurer
October 2023**

FY23 Operating Results - Unrestricted

For the eight months ended September 30, 2023, net unrestricted operating results for the churchwide organization reflect a loss of \$424,000 compared to a budgeted loss for this period of \$8.0 million. On the surface this is encouraging, but it is important to look at the factors that contribute to this favorable result. Budgeted expenses for the eight-month period were \$6.4 million greater than the actual; however, we expect that many of these expenses will be incurred in a later month when they are not budgeted. Should we finish the year at 95 percent of the budgeted expenditures, which is likely, given the nature of the delayed expenses and historical performance, the net loss at this time would be \$2.75 million instead of \$424,000.

As it relates to the underlying trends, while revenues are \$1.2 million favorable to budget and \$2.0 million favorable to the prior year, this strength has been fueled by a single large bequest of \$2.7 million and stronger than planned investment performance relative to the budget and prior year.

Year to date mission support is just over \$23 million which is \$835,000 or 3.5 percent below plan and 5.9 percent less than prior year. Mission support represents 62 percent of our annual unrestricted revenue stream budget.

Unrestricted direct gifts, also known as Where Needed Most, along with temporarily restricted gifts for missionaries and young adults in global mission are running 40 percent, or \$2.1 million behind budget and prior year. This is attributable to fewer unrestricted gifts synod special gifts related to holy closures in 2023, general inflationary conditions, and softness in missionary and young adults in global mission support (YAGM). Analysis has been completed and we will be presenting a request for changes to the approved fundraising priorities to the Budget & Finance Committee and the Church Council, in hopes of growing our unrestricted fundraising support in 2024.

As mentioned previously, we were blessed with a \$2.7 million temporarily restricted bequest (which has been fully realized in 2023). As a result, bequest and trust income has exceeded the budget, both for the eight-month year to date and the full year periods. Per previous church council action, this excess, after making whole total revenue shortfalls, will be credited to the mission development fund endowment, which funds new and innovative ministries. Total unrestricted bequest income is currently over plan by \$2.6 million.

Given negative investment returns in 2022, we had planned for a rebound in 2023; however, through September, results are favorable to plan by \$1.6 million. In addition to recoveries in our managed investments, our cash position is strong, enabling us to take advantage of short-term CD returns which has increased our investment income in 2023.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Nov. 9-12, 2023

Report from the Treasurer

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To date, we have not recorded any of the budgeted operations support that was set aside in prior years to help during difficult years. Based on the current projections, we plan to use the budgeted \$3.1 million of this church council designated fund throughout the remainder of the year to offset losses.

Unrestricted spending through September is at 86.3 percent of plan. As mentioned previously, a portion of this relates to spending which will occur later in the year than was budgeted. Key components of savings to date include Compensation and Benefits (this should remain favorable) - \$2.2 million; Grants (some is timing) - \$1.1 million; and Travel and Events - \$1.2 million (some is timing).

Results could shift significantly in the last four months of the year as a result of the investment market volatility and finalization of grants; however, given the results to date, the flexibility to utilize excess bequest income to offset revenue shortfalls, and the release of budgeted operations support, we believe it is likely that we can achieve a breakeven budget.

ELCA World Hunger

Spending has exceeded revenues to date by \$3.6 million, thus decreasing our fund balance from \$13 million at the beginning of the year to \$9.4 million at September 30, 2023. Two factors contribute to this: 1) historical revenues streams are more heavily weighted toward the end of the year and 2) we intended to spend more than we will raise in an effort to reduce the fund balance.

Overall, ELCA World Hunger revenues are \$560,000 below plan, despite World Hunger bequest income and endowment distributions being over plan by just over \$500,000. Fundraising efforts (i.e. direct gifts for ELCA World Hunger) have generated \$7.2 million against a budget of \$8.3 million, a shortfall of 12.9 percent. We continue to monitor progress in fundraising in this area as it is often a leading indicator of other trends.

The ELCA churchwide organization has a strong balance sheet which will give us time to analyze and make good decisions vis a vis the strategic priorities of the organization.

Report from the Conference of Bishops

The Conference of Bishops (COB) met at The Lutheran Center for its fall 2023 meeting. For the first time in several years, every member of the conference was present. As has been our pattern lately, we spent time in relationship building, engaged in anti-racism education, receiving reports from churchwide staff and officers, and in conversation around matters of importance to the life of our congregations and synods. We were pleased to have two Church Council members present as visitors – Mr. Kevin Anderson and the Rev. Nick Billardello, along with ELCA Vice President Imran Siddiqui.

We welcomed four new bishops to our conference: Becca Middeke-Conlin (Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod), Meggan Manlove (Northwest Intermountain Synod), Greg Busboom (Central/Southern Illinois Synod), and Phyllis Milton (Virginia Synod). Bishop-Elect Jeff Johnson (Sierra Pacific Synod), who was elected a week before our meeting, was introduced and will become a member of the COB when he takes office on November 1, 2023.

Elections for leadership in the COB resulted in the following executive committee: Bishop Yehiel Curry, chair*; Bishop Deborah Hutterer, vice-chair*; Bishop Pedro Suárez; Bishop Amy Current*; Bishop Lee Miller*; Secretary Sue Rothmeyer; and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. Newly elected executive committee members (marked with an *) will take office on December 1 and serve for 4-year terms.

Church Council Liaison Bishops were elected for several regions. Bishops in five regions were elected for a 4-year term each: Region 1 – Laurie Jungling; Region 3 – Craig Schweitzer; Region 4 – Scott Johnson; Region 6 – Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt; and Region 8 – Jim Dunlop. Because the Region 5 bishop was elected chair of the COB, Amy Current was elected to fill the remainder of his term (2025). The new liaisons will begin serving in 2024.

Significant time was spent in conversations on four issues:

- The proposal from the Task Force on Discipline for Rostered Ministers of Color, which calls for an Ombudsperson. Many questions remain about this proposal and how it would serve the needs of those requesting it as well as this church.
- The Candidacy Working Group presented the first draft of a revised candidacy process. There was both affirmation and questioning about this revised process. This group will come back to the COB in October with a second draft.
- Online Holy Communion is an ongoing conversation for which there is not agreement among the conference. Prayerful, theological exploration of the issue and its complexities (locally, globally, and ecumenically) continues.
- Initial Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) conversation directed us to examine the purpose statements for churchwide, synods, and congregations so we are familiar with what is currently in our constitutions.

This will be my last report to the Church Council as the chair of the COB. It has been my privilege to serve in this capacity with my colleagues. I still wonder why the chair of the COB is a voting member of the Church Council and serves on the Executive Committee. I believe with nine liaison bishops, the presiding bishop, and the secretary, there are enough voices from the COB already present at council meetings. Nevertheless, thank you for welcoming me as a part of this faithful council.

Respectfully submitted,

Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew

En Bloc Items

I. Budget and Finance Committee

A. Audit Committee Report

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the **report of the ELCA Audit Committee** describing their approval from June 2023 of the audited financial statements for the churchwide organization's fiscal year ended January 31, 2023.

B. Engagement of Crowe LLP

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To assign responsibility for the engagement of Crowe LLP to perform the audit service plan for the churchwide organization's year ending January 31, 2024 to the Executive Committee.

C. Audit Committee Reappointments

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the reappointment of Mr. Kevin Anderson, Ms. Tracey Beasley, Ms. Kerry Fehrman and Mr. Keoni Newman as members to the ELCA Audit Committee for a two-year term expiring in August 2025; and

To approve the reappointment of Ms. Ingrid Stafford as a member to the ELCA Audit Committee for a two-year, renewable term beginning November 2023.

II. Executive Committee

III. Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

A. Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies

The Administrative Team added Indigenous Peoples Day as a paid holiday for churchwide staff. They recommend an update to the policy. The updated section in Personnel Policies 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. Additional Voting Members for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly

For each Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, provision for additional voting members has been made for certain synods. This has been done in keeping with this church's "Principles of Organization." Under those principles, the Church Council was assigned responsibility for ensuring that at least 60% of the members of assemblies shall be lay persons and that at

least 10% of such voting members shall be people of color or people whose primary language is other than English (provision 5.01.f.).

Experience in the registration process for assemblies has demonstrated the need for allocation of additional voting members to help ensure fulfillment of the organizational principles and also to provide for broader representation in synods (for example, the Caribbean Synod) that normally would be entitled to only two voting members, one of whom would be the synod bishop.

The 2011 Churchwide Assembly passed an amendment to bylaw 12.41.11., which describes the process for determining the number of voting members for a Churchwide Assembly and includes the possibility that the Church Council may allocate up to ten additional voting members.

- 12.41.11.** Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synod bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synod vice president shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members. The voting members elected by each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this Constitution. In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English. The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To allocate for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly two additional voting members to the Alaska Synod (1A), Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C), Slovak Zion Synod (7G), West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H), and Caribbean Synod (9F), making a total of six voting members per synod.

C. Proposed Bylaw Amendments for Wartburg Theological Seminary

Bylaw 8.21.02. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* stipulates: "Amendments to the governing documents of each separately incorporated seminary and each seminary cluster shall be submitted, upon recommendation of the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization, to the Church Council for approval."

During the 2022 to 2023 academic year, the Wartburg Seminary Board of Directors (WTS Board) participated in a comprehensive governance curriculum offered by the InTrust Center's Wise Stewards Initiative. The threefold purpose of this curriculum is: (1) to equip boards to reimagine governance as a force for change, (2) to support the president and board partnership as a means of institutional renewal, and (3) to clarify the roles and responsibilities of boards of theological schools. Through that work, the WTS Board committed itself to "getting the paper right" by clarifying internal governing documents and by bringing bylaws into alignment with best practices for boards of theological schools. The rationales for the [proposed amendments](#) are included in the [letter](#) from the chair of the Wartburg Seminary Board of Directors.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendments to the Bylaws of Wartburg Theological Seminary.

D. Amendments to ELCA Participating Annuity Trust

At its November 2023 meeting, Portico Benefit Services Board of Trustees will review a resolution to authorize amendments to the ELCA Participating Annuity Trust. As there will no longer be any assets or liabilities in the ELCA Participating Annuity Bridge Fund (“Bridge Fund”) as of Dec. 31, 2023, the [recommendation](#) is to remove references to the Bridge Fund in the Annuity Trust and in the ELCA Retirement Plan.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the amendments to the ELCA Participating Annuity Trust and the ELCA Retirement Plan relating to references to the “Bridge Fund.”

E. Synod Constitution Amendments

Provision 10.12 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* stipulates: “Each synod shall have a constitution, which shall become effective upon ratification by the Church Council. Amendments thereto shall be subject to like ratification...”

The amendments to certain synod constitutions are [here](#).

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Northwest Intermountain Synod (1D); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Oregon Synod (1E); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Rocky Mountain Synod (2E); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendment to the constitution of the Western North Dakota Synod (3A); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendment to the constitution of the Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H), (with the exception of S9.04.i); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Northeastern Ohio Synod (6E); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Upstate New York Synod (7D); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the South Carolina Synod (9C); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendment to the constitution of the Southeastern Synod (9D); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Florida-Bahamas Synod (9E); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.

IV. Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee

A. Reconsideration of Message on End-of-Life Decisions

A request to review another social message, [End-of-Life Decisions](#) (1992), was submitted. This additional request is added to the two other pending requests for social messages. It is the [recommendation](#) of the director for theological ethics to postpone action along with the two other pending requests for assessment until late winter of 2024.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To defer the question of reconsidering the selected paragraph in the “Message on End-of-Life Decisions” (1992) following the 2023-24 social message development cycle in order to allow for a careful and thorough assessment of that request along with continued assessment of the pending request for a social message on child abuse and protection and the request of a substantive revision of the “Message on Homelessness” (1990). This assessment will include input from relevant leadership circles as well as the availability of staff capacity, and finances; and

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

V. Service and Justice Committee

A. Corporate Social Responsibility Documents

The Church Council is responsible for reviewing this church’s ongoing work in corporate social responsibility. The Service and Justice Committee reviewed [three issue papers and two social criteria investment screens](#).

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the amendments to the following corporate social responsibility documents to serve as the basis for ongoing corporate social responsibility work in this church:

- Code of Conduct Issue Paper
- Domestic Access to Health Issue Paper
- Extractive Industries and Environmental Justice Issue Paper
- Community Economic Development Social Criteria Investment Screen
- Gambling Social Criteria Investment Screen; and

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

VI. Christian Community and Leadership Committee

A. Independent Lutheran Organization: Order of Lutheran Franciscans

In accordance with Bylaw 14.21.15., acknowledgment of an independent Lutheran organization in relation to a unit of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America requires conscientious deliberation and thorough evaluation before implementation.

Any acknowledgment of a relationship with independent, cooperative, and related Lutheran organizations that seek to relate with this church while maintaining their independence and autonomy shall follow the policy on relationships of churchwide units with independent Lutheran organizations.

The Order of Lutheran Franciscan seeks to deepen and expand its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as an independent Lutheran organization. The [application material](#) can be found in CCLC folder in Public Current Meeting channel.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To acknowledge the Order of Lutheran Franciscans as an Independent Lutheran Organization relating to the Christian Community and Leadership home area.

VII. Other Items

A. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the Church Council meeting on [April 20, 2023](#) have been provided to council members electronically on Church Council Microsoft Teams.

The minutes of the council's Executive Committee meetings on [April 20, 2023](#), [May 25, 2023](#), [June 20, 2023](#), [July 25, 2023](#), [Aug. 29, 2023](#), [Sept. 25, 2023](#), and [Oct. 17, 2023](#) have been provided electronically to members on Church Council Teams. Minutes for the meetings on April 11, 2023, April 14, 2023, April 24, 2023, May 25, 2023 are 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). 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 April 20, 2023 meeting of the Church Council; and

To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the April 11, 2023, April 14, 2023, April 20, 2023, April 24, 2023, May 25, 2023, June 20, 2023, July 25, 2023, Aug. 29, 2023, Sept. 25, 2023, and Oct. 17, 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 Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary at California Lutheran University to a term beginning in June 2023 and expiring in June 2026: Mr. Antoine Ricardo Cummins, Mr. Richard Alan Deschamps, Mr. Mark Dalton Fornwall, and The Rev. Herbert Shao.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a term beginning Nov. 12, 2023, and expiring Dec. 31, 2027 (term end date subject to approval of amended Bylaws of Wartburg Theological Seminary): The Rev. Rudy Trevino Flores and Deacon Ross Robert Murray.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To re-elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc. to a three-year term expiring in 2027: The Rev. Keith Douglas Hohly and Ms. Monica Elizabeth Holle

Revised Oct. 31, 2023

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To re-elect to the Board of Directors of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. for a four-year term beginning in March 2024 and concluding March 2028: The Rev. Carol L. Schneider.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To elect to the ELCA Foundation Board of Trustees to a term expiring on December 31, 2025: Mr. Andrew George Steele.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To elect to the Committee on Appeals to a term expiring in August 2025: The Rev. Andrew Arthur Taylor.

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF PORTICO BENEFIT SERVICES
TO AUTHORIZE AMENDMENTS TO
THE ELCA PARTICIPATING ANNUITY TRUST**

WHEREAS, the ELCA Participating Annuity Trust (“Trust”) holds the assets of the ELCA Participating Annuity Fund, including assets in the ELCA Participating Annuity Bridge Fund (“Bridge Fund”);

WHEREAS, as of December 31, 2023, all members in the Bridge Fund have annuitized and as a result there are no longer assets or liabilities associated with the Bridge Fund;

WHEREAS, Portico Benefit Services desires to amend the Trust, effective January 1, 2024, to remove references to the Bridge Fund; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 7.01(c) of the Trust, Portico Benefit Services may initiate amendments which shall be submitted to the ELCA Church Council for final action.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees authorizes staff to amend and restate the Trust to remove references to the Bridge Fund and facilitate submission to the ELCA Church Council for final action.

Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions

1. Disability Status to Persons Experiencing Mental Illness

Churchwide Assembly action [CA22.01.05o]

To receive with gratitude the memorial on “Disability Status to Persons Experiencing Mental Illness” from the Northwest Washington Synod;

To receive the background information as an explanation of Portico Benefit Services’ disability process;

To ask Portico to present a primer to the Fall 2022 Conference of Bishops on the disability process, especially as it relates to disability stemming from mental illness; and

To ask Portico to include a review of mental-health related disability claims in its next regular review of disability benefits and to report any findings and recommendations to the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council at its Fall 2023 meetings.

Response from Portico Benefit Services (November 2023)

The 2022 Churchwide Assembly action, “Disability Status to Persons Experiencing Mental Illness,” asked Portico to take three actions related to the disability process in the context of mental illness:

- Present a primer to the fall 2022 Conference of Bishops explaining the disability process, especially as it relates to disability stemming from mental illness.
- Conduct a review of mental health-related disability claims as part of Portico’s annual review.
- Report any findings and recommendations to the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council at their fall 2023 meetings.

Last fall, then-president Jeff Thiemann presented a new disability primer to the Conference of Bishops created specifically to explain the process of applying for and receiving ELCA disability benefits in the context of a mental health-related claim. Then, late in 2022, Portico conducted a review of mental health-related disability claims as part of its regular review of the ELCA Disability Benefits Plan. As requested, the findings were reported to the fall 2023 gathering of the Conference of Bishops last month and now report them here to the Church Council.

Findings:

- Applications for disability benefits due to mental health illness/disorders and physical illness/injury are treated similarly under the plan.
- The plan does not have a more restrictive requirement for Total Disability if, as a direct result of a mental disorder substantiated by objective medical information from a qualified health care provider, a member is unable to perform the material duties of their normal occupation for any employer.
- Unlike many other plans, the plan doesn’t limit the duration of disability benefits due to mental disorder.

Recommendations: Based on these findings, Portico recommends no new plan amendments.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report and findings on “Disability Status to Persons Experiencing Mental Illness” from Portico Benefit Services;

To affirm Portico’s recommendation to not include new plan amendments; and

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

2. Voting Rights and D.C. Statehood

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.05c]

To receive with gratitude the memorial on “Voting Rights and D.C. Statehood” from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod;

To request that the presiding bishop communicate this church’s support for statehood for the District of Columbia to the United States Congress;

To direct the ELCA Witness in Society team in the Service and Justice home area to promote opportunities for education and advocacy regarding statehood for Washington, D.C.;

To direct the ELCA Witness in Society team to listen to and support calls for self-determination for American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and other U.S. territories and to act on requests related to these matters from the Caribbean Synod and the ELCA director for Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations; and

To encourage all ELCA synods, congregations, and members to inform and educate themselves about ELCA social teaching and witness in society on voting access and voting rights.

Executive Committee Action [EC22.09.23b1]

To refer the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action on “Voting Rights and D.C. Statehood” to the Service and Justice 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 Service and Justice home area (November 2022)

As a church body, the ELCA uses its voice to address important policy issues that affect the well-being of people and communities, including promotion of civic engagement and the right to vote. The ELCA has consistently expressed its support for full representation of all people in political processes and decision making as a matter of fairness and civil rights. The ELCA social statement *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (1991) states, “Along with all citizens, Christians have the responsibility to defend human rights and to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well-being, and good order in public life. They are to recognize the vital role of law in protecting life and liberty and in upholding the common good. Christians need to be concerned for the methods and the content of public deliberation. They should be critical when groups of people are inadequately represented in political processes and decisions that affect their lives.” (p. 5) The ELCA social statement *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture* (1993) states, “This church will support legislation, ordinances, and resolutions that guarantee to all persons equally: civil rights, including full protection of the law and redress under the law of discriminatory practices; and to all citizens, the right to vote.” (p. 7)

Through the Witness in Society team, the ELCA Service and Justice home area will respond to the memorial “Voting Rights and D.C. Statehood” with the following steps:

1. Fall 2022: Consult with the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod on the issue of statehood for the District of Columbia and collaborate with the synod on an action plan.
2. Fall 2022: Consult with the ELCA director for Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations and with the Caribbean Synod regarding the resolve “to direct the ELCA Witness in Society team to listen to and support calls for self-determination for American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and other U.S. territories and to act on requests related to these matters from the Caribbean Synod and the ELCA director for Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations.”
3. 2023: Determine opportunities for education and advocacy on voting rights, representation and statehood in the District of Columbia, including opportunities for timely communication from the Presiding Bishop to the United States Congress.
4. 2023: Continue to promote and encourage civic engagement in the ELCA, including through the ELCAvotes initiative.
5. Fall 2023: Report on memorial response to the ELCA Church Council.

Church Council Action [CC22.11.34.s]

To receive the response on “Voting Rights and D.C. Statehood” from the Service and Justice home area;

To affirm the timeline proposed and to anticipate a report by the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting; and

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

Response from the Service and Justice home area (November 2023)

Witness in Society reached out in 2022 and 2023 to the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod for consultation on the memorial to discuss synod intentions for work on the memorial. The synod determined that there was no capacity at this time to participate in action planning or to mount a campaign.

Prospects for movement on D.C. statehood in the current U.S. Congress are extremely low. New opportunities may open in the next session in 2025. Witness in Society in collaboration with the Public Messages Working Group will determine opportunities for the presiding bishop to communicate ELCA support for D.C. statehood to the U.S. Congress.

Witness in Society has reached out to the Caribbean Synod to express interest in opportunities to listen to and support calls for self-determination.

Witness in Society is collaborating with the ELCA director for Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations. Activities include support for legislation to establish a “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy Act.” Native people have called for this legislation and commission which will allow Native leadership to determine the best courses of action to care for survivors of boarding schools as well as for their descendants. It will also give Native leadership the task of determining best practices for collecting data, education for the US populace, and holding the U.S. Federal Government and churches accountable.

Attention to the memorial and the call for education and advocacy related to ELCA social teaching and witness on voting access and voting rights will be prioritized during the 2024 ELCAvotes campaign.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report on “Voting Rights and D.C. Statehood” resolution from the Service and Justice home area;

To encourage the ELCA Witness in Society team to seek opportunities to communicate this church’s support for D.C. statehood to the U.S. Congress;

To commend the collaboration efforts to support the “Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policy Act” legislation;

To urge the ELCA Witness in Society team to prioritize education and advocacy on voting access and voting rights utilizing ELCA social teaching during the 2024 ELCAvotes initiative; and

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

3. Mission Development Process

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.10]

To receive with gratitude the memorial on “Equity and Clarity in the Mission Development Process” from the Delaware-Maryland Synod;

To refer this memorial to the Congregational Vitality Training and Development team in the Christian Community and Leadership home area to establish a working group in partnership with the appropriate leaders in the Delaware-Maryland Synod to study and refine current ELCA guidelines and systems for appointments, calls, funds, and support mechanisms for mission developers and new ministries; and

To request that the working group consult with and provide regular reports to the Church Council beginning by Fall 2023 to ensure that the purposes and objectives of this memorial are being fulfilled.

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

The ELCA Christian Community and Leadership home area Congregational Vitality Training and Development Team leaders have contacted Delaware-Maryland Synod staff to create a working group in partnership with

Delaware-Maryland Synod leaders who composed this memorial. The Rev. Sandra Chrostowski, senior director, Congregational Vitality, and New Ministry Training and Development, and the Rev. Ruben Duran, senior advisor for New Ministry Development, have been appointed as conveners of this working group which will identify partners across this church for consultation and collaboration with the goal of scheduling an online meeting during the first quarter of 2023.

This working group will study and refine current ELCA guidelines and systems in place for appointment, calls, funding, and support mechanisms for mission developers and new ministries. The working group will also provide regular reports, beginning at the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting, to ensure that the purposes and objectives of this memorial are being fulfilled.

Church Council Action [CC22.11.34.q]

To receive the progress report on “Equity and Clarity in the Mission Development Process” from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;

To request a progress report on the work by the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting; and

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

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

In the beginning of 2023, there was a leadership transition and team realignment. Late in June the new senior director was hired. With a new senior director came new priorities, one of which was to gain understanding of the grants and grants processes. An audit of the New Starts grants began in July and is nearing completion, then a team will evaluate and redesign the granting process. This team will be made of current Directors for Evangelical Mission, including the Rev. Alejandro Mejia of Delaware-Maryland Synod. The new grants process is scheduled to start next fiscal year. More will be reported by the next spring Church Council meeting.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response on “Equity and Clarity in the Mission Development Process” from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;

To request a progress report on the work by the Spring 2024 Church Council meeting; and

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

4. 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 50th 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.

Church Council Action (April 2023)

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.

Response from Office of the Secretary (November 2023)

At its Spring 2023 meeting, the ELCA Church Council requested that an analysis of salary equity in the ELCA be conducted (CC23.04.08I). Through a quantitative survey of ELCA rostered ministers during Q1 of calendar 2024, updated compensation information will be collected. This survey will be conducted under the umbrella of the Educational Debt Task Force.

To this point, the Educational Debt Task Force has received presentations and input from a variety of stakeholders across the ELCA ecology with interest in the analysis of salary equity. As the task force drafts the survey of rostered ministers, it will work with these stakeholders to incorporate their suggestions and gather their feedback and support.

Dialogue with Portico Benefit Services will be renewed in the coming months regarding how Portico can begin sharing compensation data with the churchwide organization. Currently, the churchwide organization has begun providing quarterly data reports with enhanced information that should allow for greater data matching while still maintaining safeguards on identifiable personal data. Representatives from the churchwide organization will be in conversation with Portico to ascertain what data they will be able to share so that a plan can be made for matching compensation numbers to demographic data for the purpose of analysis.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the progress report on the pay gap analysis study from the Office of the Secretary and to request further reports on this topic be received through the reports of the ELCA Task Force to Study Educational Debt.

5. Motion I: Nominations and Elections Process

Submitted by: The Rev. Kathy Gerking [Nebraska Synod, 4A]

RESOLVED, that the Church Council appoint a Task Force to explore and analyze nomination and election processes used by synods and the churchwide organization, including but not limited to the ecclesiastical ballot, in order to determine best practices and to make practical recommendations concerning options for the selection of all synod and churchwide officers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Task Force report to the Conference of Bishops and Church Council in sufficient time that potential governing document amendments and/or a report on best practices can be prepared in time for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA22.04.27]

To adopt Motion I as submitted.

Executive Committee action [EC22.09.23b11]

To refer the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action on “Motion I: Nominations and Elections Process” to the Office of the Secretary for a report or a timeline on when this will receive further attention.

Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2022)

The Office of the Secretary plans to provide a report to the Church Council in November 2023, with a final report and recommendations to be brought to the Church Council at its November 2024 meeting.

Church Council action [CC22.11.34.w]

To receive the timeline on “Motion I: Nominations and Elections Process” from the Office of the Secretary on when the resolution will receive further attention; and

To request a progress report by the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting, with a final report and recommendations by the Fall 2024 Church Council meeting.

Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2023)

The Office of the Secretary currently is performing a review of all synod constitutions to outline and analyze the processes used to nominate and elect synod officers. A task force will be assembled in the next few months that will be presented to the Executive Committee for appointment. The analysis prepared by the Office of the Secretary will be provided to the task force to facilitate its work. The staff anticipates the task force will use this analysis and feedback from bishops, synod vice presidents, synod secretaries, and synod election committee chairs to compile a report to be submitted to the Church Council at its November 2024 meeting that will recommend best practices and suggest ways in which synods can learn from one another as they conduct their elections.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response on “Motion I: Nominations and Elections Process” from the Office of the Secretary; and

To authorize the Executive Committee to appoint members to the task force on synod nominations and elections processes.

6. Improvements to Online CWO Directory

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.05m]

To receive with gratitude the memorial on “ELCA Churchwide Organization Directory” from the Delaware-Maryland Synod;

To direct the Customer Service Information Technology team in the Office of the Treasurer to work with representatives from synods and congregations to determine improvements that can help users find public information about churchwide organization personnel and discern what information is public to everyone versus requiring a login public to this church;

To direct the Customer Service Information Technology team to collaborate more closely with the Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEM) within each synod to aid in facilitating information given their level of access to this data through the ELCA Constituent Information System database and other churchwide organization tools;

To direct the Customer Service Information Technology team to create opportunities for continuous improvement to the ELCA Directory for user experience while not compromising security; and

To provide a report to the Church Council at its Fall 2023 meeting.

Response from Office of the Treasurer, Information Technology (November 2023)

With gratitude, Information Technology (IT) welcomes the feedback provided on improvement to digital solutions.

IT will work with synods and Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEM) to collect constructive feedback on the use of the Directory in 2024. Some IT staff are working with synod Assistants to the Bishop (A2B) at this moment and can extend the collaboration to the DEMs.

Synods have the option to receive training and guidance on the use of the ELCA Constituent Information System (ECIS) which feeds information to the ELCA Directory. Currently there are 12 synods and 25 users utilizing ECIS and have held training sessions with some synods in 2023.

In the current state of the world, it is inadvisable to remove the Directory security protocol. IT can work with the DEMs and A2Bs to determine future accessibility features without compromising safety. IT is also currently working with Strategic Communication on continuous improvements to digital solutions which include the Find-A-Congregation and Find-A-Person solutions that contain public information.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report on “ELCA Churchwide Organization Directory” from the Information Technology (IT) team in the Office of the Treasurer;

To commend the IT team for its collaboration with synod staff to determine improvements on the ELCA Directory and to offer training and guidance on the use of the ELCA Constituent Information System (ECIS);

To affirm the security protocol in place for the ELCA Directory and to request that the IT team continue to collaborate with synod staff and churchwide staff to improve user accessibility features for digital solutions containing public information; and

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

7. Structured Process for the Pre-Assembly Identification of Nominees for the Election of a Presiding Bishop

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.051]

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the St. Paul Area Synod and the Allegheny Synod concerning a structured process for the pre-assembly identification of nominees for the election of a presiding bishop;

To refer the question to the Church Council to consider a process for the pre-assembly identification of nominees for the office of presiding bishop in a way that allows identified nominees to become publicly known prior to the Churchwide Assembly and to complete the necessary background checks;

To direct the Church Council to charge its Legal and Constitutional Review Committee with exploring such a process that would include conversation with The Episcopal Church USA about its process, and with the Church Council liaison bishops concerning processes used in the synods in their regions; and

To report recommendations to the Conference of Bishops and Church Council at their Fall 2023 meetings.

Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2023)

The Executive Committee and the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee will be discussing this more thoroughly at their November committee meetings and will share an update during the course of the Church Council meeting.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response on “Structured Process for the Pre-Assembly Identification of Nominees for the Election of a Presiding Bishop” from the Office of the Secretary;

To anticipate a verbal update during the November 2023 Church Council meeting; and

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

Responses to Synod Actions

1. Roth Tax Option for ELCA Leaders

North Carolina Synod (9B) [2023]

WHEREAS, the ELCA desires to provide exceptional pension opportunities for its leaders through Portico Benefit Services; and

WHEREAS, the tax code of the United States permits the use and implementation of both traditional and Roth tax considerations for individual retirement contributions through 403b (Pension) programs, such as the 403b/Pension offered to ELCA leaders by Portico Benefit Services; and

WHEREAS, ELCA leaders are currently only permitted traditional tax consideration for their individual 403b/Pension retirement contributions; and

WHEREAS, the Roth designated individual retirement contribution option may provide preferred and favorable tax considerations to ELCA leaders who may desire, by their own election, to utilize this option for some or all of their individual 403b/Pension retirement contributions within Portico Benefit Services; and

WHEREAS, implementing a Roth option for ELCA leaders for their personal elected retirement contributions could be provided at virtually no cost to Portico Benefit Services, as this would involve Portico Benefit Services simply adding this new Roth designation option as is already permitted and available under the current US tax code; and

WHEREAS, implementing the option for ELCA leaders will avail church leaders of the opportunity to determine their preferred designation and most beneficial tax treatment for their individual 403b/Pension contributions, whether traditional or Roth; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that The North Carolina Synod, at its 2023 assembly request that the addition of a Roth tax option for ELCA Leaders to consider for their individually-elected retirement contributions within the 403/Pension be offered by Portico Benefit Services; and be it further

RESOLVED that the assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council of the ELCA requesting that it recommend that Portico Benefit Services implement the availability of this option for ELCA Leaders.

Executive Committee Action [EC23.09.41a]

To refer the “Roth Tax Option for ELCA Leaders” resolution from the North Carolina Synod to the Portico Benefit Services 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 Portico Benefit Services (November 2023)

The Executive Committee of the Church Council voted in late September to refer the June 2023 “Roth Tax Option for ELCA Leaders” resolution from the North Carolina Synod to Portico. This resolution requests: 1) that ELCA Retirement Plan members be given the option to choose a Roth tax option for their individually elected retirement contributions, and 2) that the Church Council recommend that Portico implement this option.

Portico has long prioritized offering choices, when feasible. They invite members to engage and make selections that best support their own well-being financially, emotionally, and physically. In that spirit, Portico has evaluated a Roth option over several years. Member feedback supporting Roth, coupled with the SECURE 2.0 Act and its new Roth requirement related to catch-up contributions for members that meet specific criteria, reinforced Portico’s interest.

Decision, timeline, and cost: Portico is now implementing a Roth option that will be available to ELCA Retirement Plan members for elective deferrals, following approval of related plan amendments by Portico’s board of trustees and ELCA Church Council in 2024. Portico expects Roth to be an Annual Enrollment option in the fall of 2024, to take effect Jan. 1, 2025. This addition, however, can’t be made at “virtually no cost,” as the resolution states. Implementation and ongoing costs include:

- Changes to billing systems, benefit systems, and the proprietary retirement planning tool.

- Plan member education to ready members to make the choice that best supports their needs — including direct communications, online resources, and increased access to Portico’s financial planners.
- Separate recordkeeping for the life of Roth assets to reflect their unique tax treatment.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To receive the response on “Roth Tax Option for ELCA Leaders” from Portico Benefit Services;
To affirm the implementation of a Roth option to ELCA Retirement Plan members and to
request the related plan amendments be presented at the April 2024 Church Council meeting for
consideration; and**

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

2. Proposing Peace

New England Synod (7B) [2023]

RESOLVED, that this church affirm the call, articulated in its 1995 Social Statement, “to be advocates for a Christian peacemaking that strives for human rights, political alternatives to war, social justice, control of the arms trade, and creative means of working for peace in God’s world;” and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church affirm the moral principle that disputes over boundaries, internal or international, be resolved not by military force but through nonviolent means and with full respect for the human rights of all populations affected; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church condemn the use of military force to lay claim to or occupy the land of another people or nation, and we say “No more!”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church call on all nations to honor and enforce the principle of Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter, namely that nations “refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state . . .”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church in all of its expressions engage with, look for direction from, and advocate for those who have been abused or subjugated by another people because of the seizing or occupation of land; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this New England Synod in Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the ELCA Church Council for consideration and possible adoption.

Executive Committee action [EC23.07.35.a]

To refer the “Proposing Peace” resolution from the New England Synod to the Service and Justice home area, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, 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 Service and Justice home area (November 2023)

The ELCA social statement *For Peace in God’s World* (1995) affirms that the biblical narrative reveals God’s resolve for peace and that Christians be advocates for peacemaking. The statement affirms this church’s social teaching “that governments should vigorously pursue less coercive measures over more coercive ones: consent over compulsion, nonviolence over violence, diplomacy over military engagement, and deterrence over war.” (p.10) The ELCA “strongly support efforts to develop the potential of nonviolence to bring about just and peaceful change” (p.20) and continues “to teach about human rights, protest their violation, advocate their international codification, and support effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with them.” (p.14)

These affirmations are the foundation for the ELCA’s advocacy and public witness that promotes respect for human rights, reconciliation and just peace. They are reflected in five core accompaniment values that inform our relationships with global partners and communities in the United States: mutuality, inclusivity, vulnerability, empowerment and sustainability. This is expressed in the ELCA’s public

witness alongside people whose land has been seized or occupied, such as in our accompaniment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. The renewed ELCA strategy “SUMUD: For Justice in Palestine and Israel” is one example of how the ELCA “engages with, looks for direction from and advocates” as an expression of accompaniment values in pursuit of peace with justice.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response on “Proposing Peace” from the Service and Justice home area;

To affirm the call, articulated in *For Peace in God's World* (1995), “to be advocates for a Christian peacemaking that strives for human rights, political alternatives to war, social justice, control of the arms trade, and creative means of working for peace in God's world;”

To affirm the five core accompaniment values that inform this church's relationships with global partners and communities in the United States: mutuality, inclusivity, vulnerability, empowerment and sustainability;

To strongly encourage and support nonviolent action and efforts to develop the potential of nonviolence to bring about just and peaceful change;

To call on all nations to honor and enforce the principle of Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter, namely that nations “refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state...;”

To call on this church in all of its expressions to be a public witness alongside people whose land has been seized or occupied as an expression of this church’s accompaniment values in pursuit of peace with justice; and

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

3. Expanded Response: Climate Displaced Persons

Rocky Mountain Synod (2E) [2023]

[Originally submitted as a memorial to the Office of the Secretary, but the resolution did not memorialize the Churchwide Assembly. The secretary has determined that the action should be reclassified as a resolution.]

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA adopted the 1998 Social Message “Immigration” “as a resource for deliberation on attitudes regarding immigrants and a resource to interpret ELCA policy related to immigration”: and has adopted various, succeeding Social Policy Resolutions (particularly in 2009 and 2016), advocating for a “generous US response” policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees noted that “none of the existing international and regional refugee law instruments specifically addresses the plight of people” commonly called “climate refugees” or “environmental migrants,” here referred to as climate-displaced persons; and

WHEREAS, “the UN International Organization for Migration estimates that there could be as many as 1.5 billion climate-displaced persons in the next 30 years alone (US included) and that disasters already displace up to ten times more people than conflict and war worldwide;” and

WHEREAS, research now shows that “for thousands of years, humans have concentrated in a surprisingly narrow subset of Earth’s available climates, characterized by mean annual temperatures around +/- 55.4o F and that over the coming 50 years, 1 to 3 billion people are projected to be left outside the climate conditions that have served humanity over the past 6000 years;” and

WHEREAS, rising air and water temperatures and changes in precipitation are intensifying droughts, increasing heavy downpours, reducing snowpack, and causing declines in surface water quality, with varying impacts across regions; and

WHEREAS, as people of faith and citizens of the world, we are called to commit ourselves, our congregations, and our leaders to renew our commitment and our resources to the work of welcoming refugees, immigrants and migrants within our country and around the world; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, to encourage ELCA Witness in Society in the Service and Justice home area (WIS) and other expressions of the ELCA team to better understand the impact of climate change on migration and to promote

respect for the human rights of people impacted by climate change in different settings including in situations of human mobility; and be it further

RESOLVED, to encourage ELCA WIS to better understand and address the interplay of the factors that compel people to migrate, especially recognizing the adverse impact of climate change, as a part of how nations care for the uprooted.

Executive Committee action [EC23.07.35.b]

To refer the “Climate-Displaced Persons” resolution from the Rocky Mountain Synod to the Witness in Society team in the Service and Justice 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 Service and Justice home area (November 2023)

Thematic Priorities

Priority 1: To better understand the impact of climate change on displacement, migration, and planned relocation on people and communities; and promote respect for the human rights of people on the move impacted by climate change.

Priority 2: To better understand the interaction of the factors that contribute to individual’s vulnerability to displacement, migration, and planned relocation; and understand and employ the primary mechanisms and instruments to advocate for the protection of people.

Timeline for further attention

Date	Event	Description of Goal(s)	Desired Outcomes
Nov-23	UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28) in the United Arab Emirates from 30 th of November to 12 th of December 2023.	WiS will collaborate with LWF to lead a delegation and incorporate aspects of climate migration in our witness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reflect on climate induced migration in the context of Loss & Damage at COP28. • To educate the public about the progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
Dec-23	UN International Migrant Day on the 18 th of December 2023.	WiS will collaborate with AMMPARO and other partners to promote a toolkit on the rights and dignity of migrants which can include awareness about migration in light of climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote respect for the dignity and rights of migrants, with diaspora communities, non-governmental organizations, states, and other relevant stakeholders. • Educate the public about the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration and share progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Jan-24	14 th Summit of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in Geneva, Switzerland, from the 22 nd to the 26 th of January 2024.	WiS will collaborate with LWF to lead a delegation at the GFMD with a thematic focus on “ Responding to the climatic and cultural challenges of migration ”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To participate robustly in the summit, and emphatically raise up the role of “Culture, Narratives, and Migration” on migration discourse in our society. • To address the way climate change factors into perception about migration, highlighting the lived experience of frontline communities.
Feb-24			
March-24			
April-24	Earth Day in on the 22 nd of April 2024.	WiS will use various platforms to raise awareness of the situation of climate displaced persons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make the general public aware of the challenges and opportunities that migration presents within the context of climate change.
May-24			
June-24			
July-24	ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans from the 13 th to the 16 th of July 2024.	AMMPARO will coordinate with LDR, WH, and WiS to lead an educational experience at the Youth Gathering with a primary focus on climate resilience, displacement, and migration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore different ways that communities experience displacement and migration, disasters, and resilience, as climate change worsens. • To educate on migration stories from a first-person perspective.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To affirm the proposed timeline on “Climate-Displaced Persons” from the Witness in Society team in the Service and Justice home area;

To commend the Witness in Society team in identifying its thematic priorities to better understand the impact of climate change on displacement, migration, and planned relocation on people and communities and to employ the primary mechanisms and instruments to advocate for the protection of people; and

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

4. 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.

Church Council action [CC23.04.08.o]

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.

Response from the Office of the Secretary and Theological Discernment team (November 2023)

This resolution poses a number of interesting questions and challenges within the context of this church’s social teachings. Neither current social statements nor ministry policies specifically address a goal of 10% LGBTQIA+ inclusion in churchwide leadership circles. Existing teaching in social statements and ministry policies simply creates space for four different conviction sets regarding how LGBTQIA+ individuals in life-long monogamous relationships may serve and be considered within the life of this church. While reconsideration of the positions on bound conscience was called for by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, that work remains to be done and there is no predetermined outcome.

Given these elements, the spirit of the 2009 decisions and the *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* (2019) continue to provide the teaching of this church. The Rev. Roger Willer, director for theological ethics, points out that adoption of the goal described in this resolution would create favored status for leadership, thus putting the ELCA on record and sending an unmistakable signal. It would indicate to ELCA members and to Lutheran World Federation communions that the ELCA has set policy in favor of one side of this spectrum and that it is not abiding by the spirit of its own teaching. Therefore, it is recommended that consideration of this resolution be placed on hold until the reconsideration of this church’s teaching on bound conscience is completed, allowing time for this church to consider all factors involved.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response on “LGBTQIA+ Presence among ELCA Governing Bodies” resolution from the Office of the Secretary and the Theological Discernment team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop;

To postpone a recommendation on the adoption of 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 until after the completion of the reconsideration of this church's teaching on bound conscience; and

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

5. Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation

Upstate New York Synod (7D) [2022]

WHEREAS, ELCA Constitution 7.44A19 “Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament” b. “Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament” 1.2 reads:

Setting	Calling Body
1.2 Multiple-congregation parish	Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal
1.21 Pastor	One of the participating congregations
1.22 Other pastoral arrangements	One of the participating congregations

WHEREAS, pastors more and more are being asked to serve more than one congregation; and
WHEREAS, each congregation, as a place where the Promises of Jesus are proclaimed to gathered people, has the authority to call a person to be their proclaimer of those promises of Jesus; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the ELCA Church Council work up a resolution to be presented at the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly that allows more than one congregation concurrently to call the same person as pastor, and to make all necessary changes to its constitution.

Executive Committee action [EC22.06.19c3]

To refer the “Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation” resolution from the Upstate New York Synod to the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide organization office or 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 Office of the Secretary (November 2022)

This question will need to be discerned with the Conference of Bishops, in consultation with the Leadership Committee and the Roster Committee of that body. Any change would require amendments to the governing documents and revision of the roster manual.

After discussion with the Christian Community and Leadership home area, the Office of the Secretary plans to bring a report and proposed timeline to the Church Council at its November 2023 meeting, with a final report and recommendations to be brought to the Church Council at its November 2024 meeting.

Church Council action [CC22.11.34.ff.]

To receive the timeline on “Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation” from the Office of the Secretary on when the resolution will receive further attention;

To request a progress report by the Fall 2023 Church Council meeting, with a final report and recommendations by the Fall 2024 Church Council meeting; and

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

Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2023)

The energy and focus of the Conference of Bishops (COB) and its Leadership Committee over the past year has been on the restructuring of the candidacy process. As that work is coming to fruition, it will be possible for the Leadership and Roster Committees of the COB to begin to address this question. Conversation with the bishops will be scheduled for the spring 2024 COB. As any change to these policies would require amendments to the ELCA Constitution, a report and recommendations will come to the Church Council at its November 2024 meeting.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the progress report on “Concurrent Calling of Pastors by More than One Congregation” from the Office of the Secretary and to anticipate a report and recommendations at the November 2024 Church Council meeting; and

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

6. Including Creation Care

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council (5J) [July 2023]

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee 2023 Synod Assembly (Resolution 1) called for amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, to request the Church Council and the Office of the Secretary to develop amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to be presented at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly that add “care for creation” to the purposes of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that these amendments should include adding the purpose “care for creation” to 4.02., 4.03., 7.31.02., 7.61.02., 9.41., 11.21., 16.12.D21., †S6.02., †S14.12., †S14.32., *C4.02., *C4.03., *C9.03., and *C9.23.,

as well as any other applicable places within the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and be it further

RESOLVED, to request the Church Council and the Office of the Secretary add a new provision on “the purpose of membership” to “Chapter C8. Members” and/or amend *C8.04., the privileges and duties of members, to include the visions laid out in 4.03.b. of the Constitution, stating that members of this church will be equipped “to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel”, and in the liturgies of baptism and affirmation of baptism as printed in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, especially the hope that the baptized will “care for others and the world God has made”.

Executive Committee action [EC23.09.41b]

To refer the “Including Creation Care” resolution from the Greater Milwaukee Synod to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and 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 (November 2023)

The question of amending constitutional provisions and bylaws to include “care for creation” among the purposes of this church will need to be discerned along with other constitutional amendment changes. The Office of the Secretary plans to include consideration of this request when it presents the slate of proposed ELCA Constitution amendments to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee in the summer of 2024. The Church Council will forward proposed amendments to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly at its November 2024 meeting.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response on the “Including Creation Care” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;

To anticipate possible amendments related to this resolution when the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee reviews proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* at the November 2024 Church Council meeting; and

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

7. Supporting Vulnerable Youth

Greater Milwaukee Synod Council (5J) [July 2023]

WHEREAS, the Greater Milwaukee 2023 Synod Assembly (Resolution 5) called for amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, to request the Church Council and the Office of the Secretary to develop amendments to 4.02.c., †S6.02.c., and *C4.02.d. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, as well as any other applicable places, to be presented at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly that adds “supporting children and vulnerable youth” to the purposes of this church.

Executive Committee action [EC23.09.41c]

To refer the “Supporting Vulnerable Youth” resolution from the Greater Milwaukee Synod to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and 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 (November 2023)

The question of adding “supporting children and vulnerable youth” to the purposes of all three expressions of this church will need to be discerned along with other constitutional amendment changes. The

Office of the Secretary plans to include consideration of this request when it presents the slate of proposed ELCA Constitution amendments to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee in the summer of 2024. The Church Council will forward proposed amendments to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly at its November 2024 meeting.

CC ACTION *[EN BLOC]*

Recommended:

To receive the response on the “Supporting Vulnerable Youth” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;

To anticipate possible amendments related to this resolution when the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee reviews proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* at the November 2024 Church Council meeting; and

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

8. Providing for Ordination of Candidates Serving as Interim Pastors

Southwest California Synod (2B) [2023]

[Originally submitted as a memorial to the Office of the Secretary. The Secretary has determined that the memorial should be reclassified as a resolution.]

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod of the ELCA calls for Bishop and the Synod Council to fully honor the important work of interim ministry; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod Bishop and the Synod Council to determine that serving as an interim pastor constitutes a call; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod provides a means of ordination for first call candidates serving as interim pastors; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod memorialize the church wide national office to change the current policy and allow first call candidates assigned or called to interim ministries be allowed to be ordained.

Executive Committee action [EC23.07.35.c]

To refer the “Providing for Ordination of Candidates Serving as Interim Pastors” resolution from the Southwest California Synod to the Office of the Secretary and the task force on specialized ministries and On-Leave From Call 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 (November 2023)

Current policy prevents ordination to interim ministry, and further precludes interim ministry for those ministers of Word and Sacrament who have not completed three years of initial service in regular congregation calls unless they are granted an exception from the Conference of Bishops. There are a number of reasons that these policies have been in place, including a concern that because interim situations are usually short-term and frequently involve congregations under significant stress during a pastoral transition that they are not ideal settings for first-call pastors or for those congregations.

However, due to a shortage of available pastors, increasingly synods have been seeking to place candidates in interim ministry, or to offer interim calls to pastors who have not yet completed their three years of congregational service. Consideration of a change in this policy will require significant discussion with the Conference of Bishops, the candidacy staff within the Christian Community and Leadership unit, and with the Task Force on On Leave From Call and Specialized Ministry, since these questions intersect with that task force’s potential recommendations regarding specialized ministry. A report and recommendations will be given to the Church Council at its November 2024 meeting.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response on “Providing for Ordination of Candidates Serving as Interim Pastors” resolution from the Office of the Secretary and to anticipate further reports on this topic to be received through the Task Force on On Leave From Call and Specialized Ministry; and

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

9. Restoration of Language to the Constitution for Synods

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F) [2023]

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly has directed the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council to “take the necessary steps to encourage the reinstatement of the words “proclaiming God’s love to the world” to S14.12. and S14.32. of the Constitution for Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;” therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Council requests that the ELCA Church Council recommends to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly the restoration of the words “proclaiming God’s love to the world” in S14.12., S14.32., and all parallel instances in the Constitution for Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Executive Committee action [EC23.07.35.e]

To refer the “Restoration of Language to the Constitution for Synods” resolution from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and 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 (November 2023)

The question of adding “proclaiming God’s love to the world” to the Constitution for Synods will need to be discerned along with other constitutional amendment changes. Parallel changes will be considered for the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* and *Model Constitution for Congregations*. The Office of the Secretary plans to include consideration of this request when it presents the slate of proposed ELCA Constitution amendments to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee in the summer of 2024. The Church Council will forward proposed amendments to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly at its November 2024 meeting.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response on “Restoration of Language to the Constitution for Synods” resolution from the Office of the Secretary;

To anticipate possible amendments related to this resolution when the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee reviews proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* at the November 2024 Church Council meeting; and

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

10. Full Funding for Churchwide Ministries

Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C) [2023]

[Originally submitted as a memorial to the Office of the Secretary but the resolution did not memorialize the Churchwide Assembly. The Secretary has determined that the action should be reclassified as a resolution.]

WHEREAS, at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly a memorial with regards to explore the sources and needs in funding for the various Indigenous ministries of the ELCA, to identify potential sources of sustainable funding for

these ministries, and present findings of possible funding of these ministries to the Church Council with a commitment to implement proposed and sustainable actions for funding of these ministries during the 2026–2028 triennium budget cycle; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous other ministry areas of the ELCA that are suffering from the lack of sustainable funding for their ministries; and

WHEREAS, these ministry areas are vitally important to the life of the mission and ministry of the ELCA; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that similar explorations of the sources and needs in funding for the ministries of the ELCA listed below and identification of potential sources of funding for these ministries with presentation of findings of possible funding of these ministries to the Church Council no later than its Spring 2028 meeting with a commitment to implement proposed and sustainable actions for the funding of these ministries during the 2029–2031 triennium budget cycle: Youth and Young Adult ministries, College ministries, Latinx ministries, African descent ministries, Arab and Middle Eastern ministries, Asian and Pacific Islander ministries, Disabled and differently abled person ministries, Urban ministries, Education ministries, LGBTQIA+ ministries, Congregational Renewal ministries.

Executive Committee action [EC23.07.35.d]

To refer the “Full Funding for Churchwide Ministries” resolution from the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod to the Office of the Treasurer, in consultation with other appropriate churchwide units, 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 Treasurer (November 2023)

The Office of the Treasurer will complete this exploration work in conjunction with the review of funding for indigenous ministries [CA22.03.13] with a full report for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the timeline on “Full Funding for Churchwide Ministries” resolution from the Office of the Treasurer;

To request a report to present findings of possible funding of the Youth and Young Adult ministries, College ministries, Latinx ministries, African descent ministries, Arab and Middle Eastern ministries, Asian and Pacific Islander ministries, Disabled and differently abled person ministries, Urban ministries, Education ministries, LGBTQIA+ ministries, and Congregational Renewal ministries to the Church Council no later than its Spring 2025 meeting, with a commitment to implement proposed and sustainable actions for funding of these ministries during the 2026-2028 triennium budget cycle; and

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

Responses to Previous Church Council Actions

1. Creation of a Racial Justice Ombudsperson Position

Church Council action [CC22.06.20]

To receive the request to explore creation of the position of a Racial Justice Ombudsperson with a report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop delivered to the Church Council at its Fall 2022 meeting;

To acknowledge the previous action of the council to create “a task force charged with reviewing the current process for discipline and its impact on persons of color and other historically marginalized groups, considering recommendations for staffing, community healing and restoration, and learning best practices from full communion partners” (CC22.04.04); and

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

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2022)

The Task Force Addressing Disciplinary Concerns of Leaders of Color held its first Microsoft Teams meeting on Oct. 4, 2022. Judith Roberts, senior director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, facilitated the conversation with task force members. The agenda opened with a devotion, prayer, an introduction of task force members, and a review of the 2019 Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity recommendation for the creation of an ombudsperson position within the churchwide organization. The conversation was followed by examples of the impact for leaders of color and communities they served when disciplinary actions occur. The task force received a brief presentation on the current churchwide DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) portfolios, and where an ombudsperson position might be housed within the current organization. The meeting concluded with a conversation regarding expectations of work, timeline for completion, and engagement with additional churchwide staff. The task force is scheduled to meet again virtually on Dec. 1, 2022.

Church Council action [CC22.11.34.x]

To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop concerning the exploration of a Racial Justice Ombudsperson position; and

To encourage the continued conversation within the Task Force Addressing Disciplinary Concerns of Leaders of Color.

Recommendations regarding the creation of an ombudsperson position/office:

The Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color 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.

Church Council action [CC23.04.05]

To receive the report and recommendations from the Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color and thank the members of the task force for their care and due diligence to the work;

....

To refer the recommendations regarding the creation of an ombudsperson position/office to the Administrative Team, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, with a report to be made to the Church Council at its November 2023 meeting; and

....

Response from the Administrative Team (November 2023)

The Administrative Team consulted with the Conference of Bishops at the Fall 2023 meeting. More time is needed for conversation and research before the Administrative Team can decide on the creation of an ombudsperson position.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report from the Administrative Team regarding the creation of an ombudsperson position and to anticipate a report in 2024.

2. Recommendations for the Current Discipline Process

Recommendations of the Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color

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.

Church Council action [CC23.04.05]

To receive the report and recommendations from the Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color and thank the members of the task force for their care and due diligence to the work;

To refer the recommendations regarding the current discipline process to the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, with a report to be made to the Church Council at its November 2023 meeting;

...

Response from Office of the Secretary (November 2023)

The Office of the Secretary will share the recommendations with the Task Force on On Leave from Call (OLFC) and Specialized Ministry. That task force will consider its own recommendations for a protocol related to how decisions are made concerning non-recommendation of a rostered minister for OLFC or for retired roster status. Those particular recommendations will be included in the report of the Task Force on OLFC and Specialized Ministry to be given to the Church Council at its November 2024 meeting, along with proposed revisions to the roster manual and any amendments that would be required for the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report from the Office of the Secretary regarding the recommendations to the current discipline process; and

To direct further reports on the topic be received from the Task Force on On Leave from Call and Specialized Ministry.

Progress Report from the Educational Debt Task Force

At its spring 2022 meeting, the Executive Committee voted to form the Educational Debt Task Force (EC22.03.12). On October 24, 2022, this task force was fully formed and began its work together. The work is organized into three phases: self-education; research; and communication of research findings. At present, the task force has completed the self-education phase and has transitioned to the research phase.

Self-education

The primary objectives of the self-education phase were for the Educational Debt Task Force to deepen its understanding of the problem of educational debt in the ELCA, including its historical context. Included in this study was an emphasis on the unique challenges facing rostered ministers of color. Additionally, during this phase, the task force sought to contextualize its work among existing and forming programs, task forces, and study committees.

To address these objectives, the task force received presentations from colleagues across the ELCA ecology. The presentations included the topic areas of Racial Justice; Economic Justice; Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment; Quality of Call; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD) Committee; Mission Development and Redevelopment; Ethnic-Specific Ministry; and Fund for Leaders. The task force also heard from several synod leaders on programs in their synods which address educational debt, and from LSS Financial Counseling, who provided information about the intricacies of Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF).

The self-education phase concluded with an in-person gathering of the task force at the Lutheran Center on August 31 and September 1, 2023, to reflect on what had been learned throughout the phase, and to discuss the overarching questions to be answered during the research phase.

Research

Primarily, during the research phase, the Educational Debt Task Force is seeking to better understand the breadth and depth of the experience and impact of educational debt among ELCA candidates and rostered ministers. This includes learning the language candidates and rostered ministers use to discuss educational debt. With its research, the task force intends to resource existing and forming programs, task forces and study committees, actively considering their research needs. Finally, the task force is pursuing information about what programs already exist to assist rostered ministers to reduce their educational debt.

To begin to address these objectives, the task force has gathered stories of educational debt through conversations with 34 ELCA candidates and rostered ministers. There are plans to hold additional conversations before the end of 2023.

Additionally, the task force has organized itself into two research-focused sub-teams: 1.) survey of rostered ministers; and 2.) survey of synods.

- The focus of the first sub-team is to develop a survey to learn more about the extent, experience, and impact of educational debt on ELCA rostered ministers. While previous research has focused largely on candidates and research seminary graduates, this survey will seek responses from a diverse set of rostered ministers (e.g., gender and ethnic identities; age; amount of time ordained). It will be conducted in collaboration with several existing and forming programs, task forces, and study committees, including Urban Ministry, Justice for Women, Quality of Call, the STAD Committee, and the Candidacy Working Group. Beyond understanding more about the experience and impact of educational debt, the survey will also gather information to address the pay gap analysis requested by the ELCA Church Council (CC23.04.081). Ultimately, the information

collected will be used to develop recommendations for stakeholders across the ELCA ecology. The task force intends to field this survey in the first months of 2024.

- The focus of the second sub-team is to determine what activities are happening in ELCA synods around educational debt reduction, including how many and which synods have programs, how these programs are constructed, how synods define and measure the successfulness of their programs, and how this information might be able to be shared across the ELCA ecology. This information will be collected through a survey of all 65 synods to take place in December 2023.

One of the task force's central values is that the data collected during the research phase is actionable. Part of the process for both sub-teams has been considering not only what information will be collected, but also how that information will be used to develop resources and formulate recommendations to key stakeholders.

Communication

Although the task force is not yet at the point of sharing research findings, a third sub-team has been formed to develop an overall communication strategy. This will enable the task force to accomplish the primary objective of the communication phase: sharing the research findings and recommendations for reducing educational debt that could be carried out across the ELCA ecology (including the churchwide organization, synods, congregations, seminaries, universities, candidacy committees, and others).

During the communication phase, the task force—led by the communications sub-team—will finalize audiences and mechanisms for sharing the research findings and recommendations, as well as write research reports and other communications pieces.

At present, the communications sub-team is formulating a strategy to accompany the work of the survey of rostered ministers sub-team. This strategy considers the necessary audiences for the survey, the influencers who can promote the survey, the key messages to be shared, the collateral documentation needed, and the channels by which the survey will be promoted.

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

At the June 14, 2023, Audit Committee meeting, the external auditors, Crowe LLP presented a preliminary draft of the financial statements of the ELCA for the year ended January 31, 2023. They included an “unmodified” opinion that the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the ELCA as of January 31, 2023, and the changes in its net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. The opinion also contains an Emphasis of Matter paragraph stating that this is an audit of the Churchwide Organization of the ELCA and not a reflection of the entire ELCA. At this meeting the Audit Committee voted to approve the auditors’ report on the financial statements for the year ended 1/31/23.

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

At the November 8, 2023 Audit Committee meeting, management reviewed the interim financial results through September 30, 2023.

Best practices suggest a rotation of audit firm or audit partners every 7-10 years. Crowe LLP, the external audit firm, along with their partner, Brian Zgymunt, have served the Churchwide Organization for over 10 years. Over the past few meetings, the Audit Committee has discussed whether we should go out for bid or re-engage Crowe. We did not want to switch audit firms during our transition to Workday or during the pandemic. For a variety of reasons the ELCA Foundation had a strong preference to continue with Crowe and the Audit Committee feels that it is beneficial to for Churchwide and the ELCA Foundation to retain the same audit firm, due to the significance of the Ministry Growth Fund which is managed by the ELCA Foundation. At the June 2023 meeting, the Audit Committee selected their choice of partners from Crowe to succeed Mr. Zgymunt, beginning with the year ended January 31, 2024. At the beginning of November 2023, the ELCA was informed that since this new partner had not begun our engagement, she would not be able to serve as the ELCA partner due to other firmwide needs. Chair Tracey Beasley and Treasurer Fedyk reviewed other resumes from Crowe and recommended Mr. Pete Ugo to the full audit committee. He joined the November Audit Committee meeting briefly to introduce himself and to answer questions. Given the partner change, Crowe was unable to present their audit plan and fees for the year ended January 31, 2024. The committee will meet on December 5, 2023 via teams to review and with a plan to approve the audit service plan and fees and recommend to the Budget and Finance Committee to approve the engagement of Crowe LLP to perform the audit service plan for the churchwide organizations’ year ending January 31, 2024. BFC will be asked to approve this electronically and there is an en bloc action for the Church Council to delegate the approval to the Executive Committee of the Church Council.

Forvis LLP, the internal audit firm, presented the internal audit report for the period ended September 30, 2023, including a report of the findings from three audits completed since our June meeting. Two additional audits should be completed by December 31, 2023 and will be reported on at the June 2024 meeting. Forvis also presented the internal audit plan for the year ending January 31, 2025. The audit committee approved the plan and internal audit report, including fees of \$96,350.

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

The Audit Committee was also given Code of Ethics for signature and reviewed both the internal audit and audit committee charters. The committee received the resignation of Mr. Gary Hecht, an at-large member. He submitted his resignation in response to concerns over Bishop Eaton's statement on Israel/Hamas. While the committee is still in compliance with our governance, the committee is hopeful to bring on two new members before the June meeting in order to better stagger member's terms.

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

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 2024 Unrestricted Budget - Draft, Confidential**

Expense Allocation - 2023 68,429,562 at 100% budget

Changes to 2023 Budget for 2024

Reduction in Innovation	(1,000,000)	Reducing number of projects pending results of research
Reduction in Travel & Events or other areas		25% reduction (if just based on Travel and Events) but it can
Incr in Comp (2.0%) & Benefits (2.5%)	(903,000)	come from other places
	775,000	Historical compensation increase
		Recommended increase due to changing employment
Add'l comp (+2%)	532,400	markets
Set aside for 2025 PB transition (50% in 2024, 50% in 2025)	250,000	Covers bishop transition and installation costs

Proposed 2024 Spending Authorization **\$ 68,083,962**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America					
ELCA World Hunger					
2024 Proposed Budget Revisions - November 2023					
	2022	2023	2024		
	Actual		Per Churchwide Assembly	Proposed Adjustments	November 2023 Request
ELCA WORLD HUNGER					
Direct Gifts	\$ 19,090,048	\$ 20,500,000	\$ 20,180,000	\$ (1,180,000)	\$ 19,000,000
Endowment	956,436	750,000	750,000	250,000	1,000,000
Bequests and Miscellaneous	2,847,311	1,500,000	1,500,000	-	1,500,000
Release of Bequest income	-	4,020,000	500,000	4,000,000	4,500,000
Total ELCA World Hunger Income	\$ 22,893,795	\$ 26,770,000	\$ 22,930,000	\$ 3,070,000	\$ 26,000,000
EXPENDITURES					
Service & Justice					
<i>WH Domestic Program (part of S & J)</i>	5,612,127	5,521,036		4,757,544	4,757,544
<i>WH International Program (part of S & J)</i>	14,110,282	17,271,454		16,173,177	16,173,177
<i>WH Witnessing in Society (part of S & J)</i>	1,633,415	1,722,510		2,979,279	2,979,279
<i>WH Fundraising (part of S & J)</i>	2,085,382	2,255,000		2,090,000	2,090,000
Total ELCA World Hunger Expenses	\$ 23,441,206	\$ 26,770,000	\$ 22,869,000	\$ 26,000,000	\$ 26,000,000

FUNDRAISING PRIORITIES

WHAT IS A FUNDRAISING PRIORITY?

“Your fundraising priorities are your nonprofit’s priorities. They shape your past, present, and future. The money you are raising will go to support your organization’s vital work. If that work is expanding in the future, your fundraising will have to expand to support it.”

- Alex Huntsberger – How Nonprofits Can Set (and Meet) Fundraising Goals



INTRODUCTION

At the recent meeting of the Resource Development Committee (RDC) of Church Council, the committee performed their annual review of fundraising priorities and asked the Development team to bring forward a recommendation to the upcoming Church Council meeting to 1) reduce the number of fundraising priorities and 2) consider the alignment of these priorities with the mission/vision/values of the ELCA.

CURRENT STATE

CURRENT PRIORITIES

Unrestricted/Budget Relieving

- Where Needed Most
- Young Adults in Global Mission
- Missionary Sponsorship

Restricted

- ELCA World Hunger
- Lutheran Disaster Response
- International Women Leaders
- ELCA Fund for Leaders

CURRENT REALITIES

Too many priorities

- We are unable to focus our energy around identifying resources that are most useful to the organization
- Existing priorities highlight very small and specific programs and leave out significant work of the CWO
- Donors are unclear of what we are really asking for
- We are chasing arbitrary goals rather than engaging in substantive donor engagement
- The programs are reliant upon particular pools of the donorbase, rather than a diverse makeup of support (like WH)

Disconnect from mission/vision/values

- Where is Future Church?
- Some of these priorities are decreasing in size/impact/participation
- Publicly prioritizing these values paints a picture of what is an organizational priority - is that accurate?

I CAN DO ANYTHING. BUT NOT EVERYTHING

Greg McKeown, author of "Essentialism"

REVIEW PROCESS

- Reviewing historical revenue performance
- Reviewing historical program impact (i.e. fundraising impact on program costs)
- Reviewing program alignment with Future Church objectives
- Reviewing impact on budget if we were to deprioritize
- Reviewing cost/effort required of Development team to prioritize

RECOMMENDATION - CRITICAL ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

- To be actively fundraised for
 - Key Characteristics - provide the organization with flexibility, more general focus, proven donor interest, clear alignment with ELCA mission/vision/values
 - Strategy - Appeals, prioritized in donor conversation, specific revenue goals, focus the Development team
 - Recommended Priorities:
 - Where Needed Most (unrestricted)
 - ELCA World Hunger
 - Lutheran Disaster Response
 - Future Church (*new*)

WHAT THIS MOVE MEANS

- The Development team will set proactive fundraising goals only for the approved fundraising priorities
- The Development team will move towards only sending appeals for the approved fundraising priorities (with an expectation that it will take a bit of time to fully transition)
- The Development team will continue to steward donors and gifts that are intended for historical programs
- The Development team will develop parameters and a case for support for the Future Church fundraising priority.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

- Currently, the Development team equitably distributes its resources across 7 priorities that all carry the same level or urgency and prioritization, despite organization trends and needs (i.e. the WH goal of \$19 million is as critical as the YAGM goal of just over \$1 million)
- Moving forward, the new structure will ensure that the Development team can dedicate at the majority of efforts and resources toward the critical priorities

ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, Office of the Presiding Bishop
Staff Report to ELCA Church Council
March – September 2023

Ecumenical Relations

Dialogues

Twelve theologians from the USCCB and the ELCA met at St John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota from September 14-18 for the second in person meeting of the **XIII Round of the US Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue**. The meeting was co-chaired by Bishops Patricia Lull and Denis Madden and staffed by Fr. Walter Kedjierski and Pr. Carmelo Santos. There was also a recorder appointed, Fr. Matthew Cortese, a Jesuit Priest and PhD candidate in liturgics.



The emphasis of the meeting was to hear from each one of the theologians regarding the question of how to further focus the topic of the dialogue. It was agreed that further clarification of what each of our communions mean by the word bishop is needed, and what are the Biblical and historical antecedents. To that end, teams of dialogue members will collaborate on research papers to be shared with the whole group at future meetings via videoconferencing. The first two will be on a study of the various uses of the concept of episkopé in the Scriptures. The second one will be on the historical development of the office of bishop in the ancient church and through Reformation times. This will be done with attention to the work that previous dialogues have already done.

The atmosphere of the meeting was affable, with a genuine spirit of collaboration and mutual respect. It is evident that all participants love their ecclesial communions and are fully committed to finding ways for our communion to get closer in obedience to the command of our Lord. In addition to its meetings, the dialogue had the opportunity to visit with the Benedictine monks of the Abbey and share a meal with them. The dialogue also enjoyed a guided tour of the ancient manuscripts section of their library, which is housing the collection of Syriac manuscripts that was formerly housed at LSTC. On Saturday evening, the dialogue was hosted by the Collegeville Institute, where the interim executive director Pr. Martin Wells extended an invitation to use their facilities to conduct research, engage in writing projects, or simply have Sabbath time. Prayer and worship were woven throughout the meeting, including praying the evening prayer with the monks, and ending with a Lutheran service of Holy Communion with Rev. Santos presiding and Bishop Lull proclaiming the word.

On August 27, Bishop Leila Ortiz, Rev. Dr. Santos, and Kathryn Lohre joined USCCB partners Bishop Madden, Fr. Kedjierski, and Sr. Susan Wood in receiving Swedish guests, Cardinal Arborelius and Bishop Karin Johanneson (Church of Sweden) to Washington for a dialogue at the Pope St. Paul II Shrine on St. Therese of Lisieux, followed by a fruitful interaction over dinner to share more about Lutheran-Catholic relations in each context.



The publication by Fortress Press of the report of Round XII on *Faithful Teaching* is imminent. You will receive a copy as soon as that is possible. With leadership from Bishop Hutterer and dialogue member Rev. Dr. Jonathan Linman, in collaboration with EIR, a reception event will be held on January 24 during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Phoenix, at Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Full Communion

The **Reformed Church in America (RCA)** held its [General Synod 2023](#) in Pella, Iowa, June 8-13. The Rev. Judy Nelson and the Rev. Joshua Scheid were elected to serve as president and vice president, respectively, of General Synod 2024. Themes included shifts in theological education and celebrating five decades of women's ordination. The Rev. Dr. Carmelo Santos attended on behalf of the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop and will serve on the RCA's Theology Commission.

The [2023 Synod](#) of the **Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America** took place June 22-25 at Moravian University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania under the theme "For the Healing of the World." The synod honored the Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller as she concluded her third and final term as President of the Northern Province Provincial Elders' Conference. The Rev. David Bennett was elected to serve as president of the Provincial Elders' Conference for the next intersynodal period (2023-2026). Bishop Eaton took part, offering thanks on behalf of the ELCA to Rev. Dr. Miller for her 13 years of leadership and partnership. Rev. Dr. Miller is now serving as the ecumenical officer for the Northern Province.



The **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC)** and **Anglican Church of Canada (ACC)** gathered in Calgary for a [joint assembly](#) from June 27-July 2 under the theme "Let There Be Greening." This provided an opportunity to formally commemorate the partnerships and shared ministry being lived out through Churches Beyond Borders. Bishop Eaton attended on behalf of the ELCA, joining with Bishop Susan Johnson (ELCIC), Archbishop Linda Nicholls (ACC) and the Rt. Rev. R. William Franklin, who represented Presiding Bishop Curry (TEC). A full communion relationship between the Moravian Church Northern Province, the ELCIC and the ACC was unanimously approved by all three denominations at their respective synods and assemblies.



The **United Church of Christ (UCC)** [General Synod 2023](#) took place in Indianapolis, from June 30-July 4 under the theme "Making All Things New." [The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson was elected General Minister and President](#), becoming the first woman, and first Black woman, to lead the denomination. Bishop Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt represented the Office of the Presiding Bishop. Among the emerging themes from the gathering was a focus on Indigenous rights and the mending of relationships; it [passed a resolution](#) calling for the UCC to investigate and make amends for its historical complicity in boarding schools for Native Hawaiians and Native American nations. Vance Blackfox, director of Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations for the ELCA, accompanied the church in its work related to the resolution. ELCA Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber served as the General Synod's keynote speaker. The Rev. Dr. Thompson was installed as General Minister and President in Cleveland on October 20; Bishop Laura Barbins and Kathryn Lohre represented the ELCA.

The [General Assembly 2023](#) of the **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** took place in Louisville from July 29- August 1 under the theme "Kingdom of God Within Us, Among Us." Kathryn Lohre represented the Office of the Presiding Bishop. In recent years the CCDOC has been engaged in [the Covenant Project](#),

an initiative aimed at reshaping the church's governing structure. The assembly considered resolutions related to this process. The current round of dialogue met online in late October 2023, to reflect on the in-person meeting held in January focused on the landmark ecumenical convergence text, "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry," and to plan for the in-person meeting agenda for early 2024.



While in Louisville for the GA of the CCDOC, Kathryn accompanied UCC colleagues on a visit to the national offices of the **Presbyterian Church USA**, where they met with staff and Interim Stated Clerk Rev. Bronwen Bosnell who was appointed to serve beginning July 1 until the next Stated Clerk is elected at their General Assembly in 2024.

Coordinating Committees

As you will recall, the **Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC)** Implementation Team for the Orderly Exchange developed a "Proposal for Exchangeability of the Diaconate," adopted by LECC in January 2023. This proposal is not apart from, but is an interpretation of our full communion agreement, "Called to Common Mission." Recommended by the ELCA Conference of Bishops and Church Council Executive Committee, the Church Council took action in April 2023 to "receive" the proposal. A parallel process is underway in The Episcopal Church. As we await this possible action, work is underway to update the "Orderly Exchange" document to include exchangeability of deacons, in partnership with ELCA Worship and in consultation with the Office of the Secretary. Until this work is completed, and TEC takes action on the proposal, the exchangeability of deacons is not yet in effect. (Bishop Kreiss is co-chair of LECC.) It is likely that further work on our ELCA internal processes related to updating the "Orderly Exchange" will come to the Church Council in spring and/or fall of 2024.

The **UMC-ELCA Coordinating Committee** met in-person for the first time since 2019 in February 2023 in Atlanta. The meeting centered around new realities facing our churches as we emerge from the pandemic. The committee spent time discussing ecumenical formation in seminaries and other institutions of higher education, potential joint resource development opportunities, and the ways in which the ELCA can best support the UMC as they continue their process of full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ members and leadership within the UMC and the resulting challenges that are emerging. Bishop Kevin Strickland and Pastor William Flippin, Jr. were invited local guests. (Bishop Beaudoin is a member of this committee.)



Multi-Lateral Updates

The **National Workshop on Christian Unity (NWCU)** gathered May 8-11 in Milwaukee under the theme "Do Good; Seek Justice." Redeemer Lutheran Church — Milwaukee, supported by Bishop Paul Erickson, hosted the opening worship and the Rev. Chris Olkiewicz, past LEIRN president, served as chair of this year's workshop. Kristen Opalinski, ELCA manager for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, moderated a panel discussion titled "Advocacy in Action: Seeking Justice Through Prophetic Witness," which included the Rev. Cindy Crane, director of the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin. The NWCU serves as the annual meeting of the Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network (LEIRN), which reviewed and began to reimagine both the structure of LEIRN and its mission as a network within the ELCA. The ecumenical staff from the Office of the Presiding Bishop presented its [Annual Staff Report](#).

Conciliar Ecumenism

The **World Council of Churches** (WCC) Central Committee met June 21-27 in Geneva, Switzerland. This was the first full meeting of the WCC central committee following the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany. Kathryn Lohre and ELCA Vice President Imran Siddiqui were elected to serve as members of the Central Committee. The WCC's 75th anniversary was commemorated with a worship and [celebration event](#). The Central Committee adopted a strategic plan to guide the work of the WCC until the next assembly, as well as financial and communications strategies — all under the theme of a pilgrimage of justice, reconciliation, and unity. Various resolutions and minutes on public issues were also adopted. You can learn more at oikoumene.org.



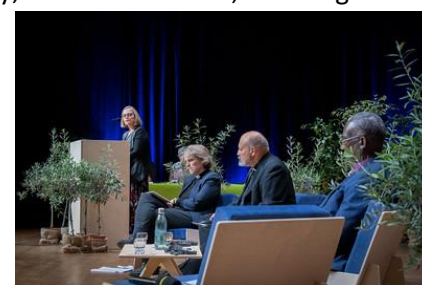
The 13th Assembly of the **Lutheran World Federation** (LWF) took place September 13-19 in Krakow, Poland, under the theme "One Body, One Spirit, One Hope." The assembly will be preceded by three pre-assemblies — for women, youth, and men. The ELCA delegation included Bishop Eaton and Rev. Dr. Robin Steinke, who completed their service on the Executive Committee, as well as Bishop Leila Ortiz, Rev. William Flippin, Jr., Brad Wendel, and Khadijah Islam, who were elected to serve on the LWF Council for the next period. Rev. Barbara Lund was elected to serve as chair of the World Service Committee, and she will serve together with Khadijah, who was elected to chair the Constitution and Membership Standing Committee, on the Executive Committee for the next period. Rev. Katherine Gohm from the ELCIC was elected



to succeed Bishop Eaton as the Vice President of the North American Region. The ELCA was also represented by advisors, co-opted staff, and visitors. You are encouraged to visit the [LWF Assembly website](#) where you can find resources, resolutions, photos, presentations, study guides, and more.

Kristen Opalinski was the visual identity coordinator for the Assembly, and her beautiful, meaningful work was highly praised by all.

The Assembly keynote speaker was Monsignor Tomáš Halík, a Catholic intellectual and author from the Czech Republic. Kathryn Lohre and Tanzanian Presiding Bishop Shoo, served as respondents. You can find Halík's keynote and their responses [here](#).



On the closing day of the Assembly, LWF General Secretary Anne Burghardt and Cardinal Kurt Koch of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity presented a [Common Word](#) to the Assembly, anticipating the 500th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession in 2030. This was followed by a [panel discussion](#) of representatives of seven Christian World Communions — the five co-signers of the JDDJ (Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican, and Reformed), along with Orthodox and Pentecostal respondents.

The **2023 Christian Churches Together Forum** took place in Savannah, Georgia October 3-6 under the theme “Water That Unites and Water That Divides: Baptism and the Journey to Unity and Reconciliation.” CCT is the most expansive ecumenical table in the US, and the forum provides an opportunity for participants representing five church families (Orthodox, Pentecostal/Evangelical, Catholic, Protestant, and Historic Black) to focus on three goals: learning, loving, and leading actions. This forum included both theological and practical presentations, small group discussions, and visits to various historic sites and churches in Savannah. A special day was dedicated to visiting the Historic Baptismal Trail in Riceboro, where enslaved people and their descendants were baptized in the swamp and springs beginning in the 1840s. Bishop Suzanne Dillahunt, who served on the Steering Committee, and Kathryn Lohre represented the ELCA.



The **National Council of Churches Christian Unity Gathering 2023** took place October 10-12 in Nashville under the theme, “Faith Under Fire: The Church in the Public Square.” The gathering opened with a celebratory reception at the AME Publishing House and worship at Greater Bethel AME across the street. Through Bible studies, plenary speakers, and panels, the gathering explored themes of Christian extremism and supremacy, the role of faith leaders in public safety, religious nationalism and the persecution of religious minorities, and gun violence. Various awards were presented, including an interfaith award to Rev. Dr. Michael Trice (ELCA), who serves as the Spehar-Halligan Professor and Founding Director of the Center for Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement at Seattle University.



Nicea 2025

2025 will mark the 1,700th anniversary of the **Council of Nicaea** of 325. This commemoration will be an important moment for Christians around the world as we reflect upon the history and future of our ecumenical journey together. The World Council of Churches (WCC) has launched a [webpage](#) with information and resources and has begun planning a [world conference](#) to take place in 2025. The Lutheran World Federation is also working on plans, including a [common Lutheran-Orthodox statement](#), and resources for member churches. The ELCA’s commemorations will focus on inviting engagement through these global efforts, including at the CWA, and through a theological symposium being planned by the National Council of Churches in the USA 75th anniversary committee, chaired by Kathryn Lohre.

Inter-Religious Relations

Inter-Religious Dialogues

The ELCA participates in the National Council of Churches' national inter-religious dialogues with Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs.

In April, the **Jewish-Christian dialogue** met in New York City to explore themes of reparations,



remembrance, and healing. To contextualize this work, the dialogue met at multiple sites: the Jewish Theological Seminary, the National September 11th Memorial, St. Nicholas Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center, and Trinity Wall Street. Presentations on Germany's post-war reparations to the Jews and on the iconography at the National Shrine depicting both the remembrance of 9/11, and

the church's healing presence amid and after 9/11, led to generative dialogue. The next dialogue meeting will take place in early December at the Carter Center in Atlanta.

The **Buddhist-Christian dialogue** and the **Hindu-Christian dialogue** met online in July to discuss possible topics for in-person meeting later this year.

Shoulder to Shoulder

In April 2023, the annual [John Paul II lecture](#) hosted by the Milstein Center for Interreligious Dialogue at The Jewish Theological Seminary held a webinar titled Confronting Anti-Religious Bigotry. The conversation, which centered around the growing swell of anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, anti-Christian bigotry, was moderated by Rabbi Burt Visotzky (director of the Milstein Center) and featured the co-founder of the Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign, Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi, and the campaign's co-chairs, Rabbi Esther Lederman and Kathryn Lohre. The next in-person Shoulder to Shoulder [Faith Over Fear Training](#) is October 5, in Bozeman, Montana. On October 18, Shoulder to Shoulder issued a [statement](#) on the impact of the war in the Middle East on heightened hate and violence, and the importance of ongoing work to build a pluralistic, democratic society where hate has no place.

Rostered Ministers Gathering

The ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering in July provided an opportunity to uplift various ELCA inter-



religious resources including [“A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community”](#) (1994/2021), [“A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment”](#) (2019), [“ELCA Guidelines for Ministry in a Multi-Religious World”](#) (2022), [“A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to the Muslim Community”](#) (2022), and [“Preaching and Teaching ‘with love and respect](#)

[for the Jewish people](#)” (2022). Several workshops and a resource table led to meaningful exchanges with ELCA pastors, deacons, and chaplains – from whom we also learned quite a lot.

WCC "Building Interreligious Solidarity" Booklet

The World Council of Churches [launched](#) a new resource on July 28: "[Building Interreligious Solidarity in Our Wounded World.](#)" The booklet highlights key insights and learnings from The Future of Interfaith Dialogue Conference, held in 2021 in hope of prompting further interest in and discussion of common formation among a range of faith communities and inter-religious organizations. Topics covered include "Transformational Formation: Five Fundamental Principles" and "Ten Practical Pointers for Initiatives of Common Formation." A directory lists organizations offering learning opportunities in common formation. Learn more by viewing the [panel discussion related to the document.](#)

Parliament of the World's Religions

To mark the 130th anniversary of the inaugural [Parliament of the World's Religions](#), the largest inter-religious gathering in the world returned to Chicago from August 14-18 under the theme, "A Call to Conscience: Defending Freedom & Human Rights."

Bishop Eaton was a keynote at the opening plenary, speaking to the theme. Kristen Opalinski and Kathryn Lohre were workshop presenters. Pr. Peter Pettit offered a well-attended workshop to introduce the ELCA guide "[Preaching and Teaching 'With Love and Respect for the Jewish People.'](#)" Dozens of ELCA leaders, including Seminary presidents, deans, faculty, and students, were also presenters and participants.



ISNA Convention and Interfaith Banquet

The annual convention of the **Islamic Society of North America** took place in Rosemont, Illinois, over Labor Day weekend. Kathryn Lohre joined Shoulder to Shoulder co-founder Mohamed Elsanousi, Executive Director Nina Fernando, and Consultative Circle member Jenan Mojahir on a panel about interfaith solidarity and the need for other faith communities to address anti-Muslim bigotry.

Kathry was also invited to give a keynote at the interfaith banquet and honored as ISNA's 2023 Interfaith Awardee. In her address, she uplifted the important role ISNA has and should continue to play in building bridges of interfaith understanding and cooperation, the inspiring leadership of Dr. Sayyid Syeed, and the ELCA's commitment to partnership.



LWF “Hope for the Future” Study Document

One of the prominent themes of the LWF 13th Assembly was examining Lutheran-Jewish relations both historically and through a contemporary lens. Almost 650 participants in the Assembly made the journey to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau, and the following day on Rosh Hashanah received a [powerful address](#) from Holocaust survivor Marian Turksi. It was in the context of these critical aspects of the Assembly that “[Hope for the Future: A Study Document for Renewing Jewish-Christian Relations](#)” was uplifted in two workshops at the Assembly. The study document, which details the Lutheran-Jewish relations of the LWF over time and provides meaningful entry points into contemporary dialogue, was the work of an eight-person task force chaired by LSTC Dean Esther Menn, who is also the chair of the ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations. The document is an educational resource intended to invite renewal in Jewish-Christian relations across the communion.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

- **The North American Academy of Ecumenists** will meet November 16-17 in San Antonio under the theme, “Ecumenism in the Borderlands: Translating Worlds. Information can be found [here](#).

Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Staff, Office of the Presiding Bishop

Kristen Opalinski, Manager, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

Carmelo Santos, Director, Theological Diversity and Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

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

[EIR Perspectives Blog](#)

[Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Facebook Group](#)

[Quarterly EIR News](#)

Reconsideration of Message on End-of-Life Decisions (1992)

Review of “End-of-Life Decisions”

Florida-Bahamas Synod (9E) [2023]

At the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council meeting on September 15, 2023, the synod council became aware that a previously passed resolution of the council had not reached the Church Council. After discussion, Bishop Pedro Suarez was asked to submit the resolution for consideration. The synod council considers the following section in the social message to be problematic, given the number of states in the U.S. which now allow, by statute, ‘physician-assisted death.’

We oppose the legalization of physician-assisted death, which would allow the private killing of one person by another. Public control and regulation of such actions would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. The potential for abuse, especially of people who are most vulnerable, would be substantially increased. ([Message on End-of-Life Decisions](#), p. 4)

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council of the Florida-Bahamas Synod express to the Church Council its desire for a review of the 1992 ELCA Social Message on End-of-Life.

Background and Recommendation

1. The concern for authorizing or reconsidering any social message (like [End-of-Life Decisions](#)) comes as a request. In assessing what might be the next social message process, staff of Theological Ethics consider many factors and consult with multiple leadership groups. For example, staff might consult with a committee of the Conference of Bishops, Lutheran Services in America, and other relevant sources. The director then provides a recommendation to ELCA Church Council (CC) about timing and type of action. This recommendation is provided to the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee for their recommendation to CC in its role of oversight of the ELCA.
2. Currently a social message on gun related violence and trauma is in process and should be presented to CC for action in the spring. There also are two other pending requests for social message consideration. One on child abuse and a reconsideration of the “Message on Homelessness” (1990). *Therefore, the director recommends the “Message on End-of-Life Decisions” (1992) request for reconsideration be held along with the two other pending requests for assessment during late winter of 2024.*
3. It is important to explain that delay in both assessment and in recommendation is necessary due to the limited capacity of both staff and church leadership capacity to handle all requests for social messages and other requests for social teaching related work. The practice currently is one social message a year, along with social statement development or reconsideration. (a five-year process). It should also be noted that some requests are ultimately handled by other means than development or reconsideration. For example, some requests have been handled through authorizing a study or in declining action all together. The director for theological ethics is sure we all share the wish that no delays were necessary for assessment or action, but we are creatures of space and time.

Recommendation:

To defer the question of reconsidering the selected paragraph in the “Message on End-of-Life Decisions” (1992) following the 2023-24 social message development cycle in order to allow for a careful and thorough assessment of that request along with continued assessment of the pending request for a social message on child abuse and protection and the request of a substantive revision of the “Message on Homelessness” (1990). This assessment will include input from relevant leadership circles as well as the availability of staff capacity, and finances; and

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

FOX SWIBEL

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October 31, 2022

Via Email

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Re: *DEI Audit of Governance Documents for The Evangelical
Lutheran Church In America (ELCA) (the "Project")*

Dear Tom and Aja:

This is to follow up on our September 2, 2022 letter to you regarding our proposed representation of the ELCA in connection with a comprehensive audit for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of ELCA's Governance Documents (as defined below) to comply with a DEI mandate (the "Mandate") from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly (the "Assembly"). In response to your recent request, we have provided below a summary of the strategy our firm would generally use to conduct such an audit so that the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions for the ELCA, the Constitution for Synods, the Model Constitution for Congregations, the Roster Manual, the Governance Policy Manual, and Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline 2021 (collectively, the "Governance Documents") reflect the implicit values and obey the dictates of the Mandate.

Our strategy would generally consist of the following:

1. *Mandate Review.* Review the Mandate and all relevant documents and records of intent, purpose and context that led to its adoption. The goal of this element of the Project would be to thoroughly understand the purpose and intent of the Mandate so that we can more precisely determine which adjustments, if any, need to be made to

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the Governance Documents to ensure its successful implementation.

- a. Confirm how the elements of the Mandate are to apply to the Governance Documents under review.
 - i. Identify any parts of the Mandate that may be optional or advisory.
 - ii. Interview relevant leaders within the churchwide organization to determine the extent to which barriers exist to implementation of the Mandate, and devise strategies to overcome such barriers as recommendations for revisions to Governance Documents are considered.

2. *Governance Documents Review; Identification of Any Compliance Deficiencies.*

Thoroughly review the Governance Documents to determine the following:

- a. The extent to which the current Governance Documents already reflect the Mandate.
 - i. Identify any deficiencies in the Governance Documents generally that need to be addressed in order to conform the applicable Governance Document to the Mandate.
- b. The extent to which various of the Governance Documents comply with the Mandate while other parts do not.
 - i. Identify any inconsistencies, for example, among the following documents as they relate to compliance with the Mandate:
 1. The Constitution of the ELCA, on the one hand, and the Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, on the other hand.
 2. The Synod Constitution, on the one hand, versus all other Governance Documents.
 3. The Model Constitution for Congregations, on the one hand, and all other Governance Documents, on the other hand.
 - ii. Propose corrections to remedy any and all such foregoing deficiencies, so that the Governance Documents operate together as a harmonious whole in furtherance of the Mandate.

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3. *DEI Implementation Review.* Evaluate whether the Governance Documents need to be expanded or improved to facilitate successful implementation of the Mandate. This task may include:
 - a. Determining whether programs or initiatives are or should be required or could be adopted to advance the Mandate, including changes to the Governance Documents that might explore steps or add wording related to:
 - i. Mentoring new, young, and diverse people to assume leadership roles
 - ii. Forming joint ventures with community organizations to expand the pool of diverse persons who can join the church and ascend to leadership roles
 - iii. Making available diversity training for leaders and congregants in synods and congregations, covering such topics as:
 1. Microaggression in conversations that may seem innocent to majority members but may trigger feelings of alienation and exclusion among diverse congregants
 2. Perceptions by minority groups of ways in which the church does not seem adequately responsive to their needs
 3. Perceptions regarding false accusations of racism, sexism, genderism, or similar character flaws when no harm was intended
 4. Ways in which the church can be more open to diverse citizens outside of the church who may fear rejection if they are part of the church
 5. Ways in which the church can devote more resources to DEI initiatives within the church, including by devoting part of the annual church budget to DEI initiatives
 6. Periodic structured discussions among diverse and non-diverse members of the church on how members may react differently to issues in the community that disproportionately affect or alienate groups within the church, such as police brutality, gun safety policies and limitations on teaching the history of racial oppression and oppressive tactics used against the LGBTQIA+ community in public schools

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- iv. Identifying obstacles to implementation of the Mandate that may be unique to the ELCA or its history but can be overcome
 - v. Expanding connections and common activities with other churches that have greater or less diversity than a given church, to help reduce racial, gender and other barriers that typically divide churches from one another
 - vi. Adopting and engaging in a broader array of community service activities that create more opportunities for LGBTQIA+, diverse and non-diverse members to learn to love, work with and trust one another, such as community clean up events and homebuilding projects for the poor
4. *Create a User-Friendly Handbook for Churches Implementing the Mandate.* The Governance Documents can provide a broad legal framework for application of the Mandate to the ELCA's affairs and churches generally, but are not easily accessible to pastors, church laity and congregants in a practical manner. We would propose creating a handbook for *optional* use by churches, laity, pastors and leadership that would (i) explain the Mandate and its implications in user-friendly terms, and (ii) identify ways congregations might conduct similar DEI audits of Governance Documents to create safe, non-discriminatory and healthy environments.

I hope this is a helpful overview of how we might achieve the goals of the Project. Feel free to call or email me should you require any further information. We look forward to working with you.

Thank you.

Very Best Regards,



N. Neville Reid, Esq.

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October 24, 2023

Fox, Swibel, Levin & Carroll LLP's Audit Report: Findings and Proposed Changes to the Governance Documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, its Synods and Congregations, Related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

Fox, Swibel, Levin & Carroll LLP ("FSLC") was retained by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ("ELCA") to conduct a legal audit of the churchwide ELCA Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions and certain related policy documents, as well as the parallel governance documents for the synods and congregations (collectively, the "Governance Documents"), for purposes of determining what changes, if any, should be made to those documents in order to effectuate the ELCA diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility goals (the "DEIA Audit" or the "Audit")¹. FSLC's proposal letter dated October 31, 2022 (attached) set forth the scope of work that FSLC intended to perform in order to complete the Audit.

This report consists of (i) a summary of (a) the work FSLC completed in connection with the Audit, and (b) FSLC's findings and recommendations, and (ii) an outline of the contents of a diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility ("DEIA") handbook that FSLC proposes to work on with a committee from ELCA over the next year that will provide further guidance to the ELCA churchwide organization, synods and congregations on how best to advance DEIA at those respective levels.

Work Completed

Initial Document Review: FSLC initially reviewed in detail the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions for the churchwide ELCA, as well as the Model Constitution for Synods and the Model Constitution for Congregations (the "Initial Document Review"). In that review,

¹ The resolution language in CC22.11.31 reads: "To approve the engagement of Fox Swibel Levin & Carroll LLP to perform a diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility audit of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, the Roster Manual, the ELCA Church Council Governance Policy Manual, and the Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline, with the total cost not to exceed \$100,000."

FSLC made initial observations of amendments that might be made to those documents that would enhance DEIA within the comprehensive churchwide organization, the synods and the congregations (collectively, the “ELCA Institutions”).

Interviews: In conjunction with or shortly after that Initial Document Review, FSLC interviewed representatives of key ELCA committees whose work touches on DEIA issues, for purposes of discerning their understanding of (i) what DEIA is and should accomplish, (ii) what obstacles may impede achieving greater DEIA within the ELCA Institutions, and (iii) whether and/or how those obstacles can be overcome (collectively, the “Interviews”). The committees interviewed were the following:

1. Conference of Bishops Executive Committee
2. Executive Committee of the Church Council
3. DEI & Racial Justice Group
4. Ethnic Desks Group
5. Ethnic Ministry Association Presidents Group
6. Directors of Evangelical Mission Constitution Team

FSLC also had further discussions with Thomas Cunniff, Sue Rothmeyer, Paul Irwin, Rev. Chris Boerger, David Swartling and Rev. Lowell Almen on ELCA structure, the intent of the Audit, and DEIA issues generally.

Draft Inserts: After completing the Interviews, FSLC revisited its initial observations regarding the Governance Documents (together with the Initial Document Review, the “Document Review”) and drafted an initial set of proposed amendments to only the ELCA churchwide Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions (the “ELCA Base Document” and such draft amendments the “Initial Amendments”). These Initial Amendments were based on the interview results, certain materials provided by the interviewees related to DEIA, and DEIA literature and analysis generally. The rationale of editing only the ELCA Base Document at that time was to avoid making edits to the other Governance Documents that the ELCA might reject in the ELCA Base Document, thereby limiting the costs of further legal editing.

Meeting with Liaison Bishops to the Church Council, and ELCA Officers: FSLC presented its preliminary findings, and summary of Initial Amendments, to the Liaison Bishops to the Church Council and various ELCA Officers, and its General Counsel and Deputy General Counsel, on Friday, September 29, 2023. As a result of feedback received from that meeting, FSLC then revised its Initial Amendments, and proposed additional amendments to substantially all of the remaining Governance Documents (collectively, the “Proposed Amendments”).² The Proposed

² Per ELCA’s request, FSLC did not review the Roster Manual. FSLC has proposed edits (summarized herein) to all Governance Documents except for the Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline which FSLC concluded did not require edits from a DEIA perspective.

Amendments are summarized below but are reflected *verbatim* in a redlined version of the affected Governance Documents appended hereto.

Summary of Preliminary Findings

Based on the Interviews and the Document Review, and without attributing any specific comment or concern to any particular interviewee (to preserve candor and confidentiality), FSLC made the following preliminary findings:

1. ELCA, and its Governing Documents, need a definition of DEIA. There is no universal agreement on what the term means, making policymaking on DEIA more difficult.
2. ELCA's leadership needs to be more vocal, consistent and strong on expressing commitment to, and visibly advancing, DEIA, from the top down. Greater funding and personnel need to be allocated to the pursuit of DEIA goals within the ELCA Institutions.
3. The ELCA national, churchwide leadership seems more committed to DEIA than do the congregations. At much of the congregational level, DEIA "falls apart" as an overriding goal or primary objective. Many congregations need instruction and leadership on how to implement DEIA at the congregational level.
4. The autonomous structure of ELCA Institutions, in which synods and congregations have minimal mandatory requirements for membership in the ELCA, precludes the material advancement of DEIA within ELCA Institutions as a whole. By the time a DEIA mandate or policy, no matter how coherent and necessary, makes it to congregations and synods, they can always choose to ignore it and yet still retain their ELCA membership. DEIA policy throughout ELCA Institutions should be more coordinated and organized, and should include accountability measures to deter non-compliance. At the same time, interviewees acknowledged, and FSLC assumes, that mandating ELCA congregations to do anything, let alone comply with any DEIA obligations, would be a fundamental, significant departure from ELCA procedures, culture, polity and history.
5. Existing ELCA membership in congregations is largely of older European and Caucasian descent, while most potential new church members and church plant congregations are non-Caucasian. Yet, power remains rigidly concentrated in the largely Caucasian leadership of the ELCA nationally.
6. New starts and other Synod Authorizing Worshiping Communities ("SAWCs ") should be able to adopt governance documents that are more tailored to their unique cultural, language, and economic circumstances, and they should be allowed a

- longer period of time to attain status as congregations given those circumstances.
7. A more aggressive DEIA policy may cause some non-diverse congregations to leave the denomination, and a less aggressive DEIA policy may cause other congregations to exit the denomination as well.
 8. Lutheran seminary graduates are generally ill-equipped to engage with diverse communities and grow existing or new churches there. Other Christian denominations, and Catholic churches, appear more effective in connecting to and serving racially and economically diverse communities.
 9. Political ideology often dominates the world view of many congregants, causing them to be skeptical of or hostile to DEIA policy as itself being “political”.
 10. Improperly managed, a DEIA policy can risk splitting the church into atomized groups along the lines of race, sexual orientation, class, immigrant status or other group categories, jeopardizing the cohesiveness of the ELCA Institutions.
 11. DEIA must make all diverse groups, including those historically underrepresented in membership and leadership, “feel like they belong.” There is a palpable lack of commitment to including and nurturing LGBTQIA+ persons seeking to connect to the ELCA.
 12. Leadership positions within the ELCA Institutions generally lack diversity. This causes marginalized groups to question whether the ELCA is for them.
 13. Some congregations in particular are hostile and insensitive to immigrants of color. There is a fear in some congregations that Christian outreach to immigrants seeking care, asylum or legal status may violate state criminal laws and result in arrests of leaders or congregants in an ELCA church.
 14. The churchwide organization must model DEIA in its personnel policies as an inspiration and example for synods and congregations. Such modeling need not always be formal or legalistic, but should include greater sensitivity and understanding for diverse personnel who may have unique challenges or issues related to their race, gender, or sexual orientation.
 15. DEIA, as a definition and a policy, must be grounded in Scripture, Biblical principles and Christian values. Divorced from a Biblical foundation, a congregation may feel more free to ignore DEIA as cultural or political indoctrination that has nothing to do with Christianity. Certain terms, such as “social justice” or “systemic racism”, can

- trigger such an adverse reaction to DEIA, which might be avoided if the goals of such terms were more clearly connected to Scriptural mandates and the teachings of Jesus.
16. DEIA should not deter free, open and candid discussion among racially diverse congregants or leaders. There is some fear that some Caucasian leaders or congregants in ELCA may be erroneously perceived as racist for expressing a viewpoint on an issue when no racist motive was present.
 17. DEIA must not be static as a definition or a policy. It must adapt and change as new groups with different characteristics but who may have been historically ignored by the Church, step forward in their pursuit of a relationship with Jesus.
 18. DEIA should encourage cross-racial, cross-cultural relationships as a path to diversifying leadership. The more the dominant racial and gender groups get to know members of non-dominant groups in social and other settings, over time, the more likely it is that such non-dominant members will advance to leadership. Such relational progress is likely more effective than goals or mandates in creating greater diversity within leadership of ELCA Institutions.
 19. Congregations that lack racial and demographic diversity in their surrounding communities largely view DEIA as an academic issue and not an immediate, practical concern. DEIA policy must be made relevant to them, such as by tying it to a broader societal problem that they have a role in addressing.
 20. The existing requirement that 10% of the members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards and other organizational units be persons of color or whose primary language is not English, as set forth in Section 5.01(e) of the ELCA churchwide Constitution, is a laudable goal yet still a work in progress. Some believe further progress has been limited by a lack of (i) funding, (ii) institutional commitment from the top down, and/or (iii) bilingual personnel. The failure to fully achieve this goal to date suggests it may be difficult to achieve more ambitious DEIA goals in the future. One interviewee noted, however, that while the 10% goal has not been achieved with respect to persons of color among members in congregations, it has been achieved with respect to persons of color at the level of boards and assemblies.

Summary of Proposed Amendments to ELCA Base Document, Model Constitution for Synods and Model Constitution for Congregations

The Proposed Amendments are intended to address the findings above and the concerns raised in the Interviews. The principal Proposed Amendments, by Governance Document, are summarized below:

1. Principal Amendments to the ELCA Constitution:

a. Principal Sections implementing DEIA:

i. Biblical Basis for Diversity (New Sections 4.01A, 4.01B and 4.02(g)):

These new sections are intended to root DEIA, as a definition³ and a policy, in Biblical principles of grace, love, holiness, and community with the marginalized. One principal animating truth behind these sections is the Apostle Paul's description of the "body of Christ" in 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, in which each person in the church is to be made to feel "indispensable" (v. 22) and that all are to share in the sufferings of all (v. 26). The principal issue for many diverse persons, historically marginalized or not fully embraced by churches or excluded from the power structure of churches, is feeling invisible or merely tolerated.

Section 4.02(g) makes clear that ELCA Institutions shall welcome and show love and compassion to members of the LGTQIA+ community, irrespective of what position such institution has taken or will take on pending issues or proposals of concern to the LGBTQIA+ community. The basis for this is the likelihood that were an LGTQIA+ person to approach Jesus personally today, say on the street outside of a Lutheran congregation, seeking a relationship with Him but sensing that the congregation does not want him/her there, Jesus would undoubtedly love and nurture that person into a closer loving relationship with Him irrespective of all other issues: "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away." (John 6:37). In the course of that relationship, by faith we would expect that the person would work out with Jesus how to deal with their sexual inclinations or understanding of their gender, consistent with that relationship and the holiness that comes from The Lord alone and not the world (Lev. 20:8; 1 Cor. 2:12). Section 4.02(g) commits the church to join with Jesus in mentoring all people -- including LGBTQIA+ persons who may have

³ DEIA is formally defined in an amendment to CR Section 5.01.C21, summarized below.

experienced alienation, hatred and marginalization from the Church historically -- into a more intimate and loving relationship with Him (John 14:23), irrespective of how the church's pending disputes regarding sexual ethics are ultimately resolved or codified.

These sections also make clear that in the event of a conflict between the Biblical basis for DEIA and other bases from secular sources, the Biblical basis shall control. This approach will guard against the erosion of support for DEIA that is already occurring in various business, political and legal arenas of the United States; by contrast, the Word of God is eternal, and religious policies are generally protected by the First Amendment, so a DEIA policy rooted in God's Word should be safer than if it were grounded on other foundations.

- ii. DEIA as policy, and certain specific DEIA measures and programs are encouraged but not required (New Section 4.02(h); amendments to Sections 5.01(d) and 9.22)): These sections make clear that promoting DEIA is the policy of ELCA Institutions as a whole, and that synods, congregations and the churchwide organization are encouraged (but not required) to adopt and diligently implement the "2019 DEIA Recommendations" and meet or exceed the "Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards" applicable to them (each as defined in CR Section 5.01.C21A and summarized in ¶12(a)(below).

Note that the Initial Amendments were originally drafted to make the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards mandatory, but the Proposed Amendments have made these voluntary in order to conform to the reality of ELCA's strong historical non-hierarchical (yet theologically interconnected) structure. FSLC acknowledges that mandatory DEIA tasks and projects at the churchwide, synod and congregational levels would be contrary to that structure. It is also clear that without enforcement mechanisms, mandatory initiatives, even if enacted, would be potentially futile. However, in light of the strong theme among interviewees that ELCA action on DEIA is far behind the rhetoric, and the church's critical role in helping to rebuild the social fabric of the country amidst deepening toxic racial and ideological polarization, FSLC encourages an ongoing, serious discussion of whether ELCA institutional culture should be adjusted to accommodate mandates that make DEIA more of a visible reality throughout the ELCA Institutions. FSLC also notes that greater discussion and engagement with ELCA clergy and congregations on the spiritual virtue of DEIA might later create

consensus behind incentivizing synods and congregations to adopt stronger DEIA measures.⁴

Those incentives might include granting congregations with stellar DEIA achievements greater voting power at the Assemblies, as a form of enhanced membership, or conditioning any grants or other financial assistance to congregations on compliance with the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

- iii. Active mentoring as a tool to promote DEIA (New Section 4.02(i)): This section makes clear that participation in God’s mission, which includes building and preserving the body of Christ and strengthening each person in it, requires proactive mentoring of persons in “Historically Underrepresented Groups” (defined in CR Section 5.01.C21B, summarized below) and preparing them for leadership roles. This principle is reflected in revisions to the nomination process in proposed amendments to bylaw Sections 19.11.06 and 19.11.A21 summarized below. It is also patterned after the proactive mentoring that Jesus provided to His disciples during His ministry.
- iv. Increasing percentage goals for participation by Historically Underrepresented Groups (Amendments to Sections 5.01(e) and 5.01(f)): These amendments propose that the original 10% goal for participation by persons of color and non-primary English speaking persons, in the various organizational units of the ELCA Institutions (see, e.g., Sections 5.01(e), (f)), be replaced by a more ambitious and inclusive goal, as follows:
 1. 10% persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English; and,
 2. An additional 10%, persons from other Historically Underrepresented Groups other than persons of color or non-primary English-speaking persons.

These amendments are intended to recognize that there are persons

⁴ Scripture reminds us that at critical junctures in history, when the Church is needed to correct or fight burgeoning evil in society (such as during the respective times of Martin Luther and Martin Luther King, Jr.), The Lord moves His Church to change old practices that limit its power to fight such evil. See, e.g., Luke 5:37-39 (“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins.”); Isaiah 43:19 (“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”).

other than racial minorities and persons whose primary language is not English (see definition of “Historically Underrepresented Groups” summarized below) who need to be addressed and included as part of any DEIA initiative. It also avoids the perceived disrespect to disparate diverse groups that may result from lumping them all under a single percentage, such as the original 10%, which may send the message that the ELCA Institutions do not want to do the work of ensuring that each group is adequately nurtured, advanced and supported in membership and leadership within such institutions.

- v. Permission to allow SAWC Communities to use separate bylaws (Amendment to Section 9.25(b)): This amendment adopts the long-standing, thoughtful work of the Evangelical Mission Constitution Team, to allow proposed SAWC communities to utilize bylaws which have been developed by that team and are more specifically tailored to the unique needs and issues facing such communities.

2. Principal ELCA Continuing Resolution Amendments:

a. New Definitions:

- i. Definition of “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility” or “DEIA” (Amendment to Section 5.01.C21): This definition is necessary to provide the requisite uniformity across ELCA Institutions on what diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility actually mean. It separately defines the constituent parts of DEIA.

“Diversity” includes persons who identify within the following categories: race, gender, gender non-conforming, LGBTQIA+, persons whose primary language is not English, geography (e.g., persons who tend to identify primarily with urban groups, or with rural groups), age, socioeconomic class and disability. The definition is expressly not static and is to be adjusted as new groups not previously identified, but whose members seek a relationship with Jesus Christ and the church, come forward over time.

“Equity” is separately defined to refer to the fair treatment of all people within the church, so that no characteristic about them impedes the development of their gifts or their faith. It also includes the church’s commitment to provide resources to persons or groups to develop those

gifts and nurture their faith, where such groups would otherwise lack such resources, even if such resources are not equally shared with all other groups.

“Inclusion” is defined as the proactive inclusion of diverse persons in the decision-making processes of the church, so that persons historically excluded from such processes can experience greater participation in charting the future course of the church.

“Accessibility” refers to the design of the church’s infrastructure to ensure the safe participation by persons with disabilities.

- ii. “2019 DEIA Recommendations” (New CR Section 5.01.C21A): This definition refers to the recommendations set forth in the “How Strategic and Authentic is Our Diversity; A Call for Confession, Reflection and Healing Action,” as adopted by the fifteenth triennial Churchwide Assembly on August 9, 2019 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- iii. “Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards” (Section 5.01.C21A): This section refers to a list of specific tasks, projects and duties that the churchwide organization, synods and congregations are encouraged to engage in or complete, at a minimum, at their respective levels in order to promote DEIA within the overall ELCA Institutions. The recommendation to complete these tasks would be part of the Constitution. The list itself, still a work in progress and appended hereto, would be attached as Exhibit A to the Continuing Resolutions, but could be amended and updated over time as new ideas for DEIA engagement at the churchwide, synod and congregational levels emerge. The list is also the basis for a “DEIA Handbook” for congregations recommended and summarized below.

The list includes such tasks as the requirement that congregations create Bible or book studies to better understand the experience of diverse persons underrepresented in or absent from their congregation, and engage in scheduled periodic meetings, worship and discussions with other congregations having opposite demographic characteristics than their own on DEIA-related topics (e.g., an urban church worshipping with a rural church 2-3 times per year and then having fellowship and dialogue on how persons of color contend with racism inside and outside the church, or how distressed rural Caucasian congregants do not feel so “privileged” merely because they are white).

This amendment is intended to create greater continuity and cohesiveness across ELCA Institutions on DEIA issues, and counter the misperception that DEIA is an issue for only certain congregations and not the whole church. It also gives congregations specific guidance on how they can advance DEIA as part of their Christian character and congregational culture.

- iv. “Historically Underrepresented Groups” (Section 5.01.C21B) refers to groups historically underrepresented in the membership and leadership of ELCA Institutions, and includes persons of color, gender-nonconforming persons, LGBTQIA+ persons, persons with a disability, lower income persons and persons whose primary language is not English. The definition is also not static and is intended to be expanded over time as new overlooked groups come forward seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ and the church.

The definition excludes women and youth whose enhanced participation is already covered in previous amendments to the Constitution and Continuing Resolutions (e.g., Constitution §5.01(e), CR §5.01.F19).

b. Other provisions:

- i. Parallel provision to constitutional DEIA policy (Sections 5.01.A16; 5.01.B20; 5.01.E19;11.21.C1;14.41.C22): These amendments reiterate the commitment of the ELCA denomination to pursuing DEIA as a policy and the “10-10” participation goal for Historically Underrepresented Groups (see ¶¶1(a)(iv) and 2(a)(iv) above), on parallel with the commitment embedded in the Proposed Amendments to the Constitution. They also obligate the churchwide organization to work with the synods to assist congregations in developing firm but realistic timetables to implement the applicable 2019 DEIA Recommendations and satisfy or exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards to the extent such congregations elect to adopt such recommendations and standards. Finally, they require congregations to include in their regular reports to synods their progress, if any, on completing or satisfying the (i) Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and (ii) 2019 DEIA Recommendations.

- ii. Including DEIA in nomination forms (Amendment to Section 19.11.A21(c)): This amendment requires that the form used for nominations from the floor at the Churchwide Assembly include an option for the nominee to identify as a member of an Historically Underrepresented Group and a requirement that such nominee indicate (i) persons from an Historically Underrepresented Group that they have mentored within the past 2 years, and (ii) specific work they have done within the past 2 years to advance the 2019 DEIA Recommendations or help the churchwide organization, any synod or any congregation achieve their respective Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

3. Principal ELCA Bylaw Provisions:

- a. Adding DEIA to responsibilities for ministers of the Word and Sacrament (Amendment to Sections 7.31.01 and 7.31.02): These amendments include in the duties and responsibilities of ministers of the Word and Sacrament, (i) a genuine commitment to DEIA as a policy of the ELCA denomination and (ii) a willingness to (a) encourage congregations to embrace, adopt and implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and (b) help consenting congregations achieve the same.
- b. Enlisting seminaries in supporting DEIA (New Section 8.22.02A): This section commits seminaries of the church to review the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and encourages them to implement the same.
- c. Expanding synod participation for Historically Underrepresented Groups (Amendment to Section 12.41.11): This section commits each synod to selecting at least one additional voting member for the Churchwide Assembly who is a member of an Historically Underrepresented Group not already listed in the section.
- d. Modeling personnel policies at the churchwide level (Amendment to Section 16.11.01): This section requires the churchwide organization to model optimal DEIA personnel policies by enhancing their recruiting, hiring and promotion efforts to include additional members of Historically Underrepresented Groups.
- e. Including DEIA in criteria for selecting nominees (Amendment to Section 19.11.06): This Section requires that the Nominating Committee include a candidate's commitment to DEIA as part of its selection criteria.

4. Principal Amendments to Model Constitution for Synods:

- a. Parallel provisions espousing DEIA policy and Establishing Biblical Basis Therefor, and Adopting DEIA-related Definitions by Cross Reference (New required Sections S6.01A, S6.01B, S6.02(g), and S6.02(h)): These sections mirror the provisions in the ELCA Base Document summarized in ¶¶1-3 above, tying DEIA to the church's mission and purpose, grounding it in Biblical principles, and adopting by cross reference the ELCA Base Document's definitions of "DEIA" (and its constituent parts), "Historically Underrepresented Groups", "2019 DEIA Recommendations" and "Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards", for inter-document consistency.
- b. Parallel provisions on mentoring and encouraging congregations to adopt DEIA measures (New required Sections S6.02(i), S6.03.01(e) and S6.03.02(g)): These new required parallel provisions commit the synods to mentoring persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups and encouraging congregations to adopt and implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards. It also commits the synods to assisting consenting congregations to design and execute strategies and programs implementing and/or satisfying those recommendations and standards.
- c. Parallel provision on percentage goals for diversifying membership and leadership positions (Amendment to required Section S6.04): This amended Section 6.04 parallels the "10-10" percent formulation for diversifying membership and leadership in or on the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards and other organizational units as summarized in ¶1(a)(iv) above for the ELCA Base Document, so that more members of Historically Underrepresented Groups have more meaningful participation and roles in the church's polity and its future.
- d. Incorporating DEIA values in investment policies (Amendment to Section S8.42(b)): This section requires the synod treasurer to devise and submit to the Synod Council for approval, a plan to meaningfully increase the portion of the synod's operating funds used to purchase goods and services from vendors owned or controlled by members of Historically Underrepresented Groups.
- e. Incorporating DEIA values in criteria for selection of synod officers (Amendment to Section S9.12): This Section includes a candidate's demonstrated commitment to mentoring persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups, and to DEIA

values generally, as part of the criteria for selection of synod officers.

5. Principal Amendments to Model Constitution for Congregations:

- a. Parallel DEIA provisions on mission, purpose and Biblical basis for DEIA (Required new Sections C4.01A, C4.01B and C4.02(g)): These sections mirror the provisions in the ELCA Base Document summarized in ¶¶1-3 above, tying DEIA to the church’s mission and purpose, and grounding it in Biblical principles. The Proposed Amendments here recommend adoption by cross reference of the ELCA Base Document’s definitions of “DEIA” (and its constituent parts), “Historically Underrepresented Groups”, “2019 DEIA Recommendations” and “Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards”, for inter-document consistency.
- b. Recommended adoption of other DEIA-related provisions (Sections C4.02(h),(i); C4.03(j), C12.04(k) and C12.05(g)): These parallel recommended provisions, if accepted by the congregation, would commit it to more actively incorporating DEIA into its culture and practices, including through proactive mentoring of members of Historically Underrepresented Groups into leadership positions (C4.02(i)), diligently implementing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to congregations (C4.03(i)), and purchasing more goods and services from vendors owned or controlled by members of Historically Underrepresented Groups, to the extent practicable (C12.05(g)).
- c. Required reporting on DEIA efforts (Amendment to required Section C9.13): This amendment requires congregations to include in their regular reports to synods the extent and nature of their progress on DEIA initiatives, even if they have not elected to adopt the DEIA recommendations herein. The reporting function, even for non-consenting congregations, is intended to help create and sustain a dialogue with them on the spiritual virtue of DEIA generally, and on possible alternative methods for realizing DEIA goals within the congregation that may be more palatable or feasible than those reflected in the Proposed Amendments.

Recommendations Regarding Church Council Governance Policy Manual (the “Policy Manual”)

In alignment with the edits to the ELCA Base Document and the model constitution for synods and congregations regarding diversity issues, FSLC recommends three edits to the Policy Manual:

First, the cross-reference to DEIA-related provisions of the ELCA Constitution, Bylaws and

Continuing Resolutions currently in the parenthetical in the fourth bullet point of Part I, Section 3(A) should be expanded to include new DEIA-related provisions and read in its entirety as follows: “(4.01A, 4.01B, 4.02.g., 4.02.h., 5.01.b., 5.01.d., 5.01.e., 5.01.f., 5.01.E19., 5.01.F19, 19.05.01)”.

Second, the fifth bullet point in Section 3(B) should be amended to add the following sentence immediately after the end thereof and the period therein: “The Church Council shall set goals at the end of each year to purchase, in the immediately ensuing year, goods and services from vendors owned or controlled by women and members of Historically Underrepresented Groups, as follows: (i) 10%, from entities owned or controlled by persons of color; (ii) an additional 10%, from entities owned or controlled by persons whose primary language is other than English; (iii) 10%, from entities owned or controlled by women; and (iv) 5% , from entities owned or controlled by persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English. For purposes hereof, the term ‘Historically Underrepresented Groups’ shall be defined in the same manner as it is in Section 5.01.C21B of the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

Third, the parenthetical at the end of the second bullet point of Part 1, Section 3C should be amended to read as follows in its entirety: “(5.01.d., 12.11, 14.11)”.

Remaining Work on DEIA Handbook

FSLC proposes that the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, currently attached hereto as proposed Exhibit A to the Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA Base Document, be used as a template over the course of the next 12 months to create an ELCA handbook mainly for congregations on how best to achieve DEIA within their respective churches. This effort will require more hands on engagement by leadership within ELCA and direct, comprehensive dialogue with a broad and diverse group of ELCA congregations throughout the country. FSLC would be happy to assist ELCA or any designated committee thereof in completing this handbook, as needed.

N. Neville Reid
Fox, Swibel, Levin & Carroll LLP

Attachments:

October 31, 2022 FSLC Scope of Work Proposal Letter

Exhibit A to ELCA Continuing Resolutions – Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards (also
template for proposed DEIA handbook)

Redline of Main Governance Documents Showing the Proposed Amendments

**DRAFT EXHIBIT A TO ELCA CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
(AND TEMPLATE FOR PROPOSED DEIA HANDBOOK)**

**RECOMMENDED MINIMUM DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY
STANDARDS FOR THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION, SYNODS AND
CONGREGATIONS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

1. Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards for Churchwide Organization:

- a. *Upgrade all personnel policies to reflect DEIA values:*
 - i. Regular DEIA training for all employees
- b. *Create and annually update a database of approved DEIA training educational materials and seminar providers, either Christian-based or consistent with Christianity (“Approved Providers”)*
- c. **[MORE TO COME PENDING FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH AND FEEDBACK FROM CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION]**

2. Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards for Synods:

- a. *Structure and implement stronger DEIA personnel policies within synod offices*
- b. *Encourage congregations to adopt and implement the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards*
- c. *Oversee the implementation of Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards at consenting congregations within the synod*

***d. [MORE TO COME PENDING FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH AND
FEEDBACK FROM SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES]***

3. Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards for Congregations:

- a. *Upgrade all personnel policies to reflect DEIA values*
- b. *Require annual DEIA training for all pastors, church staff and lay leaders, using an Approved Provider and covering at least the following topics:*
 - i. What is DEIA from a Biblical standpoint and why is it important?
 - ii. How does DEIA advance the values of the Kingdom of God?
 - iii. What are microaggressions against members of historically marginalized groups?¹
 - 1. How do microaggressions trigger feelings of alienation and exclusion among members of historically marginalized groups?
 - iv. What is a Christian's duty to alleviate microaggressions?
 - v. Is this particular church perceived as hostile or unresponsive to members of historically marginalized groups, and if so, how

¹ "Historically marginalized groups" consist of groups that have for some significant period of history been excluded from participation or leadership in the church on the basis of certain characteristics about them, and include racial and ethnic minorities (including African Americans and other persons of color), persons whose primary language is other than English, low income persons, persons with disabilities, gender non-conforming persons and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

might the church reverse that perception?

- vi. Are congregants who are not members of any historically marginalized group free to provide their views on race, DEIA and related topics without being labeled racist or insensitive, or is there a “cancel culture” within the church in which those persons self-censure instead of share their views?
- vii. How does one determine when an accusation of racism, sexism or homophobia is misplaced or outright false?
- viii. How can this church be more open, inviting and loving to members of historically marginalized groups that fear rejection or hostility if they visit our church?
- ix. What additional initiatives can the church pursue to promote DEIA values among its members, visitors and the community?
- x. What financial resources does our church commit to promoting DEIA values and programs, and should we commit more and if so can we do so on an annual basis?
- xi. How might persons from historically marginalized groups react differently than persons not from those groups, to delicate issues that cause pain, conflict and consternation in the broader community, such as police brutality, voter suppression and policies which limit opportunities or convey disrespect or hatred for individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+?
- xii. What is Christian White Nationalism and what causes people to adhere to it?

1. Is it consistent with Jesus’ teachings?

2. How might members of historically marginalized groups be offended by Christian White Nationalism?

xiii. What is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement?

1. Is it consistent with Jesus' teachings? Does it offend you? Do you support it?
2. Is it a political movement with no place in the church or its ministries?
3. Why are people drawn to it? What human need does it address?
4. Can the church do a better job of meeting the needs of BLM participants that are not being addressed by the church?

xiv. When is an issue "political", and inappropriate for church discussion? Are there some issues that should not be discussed in the context of church, and if so why?

xv. Any other issue or topic that enhances the congregation's understanding of, or inspires positive actions related to, DEIA issues.

c. Identify at least one church with opposite or at least very different demographic characteristics as your church – by race, gender, youth, political beliefs (conservative vs. liberal), average income, LGBTQIA+ individuals, geography (urban/rural, urban/suburban) or other characteristic – and commit to starting at least a one year relationship with them which shall include the following:

- i. An initial meeting between the pastor of each church to discuss ways in which both churches and their respective congregations can get to know each other better in the ensuing year

- ii. Subsequent periodic meetings between the pastors of both churches, coordinating activities between the two churches to strengthen mutual understanding on DEIA issues, which activities may include the following:
 1. Joint DEIA training sessions with an Approved Provider, covering at least the issues referenced in 3(b) above
 2. Joint Bible Studies or Biblically-based book studies covering issues related to DEIA topics, including books:
 - a. Recounting common experiences of persons in historically marginalized groups
 - b. Discussing ways in which persons in historically marginalized groups rely on their faith and their understanding of God's Word to manage stress and hardship imposed on them
 - c. Testimonies or experiences of persons of faith from rural or other communities other than those of historically marginalized groups, and exploring (i) how and why they may react to issues or problems in the community (e.g., poverty, unemployment, family disfunction, racial tension, police behavior) differently than those in historically marginalized groups, and (ii) why they may not feel as "privileged" racially or otherwise as many in historically marginalized groups may assume
 - d. Testimonies of persons who maintain a strong faith and love for Jesus while at the same time embracing an LGBTQIA+ identity

- e. Testimonies of persons who, in reliance on their faith, no longer embrace an LBTQIA+ identity
3. Speaker series of persons who can expound on their personal experience, negative or positive, with DEIA issues, such as persons who formerly were part of a racist organization but left such organization as a result of a deeper faith in and love for Jesus
- iii. An initial meeting, and subsequent monthly meetings, between the lay leaders of each church, to plan and administer activities, joint discussions and ministries that both churches can engage in together during the ensuing year, such as:
 1. Prison ministry (e.g., Kairos Prison Ministries International)
 2. Missions in general
 3. Homebuilding ministries (e.g., Habitat for Humanity)
 4. Evangelical missions
 5. Serving the homeless and migrants
 6. Fundraising to help families in need of financial assistance, in both rural and urban areas
 - iv. At least six joint worship experiences where congregants of both churches jointly worship together at their respective churches, in person but with video connections for those unable to travel, followed by a fellowship social hour after each service
4. ***[MORE TO COME PENDING FURTHER DIALOGUE WITH ELCA CONGREGATIONS NATIONWIDE]***

Edits Recommended by the 2022-23 DEIA Audit to the

CONSTITUTIONS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America®

as adopted by the Constituting Convention
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
(April 30, 1987)
and
as amended by subsequent
Churchwide Assemblies and Church Councils
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Edition current as of November 2022

Chapter 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 4.01. 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.
- 4.01A The Church reflects the fullness of the character and values expressed and lived by Jesus Christ, and this church's practices and policies must therefore be determined by that character and those values. The Church identifies Jesus' character and values based on its relationship with Jesus Christ, and application of His Word, and not by the culture or the world. Any practices or policies of this church which conflict with Jesus' character and values must and shall be confronted, challenged and adjusted to conform to that character and those values. The character and values of Jesus include:**
- a. Viewing the entire church as part of the body of Christ, not a mere building or another organization or an extension of any other institution in society.**
 - b. Valuing each person within that body equally as others, so that if one person feels or is viewed as weaker they must be made to feel indispensable.**
 - c. Sharing power and decision-making within the organization so that persons who would otherwise feel devalued or marginalized due to race, class, status, gender, sexual orientation, language or other barrier not wholly within their control are given power to control the development of their potential within the church.**

- d. Sharing in the suffering of those who have been made to feel, or believe themselves to be, the least significant within or unwelcome by the church, including on account of any characteristic they possess but neither chose nor control, so that if one suffers all others suffer with him or her as well, and all in the church endeavor daily to remedy that suffering.
- e. Loving, empowering and serving all of the marginalized.
- f. Opposing racism and racial supremacy in all its forms, and superseding geographic, ethnic and tribal barriers to share the love of Jesus Christ with those even radically different than ourselves, so that all congregants, wherever located and whatever race, experience inclusion in the loving body of Jesus Christ.
- g. Showing grace to those who have been accused of or are engaged in sin, while at the same time respecting the authority of Scripture and holiness, and never equating holiness with hatred.
- h. Avoiding hypocrisy, including the selective enforcement of applicable Scriptural moral mandates or prohibitions.
- i. Correcting systems which induce spiritual corruption in individuals or cause needless suffering, including on those who have historically been excluded from full participation in the Church.
- j. Respecting and debating diversity of opinions within the church, including on divisive social issues, without destroying the church.
- k. Promoting justice for those experiencing oppression within groups of larger society.
- l. Telling the truth and refusing to validate lies.

4.01B Since this church must reflect the character and values of Jesus Christ, its policies and practices designed to promote DEIA must therefore be rooted in but also limited by that character and such values, including as expressed in Section 4.01A above. DEIA, as a policy, shall not be fundamentally determined by any other source of authority or influence, such as political affiliation or secular ideology, culture, academia or media. In the event of a conflict between this church's DEIA policy and any of these other sources of authority or influence, DEIA policy derived from the character and values of Jesus Christ must and shall prevail. This church acknowledges, however, that there may be overlap between the church's DEIA policy based on the character and values of Jesus Christ and similar policies espoused by well-intentioned non-religious sources, which other sources may inform, but not control, the church's DEIA policy.

4.02. To participate in God's mission, this church shall:

- a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. 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.
- g. Welcome and show love and compassion to all persons in the LGBTQIA+ community, who are seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ but may have historically experienced trauma, rejection or even hatred from the church. This church will show equal value, respect, love and compassion to all those members of the LGBTQIA+ community whose faith and interpretation of God's Word has led them to avoid acting on sexual attractions proscribed by Scripture, as to those who love The Lord and neither perceive nor experience any inconsistency between their love of Jesus and their sexuality. Such equal respect, love and compassion is not conditioned on whether a congregation or synod has taken a particular position on competing proposals at any time under consideration by the church related to sexual ethics or broader issues of concern to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- h. Actively promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in all parts of the church – the churchwide organization, the synods and the congregations – at all times, including (without limitation) by

encouraging synods and congregations to adopt and diligently implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and strive to exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

i. Actively mentor all persons who have been historically underrepresented in positions of leadership within the church (including members of Historically Underrepresented Groups) so that the clergy and lay leadership at the churchwide, synod and congregation levels increasingly reflect materially greater diversity than has historically existed.

4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this church shall:

- a. Receive, establish, and support those congregations, ministries, organizations, institutions, and agencies necessary to carry out God's mission through this church.
- b. Encourage and equip all members to worship, learn, serve, and witness; to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world; and to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel.
- c. Call forth, equip, certify, set apart, and oversee a ministry of Word and Sacrament, a ministry of Word and Service, and such other forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission.
- d. Seek unity in faith and life with all Lutherans within its boundaries and be ready to enter union negotiations whenever such unity is manifest.
- e. Foster 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.
- f. Develop relationships with communities of other faiths for dialogue and common action.
- g. Lift its voice in concord and work in concert with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with church and other groups participating in activities that promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged.
- h. Produce and publish worship materials for corporate, family, and personal use and resources for education, witness, service, and stewardship.
- i. Establish and maintain theological seminaries, schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions to equip people for leadership and service in church and society.
- j. Assure faithfulness to this church's confessional position and purpose and provide for resolution of disputes.
- k. Publish a periodical and make use of the arts and public communication media to proclaim the Gospel and to inform, interpret, and edify.
- l. Study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world.
- m. Establish, support, and recognize institutions and agencies that minister to people in spiritual and temporal needs.
- n. Work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction.
- o. Provide structures and decision-making processes for this church that foster mutuality and interdependence and that involve people in making decisions that affect them.
- p. Support the mission of this church by arranging for and encouraging financial contributions for its work, management of its resources, and processes of planning and evaluation.
- q. Provide fair personnel practices and adequate compensation, benefits, and pensions for those employed by this church.

Chapter 5.

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

5.01. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church. This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church by congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization shall be carried out under his rule and authority in accordance with the following principles:

- a. The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization shall act in accordance with the Confession of Faith set forth in Chapter 2 of this constitution and with the Statement of Purpose set forth in Chapter 4.
- b. This church, in faithfulness to the Gospel, is committed to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society. Therefore, in their organization and outreach, the congregations, synods, and churchwide units of this church shall seek to exhibit the inclusive unity that is God's will for the Church.
- c. The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization of this church are interdependent expressions sharing responsibly in God's mission. In an interdependent relationship, primary responsibility for particular functions will vary among the expressions. Whenever possible, the entity most directly affected by a decision

shall be the principal party responsible for decision and implementation, with the other entities facilitating and assisting. Each congregation, synod, and separately incorporated ministry, as well as the churchwide organization itself, is a separate legal entity and is responsible for exercising its powers and authorities.

- d. Each congregation and synod in its governing documents shall include the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose and such components as are required in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Beyond these common elements, congregations and synods shall be free to organize in such manner as each deems appropriate for its jurisdiction. The churchwide organization, congregations and synods are each encouraged to embrace and implement the respective Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to them.
- e. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the appropriate office or unit of the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking Persons; and at least an additional 10 percent of such members shall be persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff and laypersons to fill positions of leadership for committees, task forces and other organizational units, there will be a balance of women and men, persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups and persons on the rosters of this church. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.
- f. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, synods, through synod councils, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both women and men. Each synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of the membership of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards or other organizational units shall be Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking persons; and at least an additional 10 percent of such members are persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons. Each synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of the membership of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.
- g. A layperson is a person who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church.
- h. Leaders in this church should demonstrate that they are servants by their words, lifestyle, and manner of leadership. Leaders in this church will recognize their accountability to the Triune God, to the whole Church, to each other, and to the organization of this church in which they have been asked to serve.
- i. As a steward of the resources that God has provided, this church shall organize itself to make the most effective use of its resources to accomplish its mission.
- j. Each assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body of the churchwide organization or any churchwide units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body.

5.01.A.16. This church commits itself to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, which includes advancing the participation of all persons in Historically Underrepresented Groups at all levels of the church, and addressing their spiritual needs. The churchwide organization shall work with synods as they encourage congregations to develop realistic but firm timetables to achieve, and then actually achieve or exceed, the Recommended Minimum

~~DEIA Standards, to the extent such congregations elect to do so. This church commits itself to ethnic and racial diversity. Each expression of this church shall annually assess its ethnic and racial diversity when compared to the demographic data of its community or territory. The churchwide organization will work with synods as they assist congregations to reach out to persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.~~

5.01.B19. Each synod shall submit its goals and strategies to the appropriate churchwide unit or office and shall annually submit a report on progress toward its goals to such unit or office, which report shall include progress made in the subject year towards implementing the (i) 2019 DEIA Recommendations and (ii) Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

5.01.B2X. Each congregation shall submit its goals and strategies to the appropriate synod and shall annually submit a report on progress toward its goals to such synod, which report shall include progress made by such congregation in the subject year towards implementing the (i) 2019 DEIA Recommendations, and (ii) the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, in each case, to the extent applicable to congregations.

5.01.C21. The term, “persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English,” shall be understood to mean African American, African Descent, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native people. This definition, however, shall not be understood as limiting this church’s commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work. DEIA, as an acronym, shall refer to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Its component parts shall be defined as follows:

a. Diversity or diverse shall refer to the variety of persons at all levels of the organizational structure of the church who possess or represent different characteristics, experiences and struggles that may (i) determine their world view, their relationship to the church, and their interest in and response to the church’s mission and initiatives, and (ii) affect the church’s effectiveness as an agent for making persons disciples of Jesus Christ. This definition shall not be static at any period of the church’s history, but shall evolve as persons who come forward with previously unrepresented views or characteristics seek a relationship with Jesus Christ and with the church in particular.

Diversity currently shall include, without limitation, persons with the following characteristics or who tend to identify with the following groups:

1) Racial: All racial groups.

2) Gender: All persons identifying as male or female.

3) Gender Non-Conforming: All persons whose gender identity and/or biological characteristics may not completely fit with the dominant and expected ways of acting as, or being, a man or woman or a boy or girl.

4) LGBTQIA+: All persons whose sexual orientation or gender generally conforms to (i) lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer, intersex, or queer/questioning sexualities, (ii) asexual, or (iii) a category of sexuality or gender not yet identified.

5) Non-Primary English Speaking: All persons whose primary spoken language is other than English, including without limitation persons from countries other than the United States who have obtained legal immigration or asylum status and whose primary language is other than English.

6) Geographic: All persons who (i) choose to identify and live with others unique to a particular geographic subgroup, including urban, rural or suburban, and (ii) tend to desire not to live or identify with other persons in substantially different geographic locations.

7) Age: All persons who primarily choose to identify with a particular age group or generation, including without limitation teenagers, young adults, middle-aged adults, the elderly, and the generations termed “baby boomers”, “millennials” and “Gen Z”.

8) Socioeconomic Class: All persons with similar social mobility and economic resources, or lack thereof, as other persons within their group.

9) Disability: All persons living with varying degrees of serious challenges to their physical or mental health that may limit their ability to fully participate in the life of the church and its ministries and activities.

b. Equity is a two-part definition. It shall refer to the fair treatment of all people within the church, so that the development of their God-given gifts and their faith in Him is not impeded by any of their characteristics, including race, age, income, gender, language or sexuality. It shall also refer to the permanent commitment of the church to provide resources to a person or group of persons who lack such resources, to enable them to develop their gifts and their faith and make a long term contribution to the church and society, notwithstanding that such allocated resources are not also provided to other persons who possess greater resources independently of the church.

c. Inclusion shall refer to the proactive, meaningful inclusion of diverse individuals in the parts of the church that exercise power and make decisions affecting the conduct, affairs and future growth of the church, the synods and/or the congregations.

d. Accessibility shall refer to the design of the church's infrastructure (including its physical buildings and meeting spaces) to ensure that persons with a disability can participate in church affairs with safety and dignity.

5.01.C2X *The term "2019 DEIA Recommendations" shall mean the recommendations set forth in the "How Strategic and Authentic is Our Diversity; A Call for Confession, Reflection and Healing Action," as adopted by the fifteenth triennial Churchwide Assembly on August 9, 2019 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

The term "Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards" shall mean the tasks, projects, commitments and timetables set forth for the churchwide organization, each of the synods and each of the congregations stated on Exhibit A to the Continuing Resolutions, as the same may be amended, supplemented, expanded or modified from time to time; provided however, that any synod or congregation, while encouraged to comply with or engage in any such tasks, projects, commitments or timetables, may elect not to do so within their sole discretion.

5.01.C3X *"Historically Underrepresented Groups" shall consist of specific groups of persons who have been historically underrepresented in the leadership and membership of the church, and shall include without limitation the following groups:*

a. Persons of Color or "persons of color", meaning persons who identify as African-American or are of African descent, Black, Arab or Middle Eastern, Asian or Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native people, and persons who do not primarily identify as Caucasian and are of a mixture of non-Caucasian races.

b. Gender Fluid persons.

c. LGBTQIA+ persons.

d. Persons who possess a Disability.

e. Lower Income persons, meaning persons whose annual income is less than the median national income for the United States as of the end of the immediately preceding calendar year.

f. Non-Primary English Speaking persons.

The combined term "persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English" shall refer to Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking persons as hereinabove defined.

None of the foregoing definitions of persons within Historically Underrepresented Groups shall ever be construed to limit this church's commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work.

5.01.D16. *The Churchwide Assembly shall receive reports from the presiding bishop and the secretary that monitor this church's progress toward meeting the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16.*

5.01.E19. *The Church Council shall establish triennial percentage goals for this church to meet the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16. The minimum goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking persons; an additional minimum 10 percent shall be persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons. ~~The minimum goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.~~*

5.01.F19. *It is the goal of this church that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, the term "youth" means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term "young adult" means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.*

5.01.G19. *To implement 5.01.g., those deacons elected as laypersons prior to the adoption of this provision may complete the term to which they were elected as a layperson. They would not be eligible for reelection as a layperson if such reelection were otherwise possible.*

5.01.H21. *For purposes of the representational principles set forth in 5.01.e. and f., the percentage of laypersons that is not allocated to women or men may be allocated to persons who identify as gender non-binary, gender fluid, women, men, or other genders.*

Chapter 7. MINISTRY

7.30. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.31. In accordance with the description stated in 7.22., ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.

- 7.31.01. Basic Standards.** Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:
- a. commitment to Christ;
 - b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
 - c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
 - d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
 - e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
 - f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; ~~and~~
 - g. membership in a congregation of this church-;
 - h. genuine commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, and achieving the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations at the congregational level; and
 - i. willingness to learn how best to serve the needs of communities with a high concentration of persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups, and a commitment to effectively serve in such communities if called or appointed to do so.
- 7.31.02. Responsibilities.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; ~~and~~
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations-; ~~and~~
 - 9) actively encouraging congregations to implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to congregations, at their respective congregational level, and furthermore assisting synods and the churchwide organization in implementing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to them.
 - b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
 - 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of the congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and the synod; ~~and~~
 - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationships with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*-; ~~and~~
 - 7) actively encourage their congregation to adopt and implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to congregations, at their respective congregational level, and furthermore assist synods and the churchwide organization in implementing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to them.
- 7.31.03. Preparation and Approval.** Except as provided in 7.31.04., a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament shall have:
- a. membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
 - b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;
 - c. satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological school in North America or completed a program of study for those accepted into the TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries), including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work;

- d. completed the expectations and outcomes established for Lutheran learning and formation in a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, except when waived by the appropriate committee in consultation with the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- e. been recommended for approval by the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or have received the waiver described in **7.31.03.d.**;
- f. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- g. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
- h. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

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7.60. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

7.61. In accordance with the description stated in 7.52, ministers of Word and Service shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.

7.61.01. Basic Standards. Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Service of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church’s constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

- a. commitment to Christ;
- b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
- d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
- e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
- f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; ~~and~~
- g. membership in a congregation of this church; ~~;~~
- h. genuine commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, and achieving or implementing the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations at the congregational level; and
- i. willingness to learn how best to serve the needs of communities with a high concentration of persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups, and a commitment to effectively serve in such communities if called or appointed to do so.

7.61.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church’s outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God’s world;
- c. speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations and other persons in Historically Underrepresented Groups;
- d. equip the baptized for ministry in God’s world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God’s mission;
- f. practice stewardship that respects God’s gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

7.61.03. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided in 7.61.04., a candidate who is to be called and received onto the roster as a minister of Word and Service shall have:

- a. membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
- b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee before being approved for call;

- c. completed the academic and practical preparation according to criteria and procedures established by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- d. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, after consultation with the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council;
- e. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod in which the candidate is being considered for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; ~~and~~
- f. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call;
- g. have demonstrated a genuine commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, and achieving the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations at the congregational level; and
- h. have demonstrated a willingness to learn how best to serve the needs of communities with a high concentration of persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups, and a commitment to effectively serve in such communities if called or appointed to do so.

7.61.04. Approval under Other Circumstances. A candidate may, for reasons of age or prior experience, be granted approval under criteria and procedures which permit certain equivalencies as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

7.61.05. No person who belongs to any organization such as a lodge or fraternal order which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church shall be called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so called and received onto the roster of Ministers of Word and Service or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins or is discovered to be a member of such an organization.

7.61.06. Roster status in more than one church body is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As required by constitutional provision 7.52. and bylaw 7.61.01., ministers on the Word and Service roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must accept and adhere to this church’s Confession of Faith, as well as abide by this church’s standards and policies for ministers of Word and Service.

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Chapter 8.
RELATIONSHIPS

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8.22. Colleges and Universities. This church shall relate to its colleges and universities in their mission to educate students for vocations in the Church and the world. The churchwide organization, through the appropriate churchwide unit, shall support an association of this church’s colleges and universities.

8.22.01. The relationship of this church to its colleges and universities shall be guided by policies fostering educational institutions dedicated to the Lutheran tradition wherein such institutions are an essential part of God’s mission in the world; faithful to the will of God as institutions providing quality instruction in religion and a lively ministry of worship, outreach, and service; diligent in their preparation of leaders committed to truth, excellence, and ethical values; and pledged to the well-being of students in the development of mind, body, and spirit.

8.22.02. Each college and university of this church shall establish a relationship with:

- a. a synod or synods;
- b. a corporation whose voting members are elected or appointed by a synod or synods, other organizational units (conferences, clusters, etc.), or congregations; or,
- c. a corporation
 - 1) that has voting members, at least a majority of whom shall consist of members of the Churchwide Assembly or the Church Council, and
 - 2) that shall hold the meeting of such a corporation in conjunction with the Churchwide Assembly or the Church Council for the purpose of approving amendments to the articles of incorporation, and approving amendments to other governing documents which affect the relationship between the college or university and this church. A majority of the members of the board of a corporation that meets in conjunction with the Churchwide Assembly or Church Council shall be members of this church or of a church body with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, but under no circumstances shall fewer than forty (40) percent of the members of such board be members of this church.

8.22.02A Each seminary of this church shall review and is encouraged to implement the portions of the 2019 DEIA Recommendations applicable to seminaries, including without limitation the “Recommendations for Theological Education and Leadership” included therein.

- 8.22.03. Responsibility for the size and composition of a college or university's board of directors, including recruiting and electing board members, belongs to each college or university of this church. This responsibility shall be exercised congruent with the form of relationship, as provided in 8.22.02., established by the college or university with this church.
- 8.22.04. Responsibility for governance and governance documents rests with each college or university of this church. This responsibility shall be exercised congruent with the form of relationship as provided in 8.22.02., established by the college or university with this church.
- 8.22.05. In addition to and consistent with the above provision 8.22. and bylaws 8.22.01. through 8.22.04., colleges and universities of this church where a school, department, or unit of that institution is a seminary of this church must comply with all requirements, policies, procedures, and standards specified in provision 8.21. and bylaws 8.21.01. through 8.21.08.
- 8.23. **Institutions and Agencies. This church shall seek to meet human needs through encouragement of its people to individual and corporate action, and through establishing, developing, recognizing, and supporting institutions and agencies that minister to people in their spiritual and temporal needs.**
- 8.23.01. Social ministry organizations affiliate with this church through criteria and policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit and through membership in Lutheran Services in America.

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Chapter 9.
CONGREGATIONS

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- 9.20. **CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION AND RECEPTION**
 - 9.21. **This church shall recognize, receive, and maintain on the roster those congregations which by their practice as well as their governing documents:**
 - a. **preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission;**
 - b. **accept this church's Confession of Faith;**
 - c. **agree to the Statement of Purpose of this church;**
 - d. **agree to call pastoral leadership from the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church in accordance with the call procedures of this church, except in special circumstances as defined in the bylaws accompanying this provision, and with the approval of the synod bishop;**
 - e. **agree to be responsible for their life as a Christian community;**
 - f. **agree to support the life and work of this church; and**
 - g. **adhere to the additional commitments expressed in this chapter of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.***
 - 9.21.01. Approval of the synod bishop, as required in 9.21.d., involves the bishop's attesting that a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church has been approved, in conformity with the governing documents and policies of this church, through the synod candidacy process for first call as a seminary graduate or for call in this church through approval for reception into this church from another Lutheran church body or another Christian church body. Consultation with the synod bishop in accordance with the call procedures and governing documents of this church and the synod is required for the calling of pastoral leadership from among persons on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or persons who are approved as eligible candidates for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church.
 - 9.21.02. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of the congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which this church officially has established a relationship of full communion by action of a Churchwide Assembly may serve temporarily under contract as pastor of a congregation of this church.
 - 9.22. **In addition to this Chapter 9, all congregations of this church (i) are encouraged to (a) adopt in their governance documents the definitions of DEIA (and the constituent definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility set forth therein), 2019 DEIA Recommendations, Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and Historically Underrepresented Groups, each as hereinabove defined, and (b) embrace, adopt and abide by Constitutional provision Sections 4.01A, 4.01B, 4.02(d), 4.02(g), 4.02(h), and 5.01(d), (ii) shall embrace, adopt and abide by Constitutional provision Sections 6.01, 7.46 and 7.75, and (iii) shall embrace, adopt and abide by bylaw provisions 20.41.01 through 20.41.11. In addition to this Chapter 9, all congregations of this church shall abide by the provisions of 6.01., 7.46., and 7.75., and bylaws 20.41.01. through 20.41.11.**
 - 9.23. **In accord with constitutional provision 9.21.d. and its accompanying bylaws and without invoking the provisions of Chapter 20, a congregation that calls or otherwise maintains as its pastor a person who is neither:**
 - a. **on this church's roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament; nor**
 - b. **approved for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and called pursuant to bylaw 9.21.01.; nor**
 - c. **authorized as a minister pursuant to bylaw 7.31.10.; nor**

- d. a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which this church has established a relationship of full communion and contracted with pursuant to bylaw 9.21.02.;
may be removed from the roster of congregations of this church by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synod bishop.
- 9.24. A recognized and received congregation that is part of this church shall, when legally possible, be incorporated and may, in its sole discretion:
- a. own property and be responsible for its care; and
 - b. call or employ staff.
- 9.25. A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church shall:
- a. Accept the criteria for recognition and reception as a congregation of this church, fulfill the functions of the congregation, and accept the governance provisions as provided in Chapter 9 of this constitution.
 - b. Adopt governing documents that include fully and without alterations the Preamble, Chapter 1, where applicable, and all required provisions of Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the *Model Constitution for Congregations* consistent with requirements of this constitution and the Constitution for Synods of this church. Bylaws and continuing resolutions, appropriate for inclusion in these chapters and not in conflict with these required provisions in the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, the constitution of the synod, or the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be adopted as described in Chapters 17 and 18 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. Notwithstanding the foregoing or any other provision of these Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the contrary, if a congregation is designated a Synod Authorizing Worshiping Community (SAWC) by the synod to which it belongs, then that congregation may adopt the applicable bylaws for SAWC congregations as approved by such synod as part of its governing documents. In the event of any conflict between the bylaws of a SAWC congregation as approved by the applicable synod, and any bylaws within these Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the synod-approved bylaws of such SAWC congregation shall control.
 - c. Accept the commitments expected of all congregations of this church as stated in *C6.01., *C6.02., and *C6.03. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.
- 9.25A A congregation newly formed by this church and any congregation seeking recognition and reception by this church is encouraged to accept and implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the part of the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards that applies to congregations, as soon as practicable.
- 9.26. Recognition and reception into this church of transferring or independent congregations by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is based on the judgment of the synod and action by the synod through the Synod Council and Synod Assembly. The synod bishop shall provide for prompt reporting of such additions to the secretary of this church for addition to the roster of congregations.
- a. If a congregation is a member of another church body, the leadership of the congregation first should consult with the appropriate authorities of that church body before taking action to leave its current church body. After such consultation, leaders of the congregation should contact the synod bishop or synod staff in this church where the congregation is located.
 - b. The synod bishop or synod staff where the transferring or independent congregation is located shall confer with the congregation to assure its understanding and acceptance of commitment to and affiliation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 9.27. Each congregation, except those which are in relationship with the Slovak Zion Synod, shall establish a relationship with the synod in whose territory it is located.
- 9.30. RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY
- 9.31. Congregations of this church shall have authority in all matters that are not assigned by the constitution and bylaws of this church to synods and the churchwide organization.
- 9.40. FUNCTIONS
- 9.41. The congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
 - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily life and in their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.

- f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation’s ministry and the ministry of the synod and the churchwide organization.
- h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization.
- i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

9.50. GOVERNANCE

9.51. Each congregation shall structure itself in such a way as to involve its members in fulfilling the definition, purpose, and functions of a congregation of this church.

9.52. The governing documents of congregations recognized at the establishment of this church shall continue to govern such congregations until amended. When such a congregation wishes to amend any provision of its governing documents, the governing documents of that congregation shall be so amended to conform to 9.25.b. **and the other requirements of this Chapter 9, including without limitation Section 9.22.** The synod responsible for the review of such amendments may permit, for good cause, a congregation to retain particular unamended provisions in the congregation’s governing documents that were in force at the establishment of this church.

9.53. Each congregation shall have governing documents, no terms of which shall conflict with provision 9.21. **or 9.22.** Subject to the provisions of 9.52., these documents shall contain the elements listed in the bylaws. The judgment on whether a congregation meets the criteria listed in 9.21. **or 9.22.** shall be made by this church through the synod of this church to which the congregation relates.

9.53.01. The governing documents of congregations shall include:

- a. the Confession of Faith;
- b. the Statement of Purpose;
- c. provisions describing the congregation’s relationship to this church;
- d. a process for calling a rostered minister;
- e. a listing of the duties of a rostered minister;
- f. provisions describing the role of the rostered minister in the governance of the congregation;
- g. a process for removal of a rostered minister;
- h. provisions regulating the disposition of property;
- i. a legislative process;
- j. an enumeration of officers with definition of authority and functions of each;
- k. a definition of each organizational component (e.g., committees, boards); and
- l. a process for the discipline of members.

9.53.02. A *Model Constitution for Congregations* shall be provided by this church. Amendments to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* shall be made in the same manner as prescribed in Chapter 22 for amendments of the bylaws of this church. Congregations are expected to resolve conflicts between their current governing documents and the *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

9.53.03. Each congregation shall provide a copy of its governing documents to the synod. All proposed changes in the constitution or incorporation documents of a congregation shall be referred to the synod with which the congregation is affiliated. The synod shall notify the congregation of its decision to approve or disapprove the proposed changes; the changes shall go into effect upon notification that the synod has approved them. The synod shall recognize that congregations may organize themselves in a manner which they deem most appropriate, consistent with this chapter.

9.53.04. Each congregation shall take the necessary steps to protect its members and this church from liability, including incorporation as indicated in 9.24, appropriate insurance coverage, and similar actions.

9.53.05. Congregations shall normally maintain a fiscal year of January 1 through December 31.

9.53.06. A congregation considering a relocation shall confer with the bishop of the synod in which it is territorially located and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization before any steps are taken leading to such action. The approval of the Synod Council shall be received before any such action is effected.

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**Chapter 10.
SYNODS**

10.20. PURPOSE

10.21. Each synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:

- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
- b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
- c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners; and
- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

10.21.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
 - 1) approving candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
 - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Sacrament on behalf of this church;
 - 3) approving ministers of Word and Service, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
 - 4) authorizing ordinations and ordaining ministers of Word and Service on behalf of this church; and
 - 5) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
 - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
 - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
 - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
 - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
 - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this constitution; **and**
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods; **and**
- e. implementing the part of the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards applicable to synods, and oversee the adoption and implementation of the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards by each of the congregations within the synod electing to adopt the same, as soon as practicable.

10.21.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. developing new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
- b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
- c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
- d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
- e. providing resources for congregational life; **and**
- f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes; **and**
- g. assisting congregations in drafting and implementing plans and strategies to achieve the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, to the extent such congregations have agreed to adopt the same.

10.21.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical and global companions, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into mutually beneficial relationships with other synods in the region;
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities **or any other members of Historically Underrepresented Groups, subject to and consistent with the provisions of Sections 4.01A and 4.01B herein;**
- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions; and

- i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

10.21.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
- b. participating in churchwide programs;
- c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues; and
- d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

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10.40. SYNOD ASSEMBLY

10.41. Each synod shall have a Synod Assembly, which shall meet at least triennially. Special meetings may be called as needed. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of synods other than their synod of residence, each member of the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council, a board, committee, or other organizational unit of the synod shall be a voting member of a congregation of the synod.

10.41.01. Membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:

- a. All ministers of Word and Sacrament under call on the roster of the synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.
- b. All ministers of Word and Service under call on the roster of the synod shall be voting members in the Synod Assembly.
- c. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to the synod, typically one of whom shall be a man and one of whom shall be a woman, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men. The Synod Council shall also seek to ensure that the requirements or goals set forth in Sections 5.01(e) and 5.01(f) are performed or achieved.
- d. Voting membership shall include the officers of the synod.

10.41.02. Synods may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

10.41.03. Synods may establish processes that permit rostered ministers who are on leave from call on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

10.41.04. Synods may establish processes that permit representatives of synod-authorized worshiping communities, under bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with bylaw 10.41.01.

10.41.05. Synods may establish processes that permit Synod Council voting members who are not otherwise serving as voting members of the Synod Assembly the privilege of both voice and vote as members of the Synod Assembly.

10.50. SYNOD COUNCIL

10.51. Each synod shall have a Synod Council, which shall be its board of directors, and which shall serve as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly, except that it may not take any action which is reserved exclusively for the Synod Assembly or which is in conflict with action taken by the Synod Assembly.

10.52. The Synod Council shall consist of the four officers of the synod, 10 to 24 other members, at least one young adult, and at least one youth, all elected by the Synod Assembly. Each person elected to the Synod Council shall be a voting member of a congregation of the synod, with the exception of ministers on a roster of the synod who reside outside the territory of the synod. The process for election and the term of office when not otherwise specified herein shall be determined by each synod. A member of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America from the synod, unless otherwise elected as a voting member of the Synod Council, may serve as an advisory member of the Synod Council with voice but not vote.

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10.80. CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

10.81. The Conference of Bishops shall be composed of the bishops of the synods, the presiding bishop of this church, and the secretary of this church.

10.81.01. The Conference of Bishops shall consult with and advise the Church Council. It may make recommendations to the presiding bishop of this church and to the Church Council, respond to referrals from the Church Council, and refer

concerns and proposals to the Church Council. At each meeting the Conference of Bishops shall receive a report from the Church Council brought by the vice president of this church.

10.81.02. The conference shall meet at least two times each year.

10.81.03. The responsibilities of the Conference of Bishops shall be enumerated in a continuing resolution. The resolution may be amended by majority vote of the Churchwide Assembly or by a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. Should the conference disagree with the action of the Church Council, it may appeal the decision to the Churchwide Assembly.

10.81.A16. *Responsibilities of the Conference of Bishops*

The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall provide opportunities for worship, spiritual renewal, and theological enrichment for those elected to the office of bishop of a synod, the presiding bishop of this church, and the secretary of this church, and it shall offer advice and counsel to the Church Council and the churchwide organization. To fulfill these responsibilities, the Conference of Bishops shall:

- a. be a forum in which goals, objectives, and strategies may be developed and shared concerning pastoral leadership, care, and counsel for the synods;*
- b. review recommendations from the appropriate churchwide unit or office pertaining to standards for the admission to the rosters of this church, and for their retention on those rosters;*
- c. review recommendations and foster programs, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit or office, pertaining to policies related to ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service, and their families for pastoral care in such areas as call review, guidance, mobility, intervention, discipline, rehabilitation, and spiritual growth;*
- d. work with the appropriate churchwide unit or office in the processes for first call for candidates for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church, first call for candidates for the ministry of Word and Service of this church, mobility of rostered ministers, and pastoral care;*
- e. offer programs for orientation and continuing education for bishops, officers, and their spouses;*
- f. assist the bishops in their role as teachers by being a forum for serious reflections on the theological and ethical implications of issues that affect the life of this church;*
- g. participate in the development and study of ecumenical documents and assist the bishops to promote the unity of this church through leadership and ecumenical worship, fellowship, and interaction; ~~and~~*
- h. assist the bishops in their role as leaders in fostering support for the work of this church by being a forum for discussion of annual mission-support plans and serving as a means of providing advice and counsel to the Church Council in the council's responsibility for approval of those plans; ~~and~~*
- i. assist the bishops and the churchwide organization in implementing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and encouraging synods and congregations to embrace and implement the same (as applicable).*

10.81.B14. *Organization of the Conference of Bishops*

The Conference of Bishops may establish committees as the members, from time to time, may determine to assist in fulfillment of assigned responsibilities. Quadrennially, the Conference of Bishops shall elect a chair and vice chair to preside at meetings and serve as ex officio members of the executive committee of the conference with the presiding bishop and secretary. The Conference of Bishops shall establish criteria and terms for three synod bishops to be elected by the conference as members of the executive committee.

10.81.C20. *Staff Services for the Conference of Bishops*

Staff services for meetings of the Conference of Bishops shall be provided by the Office of the Secretary. The executive for synod relations shall coordinate the operation of the Conference of Bishops.

Chapter 11.

CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION—DEFINITION AND PURPOSES

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11.20. PURPOSES OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

11.21. In fulfillment of the purposes of this church, the churchwide organization shall:

- a. Undergird the worship life of this church as the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.**
- b. Provide resources to equip members to worship, learn, serve, and witness in their ministry in daily life.**
- c. Support and establish policy for this church's mission and coordinate planning and evaluation for that mission throughout the world, including participation with other churches.**
- d. Witness to the Word of God in Christ by united efforts in proclaiming the Gospel, responding to human need, caring for the sick and suffering, working for justice and peace, and providing guidance to members on social matters.**
- e. Foster interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to implement the mission of this whole church.**

- f. Provide for the rostered ministries for this church.
- g. Oversee and establish policy for this church's relationship to seminaries, colleges, universities, schools, and other education endeavors, and provide support as appropriate.
- h. Establish and reflect this church's ecumenical stance and its relationship to other churches, and direct this church's policy for relationship with persons of other faiths.
- i. Develop and administer policies for this church's relationship to social ministry organizations and cooperate with public and private agencies that enhance human dignity and justice.
- j. Determine and implement policy for this church's relationship to governments.
- k. Provide for a comprehensive financial support system for this church's mission and for the administration of financial resources necessary for fulfillment of the particular responsibilities of the churchwide organization.
- l. Provide planned giving opportunities for the financial support of this church, its congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions through the establishment of a foundation.
- m. Provide pension and other benefits plans for this church.
- n. Provide a church publishing house.
- o. Provide archives for the retention of its valuable records, and coordinate archival activity in the synods, regions, institutions, and agencies of this church.
- p. Provide and monitor a system of discipline, appeals, and adjudication.
- q. Establish and operate other programs and activities, as determined by this church, on behalf of and in support of the congregations and synods of this church.

11.21.A2X The churchwide organization shall help synods and congregations develop plans and processes to satisfy the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations, to the extent such Standards and Recommendations are embraced by such synods and congregations.

11.30. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

11.31. The legislative function of the churchwide organization shall be fulfilled by the Churchwide Assembly as described in Chapter 12 of this constitution.

11.32. The Church Council shall exercise interim legislative authority and shall serve as the board of directors of the churchwide organization.

11.33. Leadership of this church shall be vested in the churchwide officers, the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and executive directors of churchwide units. The full-time officers shall be the presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer. The vice president shall serve as chair of the Church Council, may perform such other tasks for the benefit of this church as the Church Council directs, and may be compensated as the Church Council determines.

11.34. The churchwide organization shall carry out its duties through units and offices. Units and offices shall be responsible to the Churchwide Assembly and to the Church Council in the interim between regular meetings of the assembly.

11.34.01. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted in the actions of boards, committees, task forces, or other decision-making bodies.

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**Chapter 12.
CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY**

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12.40. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

12.41. The voting members of the Churchwide Assembly shall be the voting members of this corporation. The requirements for voting members of the assembly and other members shall be specified in the bylaws.

12.41.10. VOTING MEMBERS

12.41.11. Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synod bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. Unless otherwise determined by the synod, the synod vice president shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod's voting members. The voting members elected by each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence commitment to inclusiveness, diversity, equity, accessibility and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this Constitution.

~~In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English. In addition, each synod shall elect at least (i) one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of election, (ii) one additional voting member who is a Person of Color, (iii) one additional voting member who is a Non-Primary English Speaking Person, and (iv) one additional voting member who is a member of an Historically Underrepresented Group other than a Person of Color or a Non-Primary English Speaking person.~~ The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

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Chapter 14. CHURCH COUNCIL

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14.20. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

14.21. **The specific duties of the Church Council shall be listed in the bylaws.**

- 14.21.01. The Church Council shall act on the policies proposed by churchwide units, when requested by the presiding bishop or the churchwide unit. The Church Council shall ensure that the actions of the Churchwide Assembly are implemented by the applicable unit or office.
- 14.21.02. The Church Council shall receive from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regular reports on the programs and procedures of the churchwide units. The Church Council, through the presiding bishop, shall ensure that the purposes, policies and objectives of this church are being fulfilled.
- Specific policies identified in this constitution and bylaws, developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, and reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, shall be submitted to the Church Council for approval.
 - Separately incorporated ministries of this church, as defined in Chapter 17, shall submit a report to the Church Council on their policies and programs. The Church Council shall act to approve those policies and programs as required in this constitution and bylaws.
- 14.21.03. The Church Council shall review all recommendations from churchwide units for possible consideration by the Churchwide Assembly and determine which, if any, should be forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly for action.
- 14.21.04. The Church Council may adopt policies in accord with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- 14.21.05. The Church Council, upon recommendation of the presiding bishop, shall submit budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorize expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets.
- 14.21.06. The Church Council shall adopt personnel policies for the churchwide organization. Salary structures of churchwide units shall be within the personnel policies of the churchwide organization, unless exceptions are granted by the Church Council. The Church Council shall work with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the churchwide organization in striving to attain diversity within churchwide organization personnel, such that at least 10 percent of persons working for the churchwide organization are Persons of Color and/or a Non-Primary English Speaking person; and an additional 10 percent are from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons.
- 14.21.07. The Church Council shall report its actions to the Churchwide Assembly.

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14.40. CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

14.41. **The Church Council shall establish committees and nominate or elect such persons as necessary to carry out the functions assigned to it. The description of such committees shall be set forth in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.**

- 14.41.01. **Executive Committee.** The Church Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and eight members of the Church Council elected by the council. The vice president of this church shall chair this committee. The Executive Committee shall:
- perform those functions of the Church Council assigned to it by the Church Council, which shall include acting for the Church Council between meetings of the council;
 - transmit resolutions from synods to the appropriate unit or units of the churchwide organization;
 - fulfill the responsibilities of the Church Council related to nominations, with staff services for the nomination and election processes of the Church Council provided by the Office of the Secretary;
 - provide advice and counsel for the officers;
 - review the work of the officers and, with the absence of the salaried officers from such deliberations, set salaries of the presiding bishop, secretary, and treasurer within the ranges established by the Church Council;

- f. demonstrate concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the officers of this church; and
- g. when necessary, serve as members of the U.S.A. National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation.

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.

14.41.A15. *Budget and Finance Committee*

A Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The treasurer of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Treasurer. The committee shall prepare and present a comprehensive budget to the Church Council for its consideration and presentation to the Churchwide Assembly. The committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Treasurer.

14.41.B22. *Christian Community and Leadership Committee*

A Christian Community and Leadership Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Christian Community and Leadership unit, and have staff services provided by the Christian Community and Leadership unit. This committee shall receive reports from the Christian Community and Leadership unit, act upon policies and strategies recommended from this unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of this unit.

14.41.C22. *Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee*

A Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. This committee shall relate to the work of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Innovation unit, and have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Innovation unit. This committee shall assist the presiding bishop in coordinated, strategic planning for the work of the churchwide organization. Further, in consultation with the executive for administration, this committee shall evaluate and report annually to the Church Council and to the Churchwide Assembly on how the churchwide organization complies with and implements commitments and policies adopted by the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council. This committee shall be responsible for reviewing policies related to ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious activities, and make recommendations to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly. It shall provide ongoing review of the development of this church's social teaching documents and act upon recommendations from the Office of the Presiding Bishop. All churchwide policies and strategies recommended by the Office of the Presiding Bishop that have implications for congregations, synods, other churchwide units, or institutions and agencies of this church shall be considered by this committee for recommendation to the Church Council. This committee also shall receive reports from the Innovation unit, act upon policies recommended from the Innovation unit to the Church Council, and provide periodic review of the Innovation unit. This Committee shall also review and oversee the development and implementation of, and monitor the progress on, (i) all Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards for the churchwide organization, synods and congregations, and (ii) the 2019 DEIA Recommendations.

14.41.D22. *Legal and Constitutional Review Committee*

A Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council. The secretary of this church shall serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This committee shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Secretary. This committee shall provide ongoing review of legal and constitutional matters. It shall review all proposed amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

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Chapter 15.

CHURCHWIDE ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICES

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15.12. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

15.12.01. Responsibilities of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in addition to those specified in the bylaws, shall be set forth in continuing resolutions.

15.12.A22. *Responsibilities of the Executive for Administration*

The executive for administration shall be accountable to the presiding bishop and shall serve as chief administrator of the churchwide organization. The executive for administration shall be elected by the Church Council upon nomination of the presiding bishop and shall serve coterminous with the term of the presiding bishop. At the direction of the presiding bishop, the executive for administration shall:

- a. supervise the day-to-day functioning of the churchwide organization and coordinate the work of churchwide units;
- b. facilitate the interdependent functioning of churchwide units in the fulfillment of the responsibilities assigned to them;

- c. coordinate the strategic planning and day-to-day staff activities within the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the functioning of the administrative team;
- d. develop the budget for the churchwide organization and report to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly through the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council with regard to the preparation of the budget;
- e. provide staff services and documentation to the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee and the Board Development Committee of the Church Council.
- f. oversee churchwide strategic communications, including branding, messaging, and content development; and
- g. provide for building management and coordinate central services for the churchwide organization.

15.12.B21. Responsibility for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

Responsibility for ecumenical and inter-religious relations shall be exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

- a. The presiding bishop shall appoint an executive who shall coordinate the ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious activities of this church, and shall recommend, through the presiding bishop, policies to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly. To fulfill these responsibilities, the executive shall:
 - 1) assist the presiding bishop of this church in carrying out the presiding bishop's role as the chief ecumenical officer of this church;
 - 2) administer the ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious discussions (including bilateral dialogues) in which this church is involved;
 - 3) provide active support of the membership of this church in ecumenical organizations, such as World Council of Churches, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and The Lutheran World Federation;
 - 4) guide the process of reception of theological agreements and give advice in matters of fellowship and unity with other Lutheran churches; and
 - 5) assist synods, congregations, and churchwide units in carrying out their ecumenical, inter-Lutheran, and inter-religious responsibilities by giving guidance and by preparing guidelines for action.
- b. From time to time as necessary, the Executive Committee of the Church Council shall convene as the U.S.A. National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation. The U.S.A. National Committee also consists of the members of this church who serve as voting members of the council of The Lutheran World Federation. An ELCA advisor to the council of The Lutheran World Federation and/or the executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations shall serve as consultants to the U.S.A. National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation.
- c. Ecumenical representatives shall be chosen by the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Church Council. These representatives include members of delegations to national and international inter-church entities in which this church holds membership and members of inter-Lutheran, inter-faith, and ecumenical discussions, including bilateral dialogues and conversations, in which this church participates. All such appointments shall be reported to the Church Council as information.

15.12.C21. Responsibility for People Solutions and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Responsibility for people solutions and ~~diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility~~ diversity, equity, and inclusion shall be exercised by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, which shall develop and manage the personnel policies and procedures for the churchwide organization, including policies and procedures regarding equal-employment opportunity; recruitment, interview, and selection of staff; compensation and benefits; employee-assistance programs; just and equitable employee-relations practices; performance evaluation; maintenance of personnel records; and training. In accordance with bylaw 14.21.06., the Church Council shall adopt personnel policies upon recommendation of the Office of the Presiding Bishop. The presiding bishop shall appoint an executive who shall be responsible for people solutions and this church's commitment to ~~diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility~~ diversity, equity, and inclusion.

15.12.D21. Responsibility for Theological Discernment

Responsibility shall be exercised in the Office of the Presiding Bishop for serving the Church's theological work by promoting, coordinating, and facilitating theological discernment of the Church's message and its theological foundations in collaboration with all who share in the responsibilities to be teachers of the faith in the Church, including the Conference of Bishops, the seminary faculties, the convocation of teaching theologians, networks such as Lutheran ethicists and women theologians, the editorial staff of the publishing ministry and publications, and all rostered ministers. ~~This responsibility for serving the Church's theological work also shall encompass theological work in and commitment to discern, understand, and respond to racism, classism, sexism, discrimination against and injustice towards members of Historically Underrepresented Groups, and issues of justice for women in the Church and society in order to advance full participation, equal opportunity and justice for all. This responsibility for serving the Church's theological work also shall encompass theological work in and commitment to discern, understand, and respond to racism, classism, and sexism and issues of justice for women in the Church and in society in order to advance full participation, equal opportunity, and justice for all.~~ To fulfill these responsibilities, the presiding bishop shall appoint an executive who will assist the presiding bishop and coordinate the service of staff groups that provide theological resources and assistance in programmatic implementation.

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Chapter 16.

UNITS OF THE CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION

16.10. CHURCHWIDE UNITS

16.11. **A unit of the churchwide organization is assigned leadership responsibility for major, identified portions of the mission and ministry of this church.**

16.11.A21. *As it pertains to the churchwide organization, a unit may also be described as a home area.*

16.11.01. In conformity with this church's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, and in order to model best practices for DEIA in the realm of recruiting, hiring and promotion of staff for congregations and synods, the churchwide organization shall (i) seek a balance of men and women and persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups to work as staff within the churchwide organization; (ii) proactively recruit women and persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups to apply for staff positions within the churchwide organization; and (iii) provide meaningful and frequent mentoring and training opportunities equally to all staff persons, including women and persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups, to enable them to qualify and be selected for positions of greater responsibility or leadership within the churchwide organization. ~~In conformity with this church's commitment to inclusive practice, churchwide units and offices will assure that staff include a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and rostered ministers.~~

16.11.B20. **Identity of Units**

Units of the churchwide organization, which shall function through cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, are the following:

- a. *Christian Community and Leadership unit;*
- b. *Innovation unit;*
- c. *Operations unit; and*
- d. *Service and Justice unit.*

Each unit, except the Operations unit, shall have an executive director.

16.12. **Each unit shall report to the Churchwide Assembly and will report to the Church Council in the interim.**

16.12.01. The responsibilities of the units shall be described in continuing resolutions.

16.12.02. Executive directors of each unit shall be appointed by the presiding bishop to a four-year term. The presiding bishop, as chief executive officer, shall arrange within the personnel policies of the churchwide organization for an annual review of each executive director. A unit executive director shall be eligible for re-appointment. The employment of the executive director may be terminated in accordance with the personnel policies of the churchwide organization.

16.12.A21. **Responsibilities of the Christian Community and Leadership Unit**

The Christian Community and Leadership unit shall foster and facilitate the work of synods, congregations, the churchwide organization, and others in reaching and welcoming more people into the Christian faith. It energizes and engages the core membership and works with the whole of this church to recruit, develop, and deploy lay and rostered leadership to fulfill the Church's purpose. It works across all expressions of this church to accomplish these goals domestically and internationally. This unit shall:

- a. *create and revitalize congregations and ministries;*
- b. *enhance evangelism and discipleship;*
- c. oversee the development of multicultural ministries and collaborate on the commitment of this church to diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility, including by assisting in the implementation of the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations throughout the churchwide organization and in those congregations and synods who consent to be bound by such standards and recommendations; ~~oversee the development of multicultural ministries and collaborate on the commitment of this church to diversity and inclusivity;~~
- d. *support efforts to reach new people, young people, and to become more economically diverse;*
- e. *foster relationships with educational institutions, including participation in and support of the Network of Colleges and Universities of this church;*
- f. *recruit, train, and help to deploy lay and rostered leaders;*
- g. *support the candidacy and assignment processes;*
- h. *coordinate the work of Young Adults in Global Mission and the ELCA Youth Gathering;*
- i. *oversee the chaplaincies of this church in domestic specialized ministry settings as well as federal chaplaincies both at home and abroad; and*
- j. *support the worship ministry of this church by overseeing the development and review of worship resources intended for use throughout this church, and recommend, through the presiding bishop, policies related to worship and sacramental practices to the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly.*

This unit shall relate to Lutheran Men in Mission, National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc., Educational and Institutional Insurance Administrators, Inc., and the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association.

16.12.B20. Responsibilities of the Innovation Unit

The Innovation unit shall promote, coordinate, and facilitate organizational collaboration, culture, and development, including innovation processes and leadership development for churchwide organization staff, members of this church, and others. This unit shall:

- a. provide, manage, and design experiments and processes (including related goals, metrics, and measurement) to assist this church to develop and evaluate new and existing programs and initiatives;*
- b. be responsible for leadership development through teaching and promoting innovation culture, skills, and tools within the churchwide organization and throughout this church; and*
- c. equip the churchwide organization and this church to conduct relevant research, data collection, analysis, and evaluation to make data-informed decisions; in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary, provide for required reporting and other items related to policies established by the Church Council and the Churchwide Assembly.*

16.12.C20. Responsibilities of the Operations Unit

The Operations unit shall comprise the following:

- a. the Office of the Presiding Bishop;*
- b. the Office of the Secretary; and*
- c. the Office of the Treasurer.*

16.12.D21. Responsibilities of the Service and Justice Unit

The Service and Justice unit shall foster and facilitate this church's engagement in service and promote efforts to call and act for justice. It shall engage in mission, service, and justice in accompaniment with churches and organizations in other countries; serve as the means through which churches in other countries engage in mission to this church and society; engage with communities, coalitions and networks, congregations, and synods in service and justice work within the territorial jurisdiction of this church; and provide guidance to members on matters of social justice.

The Service and Justice unit shall support the freedom of Christians to love and serve their neighbor through the following areas:

- a. Peoples and Communities: maintain global church-to-church relationships and mutual endeavors for evangelical witness and sharing of mission personnel; oversee the work of the ethnic specific ministries and collaborate on multicultural ministries and the commitment of this church to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility ~~diversity and inclusivity~~;*
- b. Building Resilient Communities: meet human need and enhance human dignity; work to overturn oppression and injustice; and engage collaboratively toward the flourishing of human community and creation through advocacy, development, and disaster response programming internationally and domestically; and*
- c. Witness in Society: empower members to engage with systems and processes to promote the well-being of the human community and creation in the public square, local and federal government, and the international community; equip and encourage members to seek dignity and peace; advance justice in response to human suffering, marginalization, and exclusion; and promote equality, justice, and respect for the value of every person to reduce the systemic injustices impacting communities and societies; to advance corporate social responsibility through environmental, social, and justice principles to create a just and sustainable society.*

The Service and Justice unit shall relate to those Independent Lutheran Organizations and other social ministries that engage in efforts related to service, justice, and global mission; the service, justice, and global mission efforts of full communion churches; and the Deaconess Community of the ELCA.

The Service and Justice Unit shall develop personnel policies for long-term and other missionaries in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and administer such policies after their approval by the Church Council.

Chapter 17.

SEPARATELY INCORPORATED MINISTRIES

17.10. This church may fulfill some of its purposes, as described in Chapter 4, through separately incorporated ministries.

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17.40. This church shall have a separately incorporated ministry, the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to carry out the publishing ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The president of the corporation shall serve as its chief executive officer.

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17.40.A19. Responsibilities of the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America— also known as 1517 Media—shall:

- a. *be responsible for the publishing, production, and distribution of publications to be sold to accomplish the mission of this church.*
- b. *work in close cooperation with congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to provide a diversity of published resources.*
- c. *work with churchwide units to plan the publication of materials to assist congregations in fulfilling their life in mission.*
- d. *develop, produce, and distribute materials required to carry out its functions.*
- e. *be financed from the sale and distribution of materials, not from the budget of this church.*
- f. *create, develop, and publish a diversity of resources in various media; make available other publications, materials, and church supplies; produce official documents and publications of this church; and produce materials in a manner that assures their ready availability.*
- g. *provide for the wide distribution of resources within and beyond this church.*
- h. *manage its finances and other resources in a manner that assures the continuity and extension of its activities. This publishing house shall maintain its own accounting, information technology, human resources, employee benefits, and other functions essential to a cohesive, efficient, and effective operation.*
- i. ~~*identify and nurture diverse and talented authors, composers, artists and others in creating various media, including authors, composers and artists from Historically Underrepresented Groups identify and nurture talented authors, composers, artists, and others involved in creating various media.*~~
- j. *distribute the church periodical in accord with provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.*
- k. *determine its necessary financial reserves, appropriations, and publishing subsidies.*
- l. *make available resources to meet unique language and cultural needs, as feasible.*
- m. *Assist synods, congregations and the churchwide organization in finding and utilizing published materials to help them achieve their respective Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, as applicable, including by creating and maintaining a database of books, articles and other written materials (i) written by authors from Historically Underrepresented Groups, or (ii) addressing issues generally of concern or unique to Historically Underrepresented Groups, including their unique history, suffering they have endured and how it might be healed, the role of their faith in Jesus Christ as part of their history, and ways in which they are prepared to work with other groups within the church to eradicate barriers to their full inclusion in church life and culture.*

17.50. This church shall have a separately incorporated ministry, known as Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to assist its women to commit themselves to full discipleship, affirm their gifts, and support each other in their particular callings.

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Chapter 18. REGIONS

18.01. This church shall have regions as an association among nine specific groups of synods and the churchwide organization for the purpose of exercising mutual responsibilities for mission and ministry throughout this church.

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18.01.B19. *In fulfilling the region's function and the purposes of this church, each region may assist in:*

- a. *planning for this church's participation in God's mission in the region, with special attention to the opportunities for outreach with the Gospel;*
- b. *providing for ongoing dialogue between the synods of the region and churchwide units for the purpose of identifying functions that may be done together;*
- c. *forming resource planning groups to recommend resources and services needed for congregations;*
- d. *facilitating, when requested, relationships with colleges, universities, and campus ministries and supportive funding responsibilities of the synods and churchwide organization on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;*
- e. *facilitating gatherings of synod bishops, synod staff, and regional staff; and*
- f. *coordinating the work of the churchwide staff within the territory of the region.*

18.01.C91. *Additional functions may include:*

- a. *relating to seminaries;*
- b. *relating to camps and other outdoor ministries;*
- c. *developing communication plans and projects;*
- d. *planning for and coordinating continuing education programs;*
- e. *providing for various services to congregations;*

- f. *facilitating global mission education and interpretation;*
- g. *providing for stewardship and evangelism events;*
- h. *providing for events for the growth and equipping of God's people for their ministries in the world;*
- i. *compiling lists of personnel that may be used by synods for interim ministries;*
- j. *providing a financial service bureau for the cooperating synods for banking, payroll, accounts payable, and accounts receivable;*
- k. *providing for regional archives, associated with institutions of this church wherever possible;*
- l. *coordinating resources for youth ministry;*
- m. *assisting synods in facilitating the mobility of rostered ministers;*
- n. *facilitating, when requested, relationships with social ministry organizations and assisting in advocacy work; and*
- o. *addressing other functions, as deemed appropriate by synods and the churchwide organization.*

18.01.C2X *Each synod is encouraged to, as soon as practicable, implement the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and the 2019 DEIA Recommendations that apply to synods.*

Chapter 19.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION PROCESS

19.01. **The Churchwide Assembly shall elect the presiding bishop, vice president, and secretary of this church and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.**

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19.11. Further procedures relating to nominations may be set forth in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.

19.11.01. The Nominating Committee shall consist of 12–18 members elected by the Churchwide Assembly. Each member shall be elected to one six-year term and shall serve until a successor is elected. Members of the Nominating Committee shall not be eligible for consecutive re-election. The Church Council shall place in nomination the names of two persons for each position. The committee shall consist of at least one member but no more than three members from any region. Nominations from the floor shall also be permitted, but each floor nomination shall be presented in the specific category named by the Church Council and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Church Council shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.

19.11.02. Except as otherwise provided, the Nominating Committee shall nominate two persons for each council or committee position, according to the process described in continuing resolutions, for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. Nominations from the floor, where permitted in the nomination process, shall be presented in the specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.

19.11.03. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each position on the board of trustees of each of the separately incorporated ministries identified in Chapter 17 of this constitution, according to the process described in continuing resolutions, for which an election will be held by the Churchwide Assembly. In the case of re-election, if authorized, or for nominees from church bodies with which this church is in a relationship of full communion, only one person need be nominated. Nominations from the floor, where permitted in the nomination process, shall be presented in the specific category named by the Nominating Committee and shall therefore meet the same criteria as the persons against whom the nominee is nominated. In the materials provided in advance to each member of the assembly, the Nominating Committee shall set forth the specific criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor.

19.11.04. In each case in which there are floor nominations, there shall be a preliminary ballot that shall include the names of the nominees presented by the Nominating Committee or the Church Council, and the person or persons nominated from the floor, where permitted. The names of the two persons receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be placed on the final ballot.

19.11.05. The Church Council shall endeavor to ensure that every synod has at least one person serving on the Church Council or churchwide boards, committees, task forces, or other groups. Among those persons elected by the assembly, excluding the officers, no more than two persons from any one synod shall serve on the Church Council or any one board, committee, task force, or other group.

19.11.06. The Nominating Committee shall strive to ensure that all persons nominated for any position, including the boards of separately incorporated ministries, possess the necessary competence and experience for the position. All persons elected

to any position, whether nominated by the Nominating Committee or not, shall strive to represent this church and not just a particular geographic area, and further shall be able to credibly demonstrate (i) a proven commitment to increasing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility within the churchwide organization, the synods and the congregations, (ii) their role in mentoring persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups into leadership positions within the church, and (iii) the role they played, if any, in the implementation of the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards at the level of the churchwide organization, the synods and/or the congregations.

19.11.A21. Churchwide Assembly Nominations Desk and Nominations Form

- a. *Nominations from the floor at the Churchwide Assembly shall be made at the Nominations Desk, which shall be maintained under the supervision of the secretary of this church.*
- b. *A nomination from the floor shall be made by using the form provided by the secretary of this church. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Nominations Desk at times prescribed in the assembly's Rules of Organization and Procedure.*
- c. ~~*The required form to be used in making nominations from the floor shall include the nominee's name, address, phone number, lay or rostered status, white or person of color or primary language other than English status, congregational membership, synod membership, and affirmation of willingness to serve, if elected; the name, address, and synod membership of the voting member who is making the nomination; and such other information as the secretary of this church shall require.*~~ *The required form to be used in making nominations from the floor shall include the nominee's name, address, phone number, lay or rostered status, congregational membership, synod membership, and affirmation of willingness to serve, if elected. It shall also (i) list each category of Historically Underrepresented Groups so that the nominee may, at their option, indicate which group, if any, such nominee identifies with, (ii) require the nominee to identify at least one person from an Historically Underrepresented Group whom they mentored within the past 2 years, and (iii) request generally that the nominee describe, in detail, the specific role they played in at least the immediately preceding 2 years advancing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and helping the churchwide organization, any synod or congregation implement the applicable Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards. The form shall provide the name, address, and synod membership of the voting member who is making the nomination, along with such other information as the secretary of this church shall require.*
- d. *For purposes of nomination procedures, "synod membership" means:*
 - 1) *In the case of a layperson who is not on the roster of this church, the synod that includes the congregation in which such person holds membership; and*
 - 2) *In the case of a rostered minister, the synod on whose roster such minister's name is maintained.*

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Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

CONSTITUTION FOR SYNODS

Current as of November 2022

Chapter 6.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

†S6.01. 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.

†S6.01A. The Church reflects the fullness of the character and values expressed and lived by Jesus Christ, and this synod's practices and policies must therefore be determined by that character and those values. The Church identifies Jesus' character and values based on its relationship with Jesus Christ, and application of His Word, and not by the culture or the world. Any practices or policies of this synod which conflict with Jesus' character and values must and shall be confronted, challenged and adjusted to conform to that character and those values. The character and values of Jesus include:

- a. Viewing the entire church as part of the body of Christ, not a mere building or another organization or an extension of any other institution in society.
- b. Valuing each person within that body equally as others, so that if one person feels or is viewed as weaker they must be made to feel indispensable.
- c. Sharing power and decision-making within the organization so that persons who would otherwise feel devalued or marginalized due to race, class, status, gender, sexual orientation, language or other barrier not wholly within their control are given power to control the development of their potential within the church.
- d. Sharing in the suffering of those who have been made to feel, or believe themselves to be, the least significant within or unwelcome by the church, including on account of any characteristic they possess but neither chose nor control, so that if one suffers all others suffer with him or her as well, and all in the church endeavor daily to remedy that suffering.

- e. Loving, empowering and serving all of the marginalized.
- f. Opposing racism and racial supremacy in all its forms, and superseding geographic, ethnic and tribal barriers to share the love of Jesus Christ with those even radically different than ourselves, so that all congregants, wherever located and whatever race, experience inclusion in the loving body of Jesus Christ,
- g. Showing grace to those who have been accused of or are engaged in sin, while at the same time respecting the authority of Scripture and holiness, and never equating holiness with hatred.
- h. Avoiding hypocrisy, including the selective enforcement of applicable Scriptural moral mandates or prohibitions.
- i. Correcting systems which induce spiritual corruption in individuals or cause needless suffering, including on those who have historically been excluded from full participation in the Church.
- j. Respecting and debating diversity of opinions within the church, including on divisive social issues, without destroying the church.
- k. Promoting justice for those experiencing oppression within groups of larger society.
- l. Telling the truth and refusing to validate lies.

†S6.01B. Since this synod must reflect the character and values of Jesus Christ, its policies and practices designed to promote DEIA must therefore be rooted in but also limited by that character and such values, including as expressed in Section 6.01A above. DEIA, as a policy, shall not be fundamentally determined by any other source of authority or influence, such as political affiliation or secular ideology, culture, academia or media. In the event of a conflict between this synod’s DEIA policy and any of these other sources of authority or influence, DEIA policy derived from the character and values of Jesus Christ must and shall prevail. This synod acknowledges, however, that there may be overlap between the synod’s DEIA policy based on the character and values of Jesus Christ and similar policies espoused by well-intentioned non-religious sources, which other sources may inform, but not control, the synod’s DEIA policy.

†S6.02. To participate in God’s mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:

- a. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- b. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. 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.
- g. Welcome and show love and compassion to all persons in the LGBTQIA+ community, who are seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ but may have historically experienced trauma, rejection or even hatred from the church or this synod. This synod will show equal value, respect, love and compassion to all those members of the LGBTQIA+ community whose faith and interpretation of God’s Word has led them to avoid acting on sexual attractions proscribed by Scripture, as to those who love The Lord and neither perceive nor experience any inconsistency between their love of Jesus and their sexuality. Such equal respect, love and compassion is not conditioned on whether this synod has taken a particular position on competing proposals at any time under consideration by the church related to sexual ethics or broader issues of concern to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- h. Actively promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in all parts of the synod at all times, including (without limitation) by encouraging congregations in this synod to adopt and diligently implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and strive to exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards. For purposes hereof, this Constitution hereby incorporates by reference the definitions of the following terms as set forth in the Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility
Historically Underrepresented Groups
2019 DEIA Recommendations
Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

i. Actively mentor all persons who have been historically underrepresented in positions of leadership within the synod (including members of Historically Underrepresented Groups) so that the clergy and lay leadership in this synod increasingly reflect materially greater diversity than has historically existed.

†S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:

- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
- b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
- c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners.
- d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.

†S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
 - 1) approving candidates for rostered ministry in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
 - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining rostered ministers on behalf of this church;
 - 3) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
- b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
 - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
 - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
 - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
 - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
 - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
- c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
- d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.
- e. Encourage congregations within the synod to adopt the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and assist congregations in creating and pursuing strategies and programs to implement such recommendations and standards to the extent such congregations choose to do so.

†S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
- b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
- c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
- d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
- e. providing resources for congregational life;
- f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes;
- g. encouraging congregations to adopt the 2019 DEIA Recommendation and Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and assisting consenting congregations in achieving and/or implementing the same.

†S6.03.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities and members of Historically Underrepresented Groups;
- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;

- e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions;
- i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

- †S6.03.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
 - b. participating in churchwide programs;
 - c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;
 - d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

†S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. ~~This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that (i) 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking person, and (ii) an additional 10 percent be persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color and Non-Primary English Speaking persons. The synod shall devise and implement a plan to recruit, train and mentor persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups in order to equip them with the skills necessary for serving in leadership positions in the synod as soon as possible.~~

†S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

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**Chapter 8.
OFFICERS**

†S8.01. The officers of this synod shall be a bishop, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

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S8.40. Treasurer

†S8.41. The treasurer may be elected by the Synod Assembly or may be appointed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod. The treasurer may be either a layperson or a rostered minister.

S8.42. The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:

- a. Management of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of this synod.
- b. Investment of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council. The treasurer shall devise and implement a plan, approved by the Synod Council, for increasing annually the percentage of the synod’s overall operating funds that are used in making purchases from vendors or service providers owned by members of Historically Underrepresented Groups.
- c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.

- d. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.
- e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.

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Chapter 9.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

- †S9.01. The Synod Assembly shall elect such officers of this synod and such other persons as the constitution and bylaws may require, according to procedures set forth in the bylaws. The Synod Assembly shall elect members of the Churchwide Assembly in accordance with bylaw 12.41.11. of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- †S9.02. In all elections by the Synod Assembly, other than for the bishop, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of _____ members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.
- S9.05. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.06. The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.07. If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S9.08. In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.09. The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.
- †S9.10. When notified by the secretary of this church, on behalf of the Nominating Committee of the Churchwide Assembly, the Synod Assembly shall nominate two persons in the specified categories for possible election by the Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council.
- S9.11. The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.
- †S9.12. Background checks and screening shall be required and completed for persons nominated as synod officers prior to their election, if possible, or as soon as practical after their election. The specific procedures and timing of background checks and screening shall be determined by the Synod Council. Criteria for selection of synod officers shall include an evaluation of a nominee's demonstrated commitment to and experience in (i) promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility within the synod and (ii) recruiting, training and mentoring members of Historically Underrepresented Groups for service in leadership positions in the synod.

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Chapter 11.

COMMITTEES

(names of other organizational units)

- †S11.01. There shall be an Executive Committee, a Consultation Committee, a Committee on Discipline, a Mutual Ministry Committee, an Audit Committee, and such other committees as this synod may from time to time determine. The duties and functions of such committees, or any other organizational units created by this synod, and the composition

and organizational structure of such units, shall be as set forth in this constitution or in the bylaws or continuing resolutions, and shall be subject to any applicable provisions or requirements of the constitution and bylaws of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

- †S11.02. The Consultation Committee of this synod shall consist of at least six persons and not more than 12 persons, of whom half shall be rostered ministers and half shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election. The functions of the Consultation Committee are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and in Chapter 17 of this constitution. The size of the Consultation Committee, in accord with this provision, shall be defined in this synod's bylaws.
- †S11.03. The Committee on Discipline of this synod shall consist of 12 persons, of whom six shall be rostered ministers and six shall be laypersons, who shall each be elected by the Synod Assembly for a term of six years without consecutive re-election.
- a. The functions of the Committee on Discipline of this synod are set forth in Chapter 20 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- b. The Synod Council shall fill vacancies on the Committee on Discipline for any unexpired term.
- †S11.04. The Mutual Ministry Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Synod Council to provide support and counsel to the bishop. The Mutual Ministry shall assist the Synod Council and the bishop in (i) ensuring that congregations are encouraged to adopt and pursue the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards and (ii) providing all consenting congregations with the direction and resources they need to achieve and/or implement such recommendations and standards.
- †S11.05. The Audit Committee of this synod shall consist of three to six persons, none of whom is a member of the synod staff. Up to half of the committee members may be Synod Council members. The Audit Committee members shall be elected by the Synod Council for a term of three years and be eligible for re-election to a second consecutive three-year term. The terms of the Audit Committee members shall be staggered. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for assisting the Synod Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the synod's accounting, financial reporting, internal control systems, and external audit processes as provided in †S15.31.
- †S11.11. This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

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Chapter 14.

ROSTERED MINISTERS

S14.10. Ministers of Word and Sacrament

- †S14.11. The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.
- †S14.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
- 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation and abroad; and
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations and all members of Historically Underrepresented Groups.
- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of the congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline;

- 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of this synod; ~~and~~
- 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; ~~and~~
- 7) encourage the congregation to adopt the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, and to the extent the congregation agrees to adopt such recommendations and standards, structure and oversee the execution of strategies, programs and timetables to enable the congregation to implement, satisfy or exceed such recommendations and standards.

S14.13. The pastor (a) shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

S14.14. Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a congregation nearer to their place of residence.

S14.15. Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

†**S14.16.** When a congregation of this church desires to call a pastor or a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church:

- a. Each congregation of this synod shall consult the bishop of this synod before taking any steps leading to the extending of a call to a prospective pastor.
- b. For issuance of a letter of call to a pastor or candidate by a congregation of this synod in accord with ELCA constitutional provision 7.41., a two-thirds vote shall be required of voting members of the congregation present and voting at a meeting regularly called for the purpose of issuing such a call.
- c. When the congregation has voted to issue a call to a prospective pastor, the letter of call shall be submitted to the bishop of this synod for the bishop's signature.

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S14.30. Ministers of Word and Service

†**S14.31.** The time and place of the ordination of those persons properly called to ministry in this synod shall be authorized by the bishop of this synod.

†**S14.32.** Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations and all members of Historically Underrepresented Groups;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

S14.33. The minister of Word and Service shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the minister of Word and Service shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

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Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR CONGREGATIONS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA®

Current as of November 2022

Chapter 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

***C4.01.** 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.

***C4.01A** The Church reflects the fullness of the character and values expressed and lived by Jesus Christ, and this congregation's practices and policies must therefore be determined by that character and those values. The Church identifies Jesus' character and values based on its relationship with Jesus Christ, and application of His Word, and not by the culture or the world. Any practices or policies of this congregation which conflict with Jesus' character and values must and shall be confronted, challenged and adjusted to conform to that character and those values. The character and values of Jesus include:

- a. Viewing the entire church as part of the body of Christ, not a mere building or another organization or an extension of any other institution in society.
- b. Valuing each person within that body equally as others, so that if one person feels or is viewed as weaker they must be made to feel indispensable.
- c. Sharing power and decision-making within the organization so that persons who would otherwise feel devalued or marginalized due to race, class, status, gender, sexual orientation, language or other barrier not wholly within their control are given power to control the development of their potential within the church.
- d. Sharing in the suffering of those who have been made to feel, or believe themselves to be, the least significant within or unwelcome by the church, including on account of any characteristic they possess but neither chose

nor control, so that if one suffers all others suffer with him or her as well, and all in the church endeavor daily to remedy that suffering.

- e. Loving, empowering and serving all of the marginalized.
- f. Opposing racism and racial supremacy in all its forms, and superseding geographic, ethnic and tribal barriers to share the love of Jesus Christ with those even radically different than ourselves, so that all congregants, wherever located and whatever race, experience inclusion in the loving body of Jesus Christ.
- g. Showing grace to those who have been accused of or are engaged in sin, while at the same time respecting the authority of Scripture and holiness, and never equating holiness with hatred.
- h. Avoiding hypocrisy, including the selective enforcement of applicable Scriptural moral mandates or prohibitions.
- i. Correcting systems which induce spiritual corruption in individuals or cause needless suffering, including on those who have historically been excluded from full participation in the Church.
- j. Respecting and debating diversity of opinions within the church, including on divisive social issues, without destroying the church.
- k. Promoting justice for those experiencing oppression within groups of larger society.
- l. Telling the truth and refusing to validate lies.

***C4.01B** Since this congregation must reflect the character and values of Jesus Christ, its policies and practices designed to promote DEIA must therefore be rooted in but also limited by that character and such values, including as expressed in Section 4.01A above. DEIA, as a policy, shall not be fundamentally determined by any other source of authority or influence, such as political affiliation or secular ideology, culture, academia or media. In the event of a conflict between this congregation's DEIA policy and any of these other sources of authority or influence, DEIA policy derived from the character and values of Jesus Christ must and shall prevail. This congregation acknowledges, however, that there may be overlap between the congregation's DEIA policy based on the character and values of Jesus Christ and similar policies espoused by well-intentioned non-religious sources, which other sources may inform, but not control, the congregation's DEIA policy.

***C4.02.** To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. 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.
- g. Welcome and show love and compassion to all persons in the LGBTQIA+ community, who are seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ but may have historically experienced trauma, rejection or even hatred from the church or this congregation. This congregation will show equal value, respect, love and compassion to all those members of the LGBTQIA+ community whose faith and interpretation of God's Word has led them to avoid acting on sexual attractions proscribed by Scripture, as to those who love The Lord and neither perceive nor experience any inconsistency between their love of Jesus and their sexuality. Such equal respect, love and compassion is not conditioned on whether this congregation has taken a particular position on competing proposals at any time under consideration by the church related to sexual ethics or broader issues of concern to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- h. Actively promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in this congregation, including by adopting and diligently implementing the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and striving to exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

For purposes hereof, this Constitution hereby incorporates by reference the definitions of the following terms as set forth in the Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility
Historically Underrepresented Groups
2019 DEIA Recommendations

Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.

i. Actively mentor all persons who have been historically underrepresented in positions of leadership within the congregation (including members of Historically Underrepresented Groups) so that the clergy and lay leadership in this congregation increasingly reflect materially greater diversity than has historically existed.

- *C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
 - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
 - g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
 - j. Diligently implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations (as applicable to congregations) and achieve or exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards, including by creating and pursuing strategies and programs to accomplish the same.
- *C4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.]
- *C4.05. This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.
- *C4.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

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Chapter 9.

ROSTERED MINISTER

- *C9.01. Authority to call a pastor shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.
- *C9.02. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- *C9.03. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
- a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;
 - 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through available channels of effective communication;
 - 7) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; **and**
 - 8) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations and all other members of Historically Underrepresented Groups; and

9) lead the congregation in devising strategies and structuring programs, and obtaining any necessary funding, to implement the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and satisfy or exceed the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards (in each case as applicable to congregations).

- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) relate to all schools and organizations of this congregation;
 - 3) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council;
 - 4) with the council, administer discipline;
 - 5) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and of the (insert name of synod); and
 - 6) encourage adherence to covenantal relationship with this church as expressed in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

*C9.04. The specific duties of the pastor, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the pastor shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

.....

*C9.12. The pastor of this congregation:

- a. shall keep accurate records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from this congregation;
- b. shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to the synod; and
- c. shall become a member of this congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.

*C9.13. The pastor(s) shall submit a report of ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Such report shall include an explanation of (i) whether the congregation has elected to adopt, and implement or satisfy, the 2019 DEIA Recommendations or the Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards or both, (ii) if it has adopted such recommendations and/or standards, the progress achieved to date in implementing or satisfying such recommendations and standards, and (iii) if it has not elected to adopt such recommendations and standards, why that is the case and whether there are other means the congregation has considered or would consider to achieve greater diversity within the membership and lay leadership of the congregation.

*C9.14. The records of this congregation shall be maintained by the pastor and shall remain the property of this congregation. The secretary of this congregation shall attest in writing to the bishop of this synod that such records have been placed in the secretary's hands in good order by a departing pastor before the installation of that pastor in another call or approval of a request for change in roster status.

C9.15. Under special circumstances, subject to the approval of the synod bishop and the concurrence of this congregation, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially has established a relationship of full communion may serve temporarily as pastor of this congregation under a contract between this congregation and the pastor in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by this congregation.

*C9.21. Authority to call a deacon shall be in this congregation by at least a two-thirds vote of voting members present and voting at a meeting legally called for that purpose. Before a call is issued, the officers, or a committee elected by [this congregation][the Congregation Council] to recommend the call, shall seek the advice and help of the bishop of the synod.

*C9.22. Only a member of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a candidate for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service who has been recommended for this congregation by the synod bishop may be called as a deacon of this congregation.

*C9.23. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every minister of Word and Service shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations and all other members of Historically Underrepresented Groups;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of this church and its wider ministry of the gospel and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and

- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.
- *C9.24. The specific duties of the deacon, compensation, and other matters pertaining to the service of the deacon shall be included in a letter of call, which shall be attested by the bishop of the synod.

.....

Chapter 12.
CONGREGATION COUNCIL

.....

- C12.04.** The Congregation Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The duties of the Congregation Council shall include the following:
- a. To lead this congregation in stating its mission, to do long-range planning, to set goals and priorities, and to evaluate its activities in light of its mission and goals.
 - b. To seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support.
 - c. To oversee and provide for the administration of this congregation to enable it to fulfill its functions and perform its mission.
 - d. To maintain supportive relationships with the rostered minister(s) and staff and help them annually to evaluate the fulfillment of their calling or employment.
 - e. To be examples individually and corporately of the style of life and ministry expected of all baptized persons.
 - f. To promote a congregational climate of peace and goodwill and, as differences and conflicts arise, to endeavor to foster mutual understanding.
 - g. To arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or absence of the pastor.
 - h. To emphasize support of the synod and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as cooperation with other congregations, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, subject to established policies of the synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. To recommend and encourage the use of program resources produced or approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - j. To seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel.
 - k. Oversee the creation, execution and administration of strategies and programs to implement or satisfy the 2019 DEIA Recommendations and Recommended Minimum DEIA Standards.
- C12.05.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of this congregation.
- a. The Congregation Council shall be the board of [trustees] [directors] of this congregation and, as such, shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and managing its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of _____, except as otherwise provided herein.
 - b. The Congregation Council shall not have the authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of this congregation.
 - c. The Congregation Council may enter into contracts of up to \$ _____ for items not included in the budget.
 - d. The Congregation Council shall prepare an annual budget for adoption by this congregation, shall supervise the expenditure of funds in accordance therewith following its adoption, and may incur obligations of more than \$ _____ in excess of the anticipated receipts only after approval by a Congregation Meeting. The budget shall include this congregation's full indicated share in support of the wider ministry being carried on in collaboration with the synod and churchwide organization.
 - e. The Congregation Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of mission support monies to the synod.
 - f. The Congregation Council shall be responsible for this congregation's investments and its total insurance program.
 - g. The Congregation Council shall create and implement strategies, goals and timetables to ensure that (i) at least 10% of the overall goods and services purchased by the congregation (as a congregation not as individual members) are from persons who are, or entities majority owned or controlled by, Persons of Color and/or Non-Primary English Speaking persons, and (ii) an additional 10% of such goods and services are purchased from persons from Historically Underrepresented Groups other than Persons of Color or Non-Primary English Speaking persons, in each case to the extent such providers of such goods and services are available (a) online or (b) physically within a reasonable vicinity from the congregation.

- C12.06.** The Congregation Council shall see that the provisions of this constitution[,] [and] its bylaws[,] [and the continuing resolutions] are carried out.
- C12.07.** The Congregation Council shall provide for an annual review of the membership roster.
- C12.08.** The Congregation Council shall be responsible for the employment and supervision of the staff of this congregation. Nothing in this provision shall be deemed to affect this congregation's responsibility for the call, terms of call, or termination of call of any employees who are on a roster of this church.
- C12.09.** The Congregation Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this congregation at the annual meeting.
- C12.11.** The Congregation Council shall normally meet once a month. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or the president¹, and shall be called by the president at the request of at least one-half of its members. Notice of each special meeting shall be given to all who are entitled to be present.
- C12.12.** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a majority of the members of the Congregation Council, including the [senior] pastor or interim pastor, except when the [senior] pastor or interim pastor requests or consents to be absent and has given prior approval to the agenda for a particular regular or special meeting, which shall be the only business considered at that meeting. Chronic or repeated absence of the [senior] pastor or interim pastor who has refused approval of the agenda of a subsequent regular or special meeting shall not preclude action by the Congregation Council, following consultation with the synod bishop.
- C12.13.** The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous aural communication or its equivalent. To the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

¹ *If the pastor is the president of the congregation, the congregation may consider giving the vice president the authority to call a special meeting.*

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. Personnel Policies Section 6.5
Page 1 of 1

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
- Indigenous Peoples Day (*does not include staff of the Mission Investment Fund*)**
- 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
- 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..



Forming Valued Leaders for God's Mission

Dear Members of the Church Council:

On behalf of the Wartburg Seminary Board of Directors (WTS Board), thank you for considering the proposed amendments to the Bylaws of Wartburg Seminary. This letter explains why the WTS Board adopted these amendments and why we seek your approval of them.

1. Background

During the 2022 to 2023 academic year, the WTS Board participated in a comprehensive governance curriculum offered by the InTrust Center's Wise Stewards Initiative. The threefold purpose of this curriculum is: (1) to equip boards to reimagine governance as a force for change, (2) to support the president and board partnership as a means of institutional renewal, and (3) to clarify the roles and responsibilities of boards of theological schools.¹ Through that work, the WTS Board committed itself to "getting the paper right" by clarifying our internal governing documents and by bringing our bylaws into alignment with best practices for boards of theological schools. Supported by a Wise Stewards governance coach and our own Governance Task Force, the WTS Board identified several areas of our Bylaws that needed to be modified or clarified to conform to governance best practices.

II. Summary of Requested Amendments to the WTS Bylaws

A. Amendments Clarifying Board Responsibility for Mission Support.

Stewardship of the financial resources of a graduate school of theology is a central responsibility of the Board of Directors. The Wise Stewards initiative recommends that Boards of Directors take responsibility to oversee the raising of mission support and the stewardship of financial resources. While the WTS Board currently oversees financial outlays and budgeting through its Finance and Operations Committee, the current WTS Bylaws outsource the raising of mission support and donor relations to the Board of Trustees of the Wartburg Seminary Foundation. The Trustees, however, have no role in the oversight of the Seminary's operations, its strategic plan, or its operations, creating a disconnect between oversight of strategy and oversight of mission support and thus their work has been somewhat disconnected from that of the Board.

- **Governance Action Required.** Our Wise Stewards coach recommended, and we have confirmed, that the better practice is for the Board to take ownership of fundraising and mission support tasks through a Mission Advancement or Development Committee of the Board of Directors, rather than outsourcing it to a separate group that lacks governing

¹ More information about the Wise Stewards Initiative is available at the intrust.org website.

authority or strategic oversight responsibilities. The WTS Board seeks the Church Council's agreement to *remove* references to the Trustees from the Bylaws, so the Board of Directors—which has visibility into and responsibility for the oversight of operations—can take responsibility to ensure oversight of mission support functions aligns with the overall oversight of the Seminary's strategic plan and financial resources.²

○ **Provisions to Be Amended:**

- **Article III, Section 2:** Delete sentences requiring that the WTS Board of Directors must include at least two and not more than four members of the Board of Directors of the Wartburg Seminary Foundation.
-
- **Article III, Section 13:** Delete references to Chair of Wartburg Seminary Foundation as a member of the Executive Committee of the WTS Board.

B. Amendments Modifying Length and Commencement of Board Terms.

Currently, our bylaws require directors to commit to serve for two, six-year terms. This has been a barrier to our recruitment of new directors, as several candidates—though willing to serve—were unable to commit to serve a six year term in office. Our Wise Stewards work confirmed that the better practice favors shorter terms of three to four years, with the possibility of sequential terms up to a maximum of twelve years. This shorter term sequence allows for more regular evaluation of board member performance, ensuring members remain engaged and are contributing. It also ensures turnover and refreshment of the board in a predictable way that avoids large losses in institutional knowledge.

- **Governance Action Required.** To address this, the WTS Board requests that the Church Council approve two bylaw amendments. The first provides that board members shall serve four-year terms with a maximum of three consecutive terms for each director. The second provides that board members' terms shall "ordinarily" commence on January 1 of the year in which they are nominated. This avoids the prospect that a board member who agrees to serve in March, for example, would not be able to join the board until the following January.
- **Provisions to Be Amended:**
 - **Article III, Section 3:** Change term length from six years to four years and provide that a member may serve for three consecutive terms.
 - **Article III, Section 4:** Insert the word "ordinarily" to permit Board members to begin their service on their appointment, whether that occurs in January or not.

C. Amendments to Address Board Size and Synodical Nominations

² A comprehensive marked redline and a clean version of these proposed amendments are attached as Exhibit "1" and Exhibit "2."

Wartburg is one of the largest seminaries in the ELCA, but the Bylaws currently limit its Board to just 20 members. At Wise Stewards, we learned that while smaller institutions often have smaller boards, an institution with a national reach—like that of Wartburg—benefits from a larger board that affords access to a broader array of gifts, financial resources, life experiences, and expertise. In addition, the oversight expectations accreditors, denominations, and constituents have for board members of theological schools are increasing. Having more board members with relevant expertise will enhance the board’s effectiveness, improve the expertise and functioning of its committees, and ensure effective oversight of the institution’s strategic plan.

- **Governance Action Required.** The WTS Board requests that the Church Council approve a bylaw amendment providing that the maximum size of the WTS Board shall be 24 members.³

- **Provisions to Be Amended:**
 - **Article III, Section 2:** Amend to provide that “The number of Directors shall be not more than twenty-four (24) and not less than fifteen (15), the exact number to be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors.”

 - **Article III, Section 2(c):** Amend to remove the categorical prohibition that “no supporting Synod shall have elected more than one board member at any time,” leaving in place the obligation on the WTS Board to ensure that each Synod, over time, shall have an equal opportunity to nominate Board members.

D. Amendments to Executive Committee Composition and Committee Chairs

Existing provisions in the WTS Bylaws mandate that the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the immediate past chair of the Board must also serve as members of the Executive Committee.

The mandate to include the past board chair on the Board’s Executive Committee is not a good governance practice. It deprives the WTS Board of authority to prohibit a past chair who is no longer chair for adverse reasons (or who is no longer a director because their term on the board has expired) from continuing to serve as a member of the Executive Committee.⁴

³ The same 20 member limit is also stated in Article V of the Articles of Incorporation. The WTS Board, however, has no authority to act on behalf of the shareholder to seek an amendment of the articles; instead, the Church Council must take that action, in accordance with Iowa law, pursuant to Article VIII. *See* Iowa Non-Profit Corporation Act §504.1001 and 504.1005. Our external counsel is available to assist the ELCA in executing a conforming amendment to the WTS Articles of Incorporation once the Bylaw Amendments are approved.

⁴ For example, rostered leaders serve on the WTS Board. If a board chair were a rostered leader and was removed from the roster as a disciplinary matter (or resigned to avoid a disciplinary inquiry), it would be unwise to permit such a person to continue to function a part of the Seminary’s Executive Committee. It is likewise possible that a board chair’s term as chair might end when their board term ends; in that event, while the chair might be invited to serve as an advisory member, it is not appropriate that a past chair—who is not a board member—would have a vote on Executive Committee matters.

References to the Trustees in the description of the Executive Committee should also be removed from this provision. The functions formerly performed by the Foundation Trustees are moving into the Board through the Board's newly constituted Mission Advancement Committee.⁵

Finally, the Seminary's officers serve on the Executive Committee but are not board members. The Bylaws must be amended to provide that when an officer is *not* a board member, that officer has the power of voice, but not vote, on the Executive Committee. A separate amendment addresses an oversight in the current bylaws, as they do not currently require that board committees be chaired by board members.

- **Governance Action Required.** The WTS Board requests that the Church Council approve amendments to Article III as set out below.

- **Provisions to Be Amended.**
 - **Amend Article III, Section 13.** Remove references to chair of board of trustees as a member of Executive Committee, remove mandate that immediate past chair of WTS Board be a member of the Executive Committee, and add language clarifying that where an officer serving on the Executive Committee is not a board member, that officer will have voice but not vote.

 - **Amend Article III, Section 14.** Insert a new first sentence mandating that, "The chair of each Board committee must be a director."

E. Cleanup Amendments.

The remainder of the amendments are requested to conform to the current practices of the WTS Board or to remove notations and words that are obsolete.

a. Proposed Bylaw Amendments:

- i. **Amend Article III, Section 16.** Remove the unnecessary word "Corporation" and to correct a grammatical error from "its" to "the."

- ii. **Amend Article III, Section 7.** Expand the reference to the "President" of the Wartburg Association of Students to include the "President or Co-President" of the Wartburg Association of Students, as the student organization's bylaws contemplate co-presidents.

⁵ At its October 2023 meeting, the WTS Board acted pursuant to Article III, Section 4 of the WTS Bylaws to constitute a Mission Advancement Committee which will assume the functions formerly performed by the Wartburg Seminary Foundation Board of Trustees.

- iii. **Amend Article IV, Section 2:** Amend to provide that vice-presidents of the Seminary are appointed by the President of the Seminary, as the President oversees and is responsible for their work.
- iv. **Amend Article IV, Section 5.** Remove a stray date note regarding the date of a prior revision.

2. Certification of Compliance of Bylaw Approval with Articles of Incorporation

As required by Article IX of the WTS Corporation Articles of Incorporation, I certify that notice of all requested amendments to the Bylaws were provided to the members of the WTS Board in advance, and in writing, at the same time and in the same manner as the notice of the board meeting at which they would be considered. I further certify that each amendment was approved by more than a 2/3 majority of the WTS Directors present at the meeting on October 13-14, 2023.⁶

Pursuant to Article IX of the WTS Articles of Incorporation, the amendments adopted by the WTS Board cannot take effect until they are approved by the ELCA Church Council.

Accordingly, on behalf of the Wartburg Seminary Board of Directors, we ask that the Church Council accept this letter as confirmation of the WTS Board's approval of these amendments and their request that the Council approve the amendments summarized above and marked as changes in the attached revisions to the WTS Bylaws.

Sincerely,



Kathy Patrick
Chair-Wartburg Theological Seminary Board of Directors



⁶ See Article IX, Articles of Incorporation (“The Bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed and new Bylaws may be adopted at any meeting of the Board of Directors of the corporation at which a quorum is present, by a two-thirds vote of the directors present at the meetings, subject, however to subsequent approval of the membership.”)

Cc: President Kristin Largen
WTS Board Members
Rev. Javier Goitía

We at Wartburg Theological Seminary acknowledge our campus occupies ancestral lands stolen by the U.S. Government and white colonizers from the Sauk, Meskwaki, Miami, Ho-Chunk, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Kickapoo peoples. The Wartburg Seminary diaspora community continues to occupy these and other stolen lands first given to Native nations by the Creator.



BYLAWS

OF

WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Amended ~~2018~~2023

ARTICLE I

OFFICES

The principal office of the Corporation in the State of Iowa shall be located in the City of Dubuque of Dubuque County. The Corporation may have such other offices, within or without the State of Iowa, as the business of the Corporation from time to time.

The registered offices of the Corporation required by the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act to be continuously maintained in Iowa shall be initially as provided in the Articles of Incorporation, subject to change from time to time by resolution by the Board of Directors and filing of statement of said changes as required by the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERS

SECTION 1. MEMBERS. The sole member of the Corporation shall be The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

SECTION 2. GOVERNANCE. The Corporation shall be affiliated with The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor and all acts of the Corporation shall be consistent with policies defined by The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor.

ARTICLE III

DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. GENERAL POWERS. The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors.

The business and affairs of the Corporation shall include the employment of faculty and administrative officers, approval of educational policies and programs for persons preparing for public ministry in the Seminary. The Board of Directors shall exercise all other normal governance functions, including the granting of degrees, holding title to and managing all Seminary property and assets, receiving gifts and bequests, establishing salaries for faculty and administrative officers, providing for the financial resources and fiscal contracts required to operate the Seminary, and shall have the authority to recruit students globally in addition to having all other powers and rights conferred by the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act.

SECTION 2. NUMBER AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS. The number of Directors shall be not more than ~~Twenty-twenty-four~~ (20 24) and not less than fifteen (15), the exact number to be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors. The Directors shall be elected as follows:

(a) at least one-fifth (1/5) shall be nominated by the appropriate churchwide unit in consultation with the Seminary and elected by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

(b) two Directors shall be elected by the bishops of the supporting synods of the Seminary from among their number; and

(c) the remaining Directors shall be elected by the supporting synods, in consultation with the Seminary. All synods identified by the ELCA as being in its Regions IV and V shall be considered "supporting synods." The Board of Directors shall determine the number of board members to be elected by each supporting synod, ~~such that no supporting synod has elected more than one board member at any one time, and~~ such that, over time, each supporting synod has an equal opportunity to elect board members. At least two (2) Directors shall reside in each of the two supporting regions.

~~At least two (2) but not more than four (4) of the above Directors shall be elected from the membership of the Wartburg Seminary Foundation Board of Trustees. The Wartburg Seminary Foundation Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Directors, the Chair of the Board Development Committee, and the President, shall make recommendations for election of these persons by one of the three means for electing members.~~

SECTION 3. LENGTH OF TERM. The term of a Director shall be for four (4) ~~six (6)~~ years and no Director may serve more than three (3) ~~two (2)~~ consecutive terms. Terms shall be staggered so that an equal number of board members is elected each four years. The electing body shall arrange the terms to provide for the election of approximately one third (1/3) of the Directors each two (2) years. Appointment or election to one-half (1/2) or more of an unexpired term shall be construed as one full term.

SECTION 4. START OF TERM. The term of a Director shall ordinarily begin on the first day of January and conclude on the last day of December.

SECTION 5. VACANCY. If a Director dies, resigns, or is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings, the office shall be declared vacant. Vacancies shall be filled in such a manner that the election of board members remains consistent with these bylaws and the requirements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor.

SECTION 6. MEETINGS. The Board of Directors shall hold at least two (2) regular meetings each year, one of which shall be the annual meeting. The annual meeting shall be the first regular meeting following July 1. Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the Chair and shall be called by the Chair upon written request of any four (4) Directors. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, latest edition, shall be used in the conduct of business.

SECTION. 7. ADVISORY MEMBERS. A representative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the President, the Academic Dean and the Co-Presidents of the Wartburg Association of Students shall serve as advisory members. The Board of Directors may appoint others as advisory members as appropriate from time to time. Advisory members shall have voice but not vote.

SECTION 8. NOTICE. Notice of any special or regular meeting shall be given at least ten (10) days previous thereto by written notice delivered personally or mailed to each Director at his/her business address, or electronic mail (email). If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail so addressed and postage prepaid. If notice is given by email, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when electronically registered as sent and delivered. The attendance of a Director at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meetings, except where such Director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such

meeting. Any Director may make written waiver of notice before, at, or after the meeting, by filing the waiver with the person designated as secretary of the meeting.

SECTION 9. PLACE OF MEETING. The Board of Directors may designate a place either within or without the State of Iowa, as a place of meetings for any annual meeting or for any regular or special meeting. If no designation is made, or if a special meeting be otherwise called, the place of meeting shall be the registered office of the Corporation in the State of Iowa.

SECTION 10. QUORUM. A majority of the Directors currently serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

SECTION 11. MANNER OF ACTING. The act of the majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors except to the extent otherwise provided in these Bylaws.

SECTION 12. OFFICERS. The officers of the Board of Directors shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer. All officers, with the exception of the Treasurer, must be members of the Board of Directors. All officers shall be elected by the Board of Directors at a meeting prior to the annual meeting for a term of two years; the Chair and the Secretary to be elected in even numbered years and the Vice-Chair and Treasurer in odd numbered years.

SECTION 13. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers elected pursuant to Section 12 of this Article III, the chairs of all standing committees, ~~the Chair of the Foundation Board of Trustees~~, and the President of the Seminary, *ex officio*. If Officers are not members of the Board of Directors, they shall have voice but not vote on the Executive Committee. The President is entitled to notice, attendance and voice without vote for all meetings except those called to review the President's performance or compensation. ~~The chair of each Board committee must be a Director.~~ The Immediate Past Chair of the Board of Directors may also be appointed for a one year term to the Executive Committee by the current Board Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee and President, subject to approval of the Board. In that event, . ~~If the Treasurer, the Immediate Past Chair of the Board of Directors or the Chair of the Foundation Board of Trustees is not an elected member of the Board of Directors, the Treasurer,~~ the Immediate Past Chair of the Board of Directors ~~or the Chair of the Foundation Board of Trustees~~ will have voice but not vote at meetings of the Executive Committee ~~and Board of Directors~~. Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by either the Chair or the President. To the extent permitted by law, the Executive Committee shall have the power to act on behalf of the Board of Directors between meetings; such actions are subject to the review and ratification of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 14. COMMITTEES. The chair of each Board committee must be a Director. Such committees of the Board of Directors as are needed may be authorized at any meeting of the Board of Directors.

The Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee and the President, shall appoint the members of the committees and their chair, subject to the review and approval of the Board.

SECTION 15. ADVISORY BOARD. The Board of Directors shall have the power to appoint an advisory board and/or advisors to the Board of Directors who shall have voice but not vote.

SECTION 16. PRESUMPTION OF ASSENT. A Director ~~of the Corporation~~ who is present at a meeting of ~~the its~~ Board of Directors at which action on any corporate matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to the action taken unless:

- (1) the Director's dissent is entered in the minutes of the meeting; or,
- (2) the Director files written dissent to such action with the person acting as secretary of the meeting before the adjournment thereof; or,
- (3) the Director forwards such dissent by registered or certified mail to the Secretary immediately after the adjournment of the meeting.

Such right to dissent shall not apply to a Director who voted in favor of such action.

SECTION 17. INFORMAL ACTION BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Any action required by the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act to be taken at a meeting of directors of the corporation, or any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors or of a committee of the Board of Directors may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing setting for the action so taken shall be signed by all of the Directors or all of the members of the committee, as the case may be. Such consent shall have the same form and effect as a unanimous vote and may be stated as such in any article or document filed with the Secretary of State. This provision shall be applicable whether or not the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act requires that an action be taken by resolution.

SECTION 18. RESIGNATION. Any Director may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair or the Secretary. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, or if the time when it shall become effective shall not be specified therein, it shall take effect immediately upon its receipt. Except as specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

SECTION 19. CONFERENCE TELEPHONE MEETINGS AND OTHERWISE ELECTRONICALLY MEDIATED MEETINGS. Subject to other applicable provisions of this Article and to ARTICLE VIII, any action required by the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act to be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors or a committee of the Board of Directors, or any action which may be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors or of a committee of the Board of Directors, may be taken by means of conference telephone or by other electronic media by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can communicate synchronously with each other and the participation in a meeting pursuant to this provision shall constitute presence in person at such meeting.

ARTICLE IV

ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 1. PRESIDENT. There shall be a President of the Seminary who is the chief executive officer of the Seminary. The President shall be or become a member in good standing of a congregation of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor and, if an ordained minister, shall be in good standing in The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its successor. The President shall have faculty status and shall be eligible for retirement according to policies established by the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall elect the President of the Seminary in consultation with the Bishop of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization.

SECTION 2. VICE-PRESIDENTS. The vice-presidents of the Seminary shall be appointed by the President, ~~subject to subsequent approval by the Board of Directors.~~ (01.5.80)

SECTION 3. SECRETARY. The Secretary of the Board of Directors shall be the Secretary of the Corporation as elected by the Board of Directors pursuant to ARTICLE III, Section 12 thereof.

SECTION 4. TREASURER. The Treasurer of the Board of Directors shall be the Treasurer of the Corporation as elected by the Board of Directors pursuant to ARTICLE III, Section 12 thereof.

SECTION 5. ASSISTANT CORPORATE SECRETARY. The Board of Directors may also appoint an Assistant Corporate Secretary, when and for as long as the Board deems appropriate. This person will not be an officer nor a member of the Board of Directors. This person is authorized to perform the Corporate Secretary's duties at the direction of or in the absence of the Corporate Secretary. (01.11.123)

ARTICLE V

CONTRACTS, LOANS, CHECKS AND DEPOSITS

SECTION 1. CONTRACTS. The Board of Directors may authorize any officer of the Board or Seminary administrator, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

SECTION 2. LOANS. No loans shall be contracted on behalf of the Corporation and no evidence of indebtedness shall be issued in its name unless authorized by a resolution of the Board of Directors. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

SECTION 3. CHECKS, DRAFTS, ETC. All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money, notes or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation, shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 4. DEPOSITS. All funds of the Corporation not otherwise employed shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as the Board of Directors may select.

ARTICLE VI

FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin the first day of July in each year and shall end on the last day of June in each year.

ARTICLE VII

SEAL

The Corporation shall have a corporate seal.

ARTICLE VIII

WAIVER OF NOTICE

Whenever any notice is required to be given to any Director of the Corporation under the provisions of the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act or under the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of the Corporation, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be equivalent to the giving of such notice.

ARTICLE IX

INDEMNIFICATION

Any person who is or was an officer, Director, member, employee or agent of this Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of this Corporation as an officer, Director, member, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or enterprise, shall be entitled to indemnification by this Corporation to the extent the same is permitted or required pursuant to the provisions of the Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act.

ARTICLE X

AMENDMENT

These Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed as provided in the Articles of Incorporation.

Synod Constitution Amendments

Provision 10.12. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* stipulates: “Each synod shall have a constitution, which shall become effective upon ratification by the Church Council. Amendments thereto shall be subject to like ratification....”

Northwest Intermountain Synod (1D)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Northwest Intermountain Synod (1D); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

- S8.23.** In the event of the death, resignation, or disability of the bishop, the vice president, after consultation with the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall convene the Synod Council to arrange for the conduct of the duties of the bishop until a new bishop shall be elected or, in the case of temporary disability, until the bishop resumes full performance of the duties of the office. The synod vice president shall serve as an ex officio member with voice and vote of the Churchwide Assembly and be included in the number of the synod’s voting members.
- S9.03.** The Nominating Committee shall provide nominations for all elected and appointed Synod Council and eCommittee positions (see S11.07.). Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S10.03.** The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:
.....
i. Visit congregations, councils, or clusters of the synod to acquaint these organizations with the work of the synod. Announcements that council members are available for such visits shall appear in synod publications.
- S11.05.A** It shall be the responsibility of all committees or any other organizational structures to regularly report on their work to the Synod Council and to the Synod Assembly.
- S11.06.** This synod shall have a Finance Committee consisting of up to five persons appointed by the Synod Council. Terms and duties will be determined by the Synod Council.
- S11.06.01.** The Finance Committee shall consist of up to five persons appointed by the Synod Council. Terms and duties shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- S11.07.** This synod may have programmatic committees.
- P11.07.A** Programmatic Committees
1. This synod may have the following programmatic committees: Congregational Life, Global Mission, Multicultural Inclusivity, Outreach, Professional Ministry, Social Ministry, Youth Ministry and others as determined by the Synod Council.
 2. Committee members shall be appointed by the Synod Council. Terms and duties as assigned by the Synod Council.
 3. There may be a Congregational Life Committee. This committee would provide leadership in the areas of education, evangelism, leadership training, stewardship, volunteer ministries, and worship.
 4. There may be a Global Mission Committee. This committee would provide leadership in the areas of the Companion Synod, global mission advocacy, global ministry events, and world hunger.

5. ~~There may be an Outreach Committee. This committee would provide leadership in strategic planning and development of new congregations and congregations in transitional communities, area/cluster ministry development, resource development, urban and rural ministry, multicultural ministry, and shall assist the deployed Division for Outreach staff in these programmatic areas.~~
6. ~~There may be a Professional Ministry Committee. This committee would provide leadership in the areas of ELCA colleges, universities and seminaries, and training and event planning for rostered persons. A member of this committee would also relate to the Candidacy and Mobility Committee of this synod.~~
7. ~~There may be a Social Ministry Committee. This committee would provide leadership in the area of congregational social ministries, social ministry agencies which relate to the synod, public policy, and social statements.~~
8. ~~There may be a Youth Ministry Committee. This committee would provide leadership in youth ministry planning and coordination in partnership with the Synod Lutheran Youth Organization board members and regional staff with responsibilities for youth ministry. SC93.09.20 (policy 2.17)~~

S11.087. This synod shall have a Nominating Committee (see S9.03) consisting of five members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

S11.08.01. ~~The Nominating Committee shall consist of five persons, appointed by the Synod Council to one six year term and shall not be eligible for consecutive re-appointment.~~

S11.098. This synod shall have a Constitution Review Committee consisting of two review panels – a Congregation Constitution Review Panel and a Synod Constitution Review Panel.

S11.09.01. ~~The duties of the Constitution Review Committee shall be conducted by two Review Panels, a Congregation Constitution Review Panel and a Synod Constitution Review Panel.~~

†**S18.13.** Other amendments to this constitution may be adopted by this synod through either of the following procedures: a. Introduced with the support of at least 7050 voting members and having been approved by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a regular meeting of the Synod Assembly, an amendment may be adopted unchanged by a two-thirds vote at the next regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Oregon Synod (1E)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Oregon Synod (1E); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

- S9.03.** There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of no fewer than five members to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. ~~Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.~~
- S9.05.** The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for vice president; ~~additional nominations may be made from the floor.~~
- S9.06.** The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for secretary; ~~additional nominations may be made from the floor.~~
- S9.07.** If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; ~~additional nominations may be made from the floor.~~

Rocky Mountain Synod (2E)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Rocky Mountain Synod (2E); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

- S8.42.** The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:
- ~~Management~~ **Managing** of the monies and accounts of this synod, its deeds, mortgages, contracts, evidences of claims and revenues, and trust funds, holding the same at all times subject to the order of the synod.
 - ~~Invest~~ **Investing and transferring** of funds upon the authorization of the Synod Council.
 - ~~Receipt~~ **Receiving** and ~~acknowledgment~~ **acknowledging** of offerings, contributions and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and ~~paying~~ **regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed** ~~providing~~ **for timely payment on obligations, as approved and/or delegated** by the Synod Council. ~~Ensuring the monthly transmission of~~ **The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by the synod for the churchwide organization general work of this church** as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.
 - ~~Maintenance~~ **Maintaining a record of each congregation's mission support and communicating, at least quarterly, the status of their giving, of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least quarterly, of the status of this account.**
 - ~~Rendering~~ **Presenting** at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, ~~and duly audited report of the financial statement of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, as well as a tabulation of congregation mission support together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.~~
- S8.55.** Should the vice president, secretary or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall serve the remainder of the term. ~~If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four year term.~~
- S10.06.** If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which ~~she or he that member~~ was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once become vacant.

**CHAPTER 11
COMMITTEES, ~~BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS~~**

- S11.06.** The Synod Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the four ~~synodical~~ **synodical** officers and four Synod Council members, two elected by the Council at ~~a fall meeting~~ **the Winter Meeting** of the Synod Council each year to serve overlapping two-year terms. ~~The Executive Committee shall counsel with the synodical officers~~ and shall perform those functions of the Synod assigned to it by the Synod Council. This committee, with the exception of the salaried officer(s) of this synod, shall review the work of the officer(s) and the Executive Staff.
- S11.07.** General Provisions for all ~~ministry teams~~ **committees**:
- Each ~~ministry team, board, commission and~~ committee shall submit a report to the Office of the Bishop no less than forty-five days prior to each year's Synod Assembly for publication to the Assembly.

- b. Any ~~ministry team, board, commission or~~ committee requesting financial support shall submit a request to the Finance Committee of this synod as part of the annual budgeting process.
- c. Each member of a ~~ministry team, board, commission or~~ committee shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.
- d. The terms of members of all committees, who are elected by the synod assembly or by the synod council, shall begin on August 15. In the event that a vacancy on a ~~required ministry team or~~ committee occurs, that vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the Synod Council to fulfill the unexpired term.
- e. Any member of a ~~ministry team, board, commission or~~ committee who is employed by an agency or institution related to such ~~board, committee, ministry team or commission~~ shall abstain from voting on any issue related to their employer.
- f. One or more members of the Synod Council may be appointed by the Council to serve as liaison to each ~~ministry team committee~~. This liaison shall include notice of meetings, agenda items and minutes. The Council liaison may have voice and vote.
- g. A member of the synod staff may be assigned to ~~teams committees~~ as needed. The staff person shall have voice but no vote.
- h. No ministry team shall issue any public statement purporting to speak for this synod.

S11.08. Additional Committees ~~and Boards~~

S11.09. To promote interdependent relations and to further the total mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and synod ~~local~~ units, this synod shall accord to the Churchwide units the privilege of presenting their causes through reports to the regular Synod Assemblies and shall accord the privilege of representation with voice but not vote at meetings of the Synod Council.

S15.13. On the basis of ~~estimated income~~ the availability of funds, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council.

S15.14. Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16 percent of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's operating budget ~~for regular distribution to synod causes~~ shall be carried forward annually for potential disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income ~~to such causes~~. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.

Western North Dakota Synod (3A)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendment to the constitution of the Western North Dakota Synod (3A); and

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

- S9.11.** The Nominating Committee shall nominate persons to be elected by the Synod Assembly to serve on the Luther Seminary board of directors ~~Board and Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota Board~~. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod (5C); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

S7.14 One-half (1/2) of members of the Synod Assembly who are registered **and signed in** for the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.

S11.07.05. The Candidacy Committee shall consist of fourteen members, **two selected by each conference in consultation with the professional staff of the synod, and two selected at large by the Synod Council, and in compliance with +S6.04. appointed by the bishop in consultation with conference deans in compliance with +S6.04 and ratified by the synod council. This number includes the bishop (or their designee) and an ELCA seminary representative. Advisory members include a synod candidacy staff person and an ELCA candidacy staff person.**

The function of the Candidacy Committee is to work with applicants from application through Entrance, Endorsement, Approval, and Ordination. They will seek to support each candidate through prayer, guidance and counsel as well as represent the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in helping candidates discern both their inner (personal) call and their outer call (affirmation by both the seminary faculty and candidacy committee).

S11.078. Synod Program and Covenant Committees of 11.01.04.

Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

- S8.22. The vice president shall:**
- a. Chair the Synod Council.**
 - b. Supervise the Synod Assembly Planning Committee.**

Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendment to the constitution of the Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

- S7.22.** All retired rostered ministers of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall ~~be voting members~~ have the privilege of voice, and a specified number of those in attendance will have the privilege of both voice and vote as voting members. This number will be determined at the close of the registration process for Synod Assembly, ensuring that at least 60 percent of the voting members of the assembly be laypersons. The designation as voting members will be assigned to retired rostered ministers based on the date and time order of their Synod Assembly registration. This synod may establish processes that permit those designated as disabled, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H), with the exception of S9.04.i); and

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

- S9.04. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot.
- a) Each Conference Assembly shall nominate up to and including seven (7) persons for bishop. Those Conference Assemblies shall be held at least 60 days prior to the Synod Assembly.
 - b) Each of the nominees shall be contacted by the synod vice president or bishop's designee to determine willingness to be a candidate for bishop. All persons responding affirmatively shall submit biographical information using a uniform format to the synod office at least 45 days prior to the Synod Assembly.
 - c) The biographical information shall be sent to all voting members at least 30 days prior to the Synod Assembly. The first ballot shall be the candidates of the Conference Assemblies and the nominations from the floor of the Synod Assembly
 - d) Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot.
 - e) The second ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of legal votes on the first ballot, and three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
 - f) The third ballot shall be limited to five persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes shall be necessary for election.
 - g) The fourth ballot shall be limited to three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
 - h) On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot. Speeches or statements by the candidates may be permitted before any ballot as determined by bishop's election committee.

If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Persons nominated on the first ballot may withdraw their names from further consideration by verbal announcement to the Assembly prior to the second ballot. No names may be withdrawn after the second ballot has been completed. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the third ballot, and 60% of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of legal votes on the previous ballot.

[Justification for not ratifying S9.04.i) (below): S9.04.i) conflicts with ¶S8.54. by taking away the discretion granted to the Synod Council in ¶S8.54.]

- i) In the event of the death or resignation of the bishop of the synod, the Synod Council shall appoint an interim bishop for the length of the vacancy. This person shall be precluded from candidacy for election as bishop of the synod at the next election.

East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5I); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

CHAPTER 9: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Mission Team Committee consisting of ten four to eight members; ~~four members~~ who shall be appointed by the Synod Council ~~and one member elected by each of the synod conferences~~ to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.

~~**S9.07.** If the treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.~~

CHAPTER 10: SYNOD COUNCIL

S10.03. The functions of the Synod Council shall be to:
a. Exercise trusteeship responsibilities on behalf of this synod.
b. Consult with the bishop who shall appoint the chairperson and members of the Synod Assembly Mission Team, one of whom shall be from the Synod Council. The Synod Council shall set the general theme, program emphasis, and final agenda for the Assembly. Recommend program goals and budgets to the regular meetings of the Synod Assembly.

CHAPTER 14: ROSTERED MINISTERS

~~**S14.14.** Whenever members of a congregation move to such a distance that regular attendance at its services becomes impractical, it shall be the duty of the pastor to commend them, upon their consent, to the pastoral care of a Lutheran congregation nearer to their place of residence.~~

Northeastern Ohio Synod (6E)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Northeastern Ohio Synod (6E); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

- S9.03.** There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of ~~five~~ seven members who shall be appointed by the Synod Council to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- ~~**S9.07.** The Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.~~
- ~~**S9.11.** The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.~~
- ~~**S9.13.** The Synod Assembly shall elect its representatives to the Board of Directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, recognizing the inclusive composition of the board. The terms of office shall be set forth by the institution.~~
- ~~**S10.04** Any proposal to appropriate funds, whether by amendment to the budget or otherwise, which is presented to a meeting of the Synod Assembly without the approval of the Synod Council, shall require a two thirds vote for adoption. Any proposal to increase the budget must be accompanied by a statement of the sources of the revenue.~~

Upstate New York Synod (7D)

CC ACTION *[EN BLOC]*

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Upstate New York Synod (7D); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

S12.04 Conferences shall elect for their presiding officer a minister of Word and Sacrament **or a Minister of Word and Service** from the conference **and in good standing on the ELCA Roster** as their dean. The dean represents the synod bishop in the conference. The term of office of the dean shall be four (4) years. The dean shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms.

South Carolina Synod (9C)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the South Carolina Synod (9C); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

S8.42. The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:

.....

- d. Maintenance of a regular account with each congregation of this synod and informing the congregation, at least ~~quarterly~~ **semiannually**, of the status of this account.
- e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, **and** detailed, ~~and duly audited~~ report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, for record and publication in the minutes, of the contributions from the congregations.

Southeastern Synod (9D)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

- To ratify the amendment to the constitution of the Southeastern Synod (9D); and**
- To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

S8.55. Should the vice-president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the office until an election of a new officer can be held or, in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be the remainder of the unserved term. If the treasurer is appointed by the Synod Council, the Synod Council shall appoint a new treasurer to a four-year term.

Florida-Bahamas Synod (9E)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To ratify the amendments to the constitution of the Florida-Bahamas Synod (9E); and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synod of this action.**

- S9.04.** The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly by ecclesiastical ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no one is elected, the first ballot shall be considered the nominating ballot. Three-fourths of the legal votes cast on the second ballot shall be necessary for election. The third ballot shall be limited to the seven persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the second ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fourth ballot shall be limited to the five persons (plus ties) who received the greatest number of votes on the third ballot, and two-thirds of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. The fifth ballot shall be limited to the three persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the fourth ballot, and 60 percent of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. On subsequent ballots a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election. These ballots shall be limited to the two persons (plus ties) who receive the greatest number of votes on the previous ballot.
- S9.08.** In all elections, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the two highest numbers of legal votes, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on a preceding ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.

Notification of the Church Council of Synods Reporting Adoption of 2022 Churchwide Assembly Amendments to Recommended Provisions in Accord with †S18.12.

Provision †S18.12. of the *Constitution for Synods* states, “Whenever the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially informs this synod that the Churchwide Assembly has amended the *Constitution for Synods*, this constitution may be amended to reflect any such amendment by a majority vote at any subsequent meeting of the Synod Assembly without presentation at a prior Synod Assembly. An amendment that is identical to a provision of the *Constitution for Synods* shall be deemed to have been ratified upon its adoption by this synod. The Church Council, through the secretary of this church, shall be given prompt notification of its adoption.”

The following synods adopted some or all of the amendments to recommended provisions of the *Constitution for Synods* approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

Synod:	Amendments Adopted:*
1C Southwestern Washington Synod	All
1D Northwest Intermountain Synod	All
1E Oregon Synod	All
1F Montana Synod	All
2E Rocky Mountain Synod	All
3A Western North Dakota Synod	All except S7.21.01.
3B Eastern North Dakota Synod	All
3F Southwestern Minnesota Synod	All except S8.42.f. (the constitution did not match the <i>Constitution for Synods</i> at this point before)
3I Southeastern Minnesota Synod	All
4B Central States Synod	All except S14.34. (the constitution does not include this provision)
4E Southwestern Texas Synod	All
5B Northern Illinois Synod	All except S7.14.
5C Central/Southern Illinois Synod	All except S7.14. and S8.42.c.
5D Southeastern Iowa Synod	All except S7.14. and S11.10.
5F Northeastern Iowa Synod	All
5G Northern Great Lakes Synod	All except S7.14., S7.21.01., and S7.22.
5I East-Central Synod of Wisconsin	All except S7.21.01. and S7.26.
5J Greater Milwaukee Synod	All
6A Southeast Michigan Synod	All except S7.14.
6B North/West Lower Michigan Synod	All
6E Northeastern Ohio Synod	S7.21.01., S7.22., S7.24., S7.26., S7.27., and S8.42.c.
6F Southern Ohio Synod	All
7B New England Synod	All
7E Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod	All except S7.14. (the constitution already said “one-third”), S7.22., S7.27., S14.15., and S14.34.
7F Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod	All
8A Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod	All
8B Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod	All except S7.21.01. and S8.42.f.
8C Allegheny Synod	All
8D Lower Susquehanna Synod	All except S7.22., S8.42.f., and S11.10.
8H West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod	All except S7.14., S7.21.01., and S7.24.
9A Virginia Synod	All
9B North Carolina Synod	All
9C South Carolina Synod	All except S7.14., S7.21.01., and S7.22.
9D Southeastern Synod	All

* A summary of amendments to recommended provisions and bylaws is provided on the following page.

**Amendments to Recommended Provisions of the *Constitution for Synods*
Approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly**

- S7.14. ~~One-half~~ One-third of the members of the Synod Assembly shall constitute a quorum.
- ‡S7.21.01. Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until ~~voting members are seated at the opening of~~ the next regular Synod Assembly.
- S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired rostered ministers, or those granted disability status, or on leave from call, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, provided that such processes not result in fewer than 60% of the voting members of the Synod Assembly being laypersons in contravention of ~~consistent with~~ †S7.21.e. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered ministers specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.
- S7.24. Ministers under call on the rosters of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the rosters of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until the opening of the next regular synod assembly, or unless replaced by the election of new members for a special synod assembly, or until they have been disqualified by termination of congregation membership. ~~Normally, congregations will hold elections prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.~~
- S7.26. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council that permit lay representatives of authorized worshiping communities of the synod, which have been authorized under ELCA bylaw 10.01.04., to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.
- S7.27. This synod may establish processes through the Synod Council to grant a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church.
- S8.42. The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:
[...]
c. Receipt and acknowledgment of offerings, contributions, and bequests made to this synod, collecting interest and income from its invested funds, and paying regular appropriations and orders on the several accounts as approved and directed by the Synod Council. The treasurer shall transmit each month to the treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the funds received by this synod for the general work of this church as well as any funds to support restricted programs of this church.
[...]
f. ~~Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be in the custody of the secretary. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.~~
- S.11.10. — General Provisions**
- S14.13. The pastor (a) shall keep accurate parochial records of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, communicants, members received, members dismissed, or members excluded from the congregation, (b) shall submit a summary of such statistics annually to this synod, and (c) shall become a member of the congregation upon receipt and acceptance of the letter of call. In a parish of multiple congregations, the pastor shall hold membership in one of the congregations.
- S14.15. Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.
- S14.34. Each minister of Word and Service on the roster of this synod shall submit a report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1
2
3 AREA: Codes of Conduct
4 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue paper
5 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council
6 DATE: 10/10/23
7

MARKER DATES:

8
9 RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, Oct. 27, 2003
10 ENDORSED by Division for Church in Society Board, Feb. 27, 2004
11 APPROVED by Church Council, April 16-18, 2004
12 UPDATED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, Sept. 5, 2008
13 APPROVED by Church Council, November 2008 [CC08.1157]
14 APPROVED by Church Council, November 2013 [CC13.11.69y]
15 UPDATED by the Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020
16 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 27, 2023
17 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, November 2023 [anticipated]
18

Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All: Codes of Conduct

Background

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23 “In the name of the God who creates every human being out of love, this church teaches human dignity is
24 God’s gift to every person and that the commitment to universal rights protects that dignity.”¹ The
25 church meets its commitment to work for human rights by teaching about those rights, protesting their
26 violation, advocating their international codification and supporting effective ways to monitor
27 compliance.² Encouraging corporations to respect human rights is one way for our church to meet its
28 obligations to our neighbor.

29
30 Multinational corporations may be operating in countries where they are held to differing sets of laws and
31 standards. In addition, there may be concern about the practices of vendors further along the supply chain.
32 Lower standards abroad can lead to unfortunate publicity and investor unhappiness domestically.
33 Corporations and industries have developed codes of conduct as one way to address the disparities
34 between domestic and overseas expectations.
35

¹ “Human Rights” (ELCA, 2017), p. 2.

² For Peace in God’s World (ELCA, 1995), p. 14.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

36 Though different industries may need differing specifications, [“Guiding Principles on Business and](#)
37 [Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework.”](#) proposed
38 by U.N. Special Representative John Ruggie and endorsed by the 2011 U.N. Human Rights Council,
39 attempts to codify [a general framework of](#) corporate behavior that leads to just and sustainable
40 development. Governments have a primary duty to protect human rights and ensure access to remedy
41 when those rights are abused, but business enterprises are also morally responsible for respecting the
42 human rights set forth in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).³ Work in this area has expanded to
43 include guidelines for international business from the [Organization for Economic Co-operation and](#)
44 [Development](#), of which the United States is a member, as well [as](#) ~~due-~~ diligence guidance organized by
45 sector.

46
47 ~~The ELCA social statement (1999) is a benchmark for our role as Christians in economic life. Because~~
48 ~~of sin, teaching acknowledges that~~ we have fallen short of our responsibilities to each other in this world,
49 but ~~asserts that~~ we live in light of God’s ~~promise~~~~promises~~ that ultimately there will be no hunger or
50 injustice. ~~This promise makes us restless with a world that is less than God intends: “The vantage point~~
51 ~~of, and that we must work toward~~ the ~~realization of those promises in the present. The ELCA’s social~~
52 ~~statement~~ [Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](#) ~~kingdom of God motivates us (1999) commits to~~
53 ~~foe~~~~usholding corporations accountable for their effects~~ on more than short term gains. Humans, called
54 ~~to be stewards of God’s creation, are to respect the integrity and limits of the earth and its resources” (p-~~
55 ~~14). We are challenged to pursue policies and practices supporting sustainability. The multitudes around~~
56 ~~God’s global table are recognized as neighbors rather than competitors or strangers (p. 17).~~

57
58 ~~The faith community measures a corporation not only by what it produces and by shareholder returns but~~
59 ~~also by its impact on human lives~~~~workers~~, communities and the environment. Corporations today work
60 within a global reality. There are political, social and economic influences as well as the impacts of
61 militarism and technology.⁴³ A corporation’s view of how it conducts its business, promotes justice and
62 works to create a fair and sustainable world is significantly affected by these realities.

ELCA Social Policy

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67 One of the earliest ELCA social statements, [For Peace in God’s World](#),⁵ (1999), quotes the Universal
68 Declaration of Human Rights to affirm respect for human rights as part of the culture of peace toward
69 which the church works. In 2017, the ELCA issued the social message [“Human Rights,”](#) (2017) which
70 affirmed a series of broad categories of human rights, adapted from the church’s historical body of social
71 teaching. The message states that “the expectation is that the most basic rights will never be denied and
72 the highest level of rights will be available to the greatest number of people, such as elaborated in the
73 International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” (p. 12)
74 and particularly calls upon the church as an investor to press corporations to respect human rights (p. 9).
75

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

76 ~~The ELCA social statement~~ Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All (1999) develops this church's
77 vision of sufficiency and sustainability, focusing on the economic life of all people, with an emphasis on
78 those who are poor and disenfranchised. It expresses concern for the safety of employees (p. 9) and
79 commits the church to workingwork for safe and healthy working conditions (p. 10). ~~In particular,~~ It calls
80 for companies to ~~pay more fully~~ compensate for the wider social and environmental costs of what they
81 produce (p. 16). ELCA social policy includes numerous Church Council actions supporting those who are
82 poor and disenfranchised. The ELCA social statement Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action (2019)
83 draws our attention to the economic disadvantages faced by women and people of color and urges the
84 church to work for just distribution of resources.

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Corporate Response

89 In recent years the call for companies to implement fair policies, adopt vendor and supplier codes of
90 conduct, and assure fair treatment of workers on a global basis has moved the corporate world to think
91 beyond general human resource policies. Corporate ethics have moved from a focus on individual plants
92 and workers to a global code covering worldwide operations and considering the company's impact on
93 communities, workers and the environment.

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Compliance with human rights principles has been found to yield positive financial results.³ ~~Conversely,~~
~~poor human rights practices can prove costly to corporations.~~⁴ ~~Over time, corporations with good social~~
~~and sustainability track records weather market downturns better than poor performers in the ESG~~
category. Information on corporate human rights practices is publicly available through the Corporate
Human Rights Benchmark. Investors have begun to ask for accountability in the reporting and
compliance aspects of codes of conduct throughout the supply chain. They have also asked for boards to
structure themselves and to choose members with human rights expertise in order to strengthen
accountability to codes of conduct.

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Resolution Guidelines for the ELCA

107 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supports:

- 108 1. ~~The~~ Adoption of company codes of conduct. We advocate for the incorporation of the U.N.
109 Guiding Principles into a company's operations and supply chain. We support Human Rights
110 Impact Assessments in keeping with those principles.

³ ~~<https://www.sec.gov/spotlight/investor-advisory-committee-2012/human-capital-disclosure-recommendation.pdf>~~

⁴ ~~<https://corporatejustice.org/2018-good-business-report.pdf>~~

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 111 2. ~~The~~ Preparation of standards and related codes of conduct for vendors and suppliers.
- 112 3. Reporting to shareholders about international operations.
- 113 4. Buying policies and purchase contracts ~~reflecting~~that reflect the International Labor
- 114 Organization's standards.⁵
- 115 5. Implementation of independent monitoring processes for both the company and its vendors
- 116 and suppliers. We support publishing an annual summary of the results of supplier audits.
- 117 6. Policies and reports ensuring that a company or its suppliers do not use child labor. We
- 118 support policies that prohibit sexual exploitation of minors.
- 119 7. Reports that assess human rights risks, including human trafficking and forced labor
- 120 (modern-day slavery), throughout the supply chain. We support reports on specific actions to
- 121 curtail human rights risks in the supply chain.
- 122 8. Development of corporate responsibility committees at a board and staff level. We support
- 123 development of a Human Rights Risk Oversight ~~Committee~~⁶Committee at the board level.
- 124 9. Reports on board-level expertise in civil and human rights as well as the presence of board-
- 125 level infrastructure that ensures ongoing consultation with civil and human rights experts.
- 126 10. Development of policies and reports that ensure environmental standards, health and safety
- 127 standards, and basic workers' rights standards. We support additional policies to protect
- 128 worker health and safety in extraordinary situations such as a pandemic.
- 129 11. Due diligence processes to identify, assess, prevent, ~~and~~ mitigate ~~and~~actual and potential
- 130 human rights impacts and to address human rights concerns; ~~also, reports assessing the~~
- 131 effectiveness of due diligence processes in preventing forced, child and prison labor.
- 132 12. Board review of ways to link executive compensation with a company's ethical and social
- 133 performance in addition to current performance measurements.
- 134 13. Policies ensuring that a company does not use forced labor, including prison, indentured or
- 135 bonded labor, and ensuring ethical recruitment.
- 136 14. Regular assessment reports to the board of directors and shareholders on any of the above
- 137 items.
- 138 15. Development of policies and reports that promote network neutrality, ensuring that internet
- 139 service providers do not degrade, prioritize or privilege online publications based on their
- 140 source, ownership or information content.
- 141 16. Reports on policies and procedures to address the human-rights-related risks associated with
- 142 business activities in conflict-affected areas, including occupied territories-; also, reports on
- 143 whether customers' use of the company's products or services is linked to violations of
- 144 international law.

⁵ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/whatare/fundam/>

⁶ <https://investorsforhumanrights.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2020-05/Full%20Report%20-%20Investor%20Toolkit%20on%20Human%20Rights%20-%20May%202020b.pdf>

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 145 17. Reports evaluating the feasibility of adopting a policy of not doing business with
146 governments that are complicit in genocide and/or crimes against humanity as defined in
147 international law.
- 148 18. Adopting a comprehensive human rights policy that states the company’s commitment to
149 respect human rights throughout its operations and value chain, and that describes steps to
150 identify, assess, prevent, mitigate and remedy adverse human rights impacts connected to the
151 business.
- 152 19. Independent reviews analyzing the effectiveness of a company’s whistleblower policies in
153 protecting human rights.
- 154 20. Human Rights Impact Assessments examining the actual and potential human rights impact
155 of a company’s operations and policies.

Resolution Guidelines for the ELCA — General

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160 We support practices of good corporate governance, specifically:

- 161 • ~~a company~~ Having an independent board chair or independent lead director.
- 162 • Reports on policies and transparency of procedures for political contributions and
- 163 expenditures (both direct and indirect) made with corporate funds.
- 164 • Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt organization
- 165 or trade association that are used for an expenditure or contribution that might be deemed
- 166 political.
- 167 • Guidelines or policies governing a company’s political contributions and expenditures.
- 168 • Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.

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179 ~~UPDATED by the Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020~~

180 ENDNOTES [to be footnotes in final version]

181
182 1 “Human Rights” (ELCA, 2017), p. 2.

183 2 For Peace in God’s World (ELCA, 1995), p. 14.

184 3 icar.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/GoodBusinessReport_Dec18-2018.pdf AND

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- 185 mneguidelines.oecd.org/Quantifying-the-Cost-Benefits-Risks-of-Due-Diligence-for-RBC.pdf
186 4 <https://www.blackrock.com/uk/about-us/sustainability-resilience-research>
187 5 <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/whatare/fundam/>
188 6 investorsforhumanrights.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2020-05/Full%20Report%20-%20Investor%20Toolkit%20on%20Human%20Rights%20-%20May%202020b.pdf
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190

Working Document

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1 AREA: Codes of Conduct
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue paper
 3 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council
 4 DATE: 7/21/23
 5

MARKER DATES:

7 RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, Oct. 27, 2003
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Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All: Codes of Conduct

Background

21 “In the name of the God who creates every human being out of love, this church teaches human dignity is
 22 God’s gift to every person and that the commitment to universal rights protects that dignity.”¹ The church
 23 meets its commitment to work for human rights by teaching about those rights, protesting their violation,
 24 advocating their international codification and supporting effective ways to monitor compliance.²
 25 Encouraging corporations to respect human rights is one way for our church to meet its obligations to our
 26 neighbor.
 27

28 Multinational corporations may be operating in countries where they are held to differing sets of laws and
 29 standards. In addition, there may be concern about the practices of vendors further along the supply chain.
 30 Lower standards abroad can lead to unfortunate publicity and investor unhappiness domestically.
 31 Corporations and industries have developed codes of conduct as one way to address the disparities
 32 between domestic and overseas expectations.
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34 Though different industries may need differing specifications, “[Guiding Principles on Business and](#)
 35 [Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework](#),” proposed
 36 by U.N. Special Representative John Ruggie and endorsed by the 2011 U.N. Human Rights Council,
 37 attempts to codify a general framework of corporate behavior that leads to just and sustainable
 38 development. Governments have a primary duty to protect human rights and ensure access to remedy
 39 when those rights are abused, but business enterprises are also morally responsible for respecting the
 40 human rights set forth in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). Work in this area has expanded to
 41 include guidelines for international business from the [Organization for Economic Co-operation and](#)
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 43 sector.
 44

45 ELCA social teaching acknowledges that we have fallen short of our responsibilities to each other in this
 46 world but asserts that we live in light of God’s promises that ultimately there will be no hunger or
 47 injustice, and that we must work toward the realization of those promises in the present. The ELCA’s
 48 social statement [Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](#) (1999) commits to holding corporations
 49 accountable for their effects on workers, communities and the environment. Corporations today work
 50 within a global reality. There are political, social and economic influences as well as the impacts of

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

51 militarism and technology.³ A corporation's view of how it conducts its business, promotes justice and
 52 works to create a fair and sustainable world is significantly affected by these realities.

53
 54

55 ELCA Social Policy

56

57 One of the earliest ELCA social statements, *For Peace in God's World* (1999), quotes the Universal
 58 Declaration of Human Rights to affirm respect for human rights as part of the culture of peace toward
 59 which the church works. In 2017 the ELCA issued the social message "[Human Rights](#)," which affirmed a
 60 series of broad categories of human rights, adapted from the church's historical body of social teaching.
 61 The message states that "the expectation is that the most basic rights will never be denied and the highest
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 63 Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" (p. 12) and
 64 particularly calls upon the church as an investor to press corporations to respect human rights (p. 9).

65

66 *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999) develops this church's vision of sufficiency and
 67 sustainability, focusing on the economic life of all people, with an emphasis on those who are poor and
 68 disenfranchised. It expresses concern for the safety of employees (p. 9) and commits the church to work
 69 for safe and healthy working conditions (p. 10). It calls for companies to compensate for the wider social
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 72 *Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* (2019) draws our attention to the economic disadvantages faced by
 73 women and people of color and urges the church to work for just distribution of resources.

74

75

76 Corporate Response

77

78 In recent years the call for companies to implement fair policies, adopt vendor and supplier codes of
 79 conduct, and assure fair treatment of workers on a global basis has moved the corporate world to think
 80 beyond general human resource policies. Corporate ethics have moved from a focus on individual plants
 81 and workers to a global code covering worldwide operations and considering the company's impact on
 82 communities, workers and the environment.

83

84 Compliance with human rights principles has been found to yield positive financial results.⁴ Over time,
 85 corporations with good social and sustainability track records weather market downturns better than poor
 86 performers in the ESG category. Information on corporate human rights practices is publicly available
 87 through the [Corporate Human Rights Benchmark](#). Investors have begun to ask for accountability in the
 88 reporting and compliance aspects of codes of conduct throughout the supply chain. They have also asked
 89 for boards to structure themselves and to choose members with human rights expertise in order to
 90 strengthen accountability to codes of conduct.

91

92

93 Resolution Guidelines for the ELCA

94

95 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supports:

96

- 97 1. Adoption of company codes of conduct. We advocate for the incorporation of the U.N.
 98 Guiding Principles into a company's operations and supply chain. We support Human Rights
 99 Impact Assessments in keeping with those principles.
- 100 2. Preparation of standards and related codes of conduct for vendors and suppliers.
3. Reporting to shareholders about international operations.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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111 development of a Human Rights Risk Oversight Committee⁶ at the board level.
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113 level infrastructure that ensures ongoing consultation with civil and human rights experts.
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116 worker health and safety in extraordinary situations such as a pandemic.
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118 rights impacts and to address human rights concerns; also, reports assessing the effectiveness
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123 bonded labor, and ensuring ethical recruitment.
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127 service providers do not degrade, prioritize or privilege online publications based on their
128 source, ownership or information content.
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130 business activities in conflict-affected areas, including occupied territories; also, reports on
131 whether customers' use of the company's products or services is linked to violations of
132 international law.
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134 governments that are complicit in genocide and/or crimes against humanity as defined in
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137 respect human rights throughout its operations and value chain, and that describes steps to
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- 140 19. Independent reviews analyzing the effectiveness of a company's whistleblower policies in
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- 142 20. Human Rights Impact Assessments examining the actual and potential human rights impact
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144
145

Resolution Guidelines for the ELCA — General

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- 147
- 148 • Having an independent board chair or independent lead director.
- 149 • Reports on policies and transparency of procedures for political contributions and
- 150



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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- 158

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164 mneguidelines.oecd.org/Quantifying-the-Cost-Benefits-Risks-of-Due-Diligence-for-RBC.pdf

165 4 <https://www.blackrock.com/uk/about-us/sustainability-resilience-research>

166 5 <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/whatare/fundam/>

167 6 investorsforhumanrights.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2020-05/Full%20Report%20-%20Investor%20Toolkit%20on%20Human%20Rights%20-%20May%202020b.pdf

169

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Community Economic Development Screen (Redline and Clean)

Page 1 of 4

1 -
2 AREA: Community Economic Development-

3 DOCUMENT TYPE: Social Criteria Investment Screen-

4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council

5 DATE: 10/10/23

MARKER DATES:

8 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council, Nov. 13, 1988

9 UPDATED by the Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility-

10 , May 6, 2008

11 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council, November 2008

12 APPROVED by the Council, November 2015 [CC15.11.52]

13 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020

14 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 27, 2023

15 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, November 2023 [anticipated]

Community Economic Development Social Criteria Screen

Authority: The ELCA, as did

20 Like its predecessors, predecessor churches, the ELCA has a legacy of investing in communities for the
 21 sake of human flourishing. Our deep concern for those affected adversely by our economy is most clearly
 22 articulated in the social statement Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All (1999), undergirding a
 23 promise made in Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture (1993) to address how economic forces
 24 work against people of color. The church has also specifically committed itself to “advocate for and
 25 support economic policies, regulations, and practices that enhance equity and equality for women and
 26 girls, with special concern for raising up women and girls who experience intersecting forms of
 27 oppression” (Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action “Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All.”, p. 63).”

Wording of Screen:

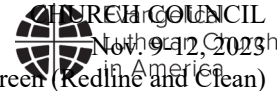
31 The ELCA seeks investment in for-profit and not-for-profit organizations that promote national or
 32 international economic development of urban and rural communities and neighborhoods characterized by with
 33 a high proportion of people living in poverty, and/or people of color, with special consideration given to
 34 projects targeting girls and women who experience intersecting forms of oppression.

Definition of Problem:

38 The field of community economic development or positive social investing continues to grow both
 39 domestically and internationally, especially through micro-finance microfinance loans. The goal is to
 40 maximize the flow of investment capital into projects that otherwise might not obtain sufficient capital to
 41 contribute to community economic development, positive social impact, and/or to encourage corporations to
 42 embark on projects that will have a positive social impact.

44 Recognizing that various investors will implement this along a continuum, such investments might
 45 include, but are not limited to: low-income housing, job creation and training, social services, public
 46 health, food and agriculture, infrastructure, community entrepreneurship, small business development and
 47 financial services.

48 -



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Church Council
Nov. 9-12, 2015
North Carolina
in America
Community Economic Development Screen (Redline and Clean)

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Social Policy and Studies

Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/race_ethnicity_culture_statement.pdf

Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Economic_LifeSS.pdf

Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Faith_Sexism_Justice_Social_Statement_Adopted.pdf

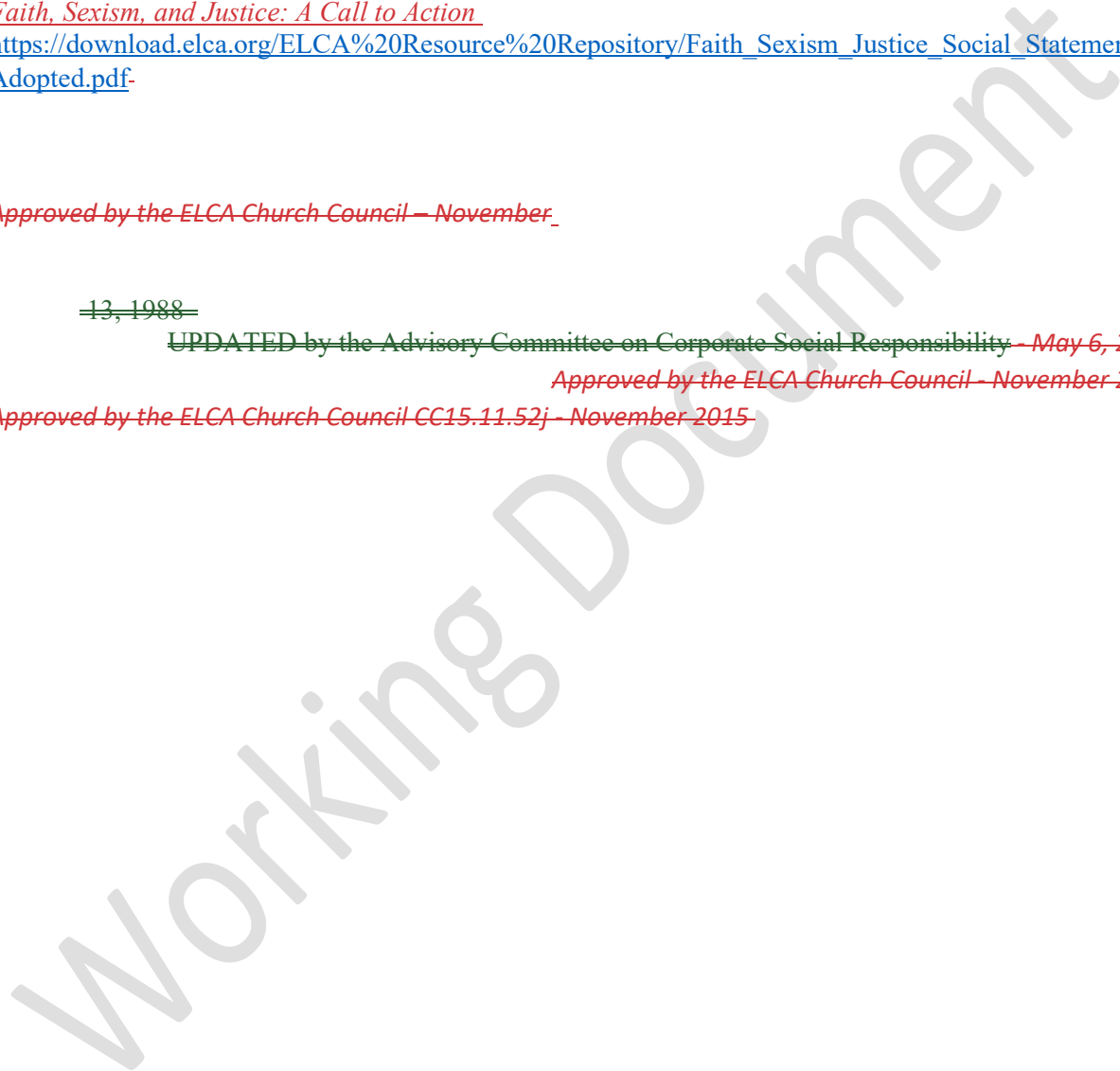
Approved by the ELCA Church Council – November

~~13, 1988~~

~~UPDATED by the Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility – May 6, 2008~~

~~Approved by the ELCA Church Council – November 2008~~

~~Approved by the ELCA Church Council CC15.11.52j – November 2015~~



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Community Economic Development Screen (Redline and Clean)

Page 3 of 4

1 AREA: Community Economic Development
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Social Criteria Investment Screen
 3 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council
 4 DATE: **7/21/23**

5
6 **MARKER DATES:**

7 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council, Nov. 13, 1988
 8 UPDATED by the Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, May 6, 2008
 9 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council, November 2008
 10 APPROVED by the Council, November 2015 [CC15.11.52]
 11 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020
 12 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 27, 2023
 13 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, November 2023 [anticipated]

14
15 **Community Economic Development Social Criteria Screen**16
17 **Authority**

18 Like its predecessor churches, the ELCA has a legacy of investing in communities for the sake of human
 19 flourishing. Our deep concern for those affected adversely by our economy is articulated in the social
 20 statement [Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](#) (1999), undergirding a promise made in [Freed in](#)
 21 [Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture](#) (1993) to address how economic forces work against people of color.
 22 The church has also specifically committed itself to “advocate for and support economic policies,
 23 regulations, and practices that enhance equity and equality for women and girls, with special concern for
 24 raising up women and girls who experience intersecting forms of oppression” ([Faith, Sexism, and Justice:](#)
 25 [A Call to Action](#), p. 63).”

26
27
28 **Wording of Screen**

29 The ELCA seeks investment in organizations that promote development of communities and
 30 neighborhoods with a high proportion of people living in poverty, and/or people of color, with special
 31 consideration given to projects targeting girls and women who experience intersecting forms of
 32 oppression.

33
34
35 **Definition of Problem**

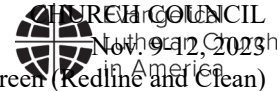
36 The field of community economic development or positive social investing continues to grow both
 37 domestically and internationally, especially through microfinance loans. The goal is to maximize the flow
 38 of investment capital into projects that otherwise might not obtain sufficient capital to contribute to
 39 positive social impact, and/or to encourage corporations to embark on projects that will have a positive
 40 social impact.

41
 42 Recognizing that various investors will implement this along a continuum, such investments might
 43 include, but are not limited to: low-income housing, job creation and training, social services, public
 44 health, food and agriculture, infrastructure, community entrepreneurship, small business development and
 45 financial services.

46
47
48 **Social Policy and Studies**

49 *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*

50 https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/race_ethnicity_culture_statement.pdf



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Community Economic Development Screen (Redline and Clean)

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Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Economic_LifeSS.pdf

Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action

https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Faith_Sexism_Justice_Social_Statement_Adopted.pdf

Working Document

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1
2 AREA: Domestic Access to Health
3 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue paper
4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council
5 DATE: 10/10/23
6

MARKER DATES:

7
8 RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, May 20, 2004
9 ENDORSED by Division Church Society Board, Oct. 22, 2004
10 APPROVED by Church Council, Nov. 11, 2004
11 UPDATED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, April 8, 2008
12 APPROVED by Church Council, November 2008 [CC08.11.57a]
13 APPROVED by Church Council, November 2013 [CC13.11.69y]
14 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020
15 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 27, 2023
16 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, November 2023 [anticipated]
17

Caring for Health: Domestic Access to Health Care

Background

21 “God creates human beings as whole persons — each one a dynamic unity of body, mind, and spirit.
22 Health concerns the proper functioning and well-being of the whole person” (*Caring for Health: Our*
23 *Shared Endeavor*, ELCA, 2003, p. 3). “We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA) in America have
24 an enduring commitment to work for and support health care for all people as a shared endeavor” (p. 2).
25 The rising costs of health care leave a system in distress and large numbers of people with inadequate
26 health care resources and a system in distress. The church is called to be an active participant in
27 fashioning a just and effective health care system (p. 1).
28

29 Health care expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) have significantly risen over
30 time¹ and made up nearly 18% of U.S. GDP in 2018;¹ 2 More Americans have health insurance than ever
31 before, yet the rate of underinsured Americans continues to rise.² Virtually miraculous pharmaceutical
32 cures are developed, yet as the price of pharmaceuticals continues to rise, they become unattainable to

¹ <https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/NationalHealthAccountsHistorical>

² “Underinsured” for this research is defined by a deductible that represents too large a proportion of household income: <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2019/feb/health-insurance-coverage-eight-years-after-aca>

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

33 ~~some patients.~~³-

34
35 remains unconscionably high.³ The expansion of coverage enabled by the Patient Protection and
36 Affordable Care Act led to significant gains in coverage and access to health care, but progress stalled in
37 2016 and various proposals to weaken the act and decrease funding were proposed. As of 2018, the rate of
38 uninsured Americans people in the United States had not increased, but the rate of underinsured
39 Americans people in the U.S. had continued to rise.⁴ ~~Access to health care continues to be a challenge for~~
40 ~~many Americans.~~⁴

41
42 ~~Beginning in February 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the systemic inequities in our : race and~~
43 ~~access to wealth affected who got sick in the first place, whether they were able to isolate from their~~
44 ~~families, what underlying conditions patients suffered from, and the health care they received. Air~~
45 ~~pollution was found to increase the death rate from COVID-19.~~⁵ ~~In addition, comorbidities related to~~
46 ~~public health issues (diabetes, obesity, overcrowding) worsened the outcomes for many.~~

47
48 ~~Also of Patient care is vulnerable to the bottom line of health care providers. Rural hospitals, subject to~~
49 ~~reimbursement from private insurance that does not fully cover costs, have been closing at an alarming~~
50 ~~rate, and more closures seem imminent.~~⁵ ~~Private equity investment in health care, though still somewhat~~
51 ~~new, raises concerns about price inflation~~⁶ ~~and increased risk to patients.~~⁷ ~~Virtually miraculous~~
52 ~~pharmaceutical cures are developed, yet as the prices of pharmaceuticals continue to rise, they become~~
53 ~~unattainable to some patients.~~⁸ ~~As the use of cost-effective telehealth rises, it needs careful attention to~~
54 ~~discern whether it represents an increase in access to health care or a problematic way of cutting costs.~~

55
56 ~~Access to public health care continues to be a challenge for many in the U.S. Yet when we collectively~~
57 ~~focus on access, we are able to address large-scale problems. During the COVID-19 pandemic the vital~~
58 ~~importance of public health measures, universal availability of vaccines, and universal access to health~~
59 ~~care could not have been made more clear. Disparities in illness and morbidity narrowed somewhat as the~~
60 ~~infection rates fell, but lower rates of vaccination in Black people in the U.S. continue to affect health and~~
61 ~~raise concern are.~~⁹

62
63 ~~Access to health care for some women and girls has become particularly challenging. With the~~
64 ~~overturning of Roe v. Wade by the Supreme Court, equitable access to reproductive health care became~~

³ ~~Nearly 20% of Americans did not fill a prescription because of cost in 2018:-~~

~~(https://www.commonwealthfund.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/Collins_hlt_ins_coverage_8_years_after_ACA_2018_biennial_survey_tables.pdf.)~~

⁴ ~~<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2019/feb/health-insurance-coverage-eight-years-after-aca>~~

⁵ ~~<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/covid-pm>~~

~~Page |~~

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

65 an even more urgent question than in the previous 50 years. The disparities created by the Supreme
66 Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade compounds existing inequities.¹⁰ In some states, pregnant
67 people can be legally denied medically necessary procedures until their lives are in extreme danger.

69 Smoking, vaping, overuse of alcohol and opioids, and use of toxic chemical compounds in medical
70 practice all continue to present challenges to public health.

73 ELCA social policy

74 The ELCA social statement *Abortion* (1991) calls for access to quality, affordable health care, and
75 opposes "laws that deny access to safe and affordable services for morally justifiable abortions" (p. 9-10).

77 The ELCA social statement *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor* (2003) articulates this church's
78 vision of health, illness and healing. Part of that vision is for equitable access to health care for everyone.
79 Also cited is an individual's responsibility for caring for their own health—such as eating well and
80 avoiding tobacco or excessive alcohol consumption. In addition, the church's ministry in health care is
81 highlighted at the level of both congregations and social-ministry organizations. A major component of
82 this social statement is the issue of access for all. Justice requires health care to be provided on the basis
83 of need, giving particular attention to those who are disenfranchised from the system (p. 19). Individuals
84 also bear responsibility for self-care to ensure their health, through good nutrition, regular exercise and
85 avoiding excessive alcohol and tobacco consumption. The church in various ways, such as parish nurses
86 or church-related institutions, continues to give special attention to people's health as part of serving the
87 neighbor.

89 The ELCA social statement on economic life, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999), calls for
90 companies to share in the wider social and environmental burden of what they produce (p. 16). The
91 ELCA social statement *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility* (2011) and its accompanying issue paper on
92 genetics address specific issues relating to genetics and domestic health, as well as access to health care.
93 The social message "*Human Rights+6*," (2017) affirms the right of each person to sufficient and
94 sustainable health care (p. 6). The ELCA social statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action: A*
95 *Call to Action*" (2019) addresses the need for equitable health care, including medical research, and for
96 all women to have access to reproductive health care (p. 62. ~~The social message (2017) affirms the right~~
97 ~~of each person to sufficient and sustainable health care (p. 6)-(62).~~

99 ~~The ELCA social statement (2011) and its accompanying issue paper on genetics address specific issues~~
100 ~~relating to genetics and domestic health, as well as access to health care.~~

102 Corporate response

103 Every corporation and family business faces decisions about health insurance for their employees, the
104 health care available to their employees and the costs to their employees for such care. All have to make
105 decisions related to their ability to be part of the solution to the health crisis, as about half the population

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

106 is covered by employer health insurance plans.⁶¹¹ Plans with narrow coverage or high deductibles can
107 render individuals underinsured, particularly low-income individuals. The reversal of Roe v. Wade means
108 that employees now face differences in access to women’s health care from one state to another, and those
109 effects are most severe on women of color.¹² Corporations may need to consider whether they would
110 fund travel across state lines for access to abortion, and whether they would want to open an office in
111 states where abortion is severely restricted.

112
113 The pharmaceutical companies in this country have an additional challenge to face in that they provide
114 some of the basic materials needed for health and wellness and must address how these goods can be
115 distributed equitably.

116
117 After years of prescription drug prices outpacing inflation, bipartisan support for price control resulted in
118 provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 to tamp down the steep rise in prices. What the effect on
119 consumers and the industry will be remains to be seen. Pharmaceutical companies ~~are~~have been in the
120 spotlight for a time due to prescription drug prices that outpace ~~inflation~~⁷inflation¹³ and create an issue of
121 access to care for patients.⁸ ~~Pharmaceutical companies~~¹⁴ They offer patient assistance programs through
122 charitable foundations, but there is significant resistance to this from a policy perspective, and the end
123 result is still far from access ~~to all~~⁹for all.¹⁵ Patients are paying unattainable prices, caught in the
124 struggle between insurers and manufacturers.¹⁶

125
126 Moreover, the domestic manufacture and distribution of certain products — from cigarettes and vapes to
127 pollutants, alcohol and foods that contribute to obesity — negatively affect public health. Some
128 manufacturers have made commitments in terms of lowering sugar content of foods and limiting tobacco
129 marketing and sales.

130 131 132 Social-criteria investment screens

⁶ <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-population/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

⁷ For example, in 2018, prices of brand-name drugs increased at twice the rate of inflation: <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2019/11/brand-name-drug-prices-increase-more-than-twice-as-fast-as-inflation.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00073.005.pdf>

⁸ On average, 28% of Medicare patients don’t adhere to their prescriptions as written due to the high cost of medication. <https://www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-2019/drug-prices-consumer-impact.html>

⁹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-05-19/the-real-reason-big-pharma-wants-to-help-pay-for-your-prescription>, <https://www.canceradvocacy.org/blog/patient-assistance-programs-do-they-help-or-hurt/>

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133 The alcohol and pornography social-criteria investment screens approved by the ELCA in 1988 and
134 updated in 2019 (alcohol) and 2020 (pornography) respond to this issue. The tobacco social-criteria
135 investment screen approved by the ELCA in 1988 and updated in 2019 also responds to this issue. The
136 gambling screen (1990, updated in 2023) addresses the public health aspects of gambling.

139 Resolution guidelines for ELCA

140 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supports:

- 141 1. Resolutions requesting both the development of ethical criteria for the extension of patents on
142 prescription drugs and reports on the implications of such criteria.
- 143 2. Reports assessing a company's initiatives to create, expand and implement policies and
144 programs to extend pharmaceutical accessibility, and taking into account the costs and
145 benefits, including the overall effect on markets.
- 146 3. Policies and statements of principle declaring that all people deserve access to basic,
147 continuous and affordable physical and mental health care — including reproductive health
148 care, substance abuse treatment, and dental care— and supporting the reduction of health
149 care costs and the number of uninsured and underinsured people.
- 150 4. Policies that restrain prices on branded pharmaceuticals and use a combination of approaches
151 to keep those prices at reasonable levels, such as tying price increases to the ~~previous year's~~
152 Consumer Price Index or removing barriers to market competition from generic drugs.
- 153 5. Reports assessing (a) a company's policy responses to regulatory, legislative and public
154 pressures to improve access to and affordability of its products, and (b) the long-term,
155 possibly negative impact of executive incentives on pricing policies.
- 156 6. Reports on the public health costs created by the limited sharing of a company's COVID-19
157 vaccine technologies, any consequent reduced availability in poorer nations, and the manner
158 in which such costs may affect the market returns available to its diversified shareholders.
- 159 7. Reports, at reasonable expense, analyzing the congruence of political, lobbying and
160 electioneering expenditures during the preceding year against publicly stated company values
161 and policies.
- 162 ~~6-8.~~ Policies addressing conflicts of interest for board members with health industry affiliations.
- 163 ~~7-9.~~ Reports evaluating the merits and feasibility of strengthening board expertise in
164 pharmaceutical manufacturing and product quality and safety.
- 165 ~~8-10.~~ Reports disclosing the extent and types of payments, incentives or rebates made to doctors,
166 pharmacy benefit managers and other pharmaceutical purchasers to influence selection of a
167 particular drug.
- 168 ~~9-11.~~ Reports and policies on the manufacture and phasing out of PVC- or phthalate-containing
169 medical supplies when safe alternatives are available.
- 170 ~~10-12.~~ Reports on the use and effects of antibiotics in animal feeds. The ~~ECLA~~ELCA supports
171 phasing out medically important antibiotics in the supply chain, except for the treatment and
172 nonroutine control of diagnosed illness.
- 173 ~~11-13.~~ Reports on the feasibility of removing dibutyl phthalates, parabens, mercury and brominated

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- 174 flame retardants from devices and products.
- 175 ~~12.14.~~ Reports and adoption of goals to reduce occupational and community-health hazards from
- 176 manufacturing or recycling lead batteries, both within the company and in the supply chain.
- 177 ~~13.15.~~ Reports on new, safer substitutes for chemicals known or suspected to cause cancer or
- 178 mutations, harm the reproductive system, affect the endocrine system, accumulate in the body
- 179 or persist in the environment.
- 180 ~~14.16.~~ Reports on policies regarding the use of nanomaterials in a product.
- 181 ~~15.17.~~ Resolutions asking for (a) warnings on tobacco products and (b) marketing programs that
- 182 discourage youth from using tobacco.
- 183 ~~16.18.~~ Assessments of the damage inflicted on youth by nicotine-delivery products, and requests to
- 184 review a company's adherence to policies that are intended to minimize the damage.
- 185 ~~17.19.~~ Companies extending to developing nations the same restrictions on marketing of tobacco
- 186 products that the company observes in the United States.
- 187 ~~18.20.~~ Policies to inform consumers about nicotine levels in tobacco products and to reduce those
- 188 products' nicotine content.
- 189 ~~19.21.~~ Proposals requesting smoke-free facilities and smoke-free boundaries around building
- 190 entrances.
- 191 ~~20.22.~~ Reports to the board about the health risks of tobacco-related products, and efforts to provide
- 192 information to low-income and less formally educated tobacco users about the health risks of
- 193 tobacco and how to quit smoking.
- 194 ~~21.23.~~ Reports assessing the financial risk (including long-term legal and reputational risk) of
- 195 continued retail sale of tobacco products, and resolutions to prohibit tobacco advertising and
- 196 sales incentives in stores.
- 197 ~~24.~~ Reports on the external public health costs created by the sale of tobacco products.
- 198 ~~22.25.~~ Reports on the health impact of teenagers being exposed to people smoking in movies, TV
- 199 productions, video games and other media.
- 200 ~~23.26.~~ Reports on policies to address the negative effects of gambling and on programs to assist
- 201 individuals who are addicted to gambling.
- 202 ~~24.27.~~ Reports examining whether a product, service or political action contributes to the epidemic
- 203 of violence.
- 204 ~~25.28.~~ Policy responses to the impact of fast food on childhood obesity, diet-related diseases and
- 205 other child health issues.
- 206 ~~26.29.~~ Reports on advertising and privacy policies to address concerns about childhood obesity, and
- 207 public or private initiatives to eliminate or restrict food marketing to youth.
- 208 ~~27.30.~~ Reports on the health risks related to obesity, as well as metrics on reducing added sugars and
- 209 developing healthier products.

Resolution guidelines for the ELCA — general-

We support practices of good corporate governance, specifically:

- ~~A company~~ Having an independent board chair or independent lead director.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Reports on policies and transparency of procedures for political contributions and expenditures (both direct and indirect) made with corporate funds.
- Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt organization or trade association that is used for an expenditure or contribution that might be deemed political.
- Guidelines or policies governing a company's political contributions and expenditures.-
- Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.-

~~RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, May 20, 2004~~
~~ENDORSED by Division Church Society Board, Oct. 22, 2004~~
~~APPROVED by Church Council, Nov. 11, 2004~~
~~UPDATED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, April 8, 2008~~
~~APPROVED by Church Council, November 2008 [CC08.11.57a]~~
~~APPROVED by Church Council, November 2013 [CC13.11.69y]~~
~~UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020~~

ENDNOTES [to be Footnotes in final copy]

- [1 www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/u-s-spending-healthcare-changed-time/#Total%20national%20health%20expenditures,%20US%20\\$%20per%20capita,%201970-2021](http://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/u-s-spending-healthcare-changed-time/#Total%20national%20health%20expenditures,%20US%20$%20per%20capita,%201970-2021)
- [2 www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/NationalHealthAccountsHistorical](http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/NationalHealthAccountsHistorical)
- [3 "Underinsured" for this research is defined by a deductible that represents too large a proportion of household income: www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2022/sep/state-us-health-insurance-2022-biennial-survey](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2022/sep/state-us-health-insurance-2022-biennial-survey) Nearly half of the respondents in this survey had delayed medical care because of the cost.
- [4 www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2019/feb/health-insurance-coverage-eight-years-after-aca](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2019/feb/health-insurance-coverage-eight-years-after-aca)
- [5 www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2023-01-16/hundreds-of-hospitals-could-close-across-rural-america#:~:text=More%20than%20200%20rural%20hospitals,and%20Payment%20Reform%20report%20states](http://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2023-01-16/hundreds-of-hospitals-could-close-across-rural-america#:~:text=More%20than%20200%20rural%20hospitals,and%20Payment%20Reform%20report%20states)
- [6 jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2789280](http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2789280)
- [7 www.nber.org/papers/w28474](http://www.nber.org/papers/w28474)
- [8 About 25% of those surveyed in 2022 reported not filling a prescription or not taking their medication as prescribed because of cost: www.kff.org/health-costs/issue-brief/americans-challenges-with-health-care-costs/](http://www.kff.org/health-costs/issue-brief/americans-challenges-with-health-care-costs/)
- [9 www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/covid-19-cases-deaths-and-vaccinations-by-race-ethnicity-as-of-winter-2022/](http://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/covid-19-cases-deaths-and-vaccinations-by-race-ethnicity-as-of-winter-2022/)
- [10 www.guttmacher.org/2023/01/inequity-us-abortion-rights-and-access-end-roe-deepening-existing-divides](http://www.guttmacher.org/2023/01/inequity-us-abortion-rights-and-access-end-roe-deepening-existing-divides)
- [11 www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-](http://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-)

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256 [population/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D](#)
257
258 [12 www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/what-are-the-implications-of-the-overturning-](#)
259 [of-roe-v-wade-for-racial-disparities/](#)
260 [13 For example, in 2018, prices of brand-name drugs increased at twice the rate of inflation:](#)
261 [www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2019/11/brand-name-drug-prices-increase-more-than-twice-as-fast-](#)
262 [as-inflation.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00073.005.pdf](#)
263 [14 On average, 28% of Medicare patients don't adhere to their prescriptions as written due to the high](#)
264 [cost of medication: www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-2019/drug-prices-consumer-impact.html](#)
265 [15 www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-05-19/the-real-reason-big-pharma-wants-to-help-pay-for-](#)
266 [your-prescription](#) and [www.canceradvocacy.org/blog/patient-assistance-programs-do-they-help-or-hurt/](#)
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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1 AREA: Domestic Access to Health
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue paper
 3 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council
 4 DATE: 7/21/23

MARKER DATES:

7 RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, May 20, 2004
 8 ENDORSED by Division Church Society Board, Oct. 22, 2004
 9 APPROVED by Church Council, Nov. 11, 2004
 10 UPDATED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, April 8, 2008
 11 APPROVED by Church Council, November 2008 [CC08.11.57a]
 12 APPROVED by Church Council, November 2013 [CC13.11.69y]
 13 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020
 14 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 27, 2023
 15 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, November 2023 [anticipated]

Caring for Health: Domestic Access to Health Care

Background

20 “God creates human beings as whole persons — each one a dynamic unity of body, mind, and spirit.
 21 Health concerns the proper functioning and well-being of the whole person” (*Caring for Health: Our*
 22 *Shared Endeavor*, ELCA, 2003, p. 3). “We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have an
 23 enduring commitment to work for and support health care for all people as a shared endeavor” (p. 2). The
 24 rising costs of health care leave a system in distress and large numbers of people with inadequate health
 25 care resources. The church is called to be an active participant in fashioning a just and effective health
 26 care system (p. 1).

28 Health care expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) have significantly risen over
 29 time¹ and made up nearly 18% of U.S. GDP in 2018.² More Americans have health insurance than ever
 30 before, yet the rate of underinsured Americans remains unconscionably high.³ The expansion of coverage
 31 enabled by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act led to significant gains in coverage and access
 32 to health care, but progress stalled in 2016 and various proposals to weaken the act and decrease funding
 33 were proposed. As of 2018, the rate of uninsured people in the United States had not increased, but the
 34 rate of underinsured people in the U.S. had continued to rise.⁴

36 Patient care is vulnerable to the bottom line of health care providers. Rural hospitals, subject to
 37 reimbursement from private insurance that does not fully cover costs, have been closing at an alarming
 38 rate, and more closures seem imminent.⁵ Private equity investment in health care, though still somewhat
 39 new, raises concerns about price inflation⁶ and increased risk to patients.⁷ Virtually miraculous
 40 pharmaceutical cures are developed, yet as the prices of pharmaceuticals continue to rise, they become
 41 unattainable to some patients.⁸ As the use of cost-effective telehealth rises, it needs careful attention to
 42 discern whether it represents an increase in access to health care or a problematic way of cutting costs.

44 Access to public health care continues to be a challenge for many in the U.S. Yet when we collectively
 45 focus on access, we are able to address large-scale problems. During the COVID-19 pandemic the vital
 46 importance of public health measures, universal availability of vaccines, and universal access to health
 47 care could not have been made more clear. Disparities in illness and morbidity narrowed somewhat as the
 48 infection rates fell, but lower rates of vaccination in Black people in the U.S. continue to affect health and
 49 raise concern.⁹

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51 Access to health care for some women and girls has become particularly challenging. With the
52 overturning of *Roe v. Wade* by the Supreme Court, equitable access to reproductive health care became
53 an even more urgent question than in the previous 50 years. The disparities created by the Supreme
54 Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* compounds existing inequities.¹⁰ In some states, pregnant
55 people can be legally denied medically necessary procedures until their lives are in extreme danger.

56
57 Smoking, vaping, overuse of alcohol and opioids, and use of toxic chemical compounds in medical
58 practice all continue to present challenges to public health.

59 60 61 **ELCA social policy**

62 The ELCA social statement [*Abortion*](#) (1991) calls for access to quality, affordable health care, and
63 opposes "laws that deny access to safe and affordable services for morally justifiable abortions" (p. 9-10).

64
65 The ELCA social statement [*Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor*](#) (2003) articulates this church's
66 vision of health, illness and healing. Part of that vision is for equitable access to health care for everyone.
67 A major component of this social statement is the issue of access for all. Justice requires health care to be
68 provided on the basis of need, giving particular attention to those who are disenfranchised from the
69 system (p. 19). Individuals also bear responsibility for self-care to ensure their health, through good
70 nutrition, regular exercise and avoiding excessive alcohol and tobacco consumption. The church in
71 various ways, such as parish nurses or church-related institutions, continues to give special attention to
72 people's health as part of serving the neighbor.

73
74 The ELCA social statement on economic life, [*Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*](#) (1999), calls for
75 companies to share in the wider social and environmental burden of what they produce (p. 16). The
76 ELCA social statement [*Genetics, Faith and Responsibility*](#) (2011) and its accompanying issue paper on
77 genetics address specific issues relating to genetics and domestic health, as well as access to health care.
78 The social message "[*Human Rights*](#)" (2017) affirms the right of each person to sufficient and sustainable
79 health care (p. 6). The ELCA social statement [*Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*](#) (2019)
80 addresses the need for equitable health care, including medical research, and for all women to have access
81 to reproductive health care (p. 62).

82 83 84 **Corporate response**

85 Every corporation and family business faces decisions about health insurance for their employees, the
86 health care available to their employees and the costs to their employees for such care. All have to make
87 decisions related to their ability to be part of the solution to the health crisis, as about half the population
88 is covered by employer health insurance plans.¹¹ Plans with narrow coverage or high deductibles can
89 render individuals underinsured, particularly low-income individuals. The reversal of *Roe v. Wade* means
90 that employees now face differences in access to women's health care from one state to another, and those
91 effects are most severe on women of color.¹² Corporations may need to consider whether they would
92 fund travel across state lines for access to abortion, and whether they would want to open an office in
93 states where abortion is severely restricted.

94
95 The pharmaceutical companies in this country have an additional challenge to face in that they provide
96 some of the basic materials needed for health and wellness and must address how these goods can be
97 distributed equitably.

98
99 After years of prescription drug prices outpacing inflation, bipartisan support for price control resulted in
100 provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 to tamp down the steep rise in prices. What the effect on

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101 consumers and the industry will be remains to be seen. Pharmaceutical companies have been in the
 102 spotlight for a time due to prescription drug prices that outpace inflation¹³ and create an issue of access to
 103 care for patients.¹⁴ They offer patient assistance programs through charitable foundations, but there is
 104 significant resistance to this from a policy perspective, and the end result is still far from access for all.¹⁵
 105 Patients are paying unattainable prices, caught in the struggle between insurers and manufacturers.¹⁶

106
 107 Moreover, the domestic manufacture and distribution of certain products — from cigarettes and vapes to
 108 pollutants, alcohol and foods that contribute to obesity — negatively affect public health. Some
 109 manufacturers have made commitments in terms of lowering sugar content of foods and limiting tobacco
 110 marketing and sales.

111

112

113 Social-criteria investment screens

114 The alcohol and pornography social-criteria investment screens approved by the ELCA in 1988 and
 115 updated in 2019 (alcohol) and 2020 (pornography) respond to this issue. The tobacco social-criteria
 116 investment screen approved by the ELCA in 1988 and updated in 2019 also responds to this issue. The
 117 gambling screen (1990, updated in 2023) addresses the public health aspects of gambling.

118

119

120 Resolution guidelines for ELCA

121 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supports:

- 122 1. Resolutions requesting both the development of ethical criteria for the extension of patents on
 123 prescription drugs and reports on the implications of such criteria.
- 124 2. Reports assessing a company's initiatives to create, expand and implement policies and
 125 programs to extend pharmaceutical accessibility, and taking into account the costs and
 126 benefits, including the overall effect on markets.
- 127 3. Policies and statements of principle declaring that all people deserve access to basic,
 128 continuous and affordable physical and mental health care — including reproductive health
 129 care, substance abuse treatment and dental care— and supporting the reduction of health care
 130 costs and the number of uninsured and underinsured people.
- 131 4. Policies that restrain prices on branded pharmaceuticals and use a combination of approaches
 132 to keep those prices at reasonable levels, such as tying price increases to the Consumer Price
 133 Index or removing barriers to market competition from generic drugs.
- 134 5. Reports assessing (a) a company's policy responses to regulatory, legislative and public
 135 pressures to improve access to and affordability of its products, and (b) the long-term,
 136 possibly negative impact of executive incentives on pricing policies.
- 137 6. Reports on the public health costs created by the limited sharing of a company's COVID-19
 138 vaccine technologies, any consequent reduced availability in poorer nations, and the manner
 139 in which such costs may affect the market returns available to its diversified shareholders.
- 140 7. Reports, at reasonable expense, analyzing the congruence of political, lobbying and
 141 electioneering expenditures during the preceding year against publicly stated company values
 142 and policies.
- 143 8. Policies addressing conflicts of interest for board members with health industry affiliations.
- 144 9. Reports evaluating the merits and feasibility of strengthening board expertise in
 145 pharmaceutical manufacturing and product quality and safety.
- 146 10. Reports disclosing the extent and types of payments, incentives or rebates made to doctors,
 147 pharmacy benefit managers and other pharmaceutical purchasers to influence selection of a
 148 particular drug.
- 149 11. Reports and policies on the manufacture and phasing out of PVC- or phthalate-containing
 150 medical supplies when safe alternatives are available.

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- 151 12. Reports on the use and effects of antibiotics in animal feeds. The ELCA supports phasing out
 152 medically important antibiotics in the supply chain, except for the treatment and nonroutine
 153 control of diagnosed illness.
- 154 13. Reports on the feasibility of removing dibutyl phthalates, parabens, mercury and brominated
 155 flame retardants from devices and products.
- 156 14. Reports and adoption of goals to reduce occupational and community-health hazards from
 157 manufacturing or recycling lead batteries, both within the company and in the supply chain.
- 158 15. Reports on new, safer substitutes for chemicals known or suspected to cause cancer or
 159 mutations, harm the reproductive system, affect the endocrine system, accumulate in the body
 160 or persist in the environment.
- 161 16. Reports on policies regarding the use of nanomaterials in a product.
- 162 17. Resolutions asking for (a) warnings on tobacco products and (b) marketing programs that
 163 discourage youth from using tobacco.
- 164 18. Assessments of the damage inflicted on youth by nicotine-delivery products, and requests to
 165 review a company's adherence to policies that are intended to minimize the damage.
- 166 19. Companies extending to developing nations the same restrictions on marketing of tobacco
 167 products that the company observes in the United States.
- 168 20. Policies to inform consumers about nicotine levels in tobacco products and to reduce those
 169 products' nicotine content.
- 170 21. Proposals requesting smoke-free facilities and smoke-free boundaries around building
 171 entrances.
- 172 22. Reports to the board about the health risks of tobacco-related products, and efforts to provide
 173 information to low-income and less formally educated tobacco users about the health risks of
 174 tobacco and how to quit smoking.
- 175 23. Reports assessing the financial risk (including long-term legal and reputational risk) of
 176 continued retail sale of tobacco products, and resolutions to prohibit tobacco advertising and
 177 sales incentives in stores.
- 178 24. Reports on the external public health costs created by the sale of tobacco products.
- 179 25. Reports on the health impact of teenagers being exposed to people smoking in movies, TV
 180 productions, video games and other media.
- 181 26. Reports on policies to address the negative effects of gambling and on programs to assist
 182 individuals who are addicted to gambling.
- 183 27. Reports examining whether a product, service or political action contributes to the epidemic
 184 of violence.
- 185 28. Policy responses to the impact of fast food on childhood obesity, diet-related diseases and
 186 other child health issues.
- 187 29. Reports on advertising and privacy policies to address concerns about childhood obesity, and
 188 public or private initiatives to eliminate or restrict food marketing to youth.
- 189 30. Reports on the health risks related to obesity, as well as metrics on reducing added sugars and
 190 developing healthier products.

Resolution guidelines for the ELCA — general

194 We support practices of good corporate governance, specifically:

- 195 • Having an independent board chair or independent lead director.
- 196 • Reports on policies and transparency of procedures for political contributions and
 197 expenditures (both direct and indirect) made with corporate funds.
- 198 • Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt organization
 199 or trade association that is used for an expenditure or contribution that might be deemed
 200 political.

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- 201 • Guidelines or policies governing a company’s political contributions and expenditures.
- 202 • Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.

203
204

ENDNOTES [to be Footnotes in final copy]

- 205
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- 211 household income: [www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2022/sep/state-us-health-](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2022/sep/state-us-health-insurance-2022-biennial-survey)
- 212 [insurance-2022-biennial-survey](http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2022/sep/state-us-health-insurance-2022-biennial-survey) Nearly half of the respondents in this survey had delayed medical care
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- 232 12 [www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/what-are-the-implications-of-the-overturning-](http://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/what-are-the-implications-of-the-overturning-of-roe-v-wade-for-racial-disparities/)
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AREA: Extractive Industries
DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue paper
POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council
DATE: ~~6/15/20~~10/10/23

MARKER DATES:

RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, Sept. 2, 2004
ENDORSED by Division for Church in Society Board, Oct. 22, 2004
APPROVED by Church Council, Nov. 11, 2004
UPDATED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, Sept. 17, 2009
UPDATED by Church Council, November 2009
UPDATED by Church Council, November 2014 [CC14.11.18]
UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020
UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 27, 2023
APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, November 2023 [anticipated]

Extractive Industries and Environmental Justice Issue Paper**Background**

The very term “extractive industries” implies an assumption that land and environment are things that can be used, profited from and disposed of. ELCA social teaching is at odds with an “extractive” outlook, as it views creation as a trust to be stewarded for the sake of the flourishing of all creation, and a system with which humans live interdependently. For this reason, extractive industries raise issues of environmental justice with particular urgency.

The extraction of resources forever changes land and livelihoods, but often those consequences are not fully appreciated or even articulated because those most affected do not have access to the decision makers. Those most affected by extractive industries are often those with the fewest resources. They have less authority to change what is happening to them and their communities, less power to hold corporations accountable for their impacts and less influence to demand remediation. In addition to presenting challenges to understanding our relationship to land and environment, extractives present justice issues that center on consent.

The church and industry have worked with evolving understandings of what environmental justice entails. The principle of participation, a fundamental tenet of ELCA social teaching, requires that everyone who will be affected has a voice and the opportunity to articulate the full impact of a given decision. Building on previous social teaching such as *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice* (1993), the 2023 message “Earth’s Climate Crisis” has challenged ELCA members to think about who must participate in environmental justice broadly, in terms of intragenerational justice, intergenerational justice and intersectional justice. By including the principle of intersectionality (Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Call to Action, 2019) in its social teaching, the ELCA also recognizes that social constructs rob people of the power of participation and authority by converging in many ways for the same person. From the perspective of the church, any attempt to give an account of the full impact of industry must begin with participation and consider intragenerational, intergenerational and intersectional impacts.

In the corporate arena, shareholders ask corporations to assess and report on environmental impacts in terms of the “stakeholder,” not just shareholders. One example would be the movement for a “just transition” to a net-zero economy, which addresses the interconnected issues of climate change, racial injustice, public health and economic inequity. (Just transition is addressed by the ELCA’s climate change issue paper.)

Corporations have begun to acknowledge that they need to measure their impact through more than just profits. When 183 CEOs of the Business Roundtable issued a statement on the purpose of a corporation and included stakeholders, and not just shareholders, they sent a signal that corporations were heeding requests from investors to incorporate more holistic thinking into their business activities. That holistic thinking can help a corporation understand how activities might represent a reputational risk to the value of corporate shares. Industry groups such as the International Council on Mining and Metals and the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance~~The principle that communities should have the opportunity to grant or withhold their~~ also work to develop industry guidelines. Investors have responded to adverse events by increasing pressure on corporations to develop disclosure and safety initiatives.

Corporations have discovered that ignoring or undermining local autonomy, and thereby underestimating the full impact of a project, can result in costs on many levels. Harm to a financial institution’s reputation is only one downside. Opposition from a community poses numerous risks to the institution, from the government imposing fines to the government deciding to halt operations altogether.

Indigenous Peoples Working Document

The activities of extractive industries on Indigenous lands present a particular set of challenges, both morally and legally. Indigenous peoples rely on their land not just for their livelihood but for culture and identity. The varying legal status of Indigenous peoples from country to country, and the historical assaults upon their lands, resources and culture, mean that extractive industries need to take an additional set of concerns into account when operating on Indigenous lands.

One way the principle of participation has been expressed legally is in terms of consent and autonomy. The United Nations has recognized the right of Indigenous peoples to autonomy and self-determination, but rights of Indigenous peoples are not fully recognized and protected in many countries. The standard that communities should have the opportunity to grant or withhold their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) to projects located on their lands or that impact the resources upon which they depend is ~~now~~ widely considered to be an internationally guaranteed human right of Indigenous peoples, and is increasingly being recognized in national law, international norms and voluntary best-practice standards and guidelines. This principle ~~has been~~ was established only after centuries of exploitation of and outright theft from Indigenous populations. Sacred lands have been acquired through deceptive and inequitable means, and their resources plundered. ~~Indigenous people~~ In the United States, Indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable because of their often-unobserved treaty status with the U.S. government. In other countries legal definitions surrounding Indigenous peoples often exclude those who have been on the land for generations.

When physical resources — such as oil, gas, coal, gold and diamonds, as well as other minerals — are extracted from the earth and transported to market, they become part of that economic sector known as

“extractive industries.” Those in the United States often look to Africa, South America and Asia, as well as Appalachian and Native American lands, to find these resources. A relatively recent development in understanding the rights of Indigenous peoples would be Indigenous communities adopting a paradigm known as biocultural rights, which brings together the cultural practices of their ancestors in protecting the environment and honoring how to manage natural resources. The local Indigenous and Afro Colombian communities in Choco, Colombia, for example, won a case in the Constitutional Court of Colombia for protecting the biocultural rights of the Atrato River basin. The basin has been degraded by extractive mining operations, which has caused pollution and deforestation that negatively affect the well-being, health and livelihoods of the local communities.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) recognizes the need to respect the land claims and alleviate the hunger, poverty, and international debt of Indigenous peoples as well as those throughout the global community. The ELCA is concerned that the extractive industries sector often brings suffering to these people through environmental degradation impacting land, air, water and climate change biodiversity. Impinging upon Indigenous landsland can tie in closely with cultural destruction and human rights violations and represents an especially severe burden on women.¹² The United Nations continues to work toward increased land rights of Indigenous peoples in law and practice, full participation, and conservation of Indigenous land and culture.

ELCA Social Policy

Decades ago, the ELCA released a supporting the sovereignty of Native American tribes and recognizing the need for advocacy in the area of treaty rights, tribal sovereignty and religious freedom.

To assess the impact of extractive industries means considering environmental, economic and human rights aspects. The ELCA’s social teaching also incorporates intergenerational and intersectional concerns and gives a strong basis for understanding the justice aspects of extractive industries as aspects interact with race, gender and class.

The very title of the ELCA’s economic life social statement, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999), indicates the importance of sustainability and sufficiency in understanding economic lifethe justice aspects related to extractive industries. Sustainability “is the capacity of natural and social systems to survive and thrive together over the long term. ... Economic life should help sustain humans and the rest of creation — now and in the future” (p. 14). The church’s vision of sufficiency and sustainability focuses on the economic life of all people, emphasizing those who are poor and disenfranchised. This emphasis often conflicts with the priorities of our economic system. Specific commitments called for in this statement include:

- Scrutinizing how specific policies and practices affect the poorest people and nations, and

¹²“Forced evictions and the dispossession of lands have particularly severe impacts on indigenous women, who, as a result, often have an increased workload as they must walk long distances to find alternative sources of water or fuel wood, or are driven out of income earning productive activities and into a situation of economic dependence on men.”

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/Indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/environment.html>

- making economic growth, trade and investment policies more beneficial to those who are poor (p. 6)).
- Urging companies to compensate communities more fully for the wider social and environmental costs of what the company produces (p. 16)).
 - Enforcing laws that prevent the inordinate market power of large corporations (p. 14)).

The social statement (1993) Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice expresses this church's vision of creation as an incarnational one where "God consistently meets us where we live, through earthy matter" (p. 2) while demonstrating the gift of hope. It makes powerful observations about the interplay between our environment and our economic systems, noting that:

- Processes of environmental degradation feed on one another, and decisions affecting an immediate locale often affect the entire planet (p. 4).
- Degradation of the environment occurs in places where racial, gender or economic discrimination leaves people with little or no voice in decision-making. This degradation aggravates their situation and swells the numbersnumber of those trapped in urban or rural poverty (p. 7).
- Neither economic growth that ignores environmental cost nor conservation of nature that ignores human cost is sustainable. A healthy economy can exist only within a healthy environment (p. 8).

Specifically, this social statement calls the church to engage in dialogue with corporations on how to promote justice for creation (5.E.1-1). This activity includes dialogues about implementing comprehensive environmental principles, healthy environments, and cooperation between the public and private sectors regarding sustainability.

The social message "Human Rights" (2017) commits this church to "be sensitive to the needs of indigenous peoples, whose understandings of ownership, culture and community may be at odds with corporate notions of ownership — corporations and governments do not possess the absolute right to ignore those perspectives" (p. 13).

In 2023 the ELCA's message on climate change raised the question of how to think about environmental justice: "First is the question of intragenerational justice. That is, how should society distribute fairly among present generations the burdens associated with greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and grappling with the costly impacts of climate change (adaptation)? Second is the question of intergenerational justice. That is, how can we best respect and defend the interests of future generations of our and other species and the integrity of the ecological systems upon which life depends? Finally, there is the matter of intersectional justice. That is, how does climate justice intersect with historical injustices related to race, class, and gender?" (p. 10-11).

The same message also explicitly rejects "beliefs, goals, and policies that ... perpetuate the disproportionate burden borne by those whose communities host industries that produce harmful pollution and greenhouse gas emissions" (p. 14).

Focusing on Indigenous Peoples

Decades ago the ELCA released a [social policy resolution supporting the sovereignty of Native American tribes and recognizing the need for advocacy around treaty rights, tribal sovereignty and religious freedom.](#)

In 2016 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed the resolution [“Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery”](#) to reject the [19th legal practice, first conceived in the late 15th century U.S. legal doctrine](#), that permitted ~~the~~ colonization of Indigenous lands and ~~the~~ exploitation of Indigenous peoples. That ideological foundation has pervaded our economic systems. In response, the ELCA is called to seek and promote justice through principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability as described in its social teachings.

Other Relevant Documents

The work of ~~the American Indian and Alaska Native Indigenous Ministries of and Tribal Relations in~~ the ELCA is guided by a [strategic plan](#).

Corporate ~~Response~~ [Social Responsibility and Extractive Industries](#)

~~Investors have responded to adverse events by increasing pressure on corporations to develop disclosure and safety initiatives.~~ [Publicity around failures and abuses has proved to be instrumental in changing the outlook of corporations involved in extractive industries. The spectacular failure of a tailings dam in Brazil led the Church of England to take action and organize discussions between investors and mining companies, develop a global standard for mining tailings and push for adoption of that standard. The Church of England has spearheaded a movement to bring together churches and mining companies in a Mining and Faith Reflections Initiative.](#)

~~After pipeline projects sparked protests and garnered unfavorable publicity, financial institutions began facing increased scrutiny about the human rights impact of projects they fund and had funded, and they began taking a broader view as well. The ICCR has successfully worked to pressure lenders to consider the full environmental, social and reputational risk cost of funding certain projects. Unfortunately, anti-ESG (environment, social and governance) legislation and rhetoric threaten to undermine that success.~~

~~Harm to a financial institution’s reputation is only one downside of the institution failing to get involved in a community. Opposition from that community poses numerous risks to the institution, from the government imposing fines to the government deciding to halt operations altogether.~~

[Indigenous Peoples](#)

Among other movements, the [United Nations Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform](#) ~~United Nations Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform~~ works to address land rights, climate change, environmental rights and autonomy of Indigenous peoples. It aims to increase full participation of Indigenous peoples in all aspects of addressing climate change. ~~Industry groups such as the and the work to develop industry guidelines.~~

~~Multinational corporations have been approached by multiple groups to clean up the environment and~~

~~protect natural habitats. Groups have also sought the involvement of communities in environmental protection and planning, but barriers remain.~~ and to preserve Indigenous land and culture. Only a few countries recognize the rights of Indigenous peoples, and even in those places, land rights may be inadequately protected in practice, and full and informed consent complicated to obtain. -The United States has not agreed to recognize consent but operates under consultation instead, which is a weaker directive to extractive industries.

Resolution Guidelines for ELCA

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supports:

1. Incorporating the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights into a company's operations and supply chain, ~~and~~ as well as conducting human rights impact ~~Assessments~~assessments³ in keeping with those principles.
2. Reports asking companies to assess the profitability and reputation of operations from environmental and social perspectives.
3. Reports asking companies to describe the due diligence process used to identify and address environmental and social risks, including Indigenous rights risks, in reviewing potential acquisitions. Such a report should consider:
 - Which committees, departments and/or managers are responsible for review, oversight and verification.
 - How environmental and social risks are identified and assessed.
 - Which international standards are used to define the company's due diligence procedures.
 - How this information informs and is weighted in acquisition decisions.
 - If and how risks identified were disclosed to shareholders.
4. Resolutions asking companies to report on, assess the impact of and curtail health, safety or environmental hazards to communities that result from ~~their~~the company's activities.
5. Asking for formal public global policies and reports on implementation concerning the rights of Indigenous peoples, including issues addressing free, prior and informed consent, as well as on the rights of local communities to control local natural resources and ~~full participation~~fully participate in business planning and decisions impacting their lands. We support assessments of how Indigenous rights policies could be extended to financing operations in Indigenous territories.
6. Reports disclosing corporate analysis and steps taken to control operating in culturally or environmentally sensitive areas and/or the impact on sustainability and biodiversity in ecologically unique or sensitive areas, including lobbying efforts for access to such areas.
7. Reports of operations for specific projects in specific regions in the United States and elsewhere in the world, including financial, environmental and social impact.
8. Reports detailing the range of financial liability associated with a project, specifying community compensation, environmental impact and mitigation of loss of natural habitat.
9. Reports disclosing policies and management systems to avoid loss of natural habitat.
10. Reports reviewing and disclosing underwriting criteria related to the impact of a transaction on the environment, human rights and the risk to a company's reputation.
11. Requesting a report on the potential environmental and public health impacts of each of a company's endeavors, those of its affiliates, and proposed ventures that extract water. Following Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) performance indicators, ~~the~~ report should consider the

- implications of a policy of reducing ground and surface water extraction to sustainable levels for all operations of the company and its affiliates and of not locating in water-scarce areas.
12. Reports on how a corporation ensures accountability for its environmental impact in the communities where it operates. Such reports should contain the following information:
 - How the corporation makes available reports regarding its emissions and environmental impacts on land, water and soil— — both within its legal limits as well as emergency emissions— — to members of the communities where it operates.
 - How the corporation integrates community environmental accountability into its current code of conduct and ongoing business practices.
 - The extent to which the corporation's activities have negative health effects on individuals living in economically poor communities.
 13. Reports on the effects of mountaintop removal, including:
 - The effects on the local community of any activities that have negative health effects for individuals living in resource-poor communities.
 - The effects on the local environment, including water, land and soil.
 - The methods the company uses to communicate with the local community.
 14. Requests that, as the board director's term of office expires, strong consideration be given to candidates with a high level of expertise and experience in environmental and/or human rights matters.
 15. Reports on the financial risks resulting from climate change as well as actions the board deems necessary to provide long-term protection of business interests. In addition, we support reports on plans for reduction of total greenhouse gas emissions, methane measurement, mitigation, and emission reduction, as well as reports on pipeline construction, integrity and emergency response plans.
 16. Reports on the company's approach to mitigating the heightened ethical and business risks associated with business activities in conflict-affected areas, including situations of occupation.
 17. Reports on efforts to identify and reduce environmental and health hazards associated with coal combustion residuals.
 18. Reports on how the corporation's policies and practices and the impacts of its business perpetuate racial injustice and inflict harm on communities of color domestically and internationally.
 19. Requests for reports and policies that are responsive to the regulatory and reputational pressure related to including Indigenous people and people of color, such as internal programs or policies on relations with Indigenous people and people of color, recruitment of employees who are Indigenous people or people of color, and procurement from businesses owned by Indigenous people or people of color.
 20. Reports evaluating the economic, human and environmental impacts of a worst-case oil spill on any given site, clarifying the cleanup response commitments of a company.
 21. Reports on environmental justice, updated annually, describing efforts to identify and reduce heightened environmental and health impacts from its operations on communities of color and low-income communities.
 22. Reports on impacts on nonwhite stakeholders and communities of color and plans, if any, to mitigate those impacts. Input from civil rights organizations, experts on environmental racism, and employees should be considered in determining the specific matters to be analyzed.

Resolution Guidelines for ELCA — General

We support practices of good corporate governance, specifically:

- ~~a company~~ Having an independent board chair or independent lead director.
- Reports on policies and transparency of procedures for political contributions and expenditures (both direct and indirect) made with corporate funds.
- Reports on any portion of any dues or similar payments made to any tax-exempt organization or trade association that is used for an expenditure or contribution that might be deemed political.
- Guidelines or policies governing a company's political contributions and expenditures.
- Reports on diversity for corporate boards and upper-level management.

Working Document

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

~~RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, Sept. 2, 2004~~

~~ENDORSED by Division for Church in Society Board, Oct. 22, 2004~~

~~APPROVED by Church Council, Nov. 11, 2004~~

~~UPDATED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, Sept. 17, 2009~~

~~UPDATED by Church Council, November 2009~~

~~UPDATED by Church Council, November 2014 [CC14.11.18]~~

ENDNOTES [to be footnotes in final format]

1 A stakeholder is someone who is affected by, or who can affect, the operations of a business.

2 “Forced evictions and the dispossession of lands have particularly severe impacts on indigenous women, who, as a result, often have an increased workload as they must walk long distances to find alternative sources of water or fuel wood, or are driven out of income-earning productive activities and into a situation of economic dependence on men.”

www.un.org/development/desa/Indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/environment.html

3 www.humanrights.dk/tools/human-rights-impact-assessment-guidance-toolbox/introduction-human-rights-impact-assessment

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1 AREA: Extractive Industries
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Issue paper
 3 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council
 4 DATE: 7/21/23
 5

MARKER DATES:

7 RECOMMENDED by Advisory Committee for Corporate Social Responsibility, Sept. 2, 2004
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 9 APPROVED by Church Council, Nov. 11, 2004
 10 UPDATED by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, Sept. 17, 2009
 11 UPDATED by Church Council, November 2009
 12 UPDATED by Church Council, November 2014 [CC14.11.18]
 13 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020
 14 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 27, 2023
 15 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, November 2023 [anticipated]
 16

Extractive Industries and Environmental Justice Issue Paper

Background

20 The very term “extractive industries” implies an assumption that land and environment are things that can
 21 be used, profited from and disposed of. ELCA social teaching is at odds with an “extractive” outlook, as it
 22 views creation as a trust to be stewarded for the sake of the flourishing of all creation, and a system with
 23 which humans live interdependently. For this reason, extractive industries raise issues of environmental
 24 justice with particular urgency.
 25

26 The extraction of resources forever changes land and livelihoods, but often those consequences are not
 27 fully appreciated or even articulated because those most affected do not have access to the decision
 28 makers. Those most affected by extractive industries are often those with the fewest resources. They have
 29 less authority to change what is happening to them and their communities, less power to hold corporations
 30 accountable for their impacts and less influence to demand remediation. In addition to presenting
 31 challenges to understanding our relationship to land and environment, extractives present justice issues
 32 that center on consent.
 33

34 The church and industry have worked with evolving understandings of what environmental justice entails.
 35 The principle of participation, a fundamental tenet of ELCA social teaching, requires that everyone who
 36 will be affected has a voice and the opportunity to articulate the full impact of a given decision. Building
 37 on previous social teaching such as [Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice](#) (1993), the 2023
 38 message “Earth’s Climate Crisis” has challenged ELCA members to think about who must participate in
 39 environmental justice broadly, in terms of intragenerational justice, intergenerational justice and
 40 intersectional justice. By including the principle of intersectionality (Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Call to
 41 Action, 2019) in its social teaching, the ELCA also recognizes that social constructs rob people of the
 42 power of participation and authority by converging in many ways for the same person. From the
 43 perspective of the church, any attempt to give an account of the full impact of industry must begin with
 44 participation and consider intragenerational, intergenerational and intersectional impacts.
 45

46 In the corporate arena, shareholders ask corporations to assess and report on environmental impacts in
 47 terms of the “stakeholder,”¹ not just shareholders. One example would be the movement for a “just
 48 transition” to a net-zero economy, which addresses the interconnected issues of climate change, racial
 49 injustice, public health and economic inequity. (Just transition is addressed by the ELCA’s climate change
 50 issue paper.)

51
52 Corporations have begun to acknowledge that they need to measure their impact through more than just
53 profits. When 183 CEOs of the [Business Roundtable](#) issued a statement on the purpose of a corporation
54 and included stakeholders, and not just shareholders, they sent a signal that corporations were heeding
55 requests from investors to incorporate more holistic thinking into their business activities. That holistic
56 thinking can help a corporation understand how activities might represent a reputational risk to the value
57 of corporate shares. Industry groups such as the [International Council on Mining and Metals](#) and the
58 [Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance](#) also work to develop industry guidelines. Investors have
59 responded to adverse events by increasing pressure on corporations to develop disclosure and safety
60 initiatives.

61
62 Corporations have discovered that ignoring or undermining local autonomy, and thereby underestimating
63 the full impact of a project, can result in costs on many levels. Harm to a financial institution's reputation
64 is only one downside. Opposition from a community poses numerous risks to the institution, from the
65 government imposing fines to the government deciding to halt operations altogether.

66
67
68 **Indigenous Peoples**
69 The activities of extractive industries on Indigenous lands present a particular set of challenges, both
70 morally and legally. Indigenous peoples rely on their land not just for their livelihood but for culture and
71 identity. The varying legal status of Indigenous peoples from country to country, and the historical
72 assaults upon their lands, resources and culture, mean that extractive industries need to take an additional
73 set of concerns into account when operating on Indigenous lands.

74
75 One way the principle of participation has been expressed legally is in terms of consent and autonomy.
76 The United Nations has recognized the right of Indigenous peoples to [autonomy and self-determination](#),
77 but rights of Indigenous peoples are not fully recognized and protected in many countries. The standard
78 that communities should have the opportunity to grant or withhold their [free, prior and informed consent](#)
79 (FPIC) to projects located on their lands or that impact the resources upon which they depend is
80 increasingly being recognized in national law, international norms and voluntary best-practice standards
81 and guidelines. This principle was established only after centuries of exploitation of and outright theft
82 from Indigenous populations. Sacred lands have been acquired through deceptive and inequitable means,
83 and their resources plundered. In the United States, Indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable
84 because of their often-unobserved treaty status with the U.S. government. In other countries legal
85 definitions surrounding Indigenous peoples often exclude those who have been on the land for
86 generations.

87
88 A relatively recent development in understanding the rights of Indigenous peoples would be Indigenous
89 communities adopting a paradigm known as biocultural rights, which brings together the cultural
90 practices of their ancestors in protecting the environment and honoring how to manage natural resources.
91 The local Indigenous and Afro Colombian communities in Choco, Colombia, for example, won a case in
92 the Constitutional Court of Colombia for protecting the biocultural rights of the Atrato River basin. The
93 basin has been degraded by extractive mining operations, which has caused pollution and deforestation
94 that negatively affect the well-being, health and livelihoods of the local communities.

95
96 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) recognizes the need to respect the land claims and
97 alleviate the hunger, poverty and international debt of Indigenous peoples as well as those throughout the
98 global community. The ELCA is concerned that the extractive industries sector often brings suffering to
99 these people through environmental degradation impacting land, air, water and biodiversity. Impinging
100 upon land can tie in closely with cultural destruction and human rights violations and represents an

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

101 especially severe burden on women.²

102

103

104 ELCA Social Policy

105 To assess the impact of extractive industries means considering environmental, economic and human
 106 rights aspects. The ELCA’s social teaching also incorporates intergenerational and intersectional concerns
 107 and gives a strong basis for understanding the justice aspects of extractive industries as aspects interact
 108 with race, gender and class.

109

110 The very title of the ELCA’s economic life social statement, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*
 111 (1999), indicates the importance of sustainability and sufficiency in understanding the justice aspects
 112 related to extractive industries. Sustainability “is the capacity of natural and social systems to survive and
 113 thrive together over the long term. ... Economic life should help sustain humans and the rest of creation
 114 — now and in the future” (p. 14). The church’s vision of sufficiency and sustainability focuses on the
 115 economic life of all people, emphasizing those who are poor and disenfranchised. This emphasis often
 116 conflicts with the priorities of our economic system. Specific commitments called for in this statement
 117 include:

- 118 • Scrutinizing how specific policies and practices affect the poorest people and nations, and
 119 making economic growth, trade and investment policies more beneficial to those who are
 120 poor (p. 6).
- 121 • Urging companies to compensate communities more fully for the wider social and
 122 environmental costs of what the company produces (p. 16).
- 123 • Enforcing laws that prevent the inordinate market power of large corporations (p. 14).

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125 Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice expresses this church’s vision of creation as an
 126 incarnational one where “God consistently meets us where we live, through earthy matter” (p. 2) while
 127 demonstrating the gift of hope. It makes powerful observations about the interplay between our
 128 environment and our economic systems, noting that:

- 129 • Processes of environmental degradation feed on one another, and decisions affecting an
 130 immediate locale often affect the entire planet (p. 4).
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 132 discrimination leaves people with little or no voice in decision-making. This degradation
 133 aggravates their situation and swells the number of those trapped in urban or rural poverty (p.
 134 7).
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 136 ignores human cost is sustainable. A healthy economy can exist only within a healthy
 137 environment (p. 8).

138

139 Specifically, this social statement calls the church to engage in dialogue with corporations on how to
 140 promote justice for creation (5.E.1-1). This activity includes dialogues about implementing
 141 comprehensive environmental principles, healthy environments, and cooperation between the public and
 142 private sectors regarding sustainability.

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144 The social message “[Human Rights](#)” (2017) commits this church to “be sensitive to the needs of
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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

151 among present generations the burdens associated with greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and
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154 of our and other species and the integrity of the ecological systems upon which life depends? Finally,
155 there is the matter of *intersectional* justice. That is, how does climate justice intersect with historical
156 injustices related to race, class, and gender?” (p. 10-11).

157
158 The same message also explicitly rejects “beliefs, goals, and policies that ... perpetuate the
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160 and greenhouse gas emissions” (p. 14).

161

162

163 **Focusing on Indigenous Peoples**

164 Decades ago the ELCA released a [social policy resolution](#) supporting the sovereignty of Native American
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167

168 In 2016 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed the resolution “[Repudiation of the Doctrine of](#)
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171 economic systems. In response the ELCA is called to seek and promote justice through principles of
172 participation, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability as described in its social teachings.

173

174

175 **Other Relevant Documents**

176 The work of Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations in the ELCA is guided by a [strategic plan](#).

177

178

179 **Corporate Social Responsibility and Extractive Industries**

180 Publicity around failures and abuses has proved to be instrumental in changing the outlook of
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195 Among other movements, the [United Nations Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform](#)
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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

201 consultation instead, which is a weaker directive to extractive industries.

202

203

204 Resolution Guidelines for ELCA

205 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supports:

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- 208 keeping with those principles.
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- 212 environmental and social risks, including Indigenous rights risks, in reviewing potential
- 213 acquisitions. Such a report should consider:
 - 214 • Which committees, departments and/or managers are responsible for review, oversight
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- 225 planning and decisions impacting their lands. We support assessments of how Indigenous rights
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- 283
- 284

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- 294
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296 ENDNOTES [to be footnotes in final format]

297 1 A [stakeholder](#) is someone who is affected by, or who can affect, the operations of a business.

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299 women, who, as a result, often have an increased workload as they must walk long distances to find

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

301 into a situation of economic dependence on men.”
302 www.un.org/development/desa/Indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/environment.html
303 3 www.humanrights.dk/tools/human-rights-impact-assessment-guidance-toolbox/introduction-human-
304 [rights-impact-assessment](http://www.humanrights.dk/tools/human-rights-impact-assessment-guidance-toolbox/introduction-human-)
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Working Document

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

~~Draft, March 24, 2016~~

GAMBLING



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

~~Social Criteria Investment Screen~~

2 AREA: Gambling
 3 DOCUMENT TYPE: Social Criteria Investment Screen
 4 POINT IN PROCESS: Transmission to Church Council
 5 DATE: 10/10/23

MARKER DATES:

8 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council, April 21-23, 1990 _
 9 UPDATED by the Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility, May 6, 2008 _
 10 ~~-APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council, November 2008 [CC08.11.57a]~~
 11 APPROVED by the ELCA Church Council, November 2016 [CC16.11.46n] _

13 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 8, 2020
 14 UPDATED by Corporate Social Responsibility Review Team, June 27, 2023
 15 APPROVAL PENDING by Church Council, November 2023 [anticipated]

Gambling Social Criteria Screen

Authority-

20 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has laid out its concern for the shared stewardship
 21 of health in *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor* (2003) and considers social statement "Caring for
 22 Health: Our Shared Endeavor" (2003), acknowledging that environment to be part of health is central to our well-
 23 being, and caring for it is a matter of shared stewardship. Further in a predecessor church body, the American
 24 Lutheran Church (ALC), statement on, The ELCA's social statements are in accord that profitability of an
 25 economic pursuit, such as gambling, must be put into the context of what is good for the neighbor.1 The
 26 ELCA supports alternatives to gambling as a means of community development, calling instead for
 27 development that takes into account the overall health and welfare of a community's people.

29 In "Gambling and the Public Good" (ALC, 1984) at the American Lutheran Church (ALC), a predecessor
 30 church body to the ELCA, expresses concern for the possible harmful impact of legalized gambling is laid
 31 out, rooted in three components: distinct claims:

- 32 • It tends to extract revenues from those least able to afford it.
- 33 • It diverts family and personal income.
- 34 • It contributes to the brokenness of individuals and families social systems.

Wording of the screen-

38 The ELCA recommends no investment in firms involved in the production or marketing of offerings of
 39 gambling opportunities. _

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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Definition of the problem-

The ALC statement describes gambling as involving three elements:

- ~~(1)~~ a valuable consideration, mutually risked in the hope of
- ~~(2)~~ winning a significant prize, which is awarded

~~not primarily for skill or ability but (3) dependent largely by on~~ the caprice of chance.

~~Recognizing that~~

~~Gambling is associated with a multitude of ills, from substance abuse and mental illness to domestic violence, and raises strong concerns about harm to public health.² From the perspective of ELCA social teaching, the disproportionate effect on low-income communities is especially concerning. Online gambling has changed the landscape of the industry, making it more accessible and, therefore, potentially more harmful to the common good.~~

~~Because~~ various investors will implement this along a continuum, ~~for the purpose of this screen, investment~~ might include ~~as investors any~~ companies having ~~any~~ revenue from owning, managing or operating gambling establishments. Companies to be reviewed are those involved in supplying key component elements and services to the gambling industry (casinos, betting operations ~~at horse racing tracks, bingos, bingo games~~, state-~~run~~ lotteries, ~~on-line~~online gambling and gambling devices such as roulette wheels).

Social policy and studies-

~~[Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor](#) (ELCA, 2003)}~~

~~[“Gambling”](#) (ELCA, 1998)}~~

~~[“Gambling and the Public Good”](#) (ALC, 1984)}~~

~~[ELCA social policy resolution, “The Sponsorship of Legal Gaming by American Indian Tribes”](#) (CC 6 approved, November 2007)~~

~~[Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](#) (ELCA, 1999)~~

~~[Genetics, Faith and Responsibility](#) (ELCA, 2011)~~

Endnotes [to be Footnotes in final format]

~~1 A 2007 social policy resolution on the sponsorship of gaming by American Indian tribes explores some ways in which American Indian gaming differs, both in terms of tribal sovereignty, and in that American Indian tribes, having been removed from their lands and livelihoods, have limited means of raising revenue.~~

~~2 <http://www.who.int/docs/default-source/substance-use/the-epidemiology-and-impact-of-gambling-disorder-and-other-gambling-relate-harm.pdf>~~

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

1 AREA: Gambling
 2 DOCUMENT TYPE: Social Criteria Investment Screen
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15 Gambling Social Criteria Screen

17 Authority

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 19 of health in [Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor](#) (2003) and considers social environment to be part
 20 of health. The ELCA's social statements are in accord that profitability of an economic pursuit, such as
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 46 gambling has changed the landscape of the industry, making it more accessible and, therefore, potentially
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56 **Social policy and studies**

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71 2 [http://www.who.int/docs/default-source/substance-use/the-epidemiology-and-impact-of-gambling-](http://www.who.int/docs/default-source/substance-use/the-epidemiology-and-impact-of-gambling-disorder-and-other-gambling-relate-harm.pdf)
72 [disorder-and-other-gambling-relate-harm.pdf](http://www.who.int/docs/default-source/substance-use/the-epidemiology-and-impact-of-gambling-disorder-and-other-gambling-relate-harm.pdf)

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**APPLICATION FOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF AN
INDEPENDENT LUTHERAN ORGANIZATION
BY A CHURCHWIDE UNIT OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

Name of independent Lutheran organization: _____

Mailing address of organization: _____

Telephone of organization: _____

Organization's Web address (if applicable): _____

Organization's contact person: _____

Churchwide unit(s) from which acknowledgment is sought: _____

The following materials *must* be submitted for review by the churchwide unit and included in its report to the Office of the Secretary:

- A copy of relevant descriptive documents, such as a constitution, corporate bylaws, purpose statement, policies, guidelines, and budget;
- Samples of publicity and fund-raising materials;
- A list of staff, leaders, and board members as well as a description of the method of election for board members;
- Documentation of the organization's independent status and insurance coverage for any existing or potential liabilities of such an organization; and
- The attached response form completed by the organization regarding the recognized relationship.

In cases where an independent Lutheran organization that may relate to more than one churchwide unit, the secretary will designate *one* unit to serve as the lead unit for acknowledgment of such a relationship.

The unit reviews the request and formulates a recommendation for possible action by the respective unit's board or steering committee.

The unit submits documentation on the proposed relationship to the secretary. Upon the secretary's confirmation that the required documentation has been received and meets the standards established in the churchwide policy, the unit's board or steering committee then may take action on the proposal. The unit agrees to keep current the documentation on file in the Office of the Secretary.

The unit's executive director or director certifies to the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that the respective organization has been acknowledged by the unit's board or steering committee upon review of the relevant documentation. The unit's executive director or director further: (1) Agrees to certify annually to the secretary that the acknowledged relationship remain in good order; and (2) Requests by July 1 of each year the listing or continued listing of the organization in the *Yearbook* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The action of the board or steering committee in acknowledgment of a relationship with an independent Lutheran organization is reported to the Church Council in the unit's report as information subsequent to certification by the secretary that the necessary documentation has been placed on file in the Office of the Secretary.

In addition to the materials listed above, the attached questionnaire must be completed and submitted for review by the churchwide unit.

**CRITERIA FOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT
BY A CHURCHWIDE UNIT OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

The criteria for reviewing an organization for possible acknowledgment of a relationship with a unit of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America include:

- A. Scope and constituency:** The organization's membership is national or churchwide in its scope. If the constituency is primarily local or regional, any relationship more appropriately would be to a synod or group of synods.
- B. Determination of compatibility with the ELCA:** The organization's statement of faith, purpose, and activities are compatible with the ELCA's governing documents, specifically the sections on Confession of Faith, Nature of the Church, Statement of Purpose, and Principles of Organization.
- C. Focus:** The organization's purpose and activities are compatible with the program and policy of the churchwide unit proposing such a recognition of relationship.
- D. Extension of ministry:** The organization undergirds or extends the work of the churchwide unit that proposes such a recognition of relationship.
- E. Documents:** The organization has a constitution or bylaws and a purpose statement, and is an officially recognized nonprofit entity.
- F. Leadership:** As appropriate, the organization seeks leadership on its board and staff that is diverse in gender, culture, and ethnicity.
- G. Funding:** The organization's financial operation is open for inspection and appropriately audited; the method and scope of its fund-raising is compatible with ELCA funding processes.
- H. Accountability:** The organization will agree to appropriate methods of accountability to the unit proposing recognition. Such agreement might include periodic programmatic and financial reports. Further, the organization agrees to defend and indemnify the ELCA churchwide organization and any related entities from claims, liability or financial demands arising out of the relationship.
- I. Commitment:** The organization agrees to support the purposes and goals of the churchwide organization and to refrain from publicity or fund-raising techniques that diminish the public image of the churchwide organization, its financial resources, and its effectiveness in mission.
- J. Publicity:** The organization consents to the use of mutually agreed phraseology in any publicity to describe the relationship with the appropriate churchwide unit.
- K. Review of Relationship:**
 - 1. The unit and organization agree to a regular review biennially and a comprehensive review of the relationship every four years.
 - 2. On an annual basis, the unit's executive director or director shall certify to the secretary continued acknowledgment of the relationship.

**APPLICATION FOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF AN
INDEPENDENT LUTHERAN ORGANIZATION
BY A CHURCHWIDE UNIT OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

RESPONSE FORM

Please respond to the following questions. If more space for responses is required, additional sheets may be attached with this form.

Why does your organization seek a relationship with a churchwide unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America?

How would the organization, in fulfilling its commitments, work compatibly and assist the respective churchwide unit in the unit's work?

Does the organization fulfill or enhance particular activities that the respective unit is unable to accomplish?

How would the organization use the acknowledged relationship in its interpretation and fund-raising activities?

What is the organization's relationship to other church-related ecumenical entities?

Is the program or activity of the organization national or international in scope?

**CONSTITUTION/ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION
ORDER OF LUTHERAN FRANCISCANS**

Article 1.**NAME AND INCORPORATION**

1. The name of this religious order shall be the Order of Lutheran Franciscans, hereinafter designated as "Order."
2. The Order shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas.

Article 2.**CONFESSION OF FAITH**

1. The Order accepts as its own the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America found in Chapter 2 of *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
2. The Order accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God.
3. The Order accepts the ancient Ecumenical Creeds and the Lutheran Confessions.
4. The Order accepts the writings and teachings of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi as essential for the shaping of this Order's life and community.

Article 3.**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

1. Taking our place within the tradition of the Franciscan family, we passionately follow Jesus, rebuilding his Church, living lives of mutual care and accountability in harmony with the creeds and confessions of the Lutheran Church and both in the spirit and practice of the Evangelical Counsels, faithfully walking the simple way of Saint Francis of Assisi.
2. To fulfill these purposes, this Order shall:
 - a. Participate in the worship life of the Church in word, sacrament, and daily prayer.
 - b. Promote the Franciscan lifestyle in the Church and in the community.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their callings in their daily lives and within this Order.
 - d. Maintain a system of religious formation for members and potential members.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
 - g. Utilize its resources for the good of the Church and the world.
 - h. Foster meaningful relationships with other religious orders, and with the congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
3. As a not-for-profit religious order:
 - a. This Order shall be organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.
 - b. This Order will ensure no part of its net earnings shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons except that this Order shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of its purpose.
 - c. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, this Order shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Article 4.**POWERS OF THE ORDER**

1. The powers of the Order are vested in the Chapter meeting, called and conducted as provided in this constitution and the General Rule.
2. Only such authority as is delegated to the Servant Council, leaders, or other organizational units in this Order's

governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by the Order. The Order, meeting in Chapter, is authorized to:

- a. elect its Minister General and terminate the appointment as provided in the General Rule;
- b. adopt amendments to the constitution and the General Rule;
- c. approve the annual budget;
- d. maintain a motherhouse, retreat centers, camps, or educational campuses as allowable by law and ecclesiastical policy;
- e. affirm applicants approved for life profession as provided in the General Rule;
- f. acquire, hold title to, use, sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of its real and personal property by any lawful means; and
- g. require its leaders to carry out their duties in accordance with the constitution and the General Rule.

Article 5.

CHURCH AFFILIATION

1. The Order shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
2. The Order shall share a special relationship with the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (hereinafter designated as “the local synod”). Members of the Order shall be servants to the people and congregations of this Church whenever possible.
3. The Order accepts the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and shall act in accordance with it.
4. The Order acknowledges its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which:
 - a. The Order agrees to be fully responsible for its life as a religious community.
 - b. Members of the Order are active members of congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - c. The Order pledges financial support and participation in the life and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its interdependent expressions.
5. Relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be terminated as follows:
 - a. This Order takes action to terminate the relationship. Such action shall require 3/4 majority vote at Chapter, and consent of the Servant Council. Before such action, the leadership of this Order shall seek the counsel of the bishop of the local synod.
 - b. This Order ceases to exist. Upon the dissolution of this Order, assets shall be distributed to the local synod, or its successor, or for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose.
 - c. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, through the local synod, acts to terminate its relationship with this Order. Before such action, the bishop of the local synod shall meet with the leadership of this Order to seek reconciliation.

Article 6.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership in the Order shall be attained through a process of formation as specified in the General Rule.
2. As defined by the General Rule, it shall be the privilege and duty of members of this Order to:
 - a. hold active membership within a local congregation, making regular use of the means of grace, both Word and sacraments;
 - b. live according to the General Rule, in harmony with the Word of God and the teachings of Saint Francis of Assisi and the Lutheran Church;
 - c. support financially the work of the Church and the Order; and
 - d. have access of use of any established motherhouse, friary or center of this Order, and the opportunity to live within traditional religious community, as defined by the General Rule and other governing documents of the Order.
3. Membership in the Order may be revoked by the Minister General, with majority consent of the Servant Council. Grounds for terminating membership includes, but is not limited to, persistent behavior that is inconsistent with this Order’s values, leaving the Lutheran church, and rejecting the vows of this Order by making vows with another religious community. Before such recommendation is made, the Minister General, with the assistance of the Chaplain, shall work towards reconciliation with the estranged member, when possible.
4. This Order may maintain an associate membership as specified in the General Rule.

Article 7.**CHAPTER MEETING**

1. The annual business meeting of this Order shall be known as Annual Chapter and shall be held at a time specified by the Servant Council.
2. Special Chapters may be called by the Minister General or at the recommendation of the Servant Council or 50% of the life-professed membership. The call for each special Chapter shall specify the purpose for which it is to be held and no other business shall be transacted.
3. Notice of all special Chapters of this Order shall be given at least 30 days before Chapter. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, or through email, sent to the last known address of life-professed members, shall be sufficient.
4. The number of life-professed members present and voting shall constitute a quorum. Novices, Postulants, and Associates may have voice but not vote at Chapter, with approval of the Servant Council.
5. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot may be permitted, at the discretion of the Servant Council, only if notice of such allowance is given at least 30 days before Chapter.
6. All actions approved by the Order shall be by majority vote of those present and voting, except as otherwise provided in this constitution, the General Rule or by state law.
7. The wisdom of *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition, shall be used to assist with parliamentary procedure for all Chapter meetings.

Article 8.**OFFICERS**

1. The officers of this Order shall be the Minister General, Minister of Formation, and the Chaplain.
2. The Minister General shall serve as president and the Minister of Formation shall serve as secretary of the Order.
3. The election and duties of the officers shall be specified in the General Rule.

Article 9.**THE SERVANT COUNCIL**

1. The voting membership of the Servant Council shall comprise the officers and no more than three life professed members of the Order appointed as specified by the General Rule. Should a member's place on the Servant Council become vacant, the Minister General shall appoint a successor.
2. The Servant Council shall have general oversight of the life and activities of this Order, and in particular the interpretation of its General Rule, to the end that everything be done in accordance with the Word of God and the faith and practice of Franciscan life and the Lutheran church.
3. The Servant Council shall be the board of directors of the Order, and as such shall be responsible for maintaining and protecting its property and the management of its business and fiscal affairs. It shall have the powers and be subject to the obligations that pertain to such boards under the laws of the State of Texas, except as otherwise provided herein.
4. The Servant Council shall be responsible for the financial and property matters of the Order and shall have the authority to make financial decisions on behalf of this Order.
5. The Servant Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this Order are being conducted ethically and efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations.
6. The Servant Council shall submit a comprehensive report to this Order at Annual Chapter.

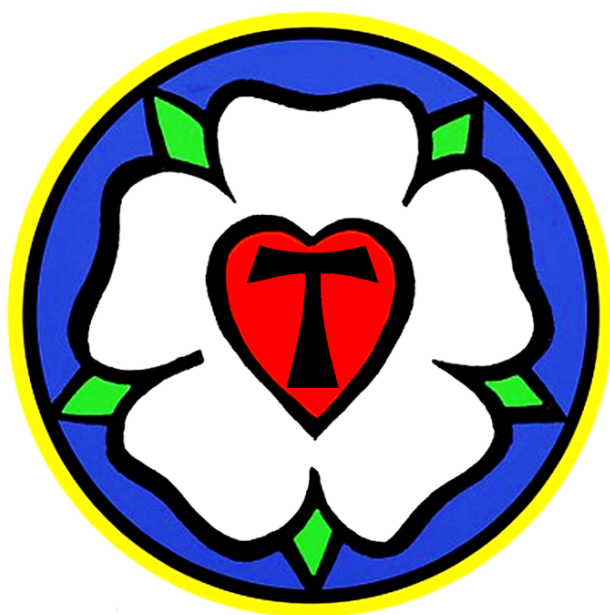
Chapter 17.**AMENDMENTS**

1. Amendments may be proposed by at least 25% of life professed members or by the Minister General or the Servant Council. The Servant Council shall have at least 30 days to consider the proposed amendment and make a recommendation at Chapter.
2. If the Servant Council recommends approval of the amendment, a simple majority vote at the next Chapter shall be required for approval, and shall become effective immediately if approved. If the Council does not recommend the approval of the amendment, a 2/3 majority vote at Chapter shall be required for approval.
3. If approval of an amendment requires a 2/3 majority vote, it shall require ratification at the subsequent Chapter meeting before becoming effective.

Article 11.

INDEMNIFICATION

1. Consistent with the provisions of the laws under which this Order is incorporated, the Order idemnifies each person who, by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Servant Council member, officer, employee, agent, or other member of any agency or committee of this Order, was or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed civil, criminal, administrative, arbitration, or investigative proceeding.



"Following the simple way of St. Francis"

The General Rule of the Order of Lutheran Franciscans

as ratified January 2011
as amended August 2016/7

MISSION STATEMENT

Taking our place within the tradition of the Franciscan family, we passionately follow Jesus, rebuilding his Church, living lives of mutual care and accountability in harmony with the creeds and confessions of the Lutheran Church and both in the spirit and practice of the Evangelical Counsels, faithfully walking the simple way of Saint Francis of Assisi.

CHAPTER 1. *Entering the Community*

1. Any adult baptized woman or man who is an active member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), inquiring about membership within the Order, shall be received kindly. Such inquirers may be welcomed to enter into a process that includes a postulancy, the novitiate and life profession.

- **Postulancy.** Postulancy shall last for a period of at least six months. During this time, postulants will associate with their local Province, participate in Franciscan gatherings and fulfill all other expectations for postulancy. At the completion of postulancy, and upon recommendation of the Minister of Formation, the postulant may apply for the novitiate.
- **Novitiate.** The approved postulant is welcomed as a novice through a novicing rite that takes place at worship during either Chapter or a regional convocation. The Chaplain may give special dispensation for the novicing to take place at another time or location. At the novicing, the novice makes initial vows, to be renewed annually until life profession or removal from formation.

The novitiate lasts for a minimum of two years, as directed by the Minister of Formation. During the novitiate, the novice will complete the approved formation process for novices as well as be in regular spiritual direction. The novice shall begin to live according to the General Rule, and regularly attend Annual Chapter and Provincial convocations and fulfill all other expectations of the novitiate.

- **Life Profession.** Once a novice has fulfilled all requirements of the novitiate, and has attended a minimum of two Annual Chapters, the novice may make application for life profession. The Servant Council shall examine the novice, review the recommendation of the Minister of Formation, and shall make a decision to receive the novice as a permanent friar of the Order, with final consent of the Order at Chapter. Life profession takes place at Chapter.

2. **Friends of the Order.** Friends of the Order are those people who are called to accompany the sisters and brothers of this Order with prayer, financial support, advocacy and through participation at events and gatherings of the Order. The rights, privileges, and expectations for standing as Friends of the Order shall be established by the Servant Council.
3. **Secular and Religious Life-Professed.** Life-professed members may choose to classify themselves as “secular” or “religious.” “Secular” friars shall normally be members whose work and vocation are primarily within the secular world. “Religious” friars shall normally be members whose primary work and vocation are to, and within, the life of the Church. The Servant Council shall establish standards for such classifications. Through baptism and the vows they share, all friars are equal in their station within the Order. Distinctions between “secular” and “religious” shall never be interpreted as status or rank but as vocation and lifestyle, and only for the purpose of encouraging accountability for each member’s calling under the vow of obedience.
4. **The Habit.** The habit of the novice is the Tau cross. The primary habit of the life-professed friar is the San Damiano cross worn over simple secular clothing, especially a white or dark brown shirt or blouse, dark brown pants or skirt. A simple brown Franciscan habit, as approved by the Servant Council, may be worn by sisters and brothers of the Order with discretion as to the appropriateness of the circumstances, and with general approval of the Servant Council.

CHAPTER 2. *The Vows*

1. **Evangelical Counsels.** This Order accepts the Evangelical Counsels of the apostolic Church. These Counsels are expressed in the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, as interpreted by this Order.

- **Poverty.** As the foundation of this Order's life, poverty is the vow that strips our allegiance from material possessions. As a commitment to this vow of poverty, the brothers and sisters shall live lives of simplicity, not caught up in possession of valuables, except they shall cling to the Good News of Jesus Christ and the means of grace, that is the Word and sacraments.

Christ chose for himself a poor and humble life, even though he valued all of God's creation. Members of this Order shall seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by keeping their desires and wants restrained. The friars shall be mindful that according to the Gospel they are called to be stewards of their money and possessions for the benefit of all God's children. This includes financial support of the Order and the local congregation.

This call to poverty includes journeying as sisters and brothers with the poor and marginalized of this world, who are true children of the Lord.

Those religious brothers and sisters who choose to give up all possessions and to live together in traditional religious community shall fulfill the requirements established by this Order.

- **Chastity.** Professing chastity "because love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8), the friars of this Order shall care for the things of the Lord so that they have nothing else to do except to love God and neighbor. Through their words and deeds, the love of God, all people and creation shall shine forth.

This vow of chastity shall be a vow to love all, without distinction. For those brothers and sisters who find the presence of the gentle Christ within the bonds of relationship, e.g. matrimony, they shall seek to be holy and chaste in those relationships, remembering their call to be servants of all for the sake of Christ and in the spirit of Brother Francis and Sister Clare.

This vow may include voluntary celibacy, but it will never be expected or encouraged as a lifestyle for those who do not have this calling. Within all relationships, the friars of this Order shall seek to maintain healthy and caring boundaries.

- **Obedience.** Each friar of this Order shall make a vow of obedience. As ones called into service for Christ as Franciscans, all brothers and sisters of this Order shall report on their Franciscan vocation and ministry to the Chaplain four times a year at times designated by the Chaplain.

In loving obedience, any friar called or elected to serve within this Order shall be open to serve in the capacity to which the friar has been called or elected, and in loving obedience, will relinquish any office when asked by the Minister General, Servant Council or the Order meeting at Chapter.

As a form of obedience, the brothers and sisters of this Order will allow themselves to be joyfully formed by the wisdom of this Order's leadership, the pastoral leadership of their respective congregations, work supervisors, spouses, and their fellow sisters and brothers of this Order. They will strive to keep their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession or power.

2. And let the brothers and sisters keep the example of Mary, the Mother of our Lord, ever before them. Let them do this according to Brother Francis of Assisi and Brother Martin Luther, who both held Mary in highest regard, since she embodies the humble call to obedience, poverty and chastity to which we are all called as Franciscans and followers of Jesus.

CHAPTER 3. *Worship, Prayer and Faith-Life*

1. **The Daily Office.** The members of this Order shall be committed to the daily rhythm of worship and prayer, following the Daily Office. The Chaplain shall approve appropriate liturgical resources, including authorized liturgies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Those friars living together or gathered in retreat shall gather each day for morning, noon and evening prayer.
2. **Holy Eucharist.** Each member of the Order shall receive Holy Communion at least weekly, and usually within the local congregation.
3. **Congregational Membership.** Each friar shall hold active membership within a local ELCA Lutheran congregation, worshipping regularly, and participating in the other ministries of the church and serving in leadership positions when called to do so. Dispensation may be granted by the Servant Council in special circumstances.

4. **Confession.** At least twice a year, each friar shall participate in individual confession with their pastor or other ordained minister of the Church.
5. **Spiritual Direction.** Each sister and brother shall participate in regular spiritual direction as defined by this Order.
6. **Tithing and Financial Stewardship.** Each friar gives generously. For those who make wages, each is expected to give a portion of her or his income to the mission of this Order (at least annually) and to the mission of the local congregation, each being challenged towards the biblical tithe.

CHAPTER 4. *Work and Vocation*

1. **Occupation.** Each sister and brother shall work according to her or his ability and vocation. Those living in the world and working in secular or church vocations shall enjoy the gift of a salary as a blessing to share with others. Those living together within traditional religious community may not receive direct pay for any work, but that the money may be placed in the community treasury as community property, as directed by the Servant Council. All friars shall seek work that fulfills their vocation, and especially the call to work for justice for the poor and marginalized.
2. **Study.** Each friar is encouraged to grow spiritually and academically. Those who have the calling are invited to receive an undergraduate degree or, for those who already have an undergraduate degree to do graduate, post-graduate and/or doctoral study.
3. **Civic Responsibility.** Every sister and brother of this Order is expected to be active citizens, exercising their rights and their franchise regularly, and participating in the democratic processes of the nation, as an act of faith and for the sake of the poor and marginalized.

CHAPTER 5. *Minister General*

1. **Duties.** The Minister General shall serve as the spiritual shepherd of the Order, set the tone and direction for this Order's life, protect its mission, serve as its chief executive officer, preside at Chapter and Servant Council meetings, be the chief ecumenical leader and public representative, interpret the social and theological positions of the Order, and ensure the effective administration of the Order. The term of office shall last until the office is vacated.
2. **Election and Call.** Whenever an election for Minister General is required, it shall take place at Annual Chapter or at a special Chapter called for such a purpose. The election will be by "ecclesiastical ballot" until someone receives 3/4 of the ballot count. Once the election is certified, the newly elected Minister General is consecrated into office during Chapter worship. The Minister General may be either lay or ordained, but must have the capacity to invest significant time in the leadership responsibilities of the Order. If the Minister General is a rostered leader in the Church, an ecclesiastical call may be sought from the Synod, with approval of the Order.
3. **Vacated Office.** A vacancy occurs when the Minister General dies or becomes incapacitated, when the Minister General resigns or retires with permission of the Servant Council, or when the Minister General is removed from office with a 3/4 majority vote at Chapter, with consent of the Servant Council.
4. **Compensation.** Compensation, if any, shall be determined by the Servant Council.

CHAPTER 6. *Servant Council*

1. **Duties.** The Servant Council shall serve as the Board of Directors for the Order. The Council shall interpret the General Rule, develop the budget for the Order, report to the Order at Annual Chapter, ensure that the Order is living out its mission and purpose, and assist the Minister General in providing for the administration of the Order.

2. **Composition.** The Servant Council shall have at least 3 and not more than 6 members. The size of the Servant Council shall be determined by the size of the Order, as recommended by the Minister General and approved at Annual Chapter. At a minimum, the members of the Servant Council shall include the Minister General, Chaplain, and Minister of Formation, who shall serve as the officers of the Order.
3. **Election.** Any non-officer members of the Servant Council shall be nominated by the current Servant Council and confirmed by general consent at Annual Chapter. If a vacancy should occur, the Minister General shall appoint a replacement until the next Annual Chapter. Non-officer members of the Council shall serve for two years.

CHAPTER 7. *The Chaplain and Minister of Formation*

1. **The Chaplain.** The Chaplain shall give pastoral guidance to the members of this Order. The Chaplain shall provide for the worship services at Chapter, receive the regular reports of members, offer pastoral care, approve liturgical resources for use by this Order, advise the Minister General, and perform any other responsibilities normally associated with the office of Chaplain. The Chaplain may be either lay or ordained.
2. **Appointment.** The Chaplain shall be nominated by the Minister General on advice of the Servant Council and confirmed by general consent at Annual Chapter. The term of office shall be 3 years. If a vacancy should occur, the Minister General shall appoint a replacement to fulfill the rest of the term.
3. **The Minister of Formation.** The Minister of Formation shall oversee the formation life of this Order, receive applications from inquirers and postulants, ensure background checks and evaluations have been performed, mentor the novices, develop and assess formation curricula, coordinate formational experiences at Annual Chapter, and make recommendations to the Servant Council concerning postulants and novices. The Minister of Formation may be either lay or ordained.
4. **Appointment.** The Minister of Formation shall be nominated by the Minister General on advice of the Servant Council and confirmed by general consent at Annual Chapter. The term of office shall be 3 years. If a vacancy should occur, the Minister General shall appoint a replacement to fulfill the rest of the term.

CHAPTER 8. *Annual Chapter and Provincial Convocations*

1. Annual Chapter shall be the annual business meeting of this Order. The time and location of Annual Chapter shall be determined by the Servant Council. During Annual Chapter, reports shall be given on the work of the Servant Council, as well as on changes in the Order's membership, the finances, and other pertinent information. Annual Chapter shall also be a time for the Order to deliberate on issues facing the Order, worship together, and fellowship and learn together as a community.
2. Special Chapters may be called as specified in the constitution.
3. The Minister General presides at Chapter. The Chaplain presides in the absence of the Minister General, with consent of the Minister General or, if the Minister General is unavailable, the Servant Council.
4. Provincial convocations may be planned regularly for the gathering of the dispersed community for worship, fellowship, deliberation and learning. Provincial Ministers shall be appointed by the Minister General, in consultation with the Servant Council. Duties of Provincial Ministers shall be determined by the Servant Council.

CHAPTER 9. *Church Affiliation*

1. **Affiliation.** This Order claims as its own the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and shall endeavor to increase its formal affiliation with this church and its expressions, according to the policies

and practices of the church. This Order also requires its brothers and sisters to be active in the work of local ELCA congregations, synods and other ministries of the ELCA.

2. **Benevolence.** When creating the budget, this Order will seek to provide financial benevolence to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through one or more of its expressions or ministries.

CHAPTER 10. *Amendments*

1. Amendments to this Rule may be proposed to the Servant Council in writing by the Minister General, the Chaplain, the Minister of Formation, or by 25% of the life professed membership of this Order. When the Servant Council receives a duly proposed amendment, it shall make a recommendation at the next Annual Chapter to either approve or reject the amendment. If the Servant Council recommends approval, the amendment may be approved at Chapter by general consent. If the Servant Council does not recommend approval or if there is not general consent, the amendment shall require a 2/3 majority vote at Annual Chapter to be approved. Any approved amendment shall require a simple majority vote at the next Annual Chapter before going into effect.
2. The Minister General may veto any amendment to the General Rule within 30 days of being initially approved, which may be overridden by a 3/4 majority vote at the next Annual Chapter. If overridden, the amendment shall go into effect immediately.
3. If an amendment is rejected at Chapter, or vetoed without being overridden, it shall not be considered again for at least five years, unless otherwise permitted by the Servant Council.

Order of Lutheran Franciscans

Organizational Directory

SERVANT COUNCIL

Minister General: Brother Ken Taylor

Election and Call. Whenever an election for Minister General is required, it shall take place at Annual Chapter or at a special Chapter called for such a purpose. The election will be by “ecclesiastical ballot” until someone receives 3/4 of the ballot count. Once the election is certified, the newly elected Minister General is consecrated into office during Chapter worship. The Minister General may be either lay or ordained, but must have the capacity to invest significant time in the leadership responsibilities of the Order. If the Minister General is a rostered leader in the Church, an ecclesiastical call may be sought from the Synod, with approval of the Order. (From *The General Rule*).

Chaplain: Sister Lynn Fonfara

Appointment. The Chaplain shall be nominated by the Minister General on advice of the Servant Council and confirmed by general consent at Annual Chapter. The term of office shall be 3 years. If a vacancy should occur, the Minister General shall appoint a replacement to fulfill the rest of the term. (From *The General Rule*).

Minister of Formation: Brother Jeff Brown

Appointment. The Minister of Formation shall be nominated by the Minister General on advice of the Servant Council and confirmed by general consent at Annual Chapter. The term of office shall be 3 years. If a vacancy should occur, the Minister General shall appoint a replacement to fulfill the rest of the term. (From *The General Rule*).

Bursar: Brother Ryan Roberts

Appointment. The Bursar shall be appointed by the Minister General, with consent of the Servant Council. The Bursar may be someone who is not a member of the Order, if their professional skills and capacity are needed for effective financial management. (As approved by action of the Servant Council in 2012).

PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

Eastern Provincial Minister: Brother Ryan Roberts

Eastern Provincial Chaplain: Brother Brett Ballanger

Eastern Provincial Formation Director: Brother Jason Darty

Central/Western Provincial Minister: Sister Carolyn Swenson

Central/Western Provincial Chaplain: Sister Mary Youngerman

Central/Western Provincial Formation Director: Brother Jeff Brown

Appointment: Provincial Ministers shall be appointed by the Minister General, in consultation with the Servant Council. Duties of Provincial Ministers shall be determined by the Servant Council. (From *The General Rule*).

OTHER SERVANTS OF THE ORDER

Representatives to the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity: Brother Andrew Chavanack and Brother Mark Molter

Chair of the Endowment Committee: Sister Mary Delasin

Representative to the Franciscan Federation: Brother Ian Boden

www.lutheranfranciscans.org

[Order of Lutheran Franciscans - YouTube](#)

www.franciscanunity.org

www.facebook.com/lutheranfranciscans

Order of the Lutheran Franciscans request to become an Independent Lutheran Organization

Executive Summary

Established in 2011, the Order of Lutheran Franciscans (OLF) seeks to follow the simple way of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi through accompanying the poor, caring for creation, ecumenical and interfaith bridge-building, and the spiritual renewal of the church. Lay and ordained persons of varying ages, identities, and contexts are siblings of the OLF. A dispersed community, the OLF rejoices in its expanding relationships with other Franciscan communities and is excited to continue to cultivate its relationship and affiliation with the ELCA for the sake of mutuality and accountability. A priority of the OLF is to educate ELCA members on the history and impact of religious orders within the wider Lutheran tradition.

Brief history

The Order of Lutheran Franciscans (OLF) was established in 2011. Founded by Pastor Chris Markert, Chris was originally a member of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans (OEF). During his years as an ecumenical Franciscan, Chris was curious about why there were Roman Catholic and Episcopalian religious orders, and even an ecumenical Franciscan Order (whose founder was a UCC pastor), but no authentically Lutheran Franciscan Order. After doing some research, Chris stumbled upon a little known fact- there have been pockets of Lutheran religious orders in Norway, Germany, and Sweden that have existed for generations!

In collaboration with supportive Franciscans from other communities, a General Rule was developed, and the leadership team of the congregation Chris served at the time received the transfer of his Vows to the newly formed OLF. The next year, six inquirers convened with Chris in New Orleans to pray, worship, deliberate and fellowship. Representatives from the Order of St. Francis (Episcopal) and the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans were also in attendance. At the end of the weeklong retreat, there was unanimous consensus that God was doing a new thing with the OLF, and all six inquirers were received as Novices, and Chris was formally elected as the minister general. Since 2011, the OLF has grown to 9 Life-Professed members, 22 Novices, 19 postulants, and over 100 Friends of the Order.

The OLF is a full member of the Joint Committee on Franciscan Unity, and an institutional member of the Franciscan Action Network. The OLF also has representation in the Franciscan Federation, and is a member of the Poor People's Campaign. The OLF is a Reconciling in Christ community.

What is a religious order?

A religious order is a group of people who have a baptismal calling to live in mutual community, bound by commitments to one another and to their particular lifestyle. The Franciscan lifestyle is marked by accompanying the poor, caring for creation, interfaith bridge-building, and the spiritual renewal of the church. To become part of a religious order, one starts with formal inquiry (postulancy), moves into first-stage membership and formation (the novitiate), and ultimately makes life profession. For the OLF, this process of formation typically lasts about five years.

The mission of the Order of Lutheran Franciscans

Taking our place within the tradition of the Franciscan family, we passionately follow Jesus, rebuilding his Church, living lives of mutual care and accountability in harmony with the creeds and confessions of the Lutheran Church and both in the spirit and practice of the Evangelical Counsels, faithfully following the simple way of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Church Council

The Rev. Benjamin B Bergren

Synod: Grand Canyon Synod, ELCA, (2D)
Congregation: Community Lutheran Church (ID: 13855) - Las Vegas, Nevada
Birthdate: 05/06/1970 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** White
Rostered: 2D **Leader Key:** L001561
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

2050 W. Warm Springs Rd.
Unit 4023
Henderson, NV 89014 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 4082067256 (Cell)
Alternate: 7024582241 (Work)

Email:

ben@communitylv.org (Work)

Educational Institutions:

Augustana College, Rock Island, IL (1987-1991): Bachelor Of Arts
Wartburg Theological Seminary (1994-1998): Master Of Divinity

Employment:

Senior Pastor (10/28/2019 - Present)
Community Lutheran Church
Las Vegas, NV

Previous Employment:

Bethel Lutheran Church, Cupertino, CA (2015-2019)
Trinity Lutheran Church, Rolling Meadows, IL (2007-2015)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

Church Wide Assembly, Orlando FL (2011-)
Personal Coach and Congregational Coach Training, Metro Chicago Synod (2013-2015)
First Call Mentor and Coach (2010-2015)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

God's call can be surprising. Bishop Hutterer called me "out of the blue" and asked if I would serve on the church council of the ELCA replacing the current member who is leaving the synod. Bishop Hutterer affirmed my calling to serve both the local church and larger church. As Bonhoeffer stated in "Life Together," The Word of God is always stronger in the other. In my life, the affirmation of my call to ministry came from others. They saw something in my that I didn't always recognize in myself early on. After 25 years of serving various congregations, I know beyond the shadow of doubt that God shaped me for pastoral, congregational ministry. Over the years I have served in a mission start, a struggling small church, a medium sized church and a larger congregation. Every step of the way, I continue to learn and grow my skill set. I understand that the variety of calls give me a unique perspective including that I have served congregations in various places in our country.

Reference: Deborah Hutterer **Phone:**6028812963 **E-mail:**dhutterer@gcsynod.org

Relationship: Bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod.

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

Mr. Antoine Ricardo Cummins

Synod: Pacifica Synod, ELCA, (2C)
Congregation: St Andrew's Lutheran Church (ID: 13971) - San Diego, California
Birthdate: 10/09/1992 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** African Caribbean
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

55 Calle conejo
Alpine, CA 91901 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 3474247715 (Cell)

Email:

antoine.cummins.ac@gmail.com (Home)

Educational Institutions:

Business Finance and Banking (2010-2015): Bachelor Of Arts
Secondary Math Education/ Mathematics (2010-2015): Bachelor Of Science

Employment:

Assistant to the Bishop for Anti-Racism Coordination (02/13/2023 - Present)
Pacifica Synod
Santa Ana, CA

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

Commission for the Renewed Lutheran Church (2023-)
Director of Campus Ministry (2015-2019)
Western Iowa Synod Council (2017-2019)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

I am interested in serving because even my most frustrating experiences and setbacks; being a young, caribbean-american and unordained leader in the ELCA have been turned into amazing opportunities of renewal and re-imagining. In fact, I think the unique perspective that I will bring to this opportunity is embedded in the reality that I am a black, unmarried, under 30, adopted Lutheran and first generation immigrant to this country. This means I, and the minority demographics I represent, frequently wrestle with the idea of what it means to be Lutheran; constantly revisiting questions of viability, feasibility and desirability every time we enter an ELCA church, or board room, or assembly, or conference, or committee. For a time, I saw this labor as a betrayal of my identity, calling and gifts within this church. However, I've remained resilient, knowing that there are many who have come before me, and many who will be able to follow after because at the center of this church, there is

Alternate Committee Nominations:

1. ELCA Foundation Board

Reference: Bp Dave Nagler **E-mail:** davenagler@pacificasynod.org

Relationship: Bishop

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Other committee or board Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

Mr. Richard (Dick) Alan Deschamps

Synod: Montana Synod, ELCA, (1F)
Congregation: Hope Lutheran Church (ID: 13357) - Bozeman, Montana
Birthdate: 02/28/1953 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** White
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

214 Coulee Drive
Bozeman, MT 59718 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 4065809906 (Cell)
Alternate: 4065865572 (Work)

Email:

ddeschamps@mt-mo.com (Home)

Educational Institutions:

Montana State University (1977-1982): Bachelor Of Science

Employment:

Lay Pastoral Associate (05/01/2022 - Present)
Hope Lutheran Church
Bozeman, MT

Previous Employment:

USDA/Farm Service Montana (1985-2013)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

Hope Lutheran Church (1997-2023)
Montana Synod Vice President (2019-2023)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

I have served in ALC/ELCA congregations since 1985 in leadership positions (council, congregational president, committee chair, etc.). Since my retirement from USDA in 2013, the Holy Spirit has continued to pull, first to 2 years of training to become a Lay Pastoral Associate with the Montana Synod, next to synod council including a term as synod vice-president. Within that period, I was drawn to a more contemplative lifestyle and completed the Living School with Richard Rohr's Center for action and Contemplation. I believe God, through the work of the Spirit has continued to mold me for service in his church. I was asked to come onto the staff at Hope Lutheran and recommended to serve on the board at PLTS. I did not seek either of these opportunities, but feel free to go as the spirit blows.

Reference: Rev. Jessica Crist **Phone:**4068687658 **E-mail:**crist.jessica@gmail.com

Relationship: friend/colleague

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Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

Dr. Mark Dalton Fornwall

Synod: Pacifica Synod, ELCA, (2C)
Congregation: St John Lutheran Church (ID: 13917) - Palm Desert, California
Birthdate: 07/31/1954 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** White
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

19 Moscato
Rancho Mirage , CA 92270 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 8082805878 (Cell)
Alternate: 8082838342 (Cell)

Email:

mark.fornwall@gmail.com (Home)

Educational Institutions:

Michigan Technological University (1972-1976): Bachelor Of Science
Michigan Technological University (1976-1978): Master Of Science
Wayne State University (1978-1986): Doctor Of Philosophy

Employment:

Program Manager (09/20/1997 - 12/31/2014)
United States Geological Survey
Lakewood , CO

Previous Employment:

US Department of Energy (1984-1997)
US Army Corps of Engineers (1982-1983)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

Kehei Lutheran Church Congregation Council (president, vp, member, committee chairs, call committee) (2002-2018)
Pacifica Synod Council (2017-2020)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

My love for God has gifted me with commitment to the church and a strong call to serve. My sense of faith has deepened these past five years to the extent that I live a mission to love and serve everyone in the name of our triune God and have a desire to follow where ever I feel that I am being led. I have extensive organizational experience both within the church (congregations) and government service working internationally where I developed a fondness for the people of both Asia and Oceania. I also have a respect and love for Pastors. We continue to be good personal friends with our last two pastors. I have lately come to feel these three passions (congregations, pastors, and respect for other cultures) could be useful to the larger church. When approached to serve in this capacity I felt an immediate excitement and a strong certainty in my gut that this is something that I should do. I have come to understand that this is the right opportunity to serve God and church at this time.

Reference: Ron Rucker **Phone:**9078416992 **E-mail:**r_rucker01@yahoo.com

Relationship: Current Pastor at a congregation where are are associate members

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Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

The Rev. Herbert Shao

Synod: Northwest Washington Synod, ELCA, (1B)
Congregation: St Matthew Lutheran Church (ID: 04934) - Renton, Washington
Birthdate: 10/06/1968 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** Asian/Pacific Islander
Rostered: 1B **Leader Key:** L001028
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

19249 99TH PL S
Renton, WA 98059 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 2109989992 (Cell)

Email:

gotarev@aol.com (Home)

Educational Institutions:

Luther Seminary (1994-1998): Master Of Divinity
Trinity Lutheran College (1992-1994): Bachelor Of Theology

Employment:

Director of Evangelical Mission (09/01/2021 - Present)
ELCA
Chicago , IL

Previous Employment:

United States Air Force - Chaplain (2000-2021)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

DEM for NW WA Synod (2021-2023)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

Having served on all levels of the United States Air Force for 21 years, I have experience with the development of vision/mission/priorities and it's operationalization. While working for the Pentagon, I directed both internal and external communications and the innovation arm for the USAF Chaplain Corps. My last assignment I managed over 400 personnel, \$200 million dollars of assets, and an annual budget of \$7 million. As a DEM, I have a good understanding of the current issues facing the three expressions of the ELCA. As personal of color, I also am acutely aware of racial and social justice challenges our church currently struggles with from an institutional perspective as well as from a BIPOC worldview.

Alternate Committee Nominations:

1. Church Council
2. ELCA Foundation Board
3. ELCA Foundation Board

Reference: Shelley Wee **Phone:**5099515701 **E-mail:**bishop@lutheransnw.org

Relationship: Bishop

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Other committee or board

Wartburg Theological Seminary

The Rev. Rudy Trevino Flores

Synod: Nebraska Synod, ELCA, (4A)
Congregation: Messiah Lutheran Church (ID: 10017) - Aurora, Nebraska
Birthdate: 07/17/1969 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** Latino/Latina
Rostered: 4A **Leader Key:** 035563
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

130 Galway Rd.
Aurora, NE 68818 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 7132050147 (Cell)
Alternate: 4026942017 (Work)

Email:

pastor@messiahaurora.org (Work)

Educational Institutions:

Blinn Jr. College (1987-1988):
Texas Lutheran College (1988-1991): Bachelor Of Arts
Wartburg Theological Seminary (2017-2021): Master Of Divinity

Employment:

Pastor (06/13/2021 - Present)
Messiah Lutheran Church
Aurora, NE

Previous Employment:

Stage Stores, Inc. (2003-2017)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

Kinsmen Lutheran Church, Hou. Tx - Seminary Student (2017-2021)
Covenant Lutheran Church, Hou. Tx - Youth Leader, Musician, Conf Ldr., Council (2005-2017)
Advent Lutheran Church, Hou. Tx - Council, Youth Leader, Choir, Conf Ldr (1993-2005)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

As a second career Pastor, I have had a strong sense of call from God specifically for mission and service. This led me to finding Wartburg Theological Seminary as my home for discernment and learning what this means in our world. I feel I have a gift for intentional listening and pastoral care in tending to issues with open eyes and mind. This helps with constructive conversations especially in negative situations or discussions. I have led teams in my past employments and dealt with high dollar budgets, so understanding group dynamics and stewardship of people and resources is a high priority. I do my best to admit my mistakes and try to learn from them for future situations. Being part of a team, working towards a specific goal, is where I find joy. Being part of a way to help and service others in our community is paramount to what we are called to do for all, and I live with that in mind and in my heart. All done with the help and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Alternate Committee Nominations:

1. Nominating Committee

Reference: Rev. Dr. Beth Warpmaeker **Phone:** 2814443127 **E-mail:** bwarpmaeker@kinsmenlutheran.org
Relationship: Senior Pastor for my CL site during Seminary

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Other committee or board

Wartburg Theological Seminary

Deacon Ross Robert Murray

Synod: Metropolitan New York Synod, ELCA, (7C)
Congregation: Advent Lutheran Church (ID: 03825) - New York, New York
Birthdate: 12/05/1976 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** White
Rostered: 7C **Leader Key:**
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

217 W 140th St
89
New York, NY 10030 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 6122087572 (Cell)

Email:

ross@fripfrop.com (Home)

Educational Institutions:

Augsburg University (1998-2000): Bachelor Of Arts
Luther Seminary (2001-2003): Master Of Arts
Augsburg University (2007-2009): Master Of Business Administration

Employment:

Vice President, GLAAD Media Institute (05/12/2011 - Present)
GLAAD
New York, NY

Previous Employment:

Lutherans Concerned/North America (2009-2011)
Augsburg University (2003-2009)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

ELCA Collaborative (2022-2023)
Total Inclusion! Steering Committee (2019-2023)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

I am keenly interested how the world is changing around us, and how we as the church are going to respond to that changing world. Wartburg Seminary seems the most well-positioned to equip the next generation of Christian leaders, ready to respond to the evolving needs of the world. The institution is clear-eyed, interested in innovation, and willing to step out as a leader among educational institutions. I would like to help shape that vision and future direction of Wartburg, and by extension, the entire ELCA. I'm bringing my work in LGBTQ community building, youth ministry, and advocacy into this role, and I hope that will inform how the institution best responds to the needs of the world, and can present the Gospel in a real, tangible way.

Alternate Committee Nominations:

1. ELCA Foundation Board

Reference: Louise Johnson **E-mail:** Louise.Johnson@elca.org
9/29/2023 12:50:04 PM

Mosaic, Inc.

Ms. Monica Elizabeth Holle

Synod: Nebraska Synod, ELCA, (4A)
Congregation: St Timothy Lutheran Church (ID: 03304) - Omaha, Nebraska
Birthdate: 04/19/1991 **Gender:** Woman
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** White
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

2324 N 52nd St
Omaha, NE 68104 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 9132054489 (Cell)

Email:

sorensenm@huskers.unl.edu (Home)

Educational Institutions:

University of Nebraska - Lincoln (2009-2012): Bachelor Of Science In Business Admin
University of Nebraska - Omaha (2017-2019): Master Of Business Administration

Employment:

Portfolio Credit Support Manager (10/21/2015 - Present)
U.S. Bank
Omaha, NE

Previous Employment:

Fiserv (2013-2015)
Wells Fargo (2012-2012)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

St. Timothy's Lutheran Church (2020-)
Mosaic - Board of Directors (2021-)
The Lutheran Center - UNL (Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry) - Governance Board (2017-2021)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

God has called me to serve Mosaic to further their mission of 'relentlessly pursuing opportunities that empower people'. And this couldn't be more relevant to God's work through the ELCA, as we serve and lift up all of God's kingdom, but particularly those who may be rejected by society due to their disabilities. I have gifts of business acumen and connection by will lead through my faith. In my current career, I have experience with non-profits and financial analysis, which will be a particular benefit as we consider our fiduciary duties as a Board. I also have experience in fundraising, both through my church and with the Lutheran Center. But more than that, I will lead by faith, which is a critical component of my life. I'm active at St. Timothy's, serving on the Stewardship Committee and other activities. Our church has a history of supporting Mosaic, including Rejoicing Spirits. Overall, this is a calling to follow in Jesus' footsteps and love all of God's children.

Reference: Pastor Kathy Gerking **Phone:**4023911144 **E-mail:**KGerking@st-timothys.com

Relationship: Pastor at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church

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Mosaic, Inc.

The Rev. Keith Douglas Hohly

Synod: Central States Synod, ELCA, (4B)
Congregation: First Lutheran Church (ID: 01609) - Mission Hills, Kansas
Birthdate: 07/01/1956 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** White
Rostered: 4B **Leader Key:** L009901
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

6505 W 87th Street
Overland Park, KS 66212 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 9132053784 (Cell)

Email:

khohly56@gmail.com (Home)

Educational Institutions:

Trinity Lutheran Seminary (1982-1986): Master Of Divinity
University of Toledo (1974-1982): Bachelor Of Arts

Employment:

Interim Pastor (01/01/2020 - 01/05/2022)
First Lutheran
St. Joseph, MO

Previous Employment:

Central States Synod (2013-2019)
First Lutheran Church, Mission Hills, KS (1988-2013)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

Mosaic Board of Directors (2012-2018)
Bethany College Board of Directors (2014-2019)
Hollis Renewal Center Board of Directors (1997-2006)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

Having served a previous set of two terms on the Mosaic Board of Directors, I am still 100% dedicated to the work of this ministry and am grateful for the opportunity to be on the board once again. My previous board experience gives me a long term understanding of this ministry.

Reference: Rev. Dr. Michael Brecke **Phone:**9204210941 **E-mail:**michaelbrecke@gmail.com

Relationship: colleague

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Other committee or board: National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc.

The Rev. Carol L. Schneider

Synod: Southwestern Washington Synod, ELCA (1C)
Congregation: St Mark Lutheran Church (ID: 04909) - Lacey, WA
Gender: Female Birthdate: 11/9/1950
Primary Language: English Ethnicity: White
Rostered: Leader Key: L033524
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)
3714 Oakwood St SE
Lacey, WA 98513 United States

Telephone: Preferred: 602-908-1224 (Cell)
E-mail: cschneider10@live.com (Home)

Educational Institutions:

Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (2011-2014): Master Of Divinity
Northwest Christian College (1992-1994): Bachelor Of Science
Southern Oregon State College (1989-1992): No Degree Earned

Employment: Staff Chaplain (11/23/2015-08/31/2018; retired 9/1/2018)
Healthcare Chaplaincy Netowrk
New York, NY

Previous Employment:

Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA (1996-2010)
First Interstate/Wells Fargo Bank (Merger) (1989-1996)

Congregational, Synodical, or Churchwide Service Activities:

Endowment Committee at St. Mark, 2019-2022
Choir at St. Mark, 2019 - present
Olympia Retired Clergy Association (ORCA - discussion and advocacy), 2019-present
Provide pastoral care to congregation when pastors are out of town
Stephen Ministry and Stephen Leader (dates approximate) (2008-2010)
Building Committee at Resurrection LC, Scottsdale, AZ (dates approx.) (1999-2001) Oregon
Synod Outreach Committee (1989-1996)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

Throughout my lifetime, I have tried to discern where God is leading me. As I look back over the path my life has taken, I can see a thread running through it where I have been able to serve God and the church throughout volunteer ministry, lay professional ministry, and then ordained ministry. I believe that, as a retired pastor, I am being called to continue my service to God and the ELCA through this ministry.

In my work as a church building consultant, I worked with congregations and campus ministries in Regions 1, 2, and 4. I worked with congregations through preliminary planning, construction, and financing of capital projects. Campus visits and conversations with campus pastors and some students gave me an insight into what some of the needs of campus communities might be. As a chaplain, my gifts include compassion, empathy, and the willingness to listen to what others are saying and discern sometimes the deeper meaning of their words.

Reference: Beth Utto-Galarneau Phone: 360-591-5533 E-mail: bethbug@aol.com

Relationship: friend and pastor

ELCA Foundation Board

Mr. Andrew George Steele

Synod: Delaware-Maryland Synod, Elca, (8F)
Congregation: Christ Lutheran Church (ID: 02666) - Baltimore, Maryland
Birthdate: 09/12/1986 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** White
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

134 W. Clement Street
Baltimore, MD 21230 United States

Telephone:

Preferred: 8569058779 (Cell)

Email:

asteel@lirs.org (Work)

Educational Institutions:

Wittenberg University (2005-2010): Bachelor Of Arts

Employment:

Chief Development & Mobilization Officer (07/06/2020 - Present)
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Baltimore, MD

Previous Employment:

Wittenberg University (2019-2020)
ELCA Churchwide Office (2013-2019)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

Christ Lutheran Church Council (2022-2023)
ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (South Africa) (2010-2011)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

Over the last 10+ years, I have been privileged to live out my vocational calling. My time serving in the mission advancement unit of the ELCA Churchwide Office provided me with opportunities and experiences that enriched my professional and personal life. I traveled extensively throughout the church to accompany ELCA congregations and members as they were discerning their stewardship and generosity plans. While inviting congregations and members to invest in God's work around the world, I experienced the complex ELCA ecology firsthand. Over the years, I've worked directly with the ELCA Foundation as a colleague, and now as a national partner as I lead the development and faith relations work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. I have served on several non-profit boards including Seafarers International House, We Raise Foundation and United Way North-Northwest. I find board service to be incredibly humbling and a way I can live into being a better servant leader.

Alternate Committee Nominations:

1. Mission Investment Fund Board of Trustees
2. Publishing House (1517 Media) Board of Trustees
3. Church Council

Reference: Ingrid Stafford **Phone:** 8472048799 **E-mail:** stafford.ingrid@gmail.com

Relationship: Ingrid is a mentor of mine who I have also worked with since 2013 in different capacities.

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Committee on Appeals

The Rev. Andrew Arthur Taylor

Synod: Pacifica Synod, ELCA, (2C)
Congregation: Carlton Hills Lutheran Church (ID: 13998) - Santee, California
Birthdate: 09/27/1957 **Gender:** Man
Primary Language: English **Ethnicity:** White
Rostered: 2C **Leader Key:** L021415
Willing to serve: Yes

Preferred Mailing Address: (Home)

7358 PARK VIEW CT
UNIT 147
SANTEE, CA 92071 United States

Telephone: Preferred: 6193227551 (Cell)

Email: NotTheSheriff57@gmail.com (Home)

Educational Institutions:

Luther Seminary (2012-2017): Doctor Of Ministry
Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary (1982-1986): Master Of Divinity
California State University, Long Beach (1978-1980): Bachelor Of Arts

Employment:

Bishop (08/01/2016 - 07/31/2022)
Pacifica Synod of the ELCA
Santa Ana, CA

Previous Employment:

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, San Diego, CA (1997-2016)
First Lutheran Church, Tulare, CA (1992-1997)

Congregational, Synod, or Churchwide Service Activities:

Bridge Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church (contract, not call) (2022-2023)
Bishop Liaison to Churchwide Council (2020-2022)
Chair, Churchside Synod Relations Committee for Conference of Bishops (2021-2022)

What are the gifts, skills, experiences and areas of expertise that you would bring to this work?

I have been privileged to serve in a variety of contexts, mostly as a congregation pastor for 30 years, and as a Synod Bishop for six years, and would bring those experiences into the work of the Committee on Appeals. I was in the Conference of Bishops when the Committee on Appeals revised Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline, and participated in providing feedback. I have dealt with issues of discipline as a bishop and know the necessity of having clear Definitions and Guidelines for such discipline. Through my work on the committee with other Bishops to revise the first call process, I learned to listen to what isn't working, to discuss and discern new processes, and to pay attention to feedback for improvement of such processes. I trust that God works through people, and thus I listen to others, often finding that their feedback contains God's wisdom and direction. I work well cooperatively and collaboratively, and will express my opinions when I feel it appropriate.

Reference: Bishop Deborah Hutterer **Phone:**6028812966 **E-mail:**dhutterer@gcsynod.org

Relationship: Former Colleague in Conference of Bishops

ELCA Future Church: God's Love Made Real

Overview

November 2023

Vision

A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

Purpose

Activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.

Goal

Share the story of Jesus and the ELCA by engaging with 1 million new people as we grow the church together.

Priority Areas

A Welcoming Church: Engaging new, young and diverse people

"Your young ... shall see visions, and your old ... shall dream dreams."
Acts 2:17

A Thriving Church: Rooted in tradition and radically relevant

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? ... You are the light of the world."
Matthew 5:13-14

A Connected, Sustainable Church: Raising the bar together

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."
John 15:5

Strategy

Phase 1:

This phase was completed in February 2023 and yielded a high-level analysis of the ELCA, including key insights related to defining and diagnosing the reality of the ELCA and key insights as to where God might be leading us. Phase one also included the development of two key teams, the Transformation and Multigenerational Teams, who are helping to guide the project. These teams are made up of key stakeholders and young and diverse leaders.

Phase 2:

We are currently in Phase 2, which is about listening to the wider church. Key strategies in this phase include:

- Develop and deploy a rostered leader survey
- Develop and deploy of a member/participant survey

- Develop and deploy a general population survey
- Listening sessions (20 completed)
- Townhall meetings (in process)
- A website: (<https://lovemadereal.elca.org/>)

At the conclusion of Phase 2, we will have an extensive “State of the ELCA” Research Report which will help us build a “Roadmap Plan” for moving forward. We also anticipate that this phase will give us insight into how we might engage the training of leaders (lay and rostered) and how we might better support the health and vocation of our rostered leaders, who are key to the success of this initiative.

Phase 3:

In Phase 3 we will be implementing the roadmap, developed in Phase 2. This phase will include:

- Sharing insights learned from the research
- Ongoing training of leaders
- Surveys to measure our effectiveness and monitor our progress
- Sharing ongoing insights from broader data and learning from Barna and Fuller

Ongoing work:

- Alignment of the staffing and budget of the churchwide organization to support the work in synods, congregations, and organizations to accomplish our vision, purpose, and goal
- Regular engagement and communication with key stakeholders
- Ongoing support and training for innovation in the CWO, synods, and congregations
- Deepening work and commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Cultivation of key donors who can support the scaling of successful innovations

Summary of Peace Not Walls Review Update

Review Overview

In 2022, the Middle East and North Africa desk of ELCA Service and Justice began a review of the ELCA campaign Peace Not Walls, which for almost twenty years has served as a program of accompaniment, awareness-raising, and advocacy for Israel/Palestine in accordance with the ELCA Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine (adopted by the ELCA Church Council and Churchwide Assembly in 2005).

The review aimed to determine, through a process of feedback gathering with Palestinian partners and with ELCA and ecumenical stakeholders, the current realities on the ground and how the ELCA is called by God and invited by the local church into future engagement in the region in accompaniment and justice work. The review team was composed of 50% Palestinian membership, including three pastors from our main ELCA companion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

Through intensive interviews with Palestinian Christian leaders and an online survey of more than 70 ELCA respondents, as well the insights and expertise of the review team, the process identified several key learnings and proposed seven recommendations shared below.

The report and recommendations were then approved by Service and Justice in September 2023 and by the Office of the Presiding Bishop in October 2023.

Key learnings of the review process:

1. **Permanent Occupation:** Since 2005, the physical and political infrastructure has developed for a permanent occupation of Palestine by Israel: a systemic denial of human rights from Palestinians that includes illegal confiscation of land, withholding of natural resources, collective punishment through violence and restricted movement, and numerous violations of UN and other humanitarian law. Palestinian partners are calling the ELCA to move from a focus on “peace” to a “justice” focus, recognizing the stark power imbalance between occupier and occupied, one that many ecumenical, interreligious, and secular human rights groups agree meets international definitions of apartheid and/or settler-colonialism. Only Israel can end the unjust occupation; and only ending the occupation and offering freedom and equality to Palestinians offers the grounds for a true and lasting peace for all of the people of the Holy Land.

2. **Christian presence:** The local, Indigenous Christian community in the Holy Land is now threatened, both by increasing anti-Christian harassment and attacks and by the emigration of Palestinians due to the hardships of the occupation, which further shrinks the minority Christian community, already less than 2% of the total population. This is a crisis not only for the global church, which risks losing 2,000 years of continuous connection to the Holy Land through the “living stones” of the local church, but also for Palestinian society, in which Christian churches and institutions play an outsize role in education, health care, social work, leadership, scholarship, and the arts.

3. **ELCA engagement:** The ELCA can make a substantial difference in supporting Palestinian Christian presence, raising awareness among our members and neighbors, and advocating for the justice of God’s reign in the Holy Land. Palestinian partners lifted up the vital importance of our ELCA *accompaniment* through personnel and financial support, *awareness-raising* through Holy Land trips and theological and educational resources, and *advocacy* (in partnership with ELCA Witness in Society and other partners) to call our own U.S. government to steward its singular political, military, and economic influence in Israel to advance justice for Palestinians through an end to the occupation and a political solution for the sharing of land and equal rights. The ELCA was invited to consider a holistic future engagement in Palestine and Israel that attends to the intersections of this justice work with gender, economic, racial, environmental, post-colonial, and Indigenous justice issues in the U.S. and globally.

Recommendations of the review process:

1. Peace Not Walls will be renamed and reshaped as **SUMUD: for Justice in Palestine and Israel**, an initiative within the MENA desk that will build and expand holistic networks for accompaniment, awareness-raising, and advocacy within and beyond the ELCA. (*Sumud* is an Arabic word meaning “steadfastness,” or nonviolent “resistance through existence,” by which Palestinians resist dehumanization and erasure through generative work for justice, healing, education, and opportunity.)
2. SUMUD will produce and/or share **theological and educational resources** to raise awareness of the need for justice in the Holy Land.
3. SUMUD will develop **new and existing networks** for engagement with ELCA members and ecumenical and interreligious partners that follow ELCA Future Church goals of engaging new, young, and diverse members and working across various expressions and ministries of the ELCA as well as with our neighbors.
4. SUMUD will continue to develop and advise physical and virtual **Holy Land trips** designed for awareness-raising and accompaniment of the Palestinian church.
5. SUMUD will work with the CWO to conduct a formal **review of the 2005 ELCA Strategy** for Engagement in Israel and Palestine with the goal of preparing a revised, updated, and/or new strategy for adoption through the appropriate ELCA channels.
6. SUMUD will expand ELCA investment in the work of justice for Palestine and Israel through the development of a **new full-time staff position** within the MENA desk to oversee SUMUD and to collaborate with the new advocacy position for Middle East policy in Witness and Society, with OPB, and with other ELCA areas and desks. A short-term contract position (SUMUD Launch Coordinator) will begin Nov. 1.
7. SUMUD will require a **commitment and investment of necessary resources** (of finances, time, attention, and prayer) by the ELCA to support these recommendations.

View the full report and related webinar presentation at elca.org/peacenotwalls.

Creation Care Network's Update

October 2023

Growing Lavishly:

ELCA Creation Care Network: A collaboration of ministries and organizations which support various ways to act on our shared calling to care for creation. 30+ members of ELCA leaders, synod team representatives + affiliate organizations meeting quarterly to leverage assets and communicate effectively across ministries.

100+ Congregations and Synods with Green Teams, Energy Stewardship Success, +/or Community Gardens ready to share their experience ([See LRC Map](#)).
Even more reported in 2021's Form C:

C41 - Creation Care	
Integrate Creation Care in Education and Ministry	695
Intentionally Reduce Energy Use	1,975
Invest in Sustainable Energy	320
Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle	3,655
Share Land with the Community	1,563
No response to any	1,430

Networked Human Resources

Online share board of incoming [Action Plans](#), monthly Connection Calls for team support, Speakers/Advisors network, & many leaders engaged in multi-faith *Blessed Tomorrow* campaign: *One Home, One Future.*

Continuing Education [Opportunities](#) offered via **Seminaries** and trusted partners along with access to certified coaching and freely accessible preaching & worship resources.

[Pilot Cool Congregation Greenhouse Gas Measurement Team](#) 35+ members team discerning best tools for the average congregation looking to measurably reduce energy.

[Climate Care Social Message](#) adopted: 500+ responses submitted (*mostly supportive*)! The footnotes and challenge to all expressions of ELCA offer a path forward.

Youth Climate Summit relating and exploring how to enact the ELCA social statements and messages relating to climate. (Oct.2023)

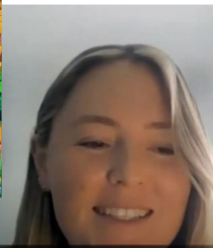
In Development:

Creation Care Network ELCA Resource Hub

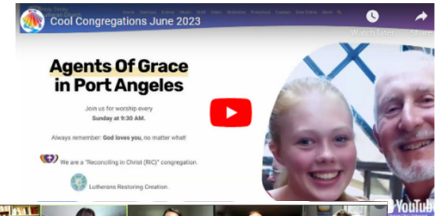
Listing of trusted resources to help identify local means to reduce energy usage, save money, and support local efforts for clean, equitable energy and livelihoods.

Churchwide Implementation Plan to Reduce GHG Emissions

Facilities Manager joining forces with trusted connections in the EPA and other energy steward experts in response to the [Memorial for a Just Transition](#).



Christine Moffett
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Still to be unearthed (needs fertilization):

Collaboration with Mission Investment Fund as partners in story-sharing, increasing ELCA's capacity to receive government support for green building, loan preference for sustainable building/renovations, etc.

Synod communications to consistently encourage every congregation to take the *Actions Speak Loudly!* survey and use it connect with others in their region. bit.ly/LRCAActionPlan

Most programs mentioned above can be explored more at www.LutheransRestoringCreation.org and eventually at the re-vamped ELCA's resource hub.



Values

What are the values for gender justice within the ELCA in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*? (See pages 52-59.)

1. Use scriptural translations and interpretation that are not androcentric or that support a gender-based hierarchy and dichotomy.
2. Teach the faith in ways that highlight gender justice.
3. Use language for humans that is gender-inclusive and for God that is gender-inclusive and expansive.
4. Create, use, and account for church policies and practices that support gender justice.
5. Ensure that church finances are distributed in ways that are gender just and have the effect of supporting gender justice.

What are the values for gender justice within all of society in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*? (See pages 59-68.)

1. Support laws, policies, and practices that respect diverse bodies.
2. Address the effects *and* the roots of gender-based violence.
3. Call for equitable medical research and health care delivery and access.
4. Create equitable economic policies, regulations, and policies.
5. Foster and support diverse and multifaceted social and economic roles in all spheres of daily living.
6. Create and use resources, policies, and practices for all families to flourish.
7. Ensure legal reforms, humane policies, and adequate services for migrants.
8. Encourage and use portrayals of people that do not objectify or stereotype them.
9. Increase women's public leadership in all spheres.

Directives

Select Implementing Resolutions related to *Faith Sexism and Justice: A Call to Action* (See pages 81-83.)

- #1** "be guided by this statement's convictions and commitments to resist and dismantle patriarchy and sexism, and to transform life in the church and in society;"
- #2** "pray, work, and advocate for justice for all those affected by sexism and patriarchy and draw upon this statement in forming judgements and actions in daily life;"
- #3** "be guided by the ELCA social message 'Gender-based Violence' (2015);"
- #4** "reflect on how mass media and social media distort sex, gender, and sexuality and address this problem in [your] own actions;"
- #5** "encourage women and girls to pursue leadership roles" in ministry;
- #6** "present positive gender roles;"
- #7** "address inequities . . . as well as the systemic causes of such inequities, for rostered and lay women of various backgrounds, identities, and personal experiences, and to advocate for adequate and equitable leave for all parents and families;"
- #8** "use gender-inclusive and expansive language for God;"
- #10** "support and advocate for measures, policies, and laws consistent with this social statement and" align programs with it;
- #11** "recognize past and present CWO efforts to address institutional sexism and foster gender justice in this church, and to urge sustained devotion of resources, such as support for CWO's Justice for Women program;"
- #15** "renew . . . efforts to welcome, care for, and support the lives and gifts of LGBTQIA+ persons and to oppose discrimination against these persons;"
- #16** "embed and incorporate anti-sexism training and protocols in . . . ongoing work;"
- #17** "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."



Values

What are the values for racial justice within the ELCA in *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*?

1. Remember unity and oneness is in Christ.
2. Hold multiculturalism as a given and a glimpse of the future.
3. Relativize the values and behavior of the predominant culture.
4. Recognize when white people and white culture are favored.
5. Resist cynicism.
6. Refuse to blame victimized people for their situations.
7. Assure the participation of all people.
8. Address the relationship between racism and social issues.
9. Communicate openly what the vision and responsibilities of this church are.
10. Practice moral deliberation.
11. Work for justice for all.

Directives

“a two-day anti-racism training be required for all new churchwide staff and elected and volunteer leaders” (Social Policy Resolution CC01.11.52 (2002))

In the “Explanation of the declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent,” the ELCA Church Council adopted these actions on June 27, 2019:

- To call this church into a time of study and to support the apology by encouraging congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to find ways to share this apology broadly;
- To encourage congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to observe an annual Day of Repentance;
- To affirm the Lutheran World Federation Council resolution “Commemorating the 2019 Quad-centennial of the Forced Transatlantic Voyage of Enslaved African Peoples to the Americas—Human Beings Not for Sale!”;
- To engage in anti-racism and racial justice work, work toward economic justice—including the study of reparations.

- To work to address and end modern forms of slavery and human trafficking” (CC19.06.23).

From “How Strategic and Authentic is our Diversity: A Call for Confession, Reflection, and Healing Action” (2019)

“•**Theological Framing and Equipping** that more broadly reflect the wide ethnic diversity of who we are, have been, and are yet becoming. Our church must dig deeper into the history and emerging theology that ground, clarify, and justify our call and continuing commitment to ethnic diversity and inclusion.

•**Healing Action** to address the personal woundedness perpetuated by racism and racial prejudice. Deeper diagnosis of the collective, structural, and systemic nature of these sins will give us the opportunity for deeper prescriptive action toward healing.

•**Structural Accountability** to deepen the intentional focus of ELCA policies, governance, related structures, agencies, and organizations, so that they might serve the goals and initiatives of an authentically diverse church in society.

•**Theological Education and Leadership Development** that, drawing on the aforementioned theological framing, equip leadership for a ‘metanoia movement,’ a change of hearts and minds about the violent sin of racism and the value of diversity, equitable inclusivity, and racial justice.

•**Partnerships With Full Communion, Ecumenical and Interreligious Partners, and Related Organizations** that deepen our shared commitment and struggle toward authentic diversity and inclusion in our systems, structures, and organizations” (page 2).

“The Church Council should further empower this task force or create another external body to track this work, support the staff desk responsible for it, and assess the intentional relationships between the areas doing this work, including: The reporting and auditing process, and Full accountability for the work of strategic authentic diversity in alignment with goal five of Future Directions 2025” (page 13).

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 4.01. 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.**
- 4.02. To participate in God’s mission, this church shall:**
- a. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.**
 - b. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.**
 - c. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.**
 - d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.**
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.**
 - f. 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.**
- 4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this church shall:**
- a. Receive, establish, and support those congregations, ministries, organizations, institutions, and agencies necessary to carry out God’s mission through this church.**
 - b. Encourage and equip all members to worship, learn, serve, and witness; to fulfill their calling to serve God in the world; and to be stewards of the earth, their lives, and the Gospel.**
 - c. Call forth, equip, certify, set apart, and oversee a ministry of Word and Sacrament, a ministry of Word and Service, and such other forms of ministry that will enable this church to fulfill its mission.**

- d. **Seek unity in faith and life with all Lutherans within its boundaries and be ready to enter union negotiations whenever such unity is manifest.**
- e. **Foster 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.**
- f. **Develop relationships with communities of other faiths for dialogue and common action.**
- g. **Lift its voice in concord and work in concert with forces for good, to serve humanity, cooperating with church and other groups participating in activities that promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged.**
- h. **Produce and publish worship materials for corporate, family, and personal use and resources for education, witness, service, and stewardship.**
- i. **Establish and maintain theological seminaries, schools, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions to equip people for leadership and service in church and society.**
- j. **Assure faithfulness to this church's confessional position and purpose and provide for resolution of disputes.**
- k. **Publish a periodical and make use of the arts and public communication media to proclaim the Gospel and to inform, interpret, and edify.**
- l. **Study social issues and trends, work to discover the causes of oppression and injustice, and develop programs of ministry and advocacy to further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world.**
- m. **Establish, support, and recognize institutions and agencies that minister to people in spiritual and temporal needs.**
- n. **Work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction.**
- o. **Provide structures and decision-making processes for this church that foster mutuality and interdependence and that involve people in making decisions that affect them.**
- p. **Support the mission of this church by arranging for and encouraging financial contributions for its work, management of its resources, and processes of planning and evaluation.**
- q. **Provide fair personnel practices and adequate compensation, benefits, and pensions for those employed by this church.**

Chapter 5.

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

- 5.01. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be one church. This church recognizes that all power and authority in the Church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Therefore, all actions of this church by congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization shall be carried out under his rule and authority in accordance with the following principles:**
- a. The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization shall act in accordance with the Confession of Faith set forth in Chapter 2 of this constitution and with the Statement of Purpose set forth in Chapter 4.**
 - b. This church, in faithfulness to the Gospel, is committed to be an inclusive church in the midst of division in society. Therefore, in their organization and outreach, the congregations, synods, and churchwide units of this church shall seek to exhibit the inclusive unity that is God’s will for the Church.**
 - c. The congregations, synods, and churchwide organization of this church are interdependent expressions sharing responsibly in God’s mission. In an interdependent relationship, primary responsibility for particular functions will vary among the expressions. Whenever possible, the entity most directly affected by a decision shall be the principal party responsible for decision and implementation, with the other entities facilitating and assisting. Each congregation, synod, and separately incorporated ministry, as well as the churchwide organization itself, is a separate legal entity and is responsible for exercising its powers and authorities.**
 - d. Each congregation and synod in its governing documents shall include the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose and such components as are required in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Beyond these common elements, congregations and synods shall be free to organize in such manner as each deems appropriate for its jurisdiction.**
 - e. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the appropriate office or unit of the churchwide organization, through the Church Council, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and**

women. At least 10 percent of the members of these assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. Processes shall be developed that will assure that in selecting staff there will be a balance of women and men, persons of color and persons whose primary language is other than English, laypersons, and persons on the rosters of this church. This balance is to be evident in the selection of staff consistent with the inclusive policy of this church.

- f. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, synods, through synod councils, shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of their assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men, and that the representation of rostered ministers shall include both women and men. Each synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of the membership of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.
- g. A layperson is a person who is not on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or the roster of Ministers of Word and Service of this church.
- h. Leaders in this church should demonstrate that they are servants by their words, lifestyle, and manner of leadership. Leaders in this church will recognize their accountability to the Triune God, to the whole Church, to each other, and to the organization of this church in which they have been asked to serve.
- i. As a steward of the resources that God has provided, this church shall organize itself to make the most effective use of its resources to accomplish its mission.
- j. Each assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body of the churchwide organization or any churchwide units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, task force, or other body.

- 5.01.A16.** *This church commits itself to ethnic and racial diversity. Each expression of this church shall annually assess its ethnic and racial diversity when compared to the demographic data of its community or territory. The churchwide organization will work with synods as they assist congregations to reach out to persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.*
- 5.01.B19.** *Each synod shall submit its goals and strategies to the appropriate churchwide unit or office and shall annually submit a report on progress toward its goals to such unit or office.*
- 5.01.C21.** *The term, “persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English,” shall be understood to mean African American, African Descent, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native people. This definition, however, shall not be understood as limiting this church’s commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work.*
- 5.01.D16.** *The Churchwide Assembly shall receive reports from the presiding bishop and the secretary that monitor this church’s progress toward meeting the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16.*
- 5.01.E19.** *The Church Council shall establish triennial percentage goals for this church to meet the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16. The minimum goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.*
- 5.01.F19.** *It is the goal of this church that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.*
- 5.01.G19.** *To implement 5.01.g., those deacons elected as laypersons prior to the adoption of this provision may complete the term to which they were elected as a layperson. They would not be eligible for reelection as a layperson if such reelection were otherwise possible.*
- 5.01.H21.** *For purposes of the representational principles set forth in 5.01.e. and f., the percentage of laypersons that is not allocated to women or men may be allocated to persons who identify as gender non-binary, gender fluid, women, men, or other genders.*

†S5.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

†S5.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in The Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, engaging in faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God’s mission in the world.

Chapter 6.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

†S6.01. 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.

†S6.02. To participate in God’s mission, this synod as a part of the Church shall:

- a. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- b. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. 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.

- †S6.03. This synod, in cooperation with the churchwide organization, shall bear primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of this church in its territory. In fulfillment of this role and consistent with policies and procedures of this church, the synod shall:
- a. Provide for pastoral care of congregations and rostered ministers in the synod;
 - b. Plan for, facilitate, and nurture the mission of this church through congregations;
 - c. Strengthen interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and foster relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as ecumenical partners;
 - d. Interpret the work of this church to congregations and to the public on the territory of the synod.
- †S6.03.01. The responsibilities of the synod include the following:
- a. providing for pastoral care of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service in the synod, including:
 - 1) approving candidates for rostered ministry in cooperation with the appropriate seminaries of this church, which may be done through multi-synod committees;
 - 2) authorizing ordinations and ordaining rostered ministers on behalf of this church;
 - 3) consulting in the call process for rostered ministers.
 - b. providing for leadership recruitment, preparation, and support in accordance with churchwide standards and policies, including:
 - 1) nurturing and supporting congregations and lay leaders;
 - 2) seeking and recruiting qualified candidates for the rostered ministries of this church;
 - 3) making provision for pastoral care, call review, and guidance;
 - 4) encouraging and supporting persons on the rosters of this church in stewardship of their abilities, care of self, and pursuit of continuing education to undergird their effectiveness of service; and
 - 5) supporting recruitment of leaders for this church's colleges, universities, seminaries, and social ministry organizations.
 - c. providing for discipline of congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service; as well as for termination of call, appointment, adjudication, and appeals consistent with Chapter 20 of this church's constitution.
 - d. providing for archives in conjunction with other synods.
- †S6.03.02. In planning for, facilitating, and nurturing the mission of this church through congregations, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. developing of new ministries, redevelopment of existing ministries, and support and assistance in the conclusion, if necessary, of a particular ministry;
- b. leading and encouraging of congregations in their evangelism efforts;
- c. assisting members of its congregations in carrying out their ministries in the world;
- d. encouraging congregations to respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society;
- e. providing resources for congregational life;
- f. grouping congregations in conferences, clusters, coalitions, or other area subdivisions for mission purposes.

†S6.03.03. In strengthening interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and in fostering relationships with agencies and institutions affiliated with or related to this church as well as with ecumenical partners, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. promoting interdependent relationships among congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, and entering into relationships with other synods in the region;
- b. fostering organizations for youth, women, and men, and organizations for language or ethnic communities;
- c. developing relationships with social ministry organizations and ministries, participating in their mission planning, and providing supportive funding;
- d. supporting relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of colleges, universities, and campus ministries;
- e. maintaining relationships with and providing supportive funding on behalf of seminaries and continuing education centers;
- f. fostering supporting relationships with camps and other outdoor ministries;
- g. fostering supporting relationships with preschools, elementary schools, and secondary schools operated by congregations of the synod;
- h. fostering relationships with ecumenical and global companions;
- i. cooperating with other synods and the churchwide organization in creating, using, and supporting regions to carry out those functions of the synod which can best be done cooperatively with other synods and the churchwide organization.

†S6.03.04. In interpreting the work of this church on the territory of the synod, the responsibilities of the synod include the following:

- a. encouraging financial support for the work of this church by individuals and congregations;
- b. participating in churchwide programs;
- c. interpreting social statements in a manner consistent with the interpretation given by the churchwide unit or office which

assisted in the development of the statement, and suggestion of social study issues;

d. providing ecumenical guidance and encouragement.

†S6.04. Except as otherwise provided in this constitution and bylaws, the Synod Council shall establish processes that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of the synod assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons; and that, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent of the lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units shall be women and, as nearly as possible, at least 45 percent shall be men; and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers shall include both men and women. This synod shall establish processes that will enable it to reach a minimum goal that 10 percent of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.

†S6.04.01. It is the goal of this synod that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, committees, and organizational units of this synod be youth and young adults. The Synod Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of this synod, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.

†S6.05. Each assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body of this synod or any synod units shall be conclusively presumed to have been properly constituted, and neither the method of selection nor the composition of any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body may be challenged in a court of law by any person or be used as the basis of a challenge in a court of law to the validity or effect of any action taken or authorized by any such assembly, council, committee, board, commission, task force, or other body.

†S6.06. References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God’s mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 4.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- *C4.01.** 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.
- *C4.02.** To participate in God’s mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - b. Proclaim God’s saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ’s sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - c. Carry out Christ’s Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - d. Serve in response to God’s love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing itself to their needs.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. 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.
- *C4.03.** To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
 - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.

- g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for this congregation's ministry and the ministry of the other expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - h. Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
 - i. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.
- *C4.04.** This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the bylaws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational group and shall review their actions. [Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions in the section on the Congregation Committees.]
- *C4.05.** This congregation shall adopt and periodically review a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.
- *C4.06.** References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of this church—congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization—as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Chapter 5.

POWERS OF THE CONGREGATION

- *C5.01.** The powers of this congregation are those necessary to fulfill its purpose.
- *C5.02.** The powers of this congregation are vested in the Congregation Meeting called and conducted as provided in this constitution and bylaws.
- *C5.03.** Only such authority as is delegated to the Congregation Council or other organizational units in this congregation's governing documents is recognized. All remaining authority is retained by this congregation. This congregation is authorized to:
- a. call a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - b. terminate the call of a pastor as provided in Chapter 9;
 - c. call a minister of Word and Service;
 - d. terminate the call of a minister of Word and Service in conformity with the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - e. adopt amendments to the constitution, as provided in Chapter 16, amendments to the bylaws, as specified in Chapter 17, and continuing resolutions, as provided in Chapter 18;
 - f. approve the annual budget;
 - g. acquire real and personal property by gift, devise, purchase, or other lawful means;

1517 Media	MIF (FCU)	ELCA Foundation	Portico	Women of the ELCA
Epiphany I	4th Floor Learning Center	Epiphany II	Pentecost	Advent
Tracey Beasley	Nick Billardello	Marcus Bigott	Lisa Ahlness	Kevin Anderson
Sheena Foster	Jamie Bruesehoff	Bill Callister	Ben Bergren	Heather Brown
Kristy Henriksen	Olivia Martin-Call	Joanne Engquist	Susan Boxberger	Rindra Josoa
Valerie Shaw	Hans Giller	Pamela Hoh	Leroy Cannon	Joel Miller
Loren Solberg	Tara Lynn	Ethan Miller-Perez	Divine	Linda Rivera
Loni Taylor	Keoni Newman	Kari Olsen	Emily Hartner	Andraine Sinaga
	Kjersten Sullivan	Noah Roux	Cherrish Holland	
	Iván Perez	Jennifer Trom	David Lenz	
			Mitch McCartney	
			Gwendolyn King	
Sue Briner	Patricia Lull	Amy Current	Shelley Bryan Wee	Brenda Bos
Pedro Suárez	Jim Dunlop		Christopher deForest	Donald Kreiss
Mark Goodman		Jesse Brown		
Alejandro Mejia	Moses Penumaka	Aubrey Thonvold	Shari Seifert	Khader El-Yateem

Synod Visit Reports

Name: Susan Boxberger
Synod Visited: Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod
Visit Date: May 5-7, 2023
Purpose of Visit: “Sister Synod” visit, for their Synod Assembly

What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?

The greatest joy and a main event of the assembly was the election of a new synod bishop. The election was decided on the fifth ballot. Although I was not acquainted with any of the nominees, all seemed capable and worthy. I was especially impressed that, when the matter came to the fifth ballot, the two finalists sat together and expressed obvious affection and respect for one another. The new bishop is the Rev. Becca Middeke-Conlin.

The synod, after two years of committee work and study, presented a motion to join the 29 other synods of the ELCA as a Reconciling in Christ synod. After the motion was presented, there were only a few comments and a relatively minor amendment, and *no one* spoke against adopting it. I applaud them for their open-mindedness and the Spirit-filled way they framed it.

While the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod is struggling in many ways (as are many others), and they’re a very small synod to begin with, they choose to reframe the situation in more positive terms: they refer to themselves as “scrappy.” They are creative in finding solutions and new approaches to issues that affect a lot of us. Also, it was clear that many of the attendees already knew and liked each other and enjoyed catching up.

I was struck by a statement made by Bishop Michael Girlinghouse in the Friday night sermon, which he was quoting from a mentor of his. He said that, like many of us, he tends to notice the empty pews in churches he visits, but ministry isn’t done by empty pews; it’s done by the *people* who are there in the pews, and we should focus more on that.

How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

I heard references to being “church together.” There were lots of mentions of churchwide organizations and related ministries that pointed to collaboration among the three expressions and other organizations of the church. Throughout the weekend, there were conversations and presentations that made it evident that the congregations represented, and the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod itself, are a part of something bigger.

I was approached by someone who has been invited to consider making herself available for Church Council but was leaning away from it. She wanted to speak to me about it because she is reconsidering.

I drove to the assembly by myself, expecting that I wouldn’t know anyone except Secretary Sue Rothmeyer and outgoing Bishop Girlinghouse. It was a pleasant surprise to see familiar faces from the Central States Synod and a few others. It drove home the point I’d previously realized, that the ELCA is really a small world. I also enjoyed chatting with others I met for the first time.

There was consideration and passage of a [resolution] to the churchwide organization, directing exploration of funding sources for several minority ministries, as was passed regarding Native American ministries at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. This certainly addresses directly the goal of reaching a million new, young and diverse people by 2030.

Name: Mitch McCartney
Synod Visited: Western Iowa Synod
Visit Date: April 21, 2023
Purpose of Visit: Synod Assembly

What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?

The theme for the Western Iowa Synod Assembly was “A Place for You.” Given the current political climate nationally and in Iowa, the discussions about inclusivity and unity in the church were especially timely and poignant.

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 asked to moderate a panel of synod executive committee members who introduced themselves to the assembly and spoke about their calling to the role they are in respectively. Consistent with the assembly theme, I was able to share a little about the Church Council and how we relate to one another with respect and a shared desire for mutual understanding.

Name: Loren Solberg
Synod Visited: Northwestern Minnesota Synod
Visit Date: June 3, 2023
Purpose of Visit: Synod Assembly

What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?

The synod this year held their assembly via ZOOM in three different locations: Bemidji, Moorhead, and Fergus Falls, Minnesota. I attended the meeting at the Bemidji location (Calvary Lutheran Church) and was very well received. I had an opportunity to visit in person with the members that were in attendance and was especially grateful to visit with members of Zion Lutheran Church in Blackduck, Minnesota where I was baptized and confirmed. The synod meeting was very tightly scheduled but I was introduced and interviewed for few minutes over ZOOM, thus able to connect with the entire synod attendees.

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 visit with attendees during breaks at the Bemidji site. A general theme was great appreciation for being able to connect with someone from the Church Council. There were not any specific questions of Church Council activities, but I encouraged attendees to contact me if they have any future questions. Next year they plan on have everyone attend in one location. I was invited, and I accepted, to attend that event.

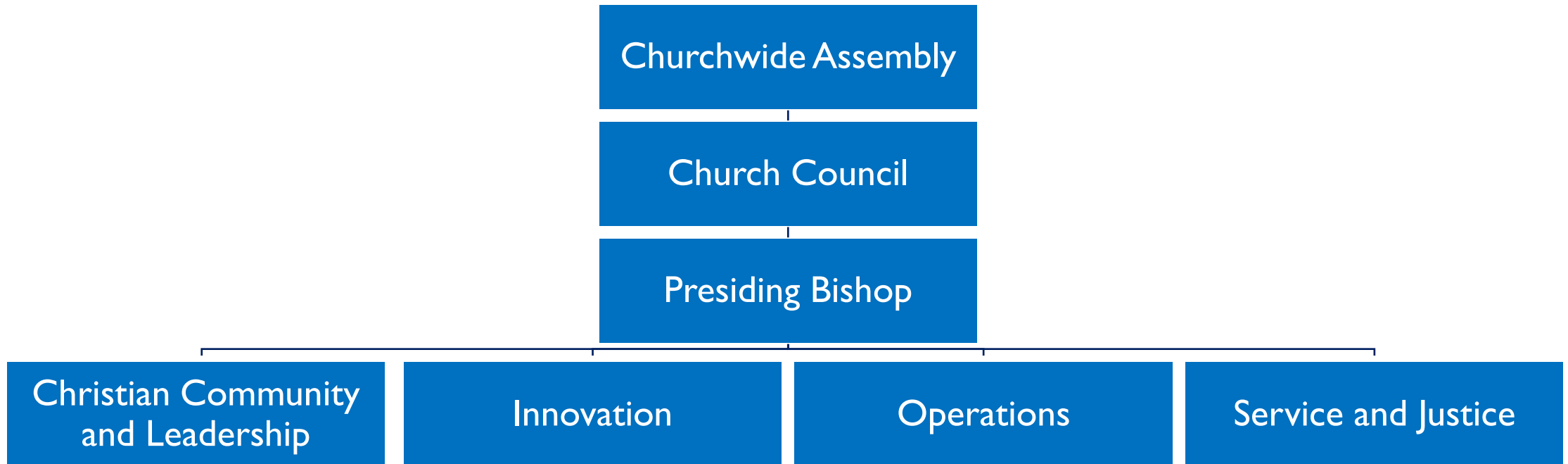


Church Council

Administrative Team Introduction

ELCA Structure

ELCA's Constitution, Purpose, and Vision



The Churchwide Organization

shall serve on behalf of and in support of this church's members, congregations, and synods in proclaiming the Gospel, reaching out in witness and service both globally and throughout the territory of this church, nurturing the members of this church in the daily life of faith, and manifesting the unity of this church with the whole Church of Jesus Christ.

The Administrative Team

shall assist the presiding bishop in providing leadership, planning, oversight, management, supervision, and coordination in the operation of the churchwide organization

Administrative Team

Iain Chester, Executive for Innovation

Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop

Lori Fedyk, Treasurer

Phillip Hirsch, Executive Director, Christian
Community & Leadership

Tammy Jackson, Interim Executive Director, Service
and Justice

Louise Johnson, Executive for Administration

Rhondean Johnson, Executive, People and Diversity,
Equity, and Inclusion

Sue Rothmeyer, Secretary

Rachel Wind, Executive for Development



Administrative Team Advisors

Jennifer DeLeon, Director for Racial Justice

Ignacio Madrussan, Financial Solutions
Manager

Ben Pearthree, Engagement Strategist

Nicolette Peñaranda, Program Director for
African Descent Ministries

Judith Roberts, Senior Director, Diversity,
Equity, and Inclusion



Christian Community and Leadership

Exists to recruit, train, and send leaders who establish and grow Christian Communities

**Putting our
Purpose to
work:
CCL Goals**

Engage New People

Recruit, train
and send leaders
to support this
engagement.

Measure how it
is going, test
new ideas and
adapt.

CCL Goals

1. By 2030 activate the ELCA to engage new People.
2. By 2027 Develop 1,000 new leaders to support engaging new People (Younger and More Diverse)
3. Make measurement, assessment, feedback and innovation standard practice in CCL



What does our work look like in CCL?

Leadership

Evangelism

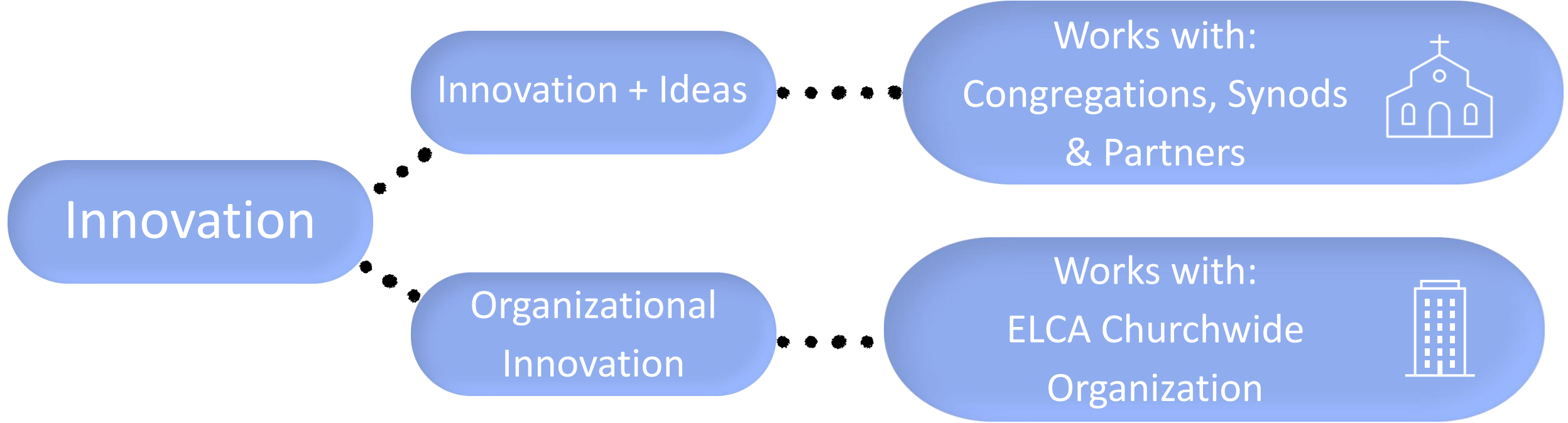
Discipleship

Young
Adults

Innovation

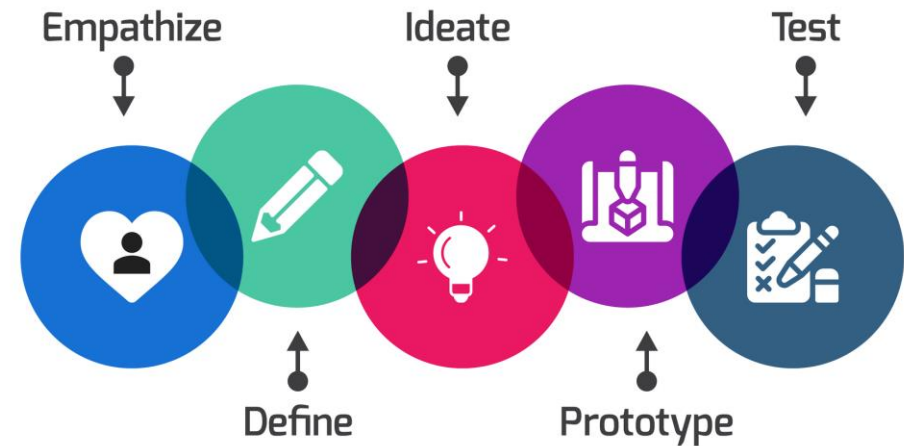
Exists to create a culture of collaboration and innovation at the CWO and to test new and useful things alongside the church.

Innovation Home Area Structure



Our Toolkit for Innovation: **Design Thinking**

a method for **creative problem-solving** that works on an understanding that the best problem-solving involves the perspectives of those who will use the design.



Our second iteration will:

- Be a lot shorter (6 months instead of 2 years)
- Build cohorts that are geographically close for relationship building/shared context.
- Include a self-guided experience that we'll test alongside our other offering.

Congregations  Lead
INITIATIVE

Service & Justice

Exists to foster and facilitate this church's engagement in service and promote efforts to call and act for justice.



Building Resilient Communities

Meets human needs and enhances human dignity; works to overturn oppression and injustice; and engages collaboratively toward the flourishing of human community and creation – internationally and domestically, through advocacy, development, and disaster response programming

**Building
Resilient
Communities**

Witness in Society

Advancing Justice and shining a light for peace and dignity in the public sphere.

- Lutheran Office for World Community
- Federal Hub in Washington, D.C.
- Lutheran state public policy offices and affiliated locations
- Corporate Social Responsibility

**Witness in
Society**

Accompanying Peoples, Communities, and Networks

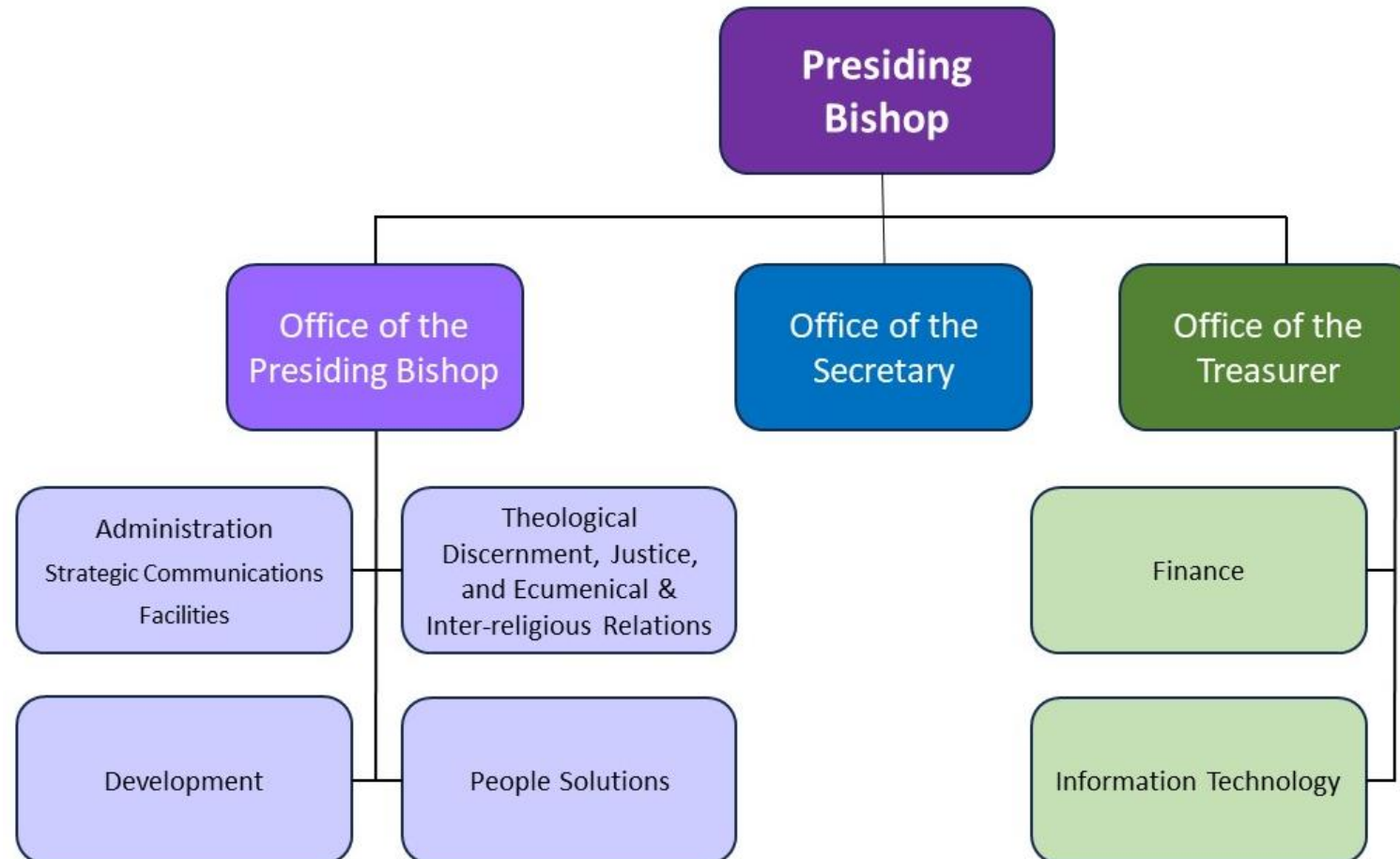
- **Companion Engagement and Global Personnel:** Maintains global relationships between churches as it shares mission personnel and carries out mutual endeavors for evangelical witness
- **Ministries with Diverse Cultures and Communities:** Supports ethnic-specific and indigenous ministries, and the commitment of this church to diversity and inclusivity



Operations

Comprises of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Office of the Treasurer and the Office of the Secretary

Operations Home Area Structure






ELCA Vision

A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.



ELCA Purpose

Activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.



ELCA Priorities

A Welcoming Church: Engaging new, young and diverse people

“Your young ... shall see visions, and your old ... shall dream dreams.” Acts 2:17

A Thriving Church: Rooted in tradition and radically relevant

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? ... You are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:13-14

A Connected, Sustainable Church: Raising the bar together

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5



ELCA Churchwide Organization

Proposed 2024 Budget

November 2023

**Unrestricted (Current Fund)
Proposed Budget
FY2024**



Unrestricted Budget – Summary

(in Thousands)

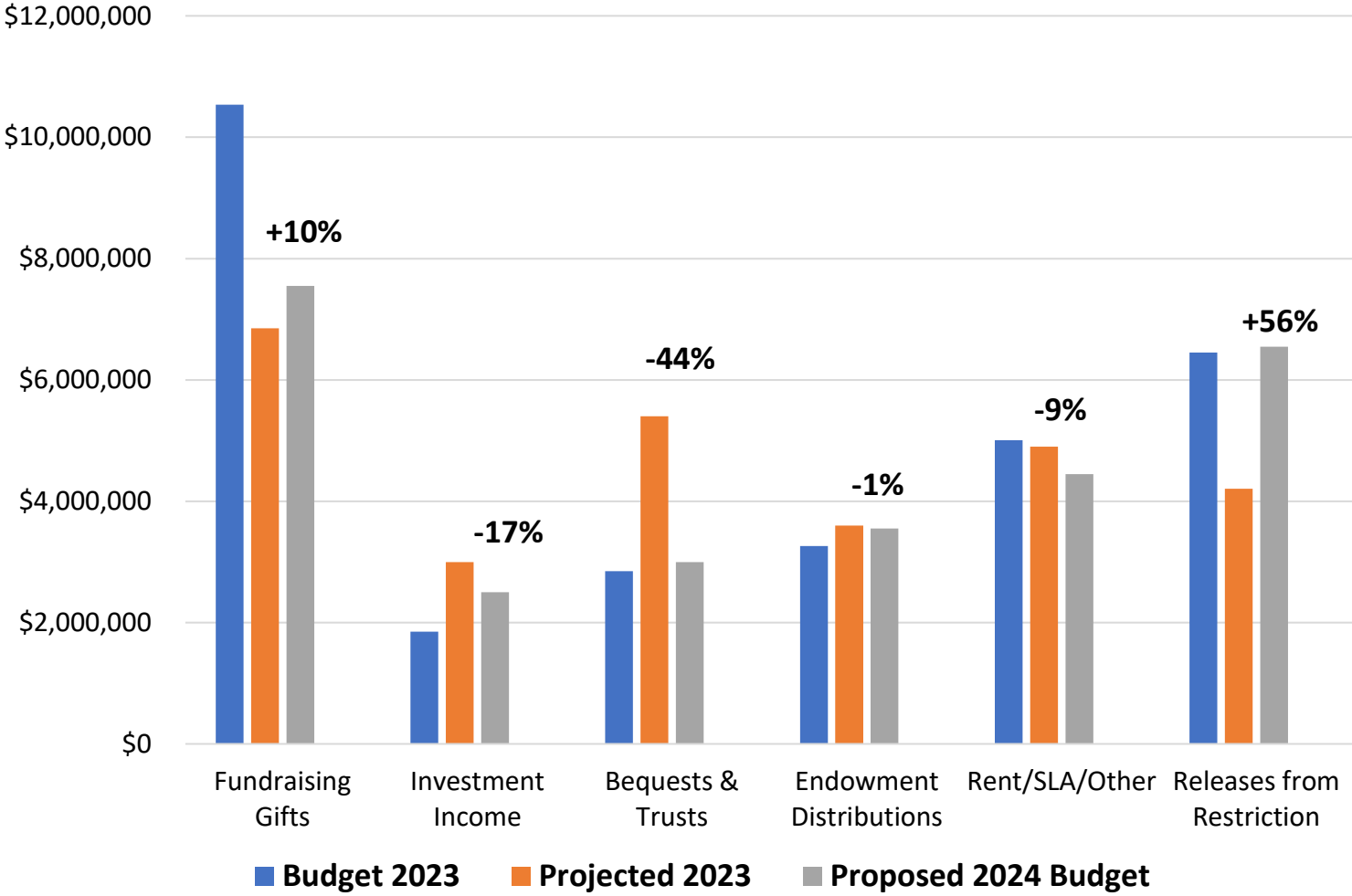
	2023 Projection	2024 CWA	2024 Proposed
Revenue	\$65,008	\$65,384	\$63,653
Expenses	<u>(65,008)</u>	<u>(70,191)</u>	<u>(68,083)</u>
Revenues in Excess of Expenses	\$ (0)	\$ (4,807)	\$ (4,431)

Mission Support

- Proposed Budget is based on rollup of 2024 Synod Intent Forms
 - 2023 YTD through Sept is 5.9% behind prior year and 3.5% behind budget
 - Proposed 2024 is a 2.7% reduction from projected 2023
 - Historically budgeted 97% of intents – recommending 96% for 2024
 - Proposed budget is \$2.25 million less, or 94% of CWA approved mission support budget



Key Revenues excl Mission Support – 2023 vs 2024



Changes to Proposed Spending

2023 Spending Authorization	\$68,429,562
Proposed Changes for 2024:	
Recast innovation spend to capacity	(1,000,000)
Reduction in travel & events (-25%) ¹	(903,000)
4% Compensation & 2.5% benefits incr ²	1,307,400
50% of 2025 Presiding Bishop transition	<u>250,000</u>
Proposed 2024 Spending Authorization	\$68,083,962

¹Goal for allocation purposes, can come from other areas

² Higher percent proposed to maintain 25th percentile



Innovation

- 70-20-10

We are still committed to this model for helping us shift our work; however, deferring tracking this shift in 2024.

- Reduction in Innovation spend in the budget

NOT a reflection for less work in this area; has been underspent in recent years. Innovation home area staffing has been increased in 3rd quarter.

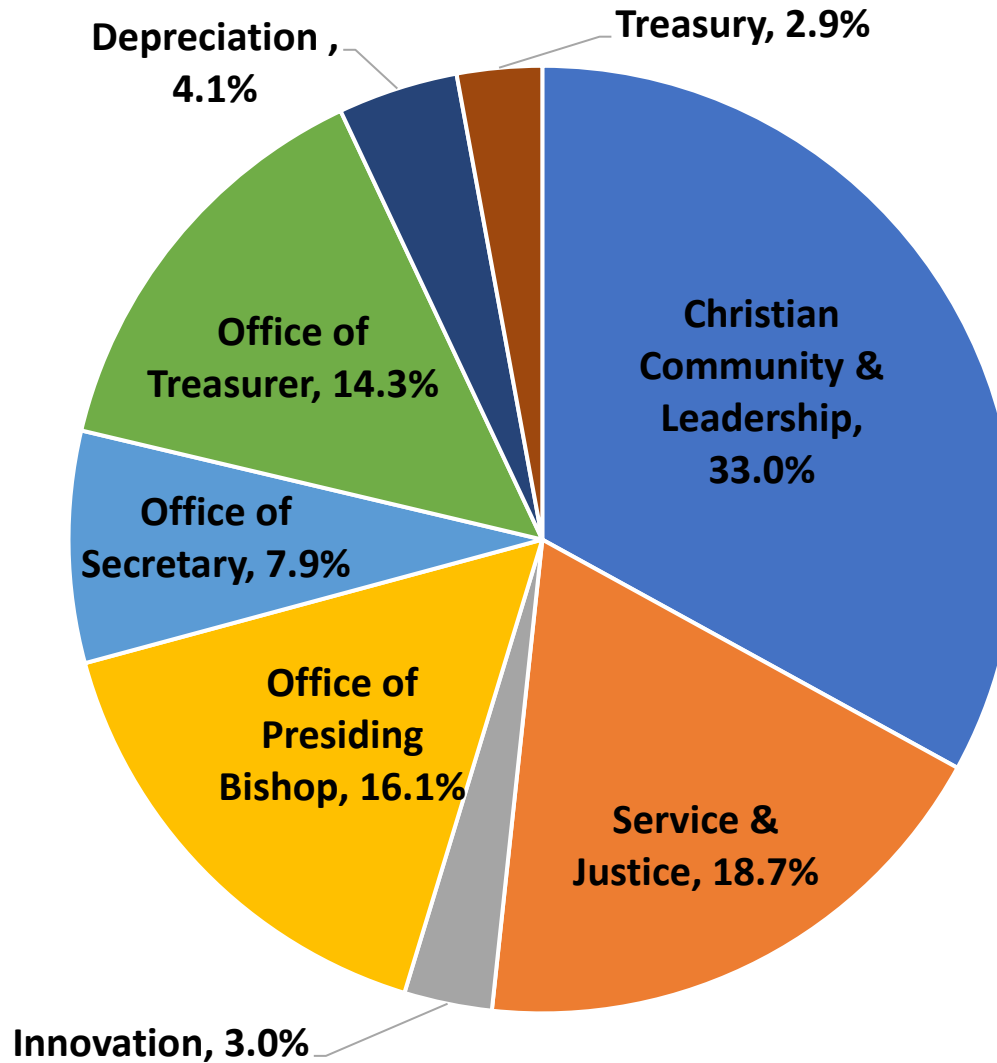
2024 Budget = \$2,049,000

Projected 2023 spend = Home Area + Project grants

\$1.5 million



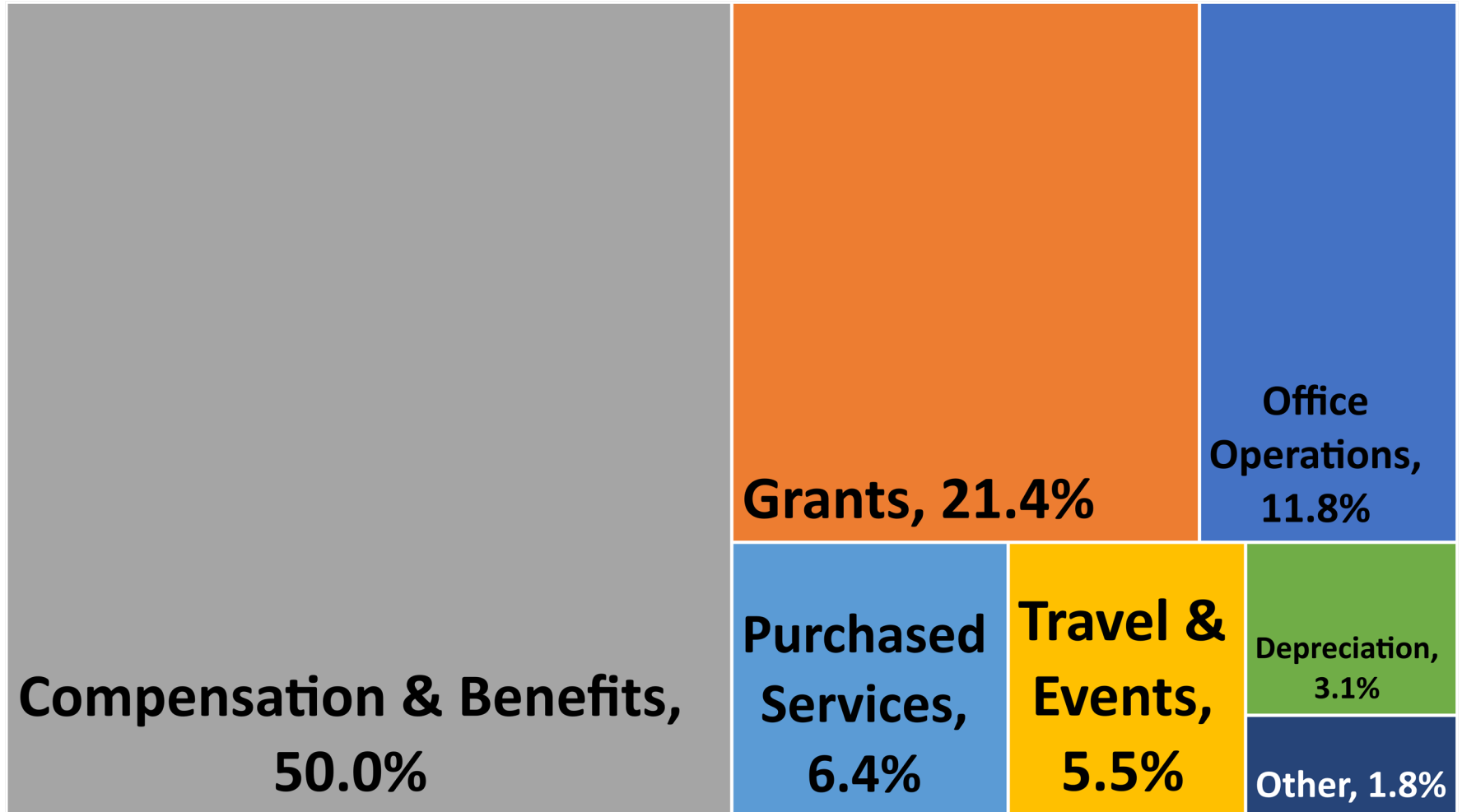
Spending Authorization by Home Area/Office



Allocation proportionate to 2023 except for adj to innovation

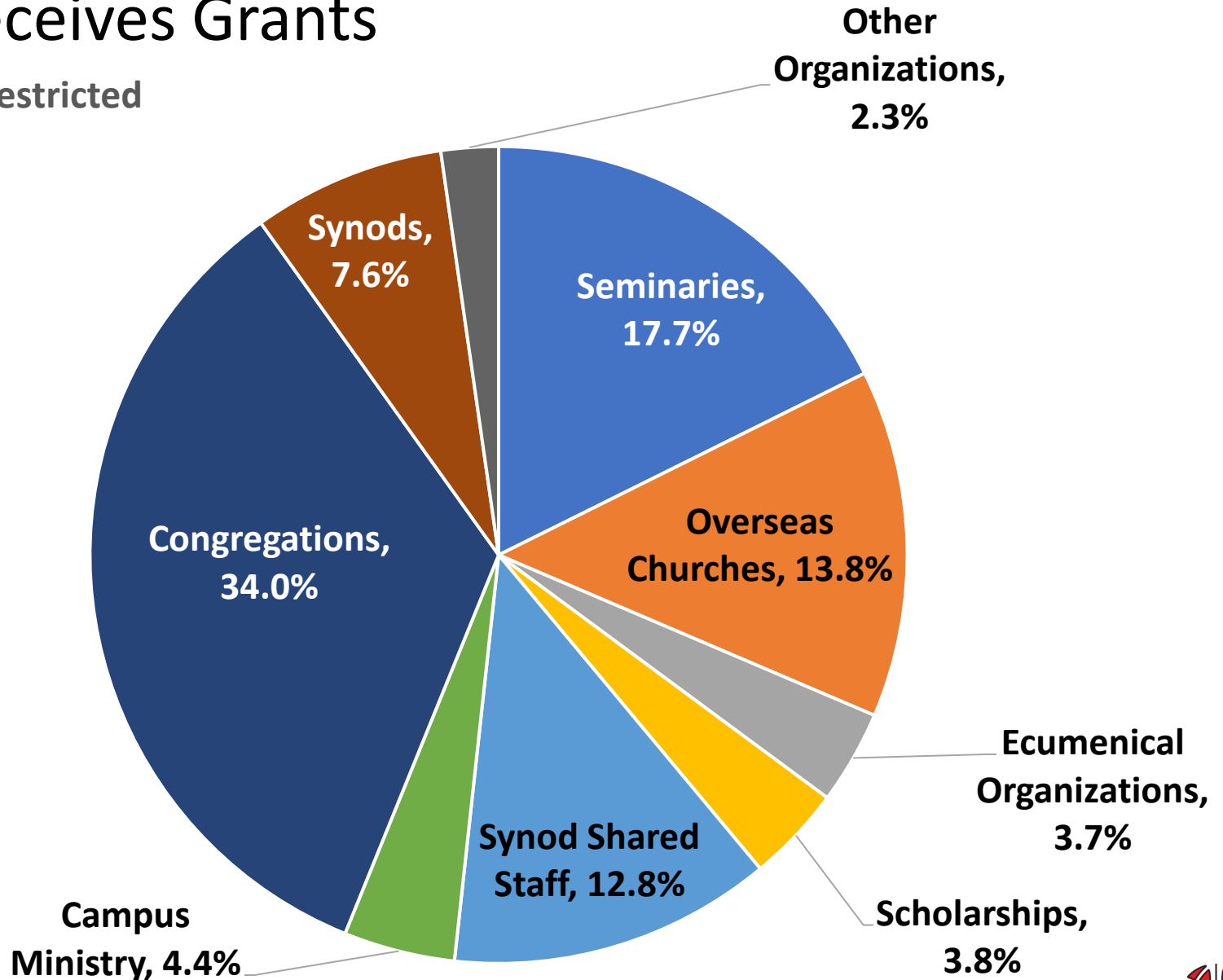


Spending by Nature - Unrestricted



Who Receives Grants

Unrestricted



Why a Deficit and What does this Mean?

- Declining revenue streams
- Need more time to interpret results of research by Barna/Fuller
- Need more time for conversation with you and other constituents that may have feedback or be impacted
- Balancing the budget in 2024 without additional prework might lead to less-than-optimal decision making

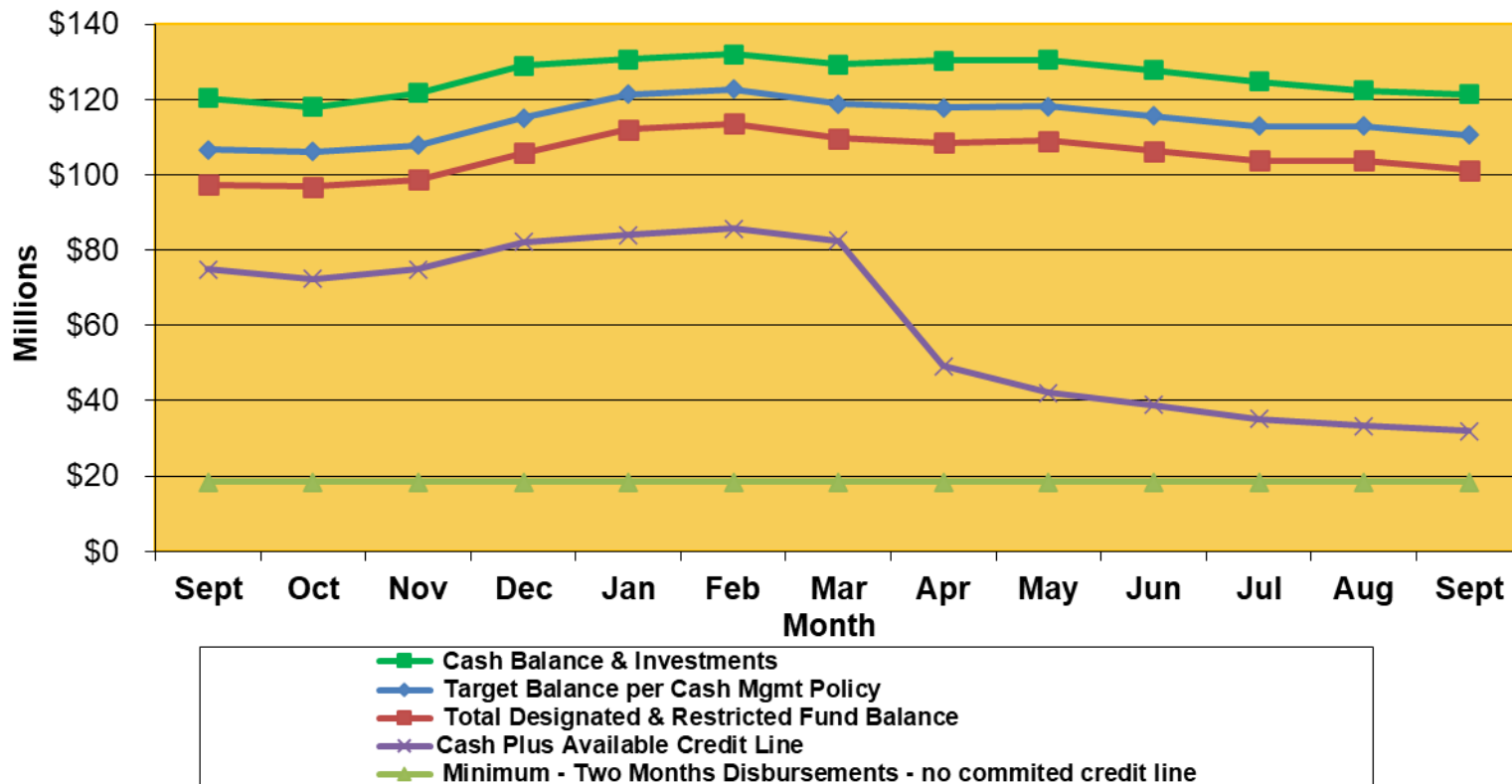


Why a Deficit and What does this Mean?

- Need to review our capacity to do what we are currently called to do by various actions of the assembly, the constitution, and our vision and mission.
- We are a church of abundance and have the financial resources to do this.
- Operating at a deficit means that we will utilize cash reserves, should the actual results equal the proposed budget and we spend more than we receive.



Cash Management Policy Comparison vs. Actual Sept 2022 through Sept 2023



Why is this so difficult? Why do we need until 2025 to balance the budget?

1) Complexity of organization and the work that we do

- In addition to the Unrestricted and World Hunger funds that are reported on and approved by the churchwide assembly and Church Council, there are over 250 restricted and designated funds.
- How do we pull all of this information together so that you get an accurate picture of the work that we do in areas that are not covered by the unrestricted or world hunger.



Why is this so difficult? Why do we need until 2025 to balance the budget?

2) Actions of the assembly, constitutional mandates, etc.

- My latest count is over 40 currently active items that we are called to do. We take this work very seriously, but it all takes time and money.

3) Stated priorities need further definition and build out to ensure our work is aligned.

- To be a welcoming church
- To be a thriving church
- To be a connected, sustainable church



Why is this so difficult? Why do we need until 2025 to balance the budget?

4) Need to define and set metrics and accountability.

5) 50% of our unrestricted budget is compensation and benefits.

6) Shifting work to others requires collaboration

7) Shift in fundraising priorities in 2024.



Why is this so difficult? Why do we need until 2025 to balance the budget?

8) We aspire for change, but we need to make space in our budget to do new work.



Proposed Action

BFC Action

- To approve and forward to Church Council for their action: A 2024 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$68,083,962.



ELCA World Hunger Budget

Revenues In 000s

REVENUES	2023 Budget	Proposed 2024	
Direct Gifts	\$20,500	\$19,000	9-year avg; Thru Sept, 87% of budget
Endowment Distribution	750	1,000	Consistent with 2023 projected actuals
Bequests & Trusts	1,500	1,500	
Use of Fund Balance	4,020	4,500	Proposed budget exp > income,
Total Revenues	\$26,770	\$26,000	

ELCA World Hunger Budget Spending In 000s

SPENDING	2023 Budget	Proposed 2024	
Domestic	\$5,521	\$4,421	\$18.3M grants. 56% synods, cong, SMO, local partners; 44% ecum org
International	17,271	16,320	
Witness in Society	1,723	3,100	Incl Domestic & Int'l advocacy
Fundraising Model Support	2,255	2,159	
Total Spending	\$26,770	\$26,000	

Proposed Action

BFC Action

- To approve and forward to Church Council for their action: A 2024 fiscal year ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$26,000,000, provided the 1/31/24 fund balance is in excess of \$10 million.



WHAT IS A FUNDRAISING PRIORITY?

“Your fundraising priorities are your nonprofit’s priorities. They shape your past, present, and future. The money you are raising will go to support your organization’s vital work. If that work is expanding in the future, your fundraising will have to expand to support it.”

- Alex Huntsberger – How Nonprofits Can Set (and Meet) Fundraising Goals



INTRODUCTION

At the recent meeting of the Resource Development Committee (RDC) of Church Council, the committee performed their annual review of fundraising priorities and asked the Development team to bring forward a recommendation to the upcoming Church Council meeting to 1) reduce the number of fundraising priorities and 2) consider the alignment of these priorities with the mission/vision/values of the ELCA.

CURRENT PRIORITIES

Unrestricted/Budget Relieving

- Where Needed Most
- Young Adults in Global Mission
- Missionary Sponsorship

Restricted

- ELCA World Hunger
- Lutheran Disaster Response
- International Women Leaders
- ELCA Fund for Leaders

CURRENT REALITIES

Too many priorities

- We are unable to focus our energy around identifying resources that are most useful to the organization
- We are missing opportunities to build momentum around priorities that are growing
- Donors are unclear of what we are really asking for

Disconnect from mission/vision/values

- Where is Future Church?
- Some of these priorities are decreasing in size/impact/participation
- Publicly prioritizing these values paints a picture of what is an organizational priority - is that accurate?

I CAN DO ANYTHING. BUT NOT EVERYTHING

Greg McKeown, author of "Essentialism"

RECOMMENDATION - CRITICAL ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

- To be actively fundraised for
 - Key Characteristics - provide the organization with flexibility, more general focus, proven donor interest, clear alignment with ELCA mission/vision/values
 - Strategy - Appeals, prioritized in donor conversation, specific revenue goals, focus the Development team
 - Recommended Priorities:
 - Where Needed Most (unrestricted)
 - ELCA World Hunger
 - Lutheran Disaster Response
 - Future Church (*new*)

WHAT THIS MOVE MEANS

- The Development team will set proactive fundraising goals only for the critical organizational priorities
- The Development team will move towards only sending appeals for the critical organizational priorities (with an expectation that it will take a bit of time to fully transition)
- The Development team will continue to steward donors and gifts that are intended for historical programs
- The Development team will develop parameters and a case for support for the Future Church fundraising priority.

A WELCOMING CHURCH

A THRIVING CHURCH

A CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

Budget and Finance Committee

Information Items

- Received update on 2023 YTD performance
- Approved the 2024 Capital Expenditure budget
- Approved Franklin Clark Fry Endowment fund to be used to cover the deficit realized by the Rostered Ministers Gathering in 2023 and to put any remaining funds into a restricted fund for other leadership development activities.
- Received an update on investment performance and change in custodian
- Received updates on the work of the Audit Committee and Resource Development Committee.



En Bloc Items

- Acceptance of the audited financial statements for the year ended 1/31/2023 which were approved by the audit committee in June 2023.
- Assign responsibility for the engagement of Crowe LLP to perform the audit service plan for the churchwide organization's year ending 1/31/2024 to the Executive Committee.
- Approve the reappointment of members to the Audit Committee

These recommendations from [committee name] are en bloc actions for Church Council approval.

Action will come during Plenary Session 7 on Nov. 12.



Approval of Proposed 2024 Spending Authorization for Unrestricted Funds

CC Action

To approve a 2024 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$68,083,962.

Approval of Proposed 2024 Spending Authorization for ELCA World Hunger

CC Action

To approve a 2024 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$26,000,000, provided the 1/31/2024 fund balance is in excess of \$10.0 million.



Fundraising Priorities

CC Action

To approve the alignment and focus of the fundraising priorities to these areas: Where Needed Most, ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, and Future Church: God's Love Made Real, and to empower the Development team to align their resources around these priorities accordingly.

A WELCOMING CHURCH

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A CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

Thank You



A WELCOMING CHURCH

A THRIVING CHURCH

A CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

Christian Community & Leadership Committee

Who are we?

The Christian Community and Leadership (CCL) Home Area' Purpose within the ELCA is to

Recruit, train, and deploy leaders who will establish and grow Christian Communities



Goals

- 1) Engage New people
- 1) Recruit, train, and send leaders to support this engagement
- 1) Measure how it's going, test new ideas, and adapt



What did we do yesterday

- Learned about staff and home area realignment to support those goals
- Pr. Miguel Gomez-Acosta shared about New Ministry Development and Evangelism – it was exciting!
- Bp. Christopher deForest updated us on the progress of the Candidacy Working Group - we had to end the discussion for lunch



En Bloc Item (*removed*)

Independent Lutheran Organization: Order for Franciscan Lutherans

The Order of Lutheran Franciscan seeks to deepen and expand its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as an independent Lutheran organization.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To acknowledge the Order of Lutheran Franciscans as an Independent Lutheran Organization relating to the Christian Community and Leadership home area.

These recommendations from Christian Community and Leadership was an *en bloc* action for Church Council approval.

Action will come during Plenary Session 7 on Nov. 12.



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Thank You



COMMISSION FOR A RENEWED
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Listening Session

ELCA Church
Council



CRLC



Listening Session Agenda

- Opening Prayer
- Purpose of CRLC & Update on Current Work.
- Overview of the Three Expressions and Anti-Racism initiatives.
- Group Discussion
- Recap & Closing



Opening Prayer

Gracious God, We gather here today as a community, bound by faith and driven by the desire to serve Your Church and Your people. We thank You for bringing us together, and we ask for Your guidance and wisdom as we embark on this journey of reflection and renewal.

Lord, You have called us to be attentive to the needs of our world, especially in our shared commitment to dismantle racism and foster equality. May our discussions today be a testament to this calling. Open our hearts and minds to new ideas, new perspectives, and new understandings as we engage in this crucial work.

Grant us the courage to speak our truths and the humility to listen to others. May we find common ground and shared vision as we strive to align our work with the principles of Your Kingdom.

In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

Dios misericordioso, nos reunimos hoy aquí como comunidad, unidos por la fe e impulsados por el deseo de servir a Tu Iglesia y a Tu pueblo. Te agradecemos por unirnos y te pedimos Tu guía y sabiduría mientras nos embarcamos en este viaje de reflexión y renovación.

Señor, nos has llamado a estar atentos a las necesidades de nuestro mundo, especialmente en nuestro compromiso compartido de dismantelar el racismo y fomentar la igualdad. Que nuestras discusiones de hoy sean un testimonio de este llamado. Abra nuestros corazones y mentes a nuevas ideas, nuevas perspectivas y nuevos entendimientos mientras participamos en este trabajo crucial.

Concédenos el coraje para decir nuestras verdades y la humildad para escuchar a los demás. Que podamos encontrar puntos en común y una visión compartida mientras nos esforzamos por alinear nuestro trabajo con los principios de Tu Reino.

En el Nombre de Jesús, oramos. Amén.

What is the purpose of the CRLC?

2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly action on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

“To direct the Church Council to establish a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church comprised of leaders of diverse representation from all three expressions that, working in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, shall reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism, and will present its findings and recommendations to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly in preparation for a possible reconstituting convention to be called under the rules for a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly.” [CA22.01.06]

Update on Commission Work

- The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) met for the first time July 13-15, 2023 in Chicago. Bishop Susan Johnson, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, acted as our facilitator in partnership with CRLC Co-Chairs The Rev. Carla Christopher and Mr. Leon Schwartz.
- Following this meeting, a subcommittee of CRLC members met with the Synod leadership for Synods that passed Memorials to the Churchwide Assembly which caused the CRLC to be formed.
- The CRLC met again, virtually, on September to hear updates from CRLC subcommittees and receive information on work being completed by various task forces and agencies within the ELCA, particularly Racial Justice in the ELCA and welcomed guest speakers Vance Blackfox (Indigenous Ministries) and Nicolette Penaranda (African Descent Ministries). Additionally, the CRLC completed training in Lutheran History and Constitutional Essentials.
- The next CRLC meeting will be in Chicago on November 30 – December 2.



The Three Expressions of the ELCA

Since our beginning in 1988, the ELCA has been one church body organized in three expressions — **congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization**. Each expression has its particular functions but all three together share a common mission of doing God's work in the world and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ."



Relationship of the Three Expressions

RELATIONSHIPS [Chapter 8] This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in an interdependent relationship with the others.

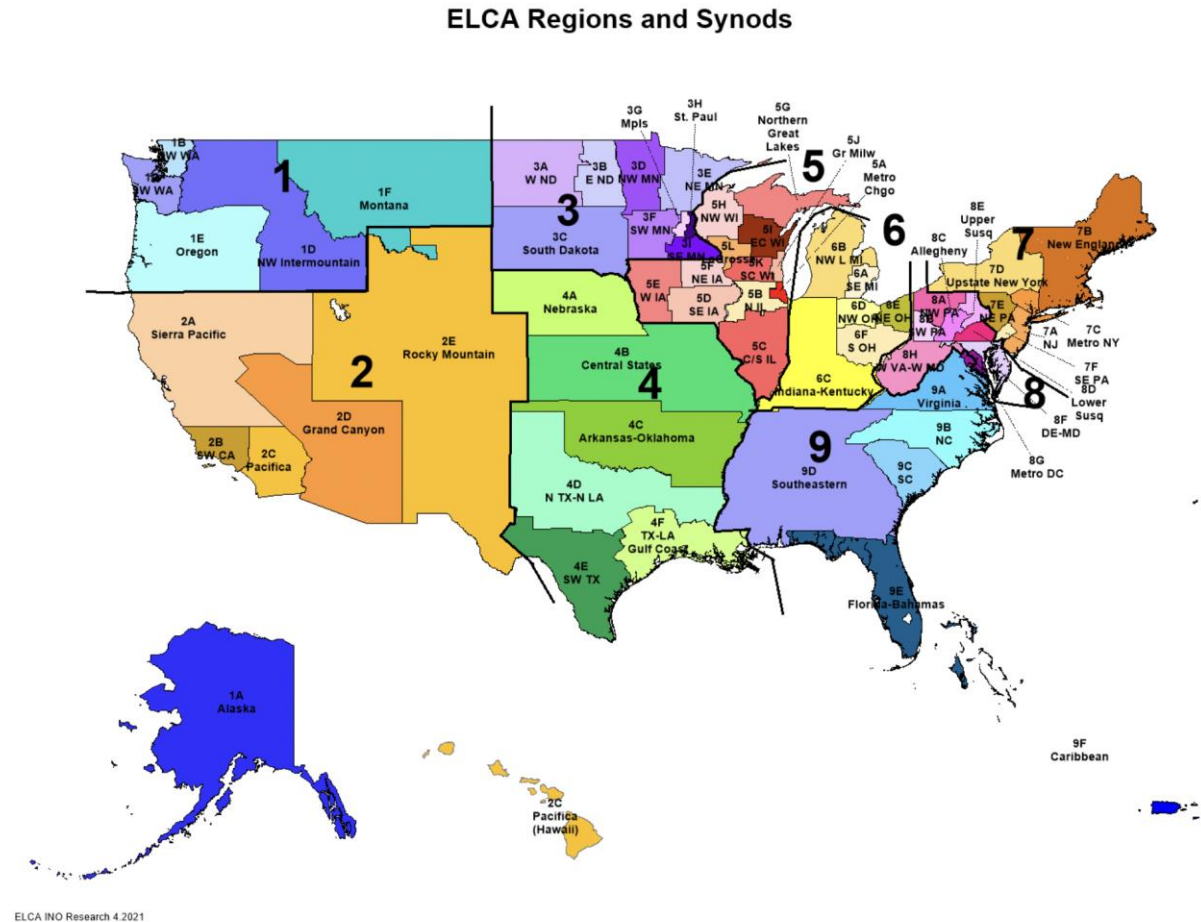
The congregation shall include in its mission a life of worship and nurture for its members, and outreach in witness and service to its community.

The synod shall provide for pastoral care of the congregations, ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ministers of Word and Service within its boundaries. It shall plan for, facilitate, and nurture the life and mission of its people and shall enlarge the ministries and extend the outreach into society on behalf of and in connection with the congregations and the churchwide organization. Conferences, clusters, coalitions, other area subdivisions, or networks shall serve to assist the congregations and synods in exercising their mutual responsibilities.

The churchwide organization shall implement the extended mission of the Church, developing churchwide policies in consultation with the synods and congregations, entering into relationship with institutions of higher education and with governmental, ecumenical, and societal agencies in accordance with accepted resolutions and/or in response to specific agreed-upon areas of responsibility.

ELCA Synod and Region Map

The ELCA's 65 synods vary greatly in size, geography, membership, staffing and program. Our smallest synod has 30 congregations — the largest nearly 300. The synods are grouped into nine regions, which are points of connection for them and the churchwide organization. Synods unite the work of congregations within their areas, serve as regional support, and guide pastoral and other staff candidates.



ELCA and Anti-Racism Work

APOLOGIES, DECLARATIONS AND STATEMENTS

- 1994 - [Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community](#)
- 2016 - [Renewed Action Regarding Racism Toward Lutherans of African Descent](#)
- 2019 - [Explanation of the Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent](#)
- 2019 - [Condemnation of White Supremacy and Racist Rhetoric](#)
- 2019 - [Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity](#)
- 2021 - [Statement on anti-Asian Racism](#)
- 2021 - [A Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People](#)
- 2022 - [A Declaration of the ELCA to the Muslim Community](#)

CURRENT CHURCHWIDE TASK FORCES:

- Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD) Advisory Committee
- DEIA Audit of Constitution, Bylaws, Continuing Resolutions, Roster Manual and ELCA Church Council Governance Policy Manual
- Quality of Call Initiative
- Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force



Group Discussion

Questions for Discussion

1. What does a renewed Church look like to you?

Questions for Discussion

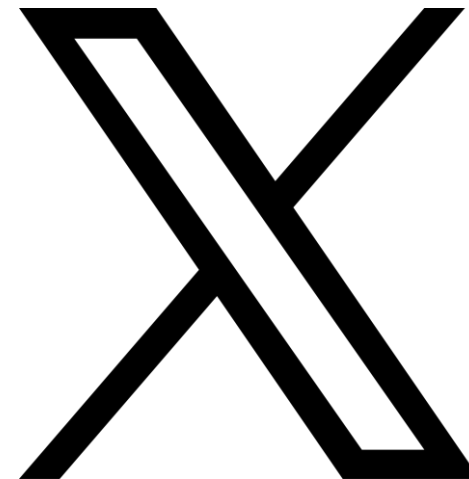
2. Based on our discussion, what elements of the Statement of Purpose do you believe are vital to the ELCA and what do you believe should be modified?

Questions for Discussion

3. Are there ways in which the ELCA could be better structured to support the activities of the Statements of Purpose?

CRLC Communication

[HTTPS://WWW.ELCA.ORG/FUTURE](https://www.elca.org/future)



ATTENDEE SUMMARY

Please scan the QR Code to answer a few questions.



A WELCOMING CHURCH

A THRIVING CHURCH

A CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

Faith, Society and Innovation Committee

Information Items

- Update on Strategy Towards Authentic Diversity
- Update on Future Church: God's Love Made Real
- Update on the Innovation Home Area
- Report on Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations
- Update on Social Statement Reconsideration of Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust
- Update on Social Statement on Gun-Related Violence & Trauma
- Update on Social Statement on Civic Life & Faith



En Bloc Items

To defer the question of reconsidering the selected paragraph in the “Message on End-of-Life Decisions” (1992) following the 2023-24 social message development cycle in order to allow for a careful and thorough assessment of that request along with continued assessment of the pending request for a social message on child abuse and protection and the request of a substantive revision of the “Message on Homelessness” (1990). This assessment will include input from relevant leadership circles as well as the availability of staff capacity, and finances; and

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

These recommendations from *Faith, Society and Innovation* Committee are *en bloc* actions for Church Council approval.

Action will come during Plenary Session 7 on Nov. 12.



A WELCOMING CHURCH

A THRIVING CHURCH

A CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

Thank You!



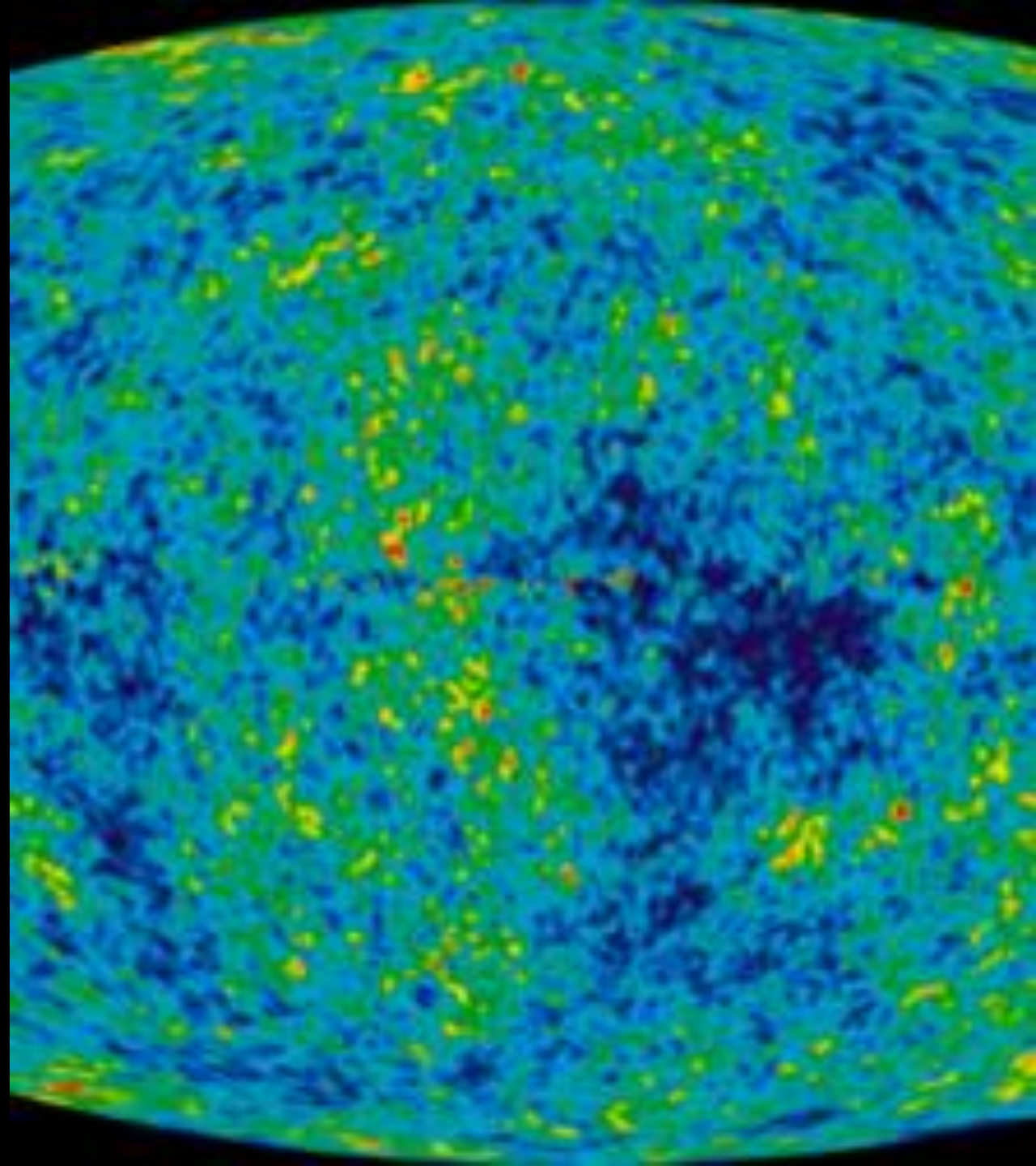
GOD'S LOVE MADE REAL

Bible Study from Different Angles

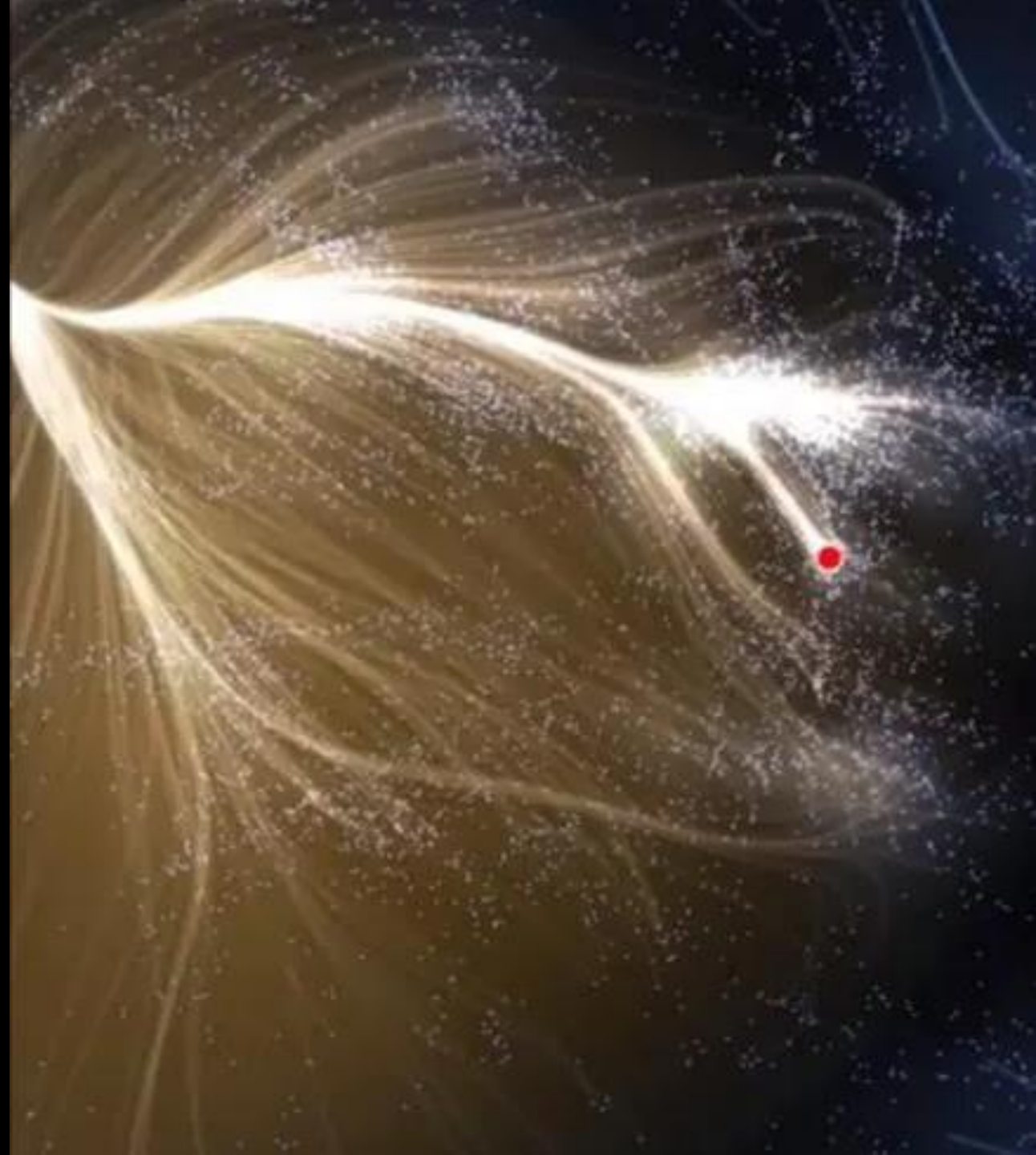
And they heard the voice of the Lord
God walking in the cool of the day



In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep...



And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night...and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth."





And the Lord answered Job, “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children?”

Jesus said, "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."



Christian concern for the environment is shaped by the Word of God spoken in creation, the Love of God hanging on a cross, the Breath of God daily renewing the face of the earth.

ELCA Social Statement—Caring for Creation:
Vision, Hope, and Justice

Therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken.

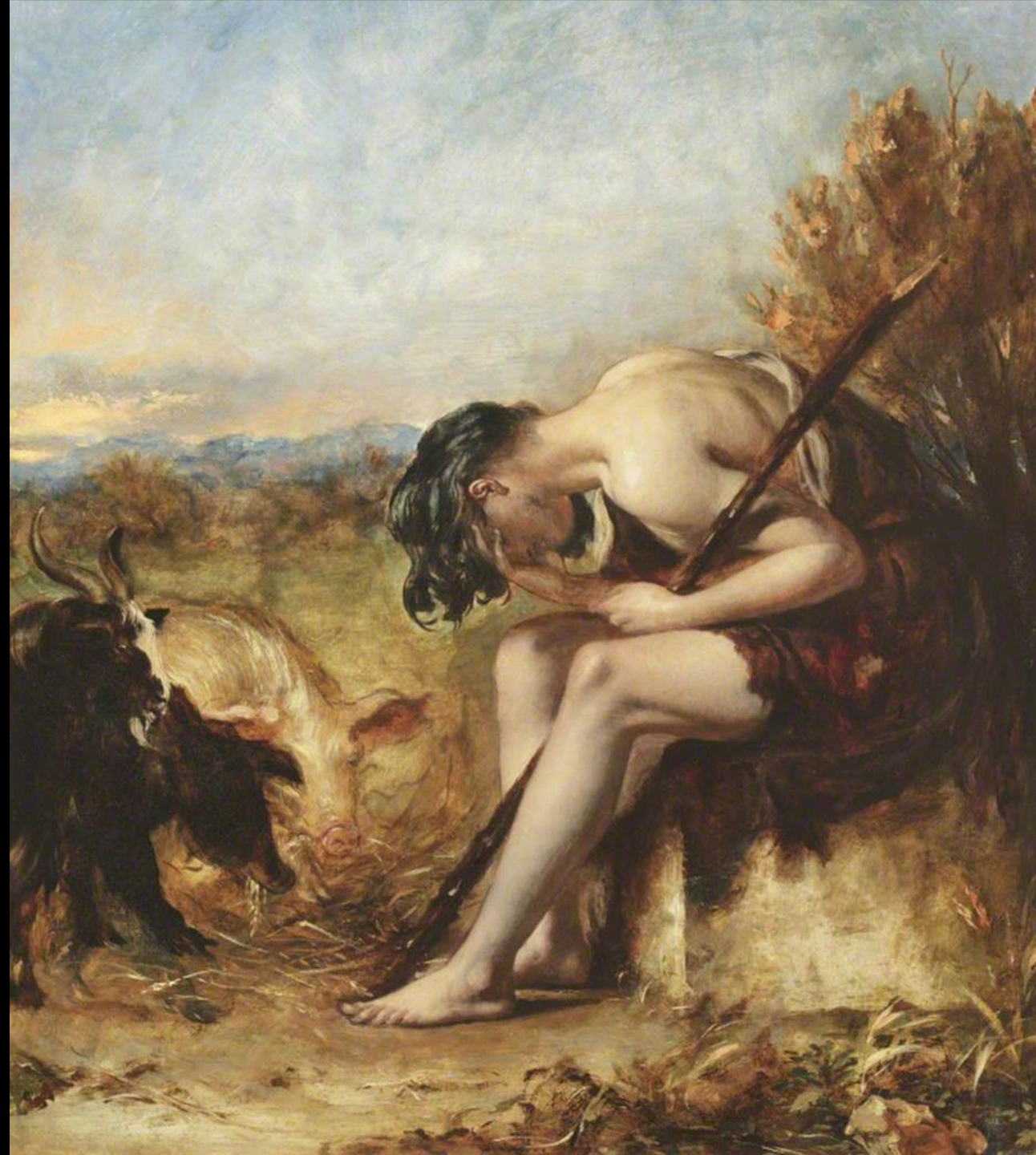


Because you had listened to the voice of your wife.

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter thought he not too long.
And all was for an apple, an apple that he took
As clerkes finden written in their book.
Ne had the apple taken been, the apple taken been
Ne had never Our Lady a-been heaven's queen.
Blessed be the time that apple taken was.
Therefore we moun singen, Deo Gracias!

Anonymous; British Library Sloane MS 2593 15th C
Text to various choral anthems, esp. Boris Ord

...and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine.



...Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out...Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."



Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord;

Lord, hear my voice;

Let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

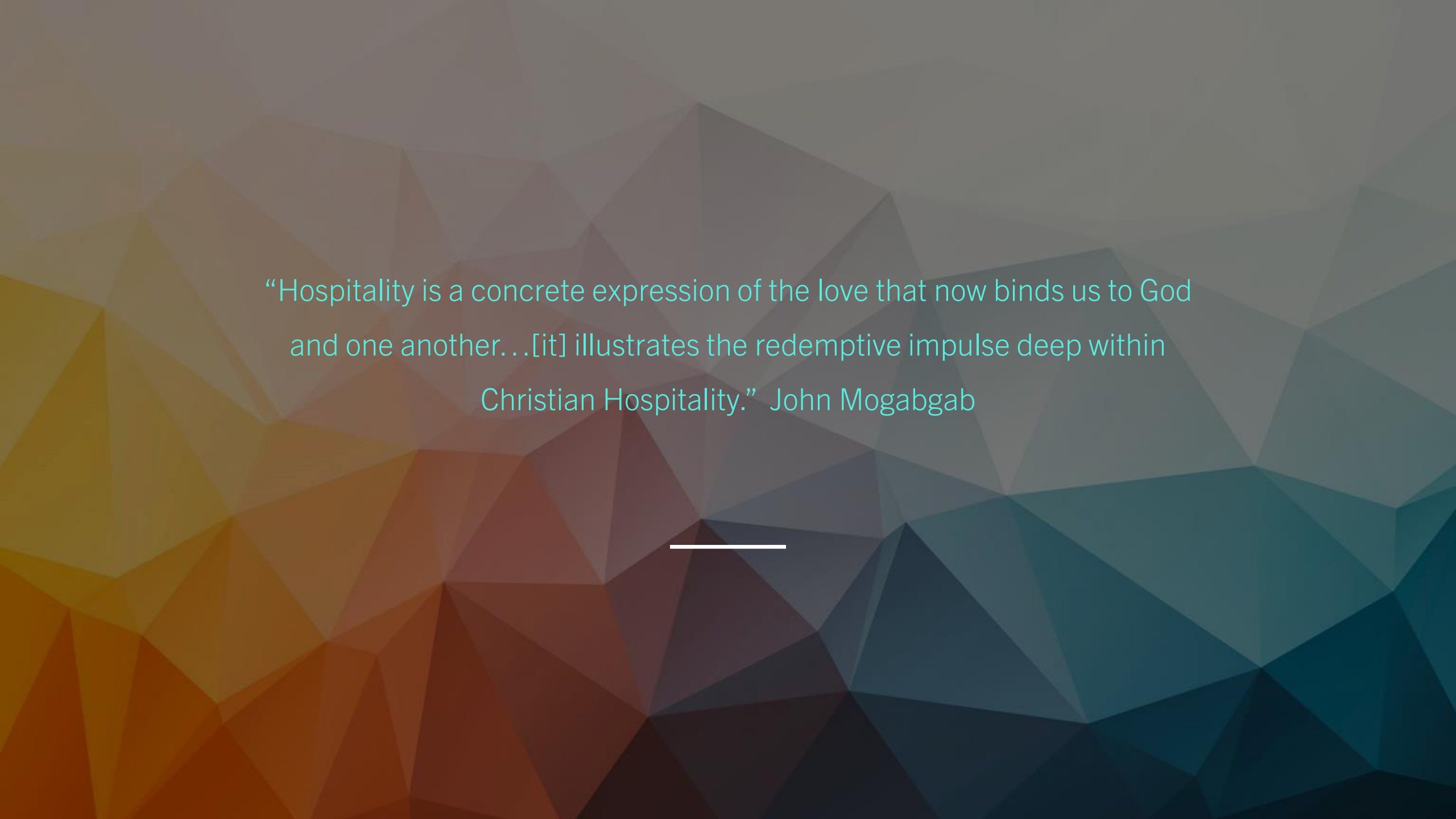
For by grace you have been saved through faith;
and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.

Andrew said to Jesus, “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they among so many?”



Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.





“Hospitality is a concrete expression of the love that now binds us to God and one another...[it] illustrates the redemptive impulse deep within Christian Hospitality.” John Mogabgab

The Love of God, to be made real, must be mediated in the world.

Through a deep appreciation and care for God's Creation

Through acknowledging God's compassionate and loving presence in our human brokenness

Experiencing God's loving-kindness in the midst of suffering

Through acts of caring and radical hospitality



INNOVATION HOME AREA



Church Council Update



What is the Innovation Home Area?



The Innovation Home Area is a unit of the ELCA Churchwide Organization that exists to create a culture of collaboration and innovation within the Churchwide Organization and the broader church. We test new and useful ideas for ministry alongside our partners that help the ELCA become a welcoming, thriving and sustainable church.

WHAT IS
INNOVATION?

WHY INNOVATION?

- 70% are willing to collaborate, but only 30% believe the organization is structured to facilitate that or that people excel at it.
- 30% believe it is safe to take the risk to speak their own mind.
- An inflexible structure, risk aversion and excessive planning make it nearly impossible to experiment or adjust quickly.
- Less than 25% believe the right people at the right level are involved in decision making.
- There is a strong sense of purpose in the ELCA, but little to no agreement on what that purpose is, especially within the CWO.

INNOVATION HOME AREA



You are the expert in your area of ministry. You know which systems can be funky and which processes are a little clunky. Whether you've got an idea you'd like to try, or a problem you can't quite solve and don't know where to start, we are here to be a partner on the journey.

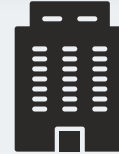
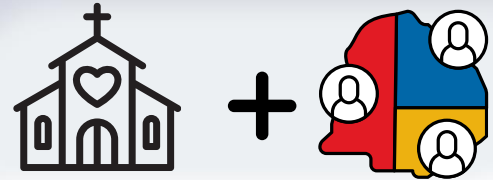
The Innovation Home Area provides collaborative workshops, resources, and tools that explore new and useful ways to experience community, justice and love, together.

WHO WE ARE...

Innovation

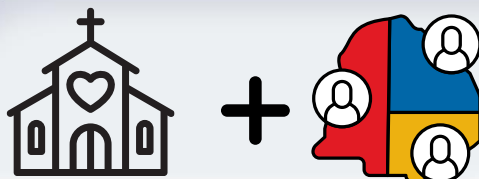
Innovation + Ideas

Organizational
Innovation



WHAT WE DO...

Innovation + Ideas



Partner with congregations, synods and other expressions of the church to develop and test **new spaces for belonging** within and outside of the ELCA.

WHAT WE DO...

Organizational
Innovation



Partner with ELCA Churchwide Organization staff in developing and testing new **processes, programs and systems** to better support church leaders within the ELCA. Creating a culture of collaboration and user-focus at the ELCA Churchwide Organization.

Meet the Team!



Iain Chester

Executive Director, Innovation



Phil LaDeur

Director, Organizational Innovation



Maddie Fairfax

Innovation Services
Coordinator



Rahel Mwitula Williams

Director, Innovation & Ideas



Aditi Shukla

Innovation Partner
Operations



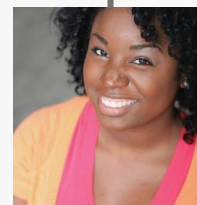
Sarah Weaver

Innovation Partner
CCL



Emilie Moravec

Innovation Partner
Service + Justice



Tyra Dennis

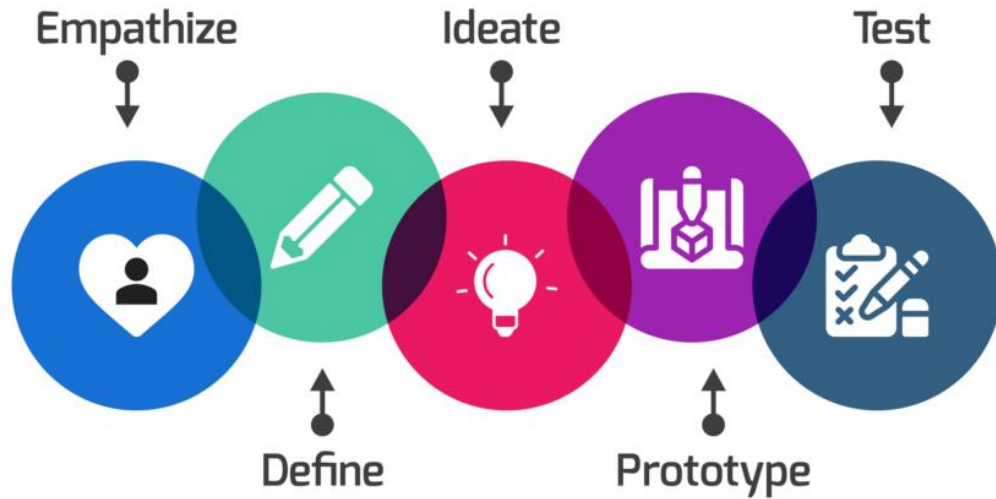
Program Manager,
Innovation & Ideas



Rebecca Payne

Program Director,
Congregations Lead Initiative

DESIGN THINKING



A method for creative problem-solving that works on an understanding that the best problem-solving involves the perspectives of those who will use the design.



We are all
designers...
including you!



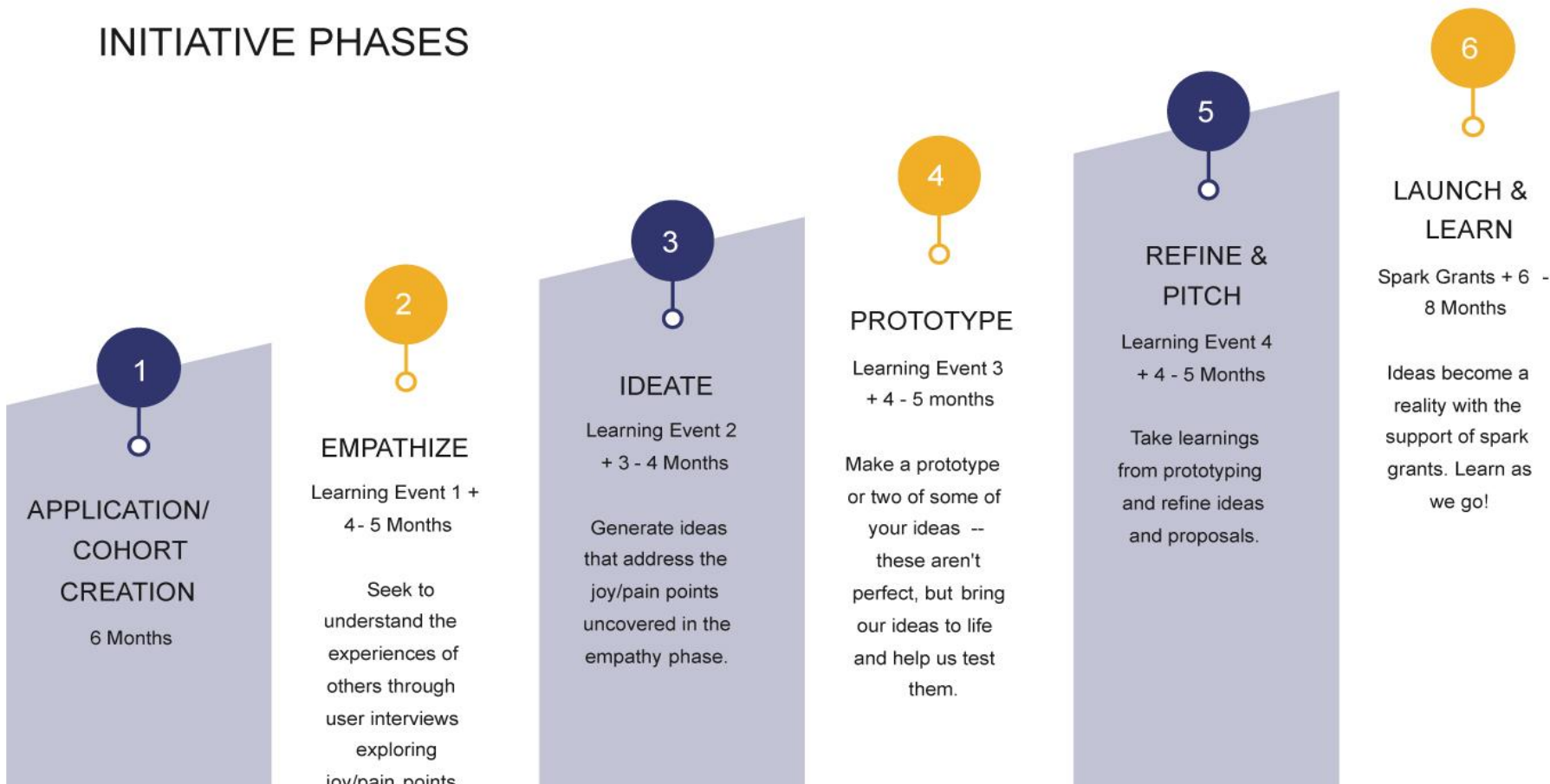
Example #1: Congregations Lead Initiative



The Congregations Lead Initiative is a two-year program that gathers a cohort of 41 congregations from 27 synods across the ELCA to unleash and harness their collective genius and discover new and useful ministry innovations.

Example #1: Congregations Lead Initiative

INITIATIVE PHASES



Example #1: Congregations Lead Initiative





Example #1: Congregations Lead Initiative



OUR 2ND ITERATION:

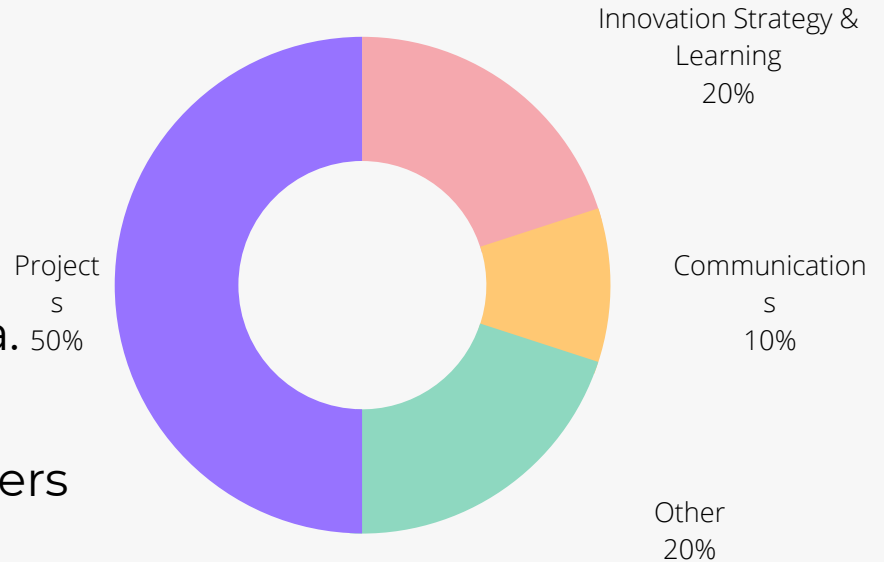
- 6-month timeline instead of two years. Two years was too long -- many congregations experienced significant leadership change in that timeframe.
- Congregations connected more and created lasting connections if they were close geographically. We'll move to geographic cohorts instead of a national pool of participants.
- Some congregations moved faster than others! This time around we'll test a self-guided experience alongside our regular cohort.

Example #2: Innovation Partners



THE ROLE:

- Planning, facilitating, executing projects alongside Home Areas
- Providing Innovation learning opportunities to each Home Area.
- Sharing updates, insights and resources in Home Area newsletters and on Innovation Connect site.
- Attending meetings and Innovation Office Hours



Example #2: Innovation Partners:



Primary constituents	Does this project grow the CWO relationship with and impact on synods, congregations, and our partners?
CWO functions	Does this project impact or help us learn about a major CWO functions such as contracts, data gathering, evaluation, and/or granting?
CWO cross-Unit	Does this project include collaboration between Home Areas?
Human-centered	Is this project centered around the person/people most proximate to the problem? Has it or does it plan to involve them in the design process? If not, are the project leads open to that?
Project entry point	If this project has already begun, is it clear how we (the Innovation Home Area) could add value?

Example #2: Innovation Partners



THE ROLE:

- Conversation Partner
- Project-based training
- Facilitation
- Share Tools and Resources
- Visualizing Systems / Processes
- User Research

Example #2: Innovation Partners



SUPPORTING NEW IDEAS

- Each Innovation Partner has funds to help mitigate the cost of trying something new.
- Specifically, we want to help our CWO get closer to those it's serve, building relationships and empathy. That means we are excited to fund research!
- We cannot fund ideas into perpetuity, but we can help with funds needed to get off the ground. Then Home Area's can work successful ideas back into their budget.

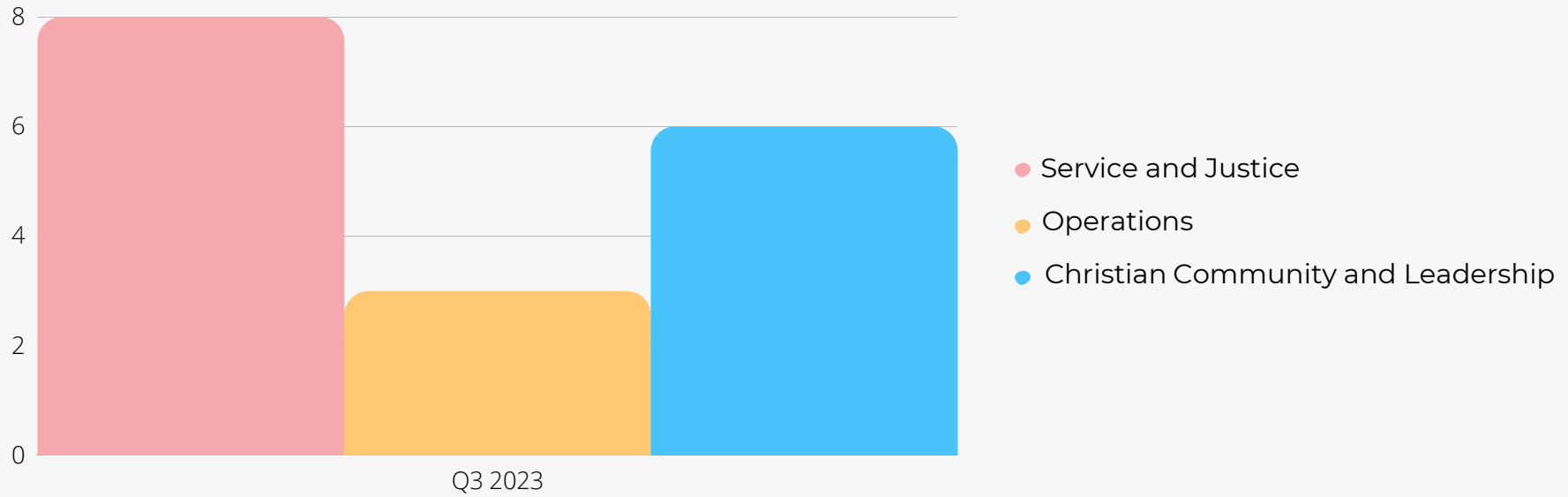
"If successful, how could this new idea become sustainable?"

A thought bubble with a grey background and a white border, containing the text "If successful, how could this new idea become sustainable?". The bubble is connected to the main text area by three smaller circles of decreasing size.

Example #2: Innovation Partners



Q3 PROJECTS



Example #2: Innovation Partners



PROJECTS HAVE INCLUDED

- Facilitating workshops that helped the Candidacy working group move from raw data to developing recommendations.
- Reviewing and reimagining the recruitment, training and deployment of ELCA mission personnel -- placing companions and personnel at the center.
- Conducting user research alongside the ELCA's strategic communications team to get insights from potential users on a new sight for "seekers"

CONNECT WITH US

We want to hear from
you!

Visit our connect website

elca.org/innovationlab

Get in touch via email

lab@elca.org

Iain.Chester@elca.org



A WELCOMING CHURCH

A THRIVING CHURCH

A CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

November 11, 2023

We read them so
you don't have to.



Pre-Assembly Identification Process for Presiding Bishop Election

CC Action [Two-Thirds Approval]

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

19.01.A213. In a year when the presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary shall be elected, those who will serve as voting members of the upcoming Churchwide Assembly shall be invited to identify the names of up to three persons who might be considered for election as presiding bishop, vice president, or secretary. Names shall be submitted to the Office of the Secretary at least four months prior to the assembly. The Office of the Secretary shall contact those persons identified and request biographical information. At least 60 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.

Information Items

- Notification of Synods Reporting Adoption of 2022 Churchwide Assembly CBCR Amendments (not requiring ratification)
- DEIA Audit Report
- Other Potential CBCR Amendments



En Bloc Items

- Wartburg Theological Seminary Bylaw Amendments
- Portico Amendments to ELCA Participating Annuity Trust
- ELCA Personnel Policies Update
- Additional Allocations for 2025 Churchwide Assembly Voting Members
- Synod Constitution Amendments (next slide)

These recommendations from the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee are *en bloc* actions for Church Council approval.

Action will come during Plenary Session 7 on Nov. 12.



En Bloc Items/Synod Constitution Amendments

- Northwest Intermountain Synod
- Oregon Synod
- Rocky Mountain Synod
- Western North Dakota Synod
- Central/Southern Illinois Synod
- Southeastern Iowa Synod
- Northern Great Lakes Synod
- Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (to be ratified with one exception)

These recommendations from the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee are *en bloc* actions for Church Council approval.

Action will come during Plenary Session 7 on Nov. 12.



En Bloc Items/Synod Constitution Amendments (Cont'd)

- East-Central Synod of Wisconsin
- Northeastern Ohio Synod
- Upstate New York Synod
- South Carolina Synod
- Southeastern Synod
- Florida-Bahamas Synod

These recommendations from the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee are *en bloc* actions for Church Council approval.

Action will come during Plenary Session 7 on Nov. 12.



A WELCOMING CHURCH

A THRIVING CHURCH

A CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

Thank You

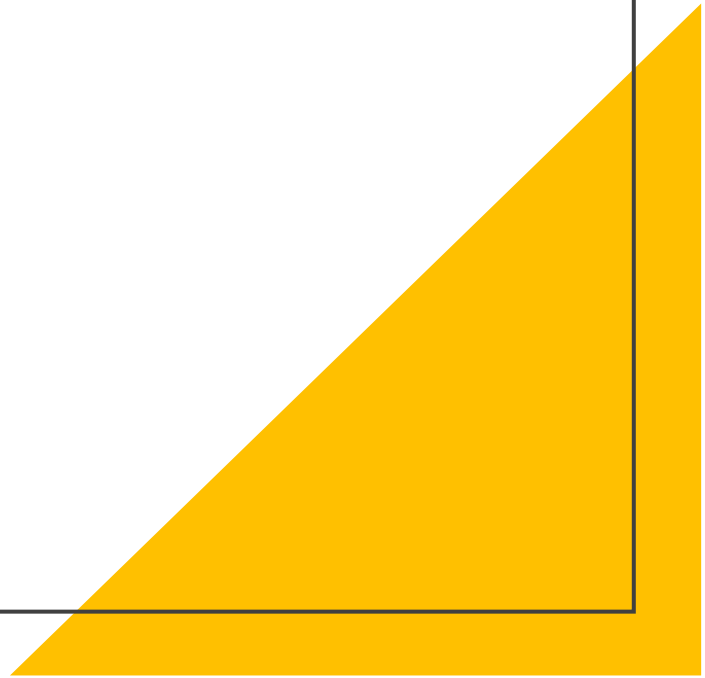




ELCA

Future Church: God's Love Made Real

Overview and Updates






ELCA Vision

A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.



ELCA Purpose

Activate each of us so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love.



ELCA Priorities

A Welcoming Church: Engaging new, young and diverse people


“Your young ... shall see visions, and your old ... shall dream dreams.” Acts 2:17

A Thriving Church: Rooted in tradition and radically relevant

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? ... You are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:13-14

A Connected, Sustainable Church: Raising the bar together

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a city skyline at dusk or dawn, with various skyscrapers and buildings under a hazy sky.

While the ELCA vision, purpose, and priorities aren't changing, there's an opportunity to reimagine and clarify *how* this work will be accomplished.

Barna

Started in 1984, [Barna Group](#) is widely considered to be one of the leading research organizations focused on faith and culture, with widespread brand awareness among church leaders. Our areas of expertise include Christianity, the faith journeys of rising generations, and religious trends in society. Barna also brings a trusted brand with pastors and the church market, along with a host of proprietary communication and marketing channels to engage church leaders and the Christian community.

We have conducted more than two million interviews and become a go-to source for insights for businesses and nonprofit organizations who want to understand the next right step to take. Our studies are frequently cited in major media outlets such as The Economist, BBC, NPR, CNN, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, Fox News, Chicago Tribune, Huffington Post, The New York Times, and The Los Angeles Times. People turn to Barna for our proven expertise in assessing and analyzing the intersection of faith and culture, for our clear and compelling data-based journalism and for our ability to obtain high response rates among religious organizations and people of faith.



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE





FULLER

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Founded in 1947, [Fuller](#) is one of the largest and most influential multi-denominational seminaries in the world. Currently serving over 2,900 students from 80 countries and 113 denominations, our 44,000 alumni have been called to serve as ministers, counselors, teachers, artists, nonprofit leaders, businesspersons, and in a multitude of other kingdom vocations around the world. For 75 years, Fuller has been on the cutting edge of serving leaders and organizations with theological depth and practical application.



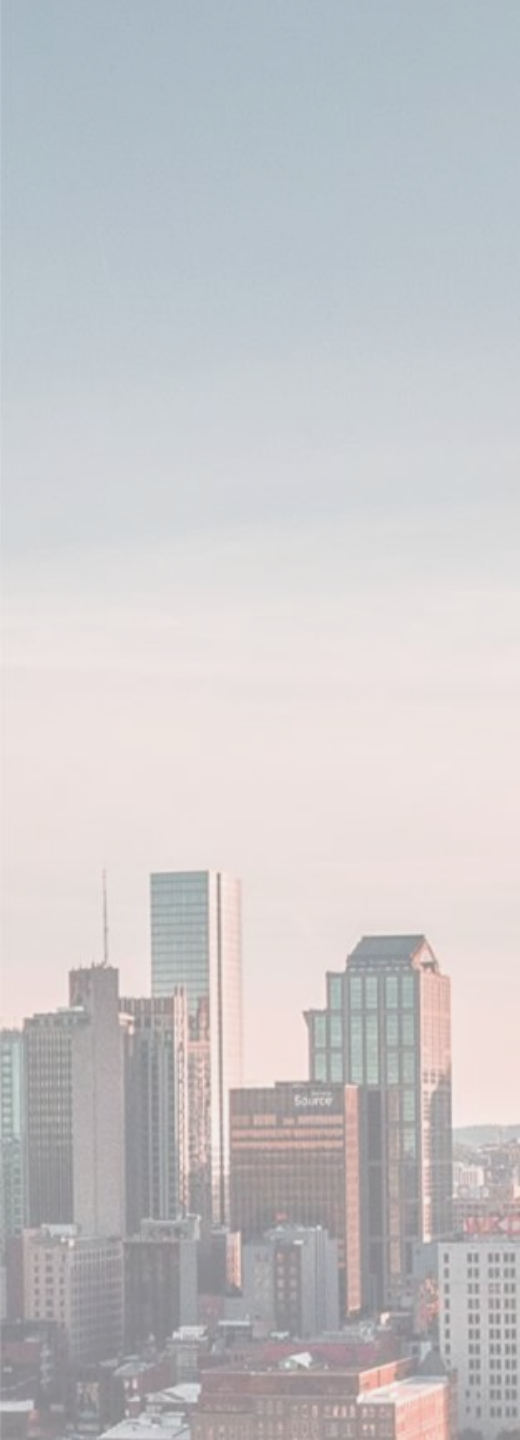
FULLER

LEADERSHIP FORMATION

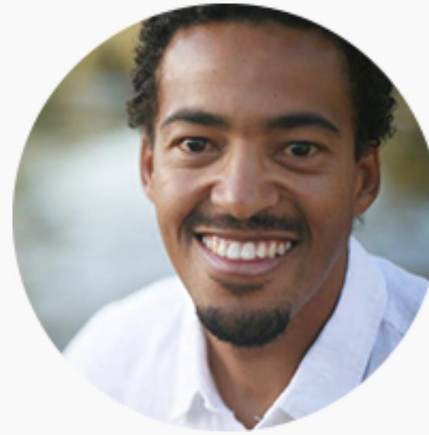
Fuller's Leadership Formation division unifies seven entities that serve the church by translating academic research into practical resources and solutions, including the [Fuller Youth Institute](#), [De Pree Center for Leadership](#), [Thrive Center for Human Development](#), Center for Spiritual Formation, [Fuller Church Planting Initiative](#), Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts, and Fuller Equip—a digital training platform for Christian leaders. Our consulting and training efforts will draw from the best of these entities, bringing wide expertise in specialized topics from diverse leaders and perspectives.



Fuller Youth Institute



Yulee Lee



Chuck Hunt, DMin



Jonathan Banks



Andy Jung, DMin



School of
**MISSION AND
THEOLOGY**

Alexia Salvatierra

**ACADEMIC DEAN FOR CENTRO LATINO AND ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR OF MISSION AND GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION**

Building A Strategy, Movement: Approach

Our process blends practical theology, appreciative inquiry, John Kotter's process on leading change, Ronald Heifetz' work on adaptive leadership, cultural competency for all leaders, and the strategy and execution framework of objectives and key results (OKRs).

Drawing from practical theology, the core questions that will guide the work include:

- What is going on? (defining current reality)
- Why is this going on? (diagnosing the current reality)
- Where is God leading us? (theological imagination)
- How do we respond? (crafting a clear plan)

Phase 1: Complete

Initial Exploration & Design

Phase 2: In Process

Research & Strategy
Creation

Phase 3:

Strategy Implementation,
Evaluation

3 PROJECT TEAMS

Core Project Team:

Comprised of Barna, Fuller Leadership Formation, ELCA CWO staff. The core project team will provide ongoing project leadership, management and direction to the other teams.

ELCA Transformation Team:

Designed to be an extension of influence for the core project team. They are a handful of key ELCA stakeholders to help champion the work across the ELCA ecology.

Multigenerational Advisory Group:

Designed to offer council and perspectives to the project. The team includes people from a variety of formal and informal roles in the ELCA ecology.



LISTENING ROOM SESSIONS

The conversations were framed around the ELCA's priorities of being a *welcoming, thriving and sustainable church* and gave people the chance to:

- Name areas that were moving the ELCA forward
- Name areas that were holding the ELCA back
- Identify tangible opportunities for the ELCA

Who have we listened to? 450 people



The findings in this report highlight experiences and thoughts from the following groups:

- COB - Conference of Bishops
- A2B - Assistants to Bishops
- DEMs - Directors of Evangelical Mission
- Youth Ministry Summit (140 youth)
- Disability Ministries
- Ministry Partners
 - Indigenous Ministry Communities and Partners (4 sessions)
 - Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities
 - Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities Chaplains
 - Lutheran Services in America
- CWO - Churchwide Organization
 - Synod Communicators and Strategic Communications Teams
 - IT Team
 - Service and Justice, CWO Home Area
 - Christian Community and Leadership, CWO Home Area

Upcoming sessions will be held with the following groups:

- African Descent Ministries
- Latinx
- Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church
- Arab and Middle Eastern community
- DEM's specific community sessions
- Office of the Secretary
- Young Adult Gather Networks
- Youth Leadership Gathering attendees
- Lutheran Outdoor Ministry leaders
- Lutheran Campus Ministry board

Conclusions, experiments, strategies,
and next steps emerge from a balanced
approach



Project Teams (Prayer & Discussion)



Listening Sessions



Survey Data

A BALANCED APPROACH

Emerging insights from work completed to date:

- We must tie this work into the ELCA larger vision, rather than adding one more silo.
- We need more Jesus!
- CWO leading in listening can bring alignment—and ultimately change.
- Massive potential to identify and widely share stories of hope. You have SO MANY bright spots! But they're largely buried, disconnected, or unknown.
- Must acknowledge the limiting perspectives, opinions and biases of current constituents and congregants.
- Work must focus on local churches/ministries, rostered leaders, younger and more diverse people--not just national systems and structures.
- DEI goals and intentions must move toward action and implementation.
- Big opportunity to develop systems to educate and resource rostered leaders, as well as lay leaders and local congregants.
- Lead with and leverage our theology of grace.

Share:



What is one recent story or example where you have seen God's love made real, especially to new, younger, or more diverse people through the ELCA?



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Survey Insights

November 2023, Church Council

A Community of Interpreters

4 Discussions

- 1. The Research**
- 2. Survey 1: ELCA Congregants and Participants**
- 3. Survey 2: ELCA Rostered Leaders**
- 4. Survey 3: U.S. Adults**

The Research

3 Quantitative Surveys

1. 10,750

ELCA Congregants and
Participants

2. 840

ELCA Rostered Leaders

3. 2,500

U.S. Adults

11,590

Representative of the
U.S. Adult population

and data is still being collected

ELCA Sample Metrics

ELCA Congregants and Participants

- **Survey Opened:** July 17th, 2023
- **Current Number of Completes:** n=10,750
- **Average length of interview:** 24.6 minutes
 - *That's 4,408 hours or 183 days of survey completions*
- **Number of Questions Asked:** 122
- **Number of synods represented:** 64/65

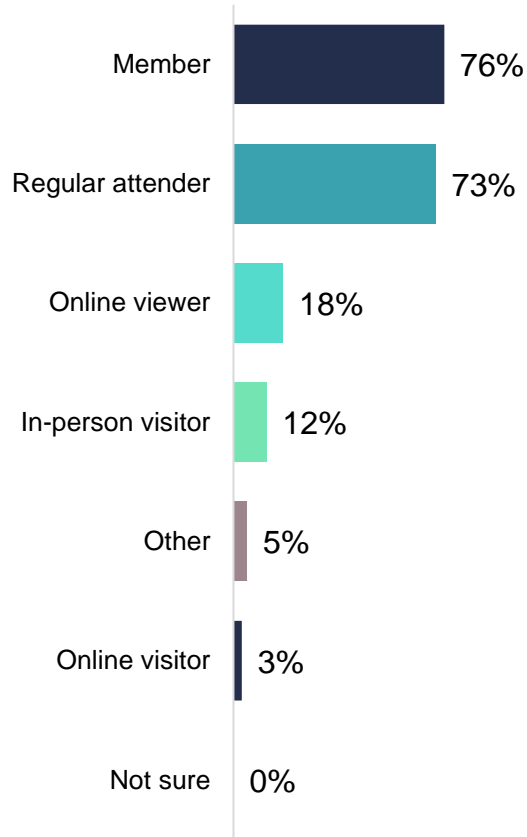
ELCA Rostered Leaders

- **Survey Opened:** July 17th, 2023
- **Current Number of Completes:** n=840
- **Average length of interview:** 26.2 minutes
 - *That's 365 hours or 15 days of survey completions*
- **Number of Questions Asked:** 138
- **Number of synods represented:** 63/65

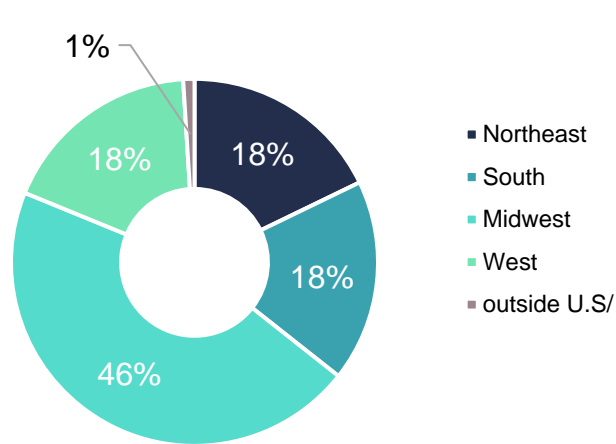
Synod	n	%	Synod	n	%	Synod	n	%	Synod	n	%	Synod	n	%
Alaska Synod	30	0.3%	South Dakota Synod	160	1.5%	Metropolitan Chicago Synod	350	3.4%	North/West Lower Michigan Synod	177	1.7%	Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod	129	1.2%
Northwest Washington Synod	198	1.9%	Northwestern Minnesota Synod	125	1.2%	Northern Illinois Synod	193	1.9%	Indiana-Kentucky Synod	191	1.8%	Allegheny Synod	59	0.6%
Southwestern Washington Synod	217	2.1%	Northeastern Minnesota Synod	118	1.1%	Central/Southern Illinois Synod	138	1.3%	Northwestern Ohio Synod	134	1.3%	Lower Susquehanna Synod	271	2.6%
Northwest Intermountain Synod	99	1.0%	Southwestern Minnesota Synod	147	1.4%	Southeastern Iowa Synod	195	1.9%	Northeastern Ohio Synod	163	1.6%	Upper Susquehanna Synod	44	0.4%
Oregon Synod	141	1.4%	Minneapolis Area Synod	309	3.0%	Western Iowa Synod	64	0.6%	Southern Ohio Synod	233	2.2%	Delaware-Maryland Synod	190	1.8%
Montana Synod	101	1.0%	Saint Paul Area Synod	246	2.4%	Northeastern Iowa Synod	116	1.1%	New Jersey Synod	153	1.5%	Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod	162	1.6%
Sierra Pacific Synod	211	2.0%	Southeastern Minnesota Synod	152	1.5%	Northern Great Lakes Synod	82	0.8%	New England Synod	254	2.4%	West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod	31	0.3%
Southwest California Synod	158	1.5%	Nebraska Synod	211	2.0%	Northwest Synod Of Wisconsin	161	1.5%	Metropolitan New York Synod	109	1.0%	Virginia Synod	167	1.6%
Pacifica Synod	149	1.4%	Central States Synod	199	1.9%	East-Central Synod of Wisconsin	163	1.6%	Upstate New York Synod	165	1.6%	North Carolina Synod	310	3.0%
Grand Canyon Synod	261	2.5%	Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod	72	0.7%	Greater Milwaukee Synod	253	2.4%	Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod	164	1.6%	South Carolina Synod	194	1.9%
Rocky Mountain Synod	333	3.2%	Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod	114	1.1%	South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	179	1.7%	Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod	186	1.8%	Southeastern Synod	256	2.5%
Western North Dakota Synod	56	0.5%	Southwestern Texas Synod	160	1.5%	La Crosse Area Synod	68	0.7%	Slovak Zion Synod	0	0.0%	Florida-Bahamas Synod	284	2.7%
Eastern North Dakota Synod	77	0.7%	Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod	146	1.4%	Southeast Michigan Synod	176	1.7%	Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod	53	0.5%	Caribbean Synod	10	0.1%

Congregants and Participants Demographics

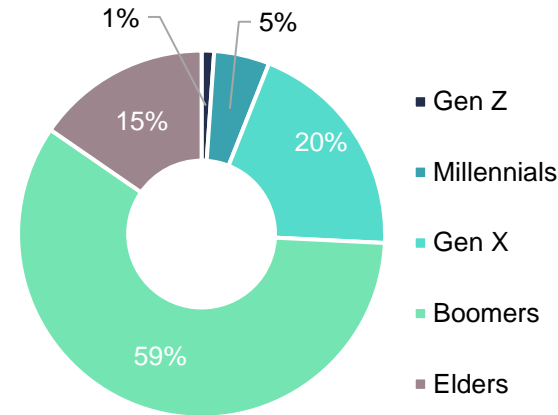
Which of these best describes your connection to the ELCA?



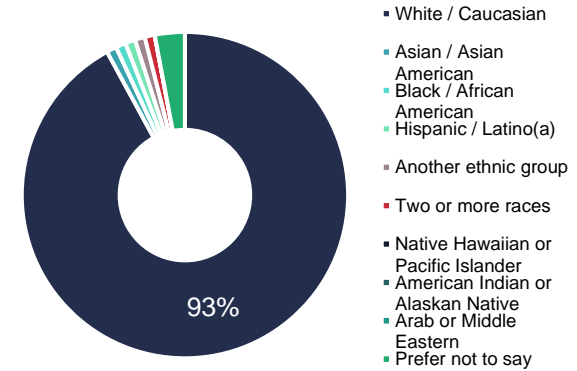
Region



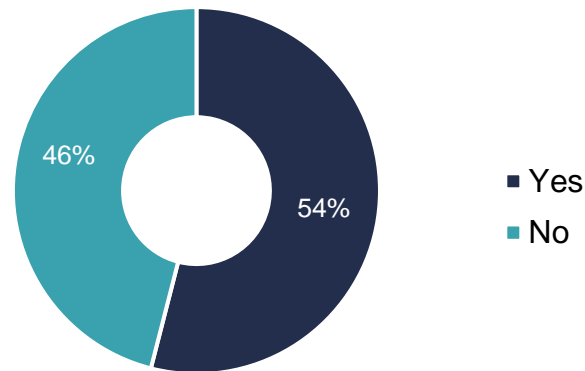
Generations



Ethnicity



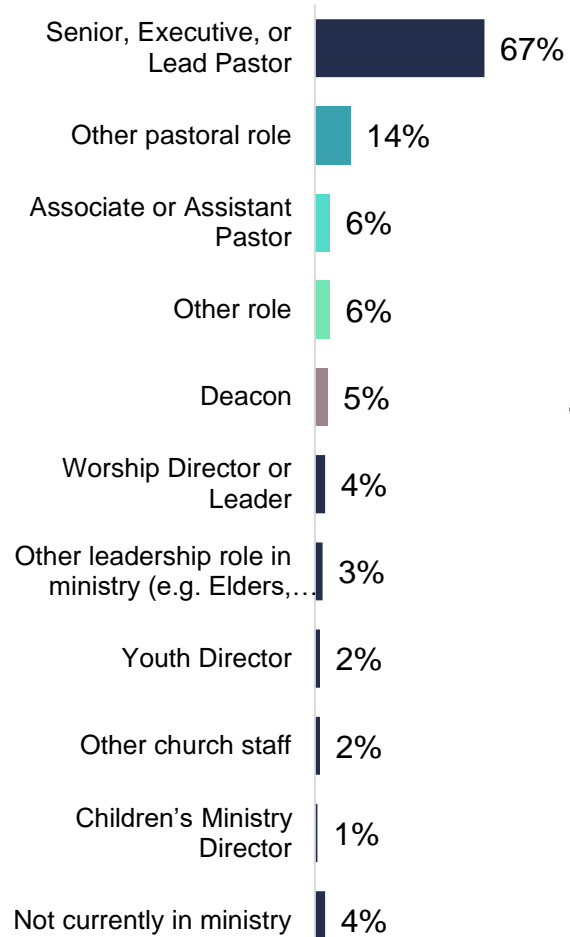
Were you raised in the ELCA?



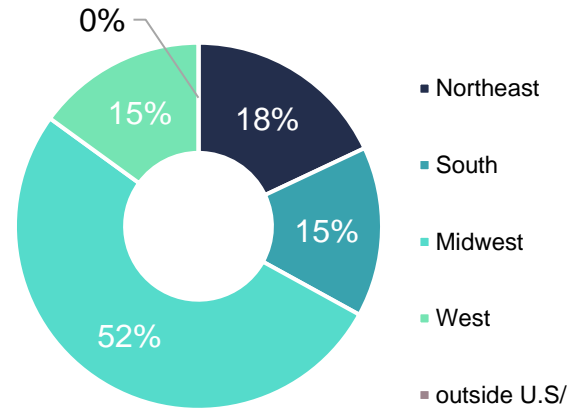
How long have you been at your current church?
35 years (average)

Rostered Leaders Demographics

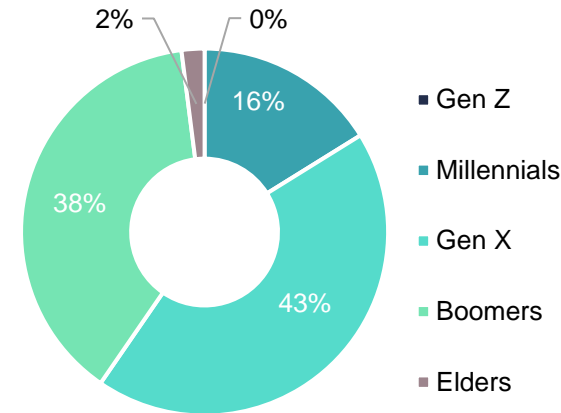
What is your current role in ministry?



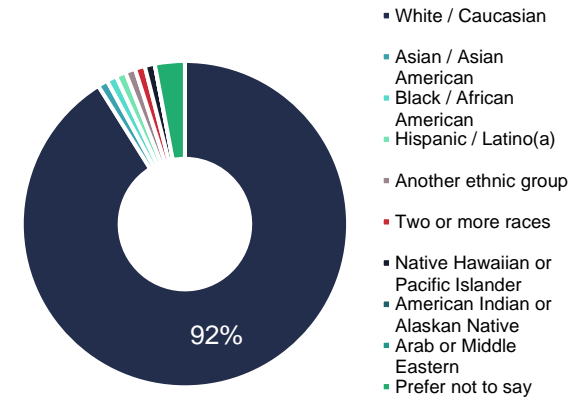
Region



Generations



Ethnicity



Average number of years in Christian ministry: 20

Average number of years in current role: 7

Average number of years as a Rostered Leader: 15

Average number of years in the ELCA: 35

The Diversity of This Data

	Congregants		
	Current Total #	Current total %	Goal
Non-White	808	7.48%	≥1,000
White	9998	92.29%	-
African American/Black	130	1.0%	200
African National/African Caribbean	-	-	
American Indian/Alaska Native	47	0.14%	
Arab/Middle Eastern	9	0.05%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	65	0.01%	200
Latino/Hispanic	92	1.24%	200
Multiracial	329	1.75%	
Other	65	3.51%	

What These Surveys Asked About

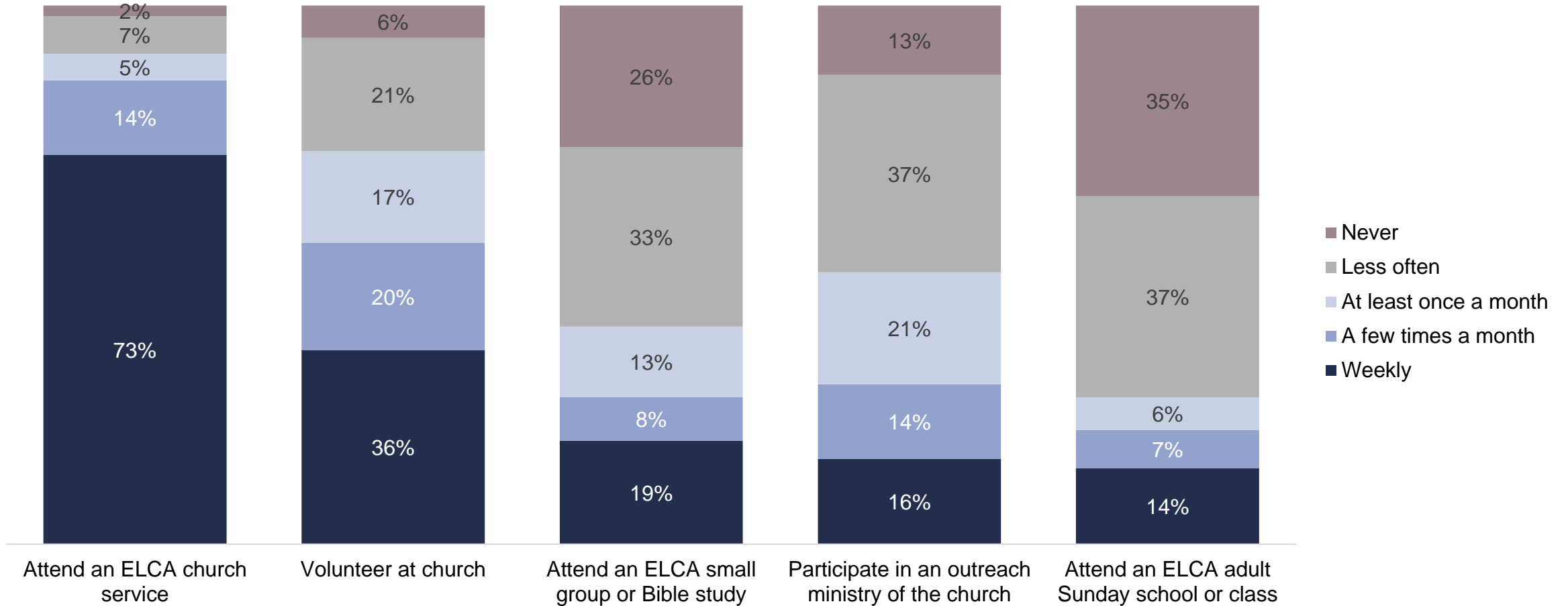
	ELCA Congregants and Participants	ELCA Rostered Leaders	General U.S. Adult Population
Spiritual/Religious Practices	X		X
Current Church Assessment	X	X	
Growing Young Assessment	X	X	
Human Flourishing	X	X	X
Vocational Well-Being		X	
Spiritual Background			X
What a Person is Looking for in a Church			X
Perceptions of the ELCA			X
Demographics <i>(age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, region, urbanicity)</i>	X	X	X
Theolographics <i>(church size, church racial/ethnic makeup, spiritual beliefs, etc.)</i>	X	X	X

Survey 1: ELCA Congregants and Participants

1. Frequency of Church and Ministry Engagement

Church and Ministry Engagement

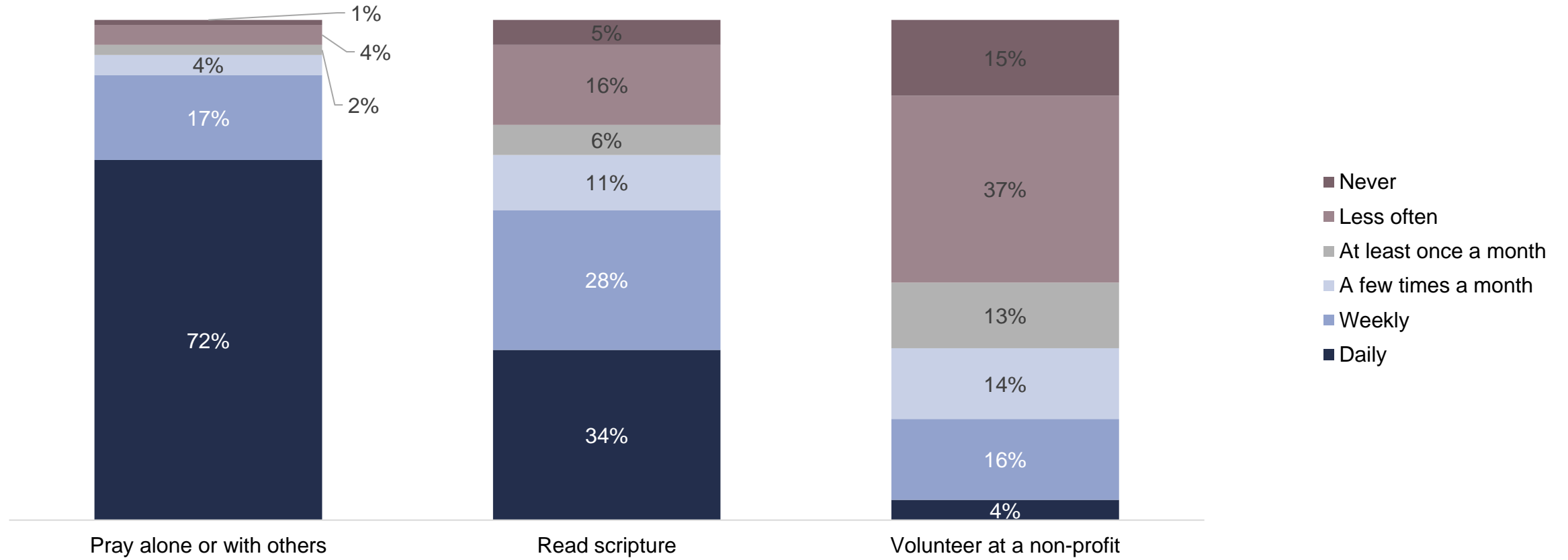
*How often do you do any of the following through an ELCA church?
% among ELCA Congregants and Participants*



2. Frequency of Prayer, Scripture Reading and Service

Church and Ministry Engagement

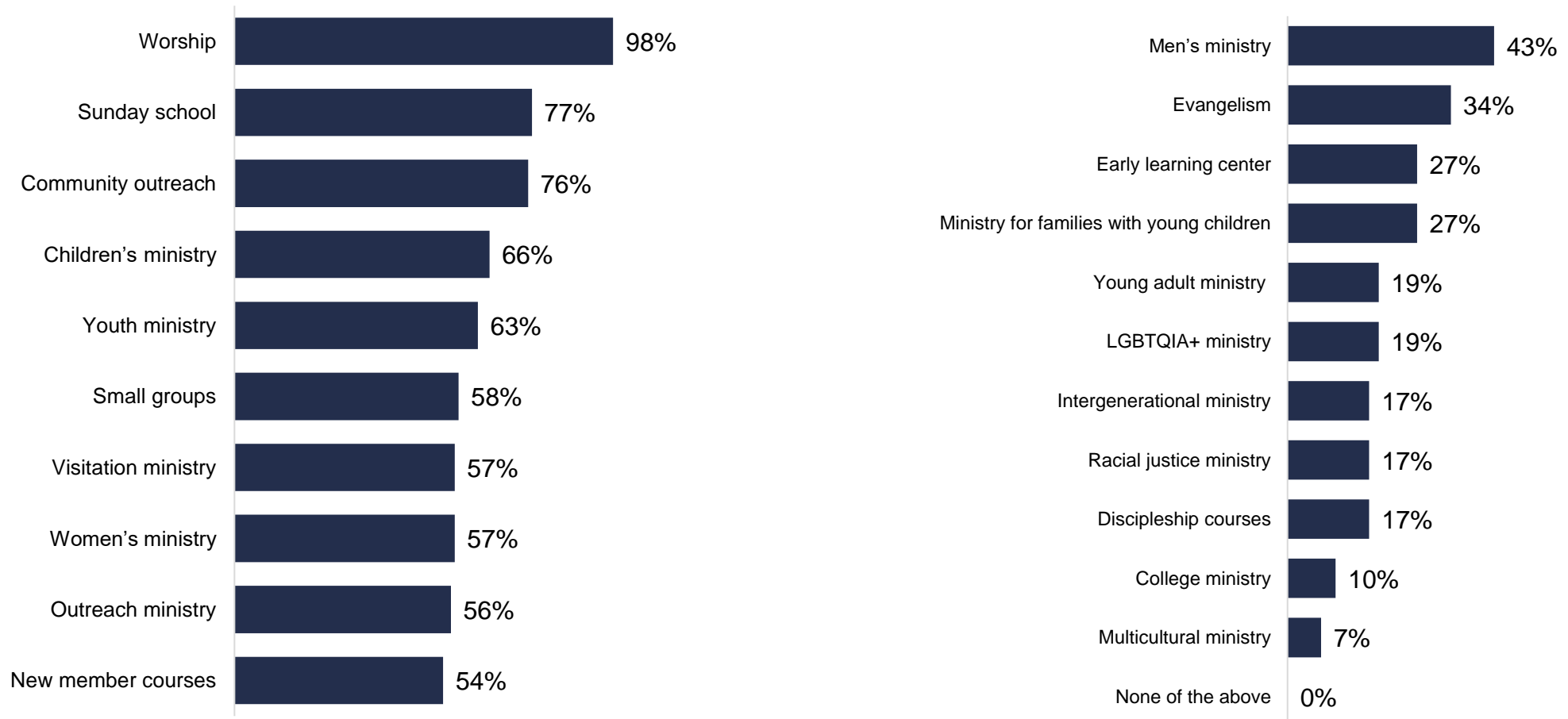
*How often do you do any of the following?
% among ELCA Congregants and Participants*



3. Ministry Programs Offered and What Makes an Impact

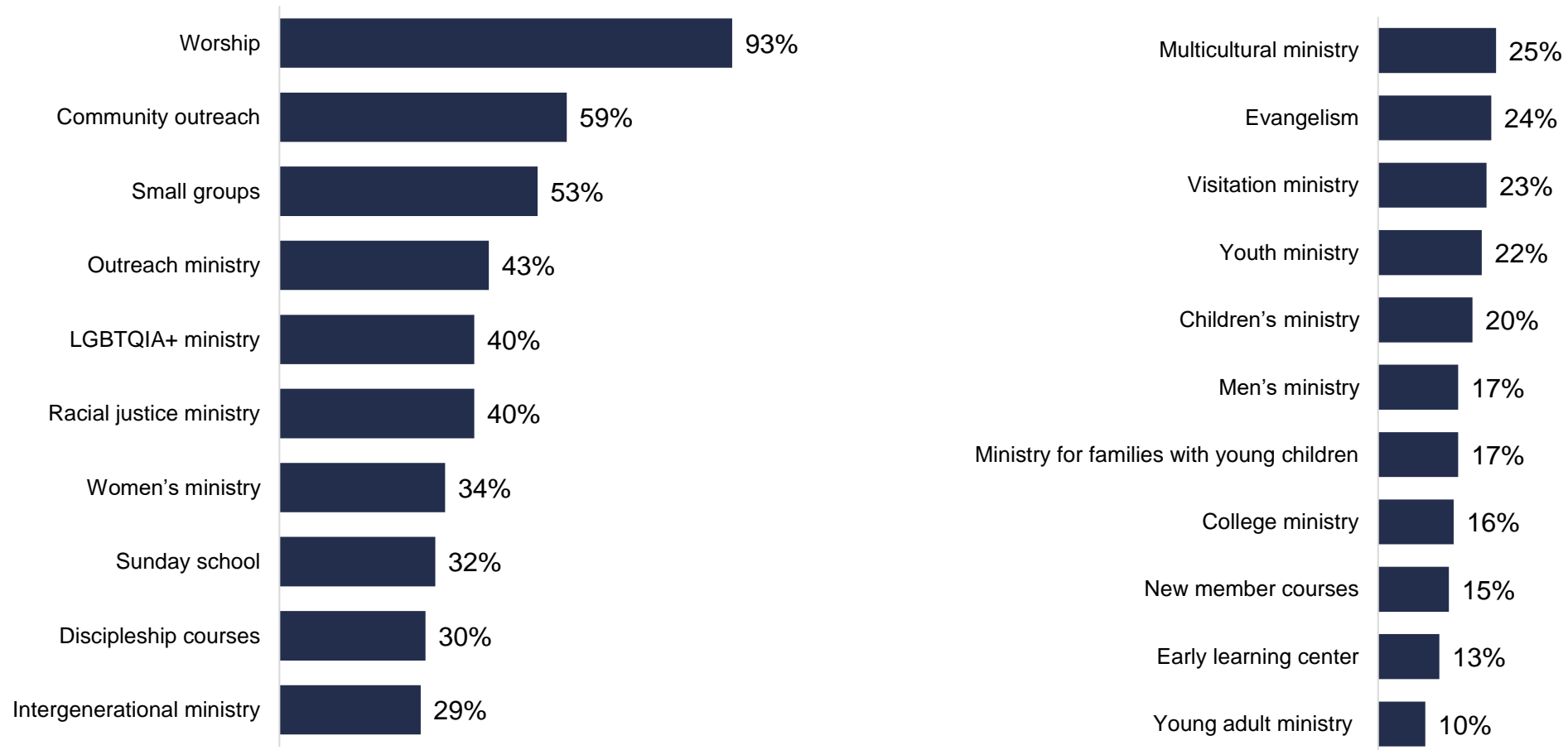
Programs Offered

*Does your church offer any of the following?
Select all that apply | % among ELCA Congregants and Participants*



What Makes an Impact

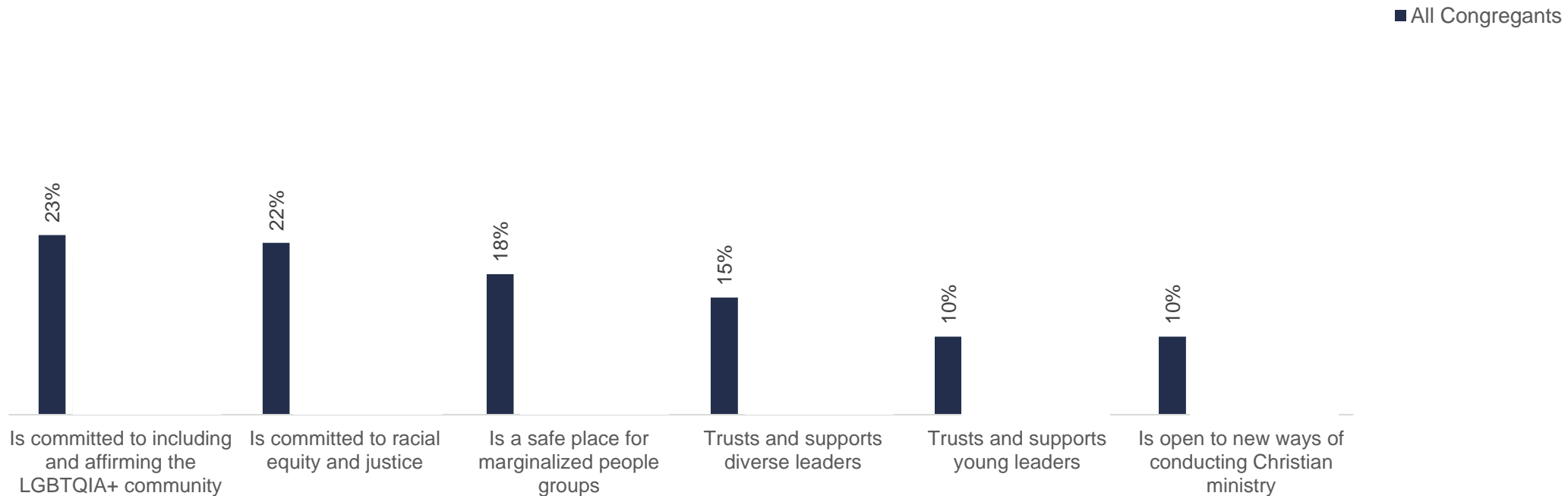
*Of those your church currently offers, which five would you have had the most positive impact on you?
 Select up to five | % among ELCA Congregants and Participants who say their church offers this*



4. Diversity and Inclusion

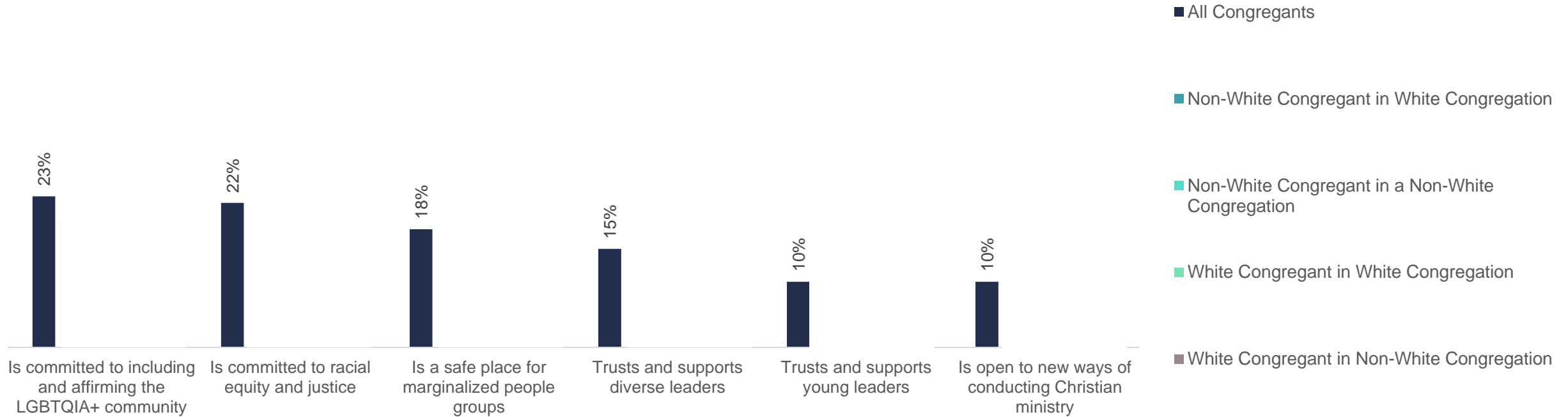
Diversity and Inclusion

Thinking about your church overall, how true would you say each of the following are? Our church...
% Completely True



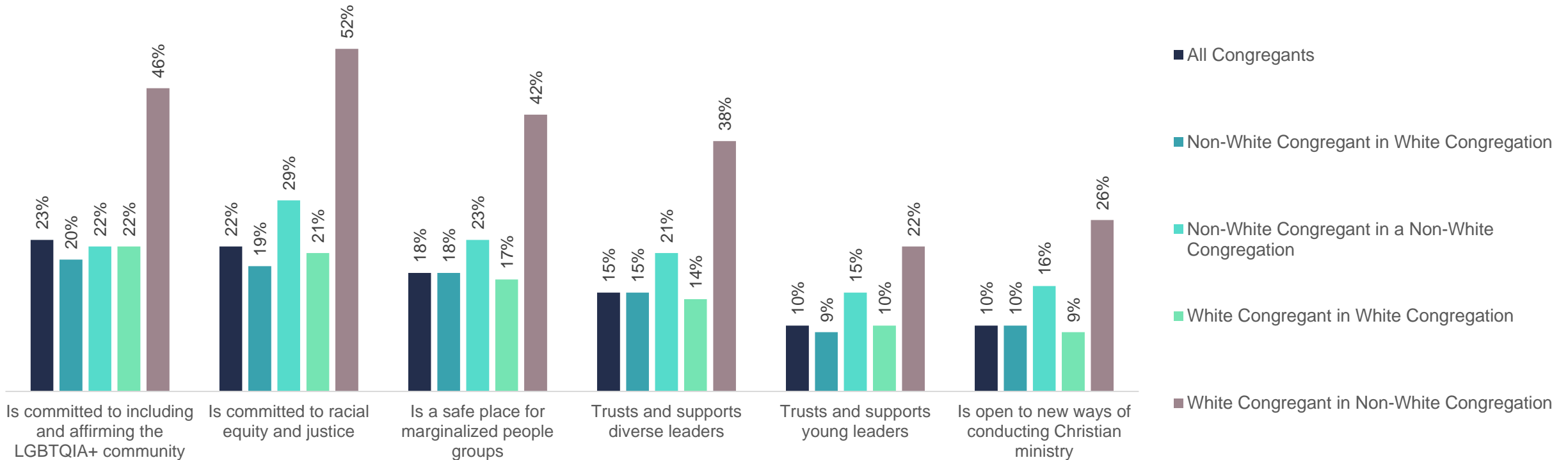
Diversity and Inclusion

*Thinking about your church overall, how true would you say each of the following are? Our church...
% Completely True*



Diversity and Inclusion

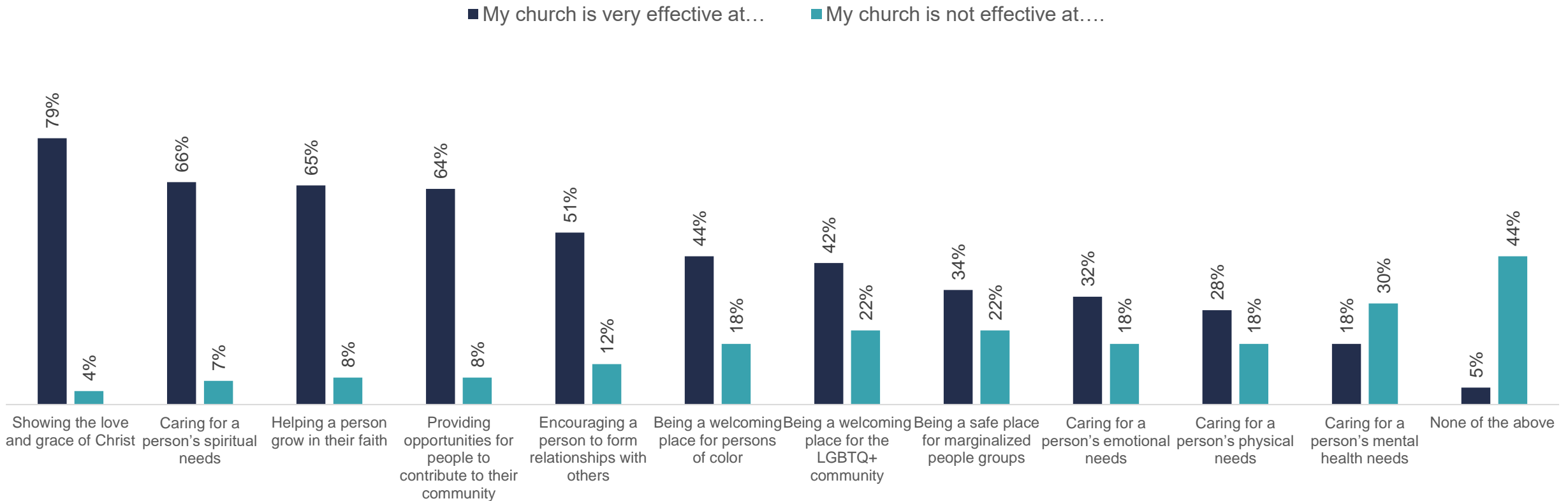
Thinking about your church overall, how true would you say each of the following are? Our church...
% Completely True



5. Church Effectiveness

Effectiveness of our Churches

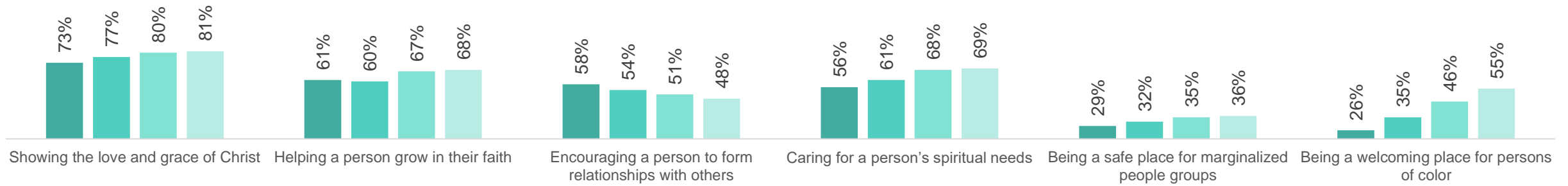
Would you say that your church is very effective at any of the following? Select all that apply
Would you say that your church is not effective at any of the following? Select all that apply



Generational Differences

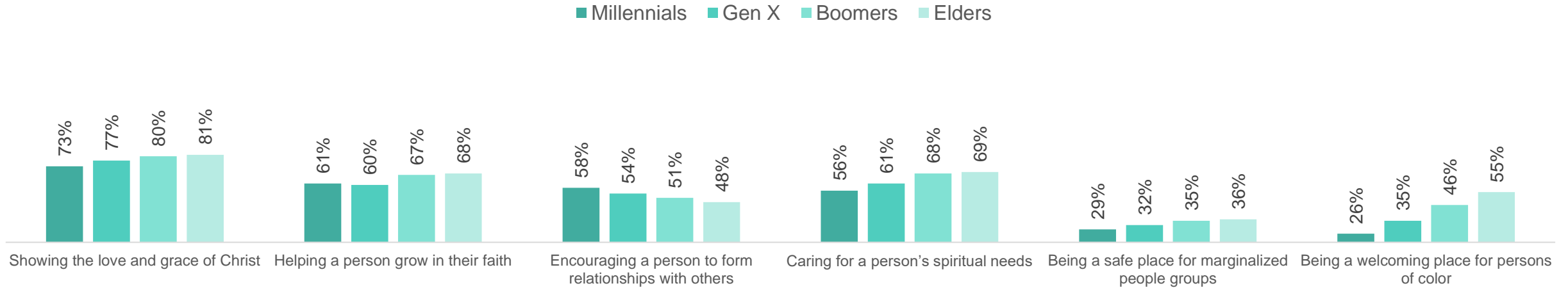
Would you say that your church is very effective at any of the following? Select all that apply

■ Millennials ■ Gen X ■ Boomers ■ Elders



Generational Differences

Would you say that your church is very effective at any of the following? *Select all that apply*



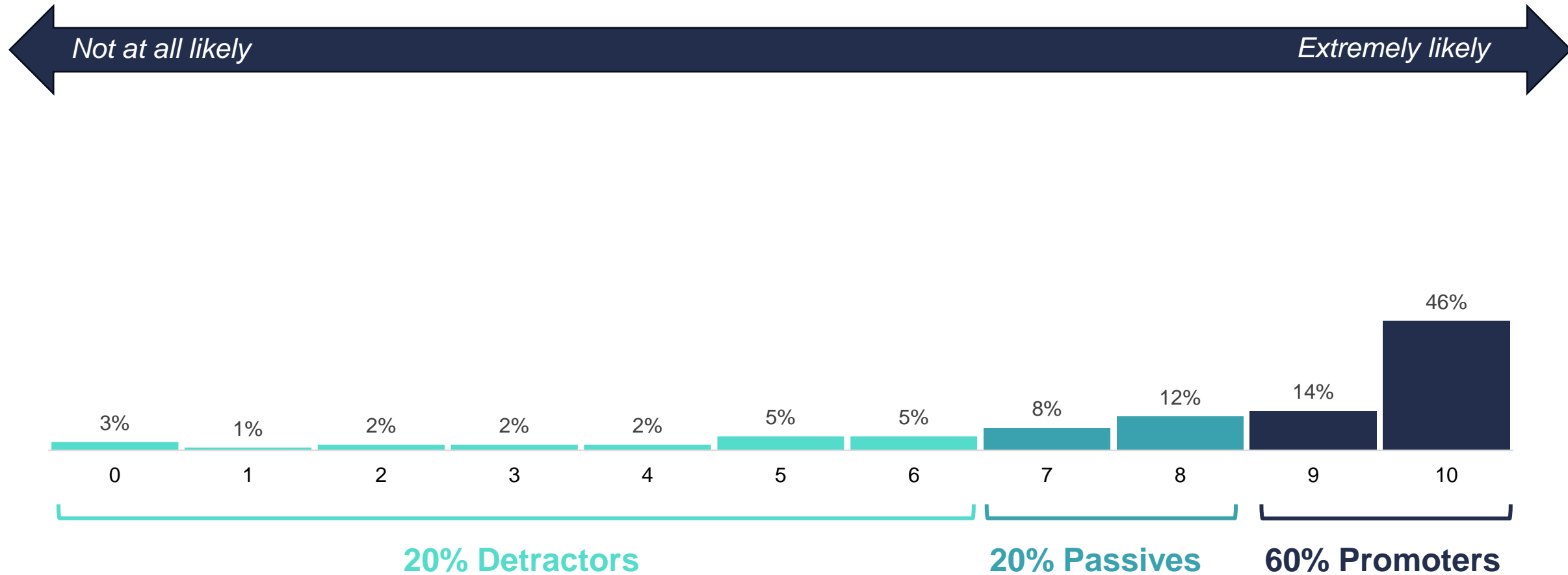
Would you say that your church is not effective at any of the following? *Select all that apply*



6. Would you recommend your church?

Net Promoter

Based on your experience, how likely are you to recommend your church to a friend?
 % among ELCA congregants and participants



Net Promoter

	Total	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers	Elders	Non-White	White
Promoters	60%	44%	46%	52%	62%	67%	49%	61%
Passives	20%	20%	28%	25%	21%	18%	21%	22%
Detractors	20%	36%	26%	23%	17%	15%	30%	19%

Share:



What are your assumptions or hypotheses about the ELCA, that you'd like this research to be able to test or answer?

Survey 2: Rostered Leaders

1. The Average ELCA Congregation, According to Rostered Leaders

The Average ELCA Congregation, According to Rostered Leaders

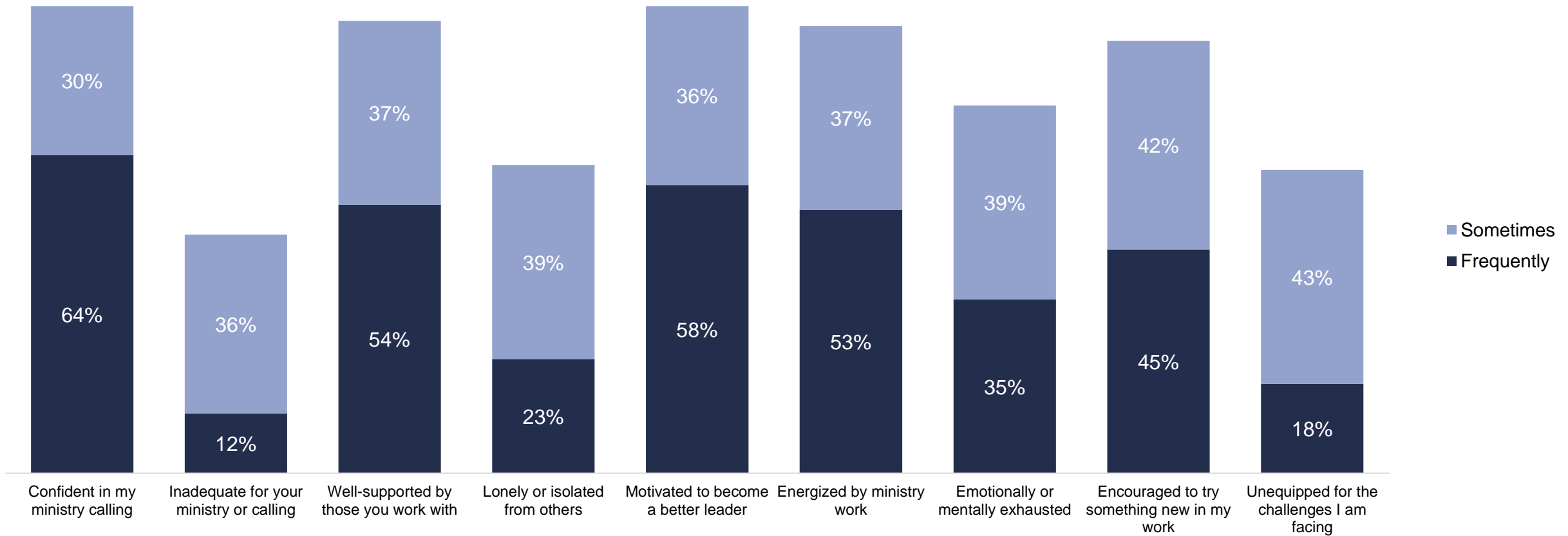
- **Average adult attendance: 102 people**
 - # of 18 - 35-year-olds: 12
 - # of 36 – 55-year-olds: 26
 - # of 56 – 75-year-olds: 40
 - # of 76+ year olds: 24
- **Church Size (by number of weekly attendees)**
 - < 50 attendees: 31%
 - 51 – 99 attendees: 40%
 - 100 - 199 attendees: 19%
 - 200+ attendees: 10%
- **How would you describe the community where your church is?**
 - Urban: 20%
 - Suburban: 37%
 - Small town: 27%
 - Rural: 16%
- **What is the primary ethnicity of your congregation?**
 - White: 95%
 - Multi-racial: 4%
 - Else: 1%
- **Is your church openly affirming and accepting of the LGBTQIA+ community?**
 - Yes: 52%
 - No: 30%
 - Not sure: 18%
- **Does anyone in your church's congregation identify as LGBTQIA+?**
 - Yes: 80%
 - No: 6%
 - Not sure: 14%
- **Do you, personally, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, non-binary, or transgender?**
 - Yes: 12%
 - No: 84%
 - Not sure: 4%

2. Rostered Leader Well-Being

Rostered Leaders are healthier than you may assume, but also have clear needs.

Rostered Leader Well-Being

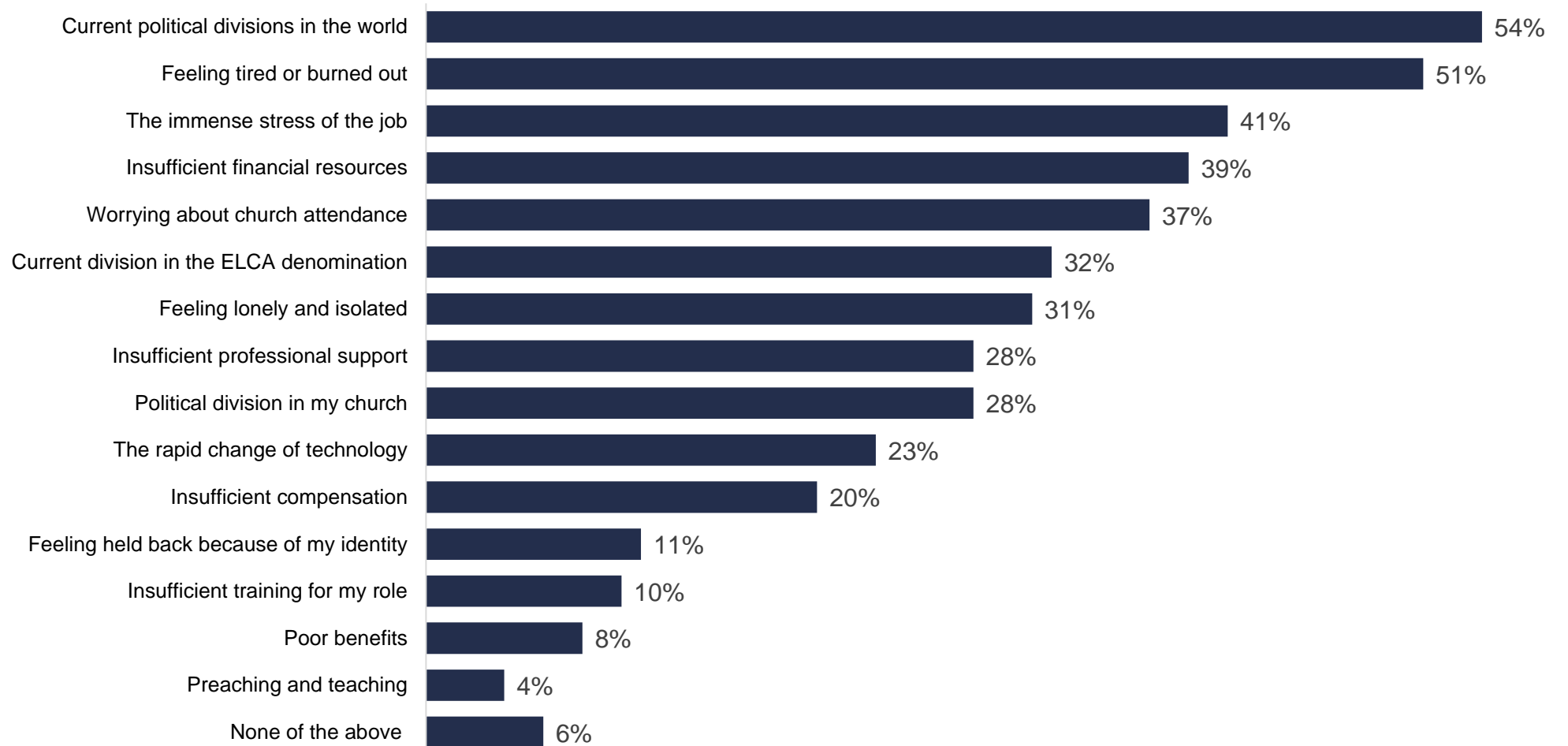
Over the past year, how often have you felt any of the following in your ministry work?



3. What Hinders Rostered Leaders

What Hinders Rostered Leaders

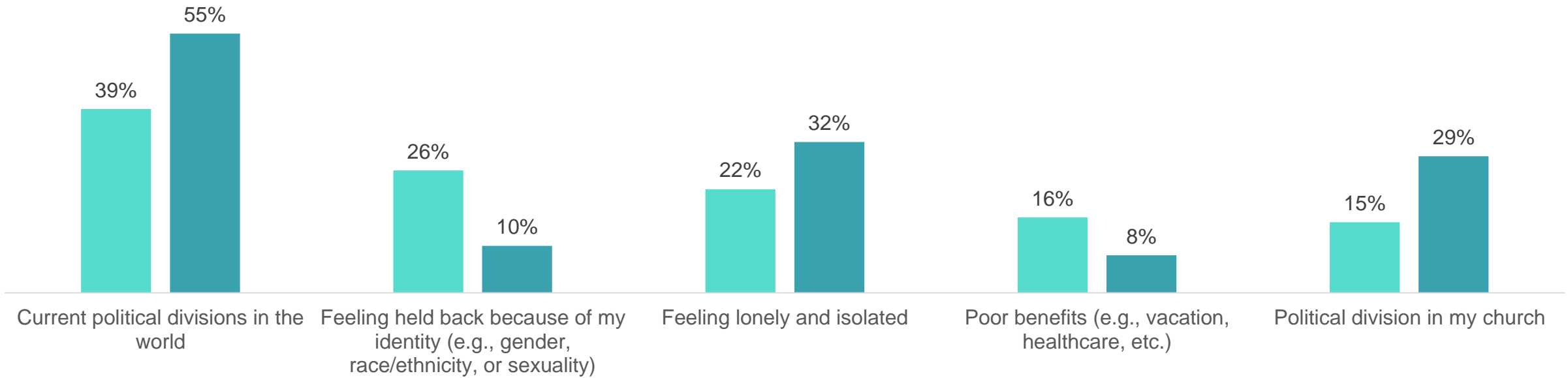
Read the following list of items. Of these, which five would you say have the most significant, negative impact on your ability to lead? Select five



What Holds Leaders Back

Read the following list of items. Of these, which five would you say have the most significant, negative impact on your ability to lead? Select five
Only showing statistical differences

■ Non-White Rostered Leaders ■ White Rostered Leaders



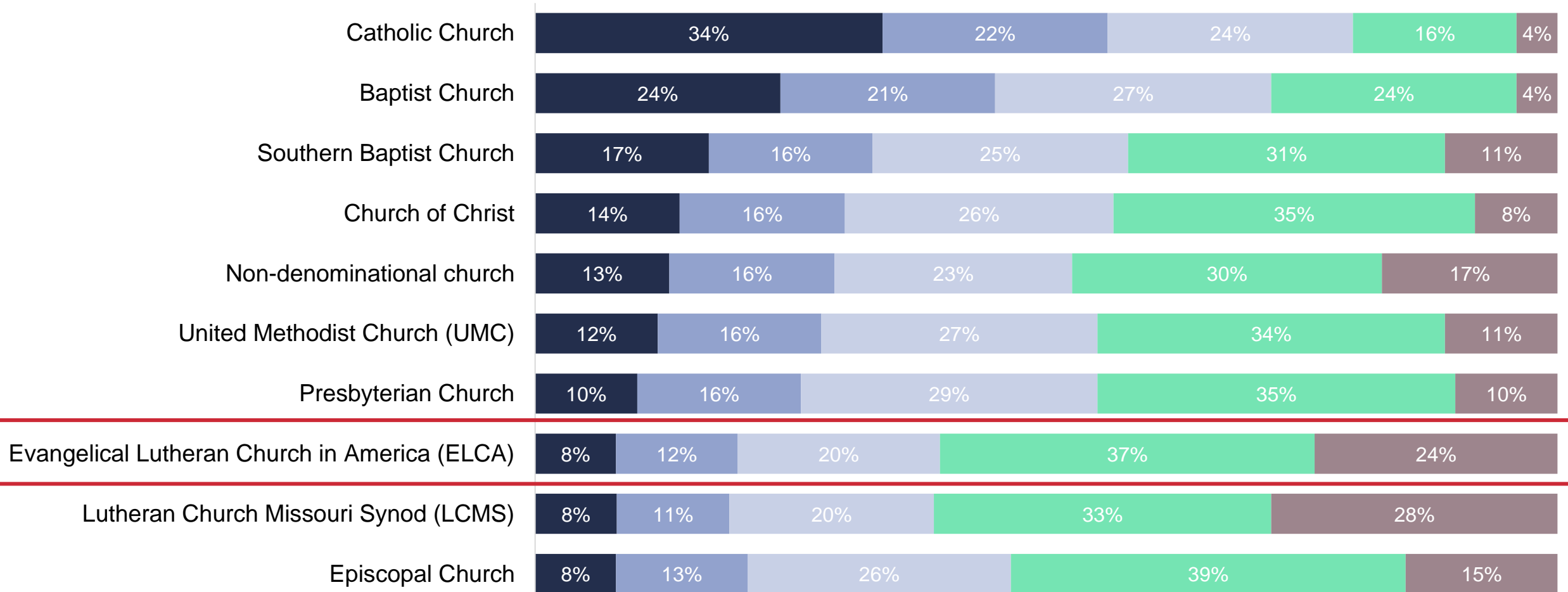
Survey 3: The General U.S. Population

1. From the outside looking in, what do U.S. adults know and believe about the ELCA?

Denomination Familiarity

The following is a list of religious groups. How familiar are you with each of these?
% Among all U.S. Adults

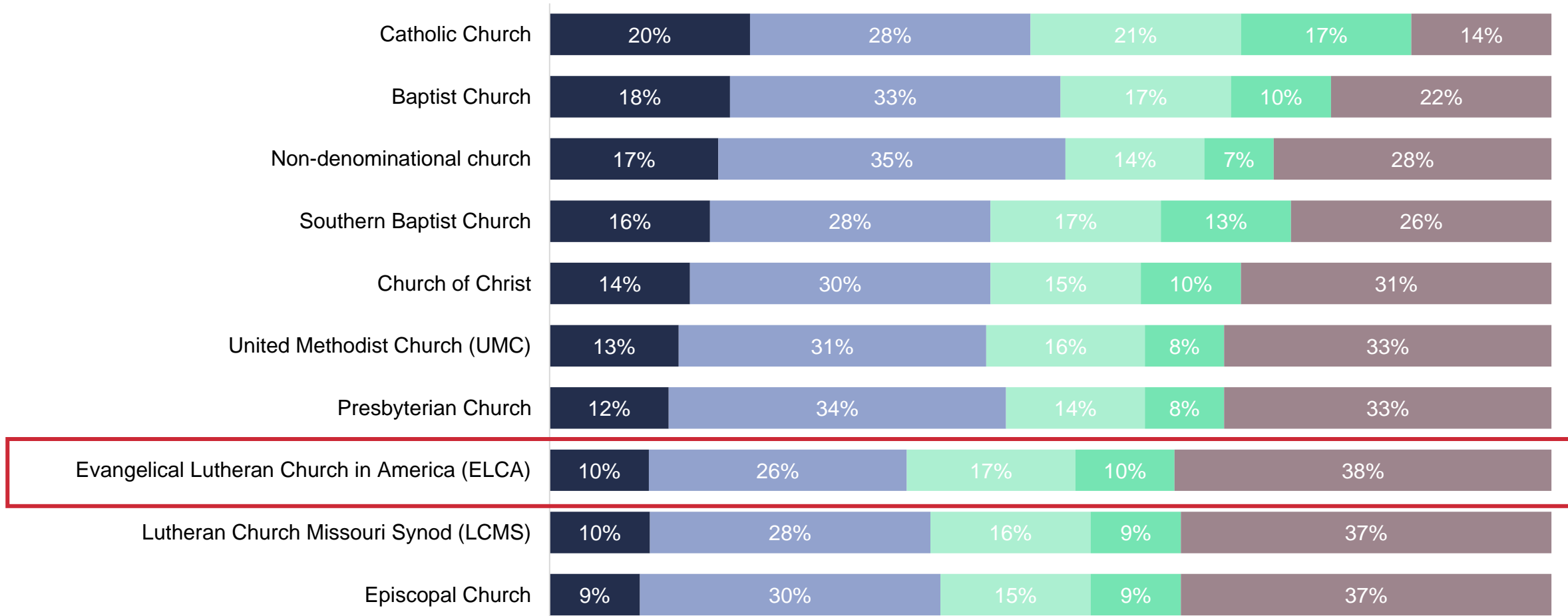
■ Very familiar
■ Moderately familiar
■ Slightly familiar
■ Have heard of, but not familiar
■ Never heard of



Denomination Favorability

The following is a list of religious groups. For each listed, please indicate if you have a favorable or unfavorable impression. | % Among those who have heard of each

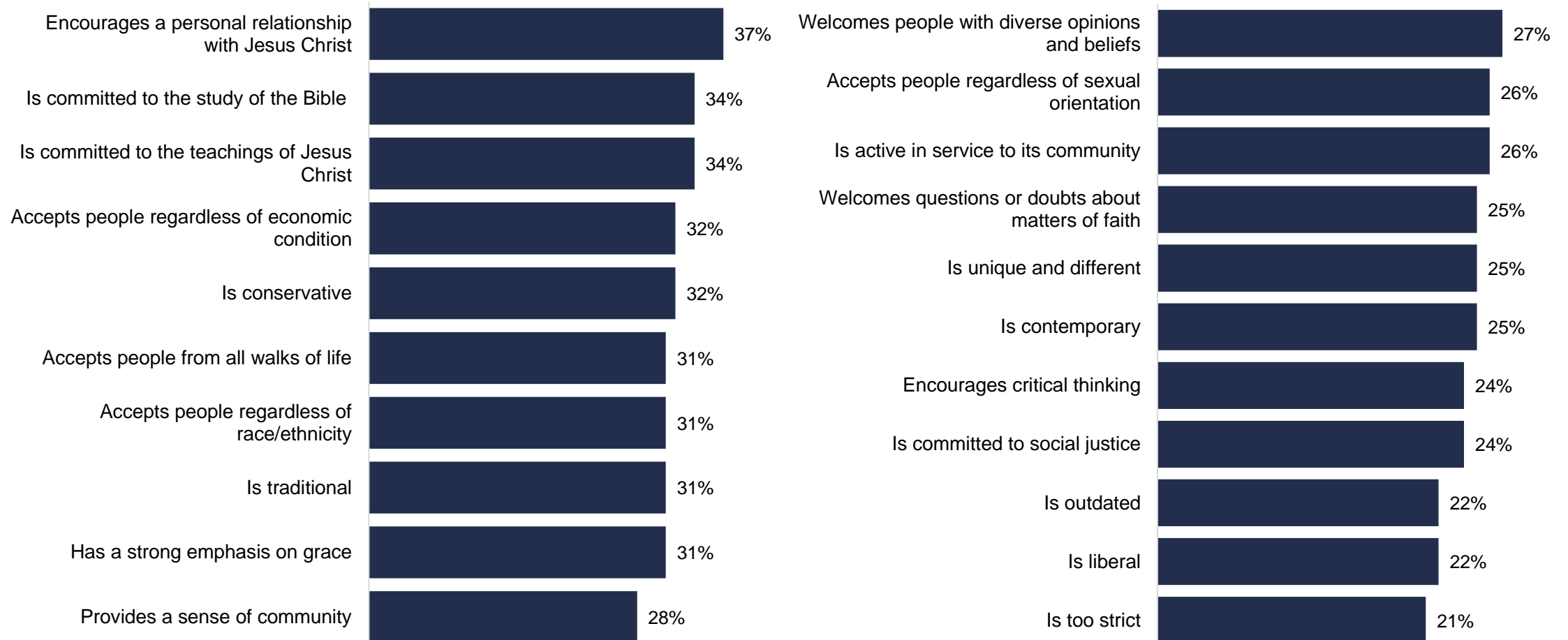
Very favorable
 Somewhat favorable
 Somewhat unfavorable
 Very unfavorable
 Heard of, but no opinion



What People Believe about the ELCA

Based on what you know, have seen, or have heard, please indicate how accurately each statement describes the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

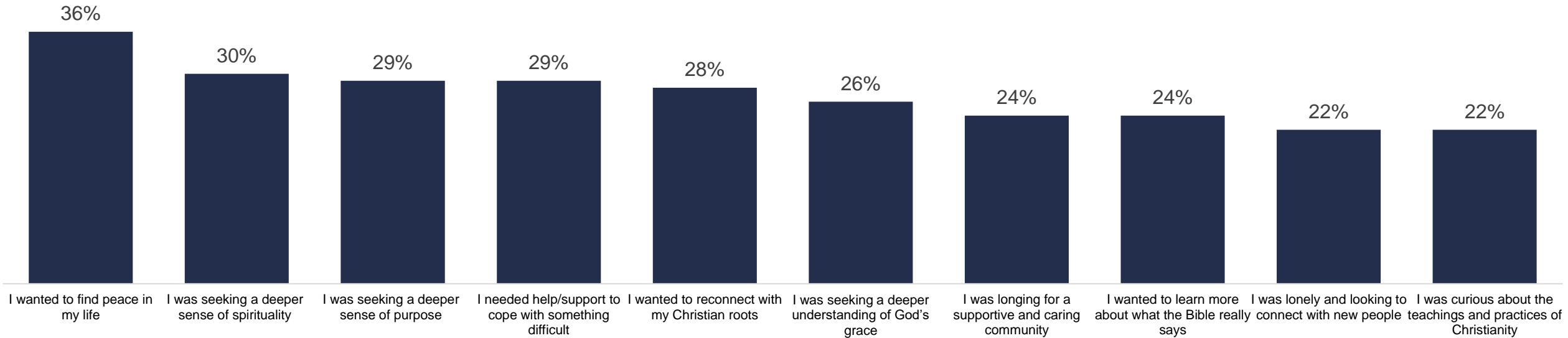
% among those familiar with the ELCA | % this is “very accurate” of the ELCA



2. For U.S. adults who do not currently attend a Christian church, what might they be looking for?

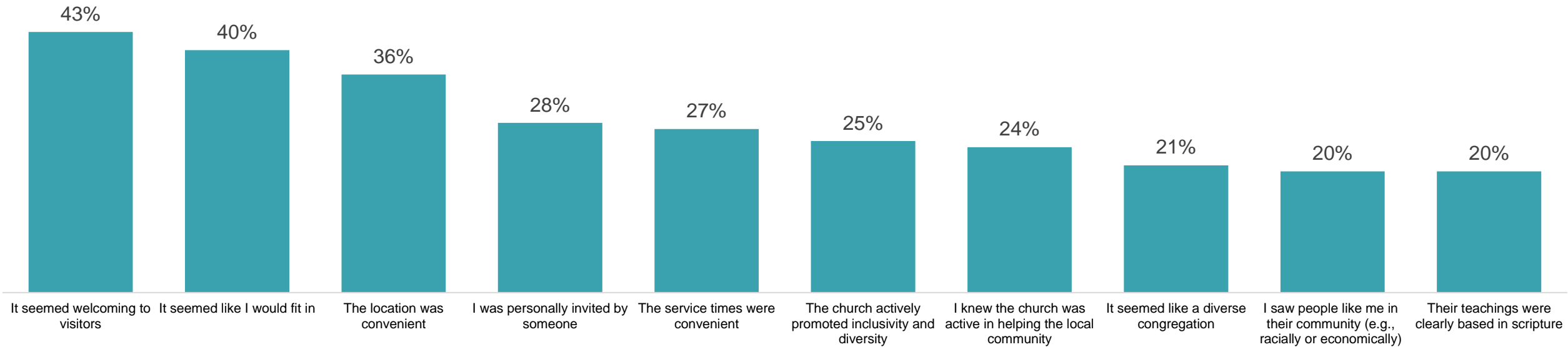
“I might consider going to a Christian church if...”

*% among adults who are not connected with a Christian church
Top 10 Responses Shown*



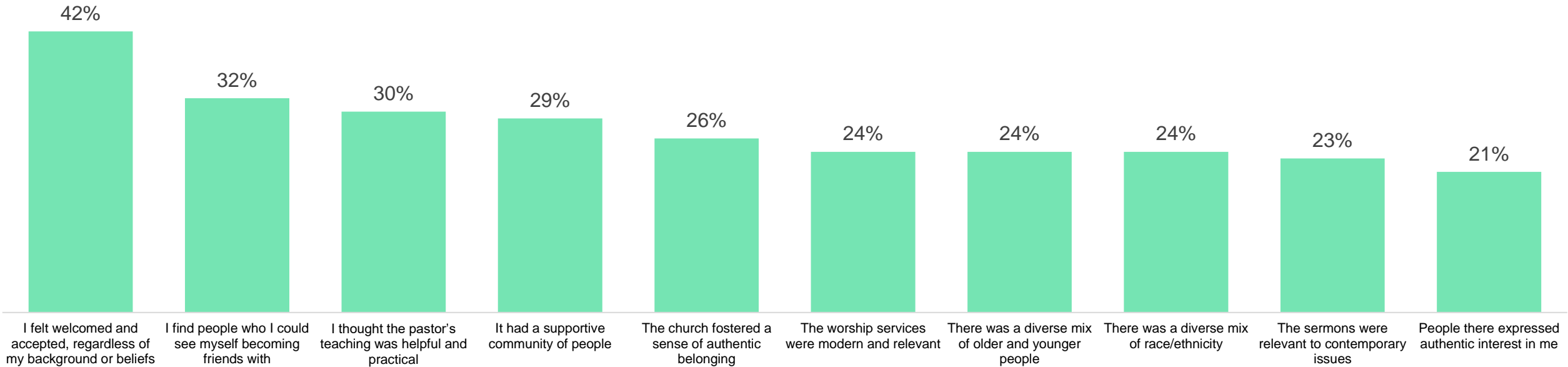
“I would consider visiting a specific church if . . .”

*% among adults who are not connected with a Christian church
Top 10 Responses Shown*



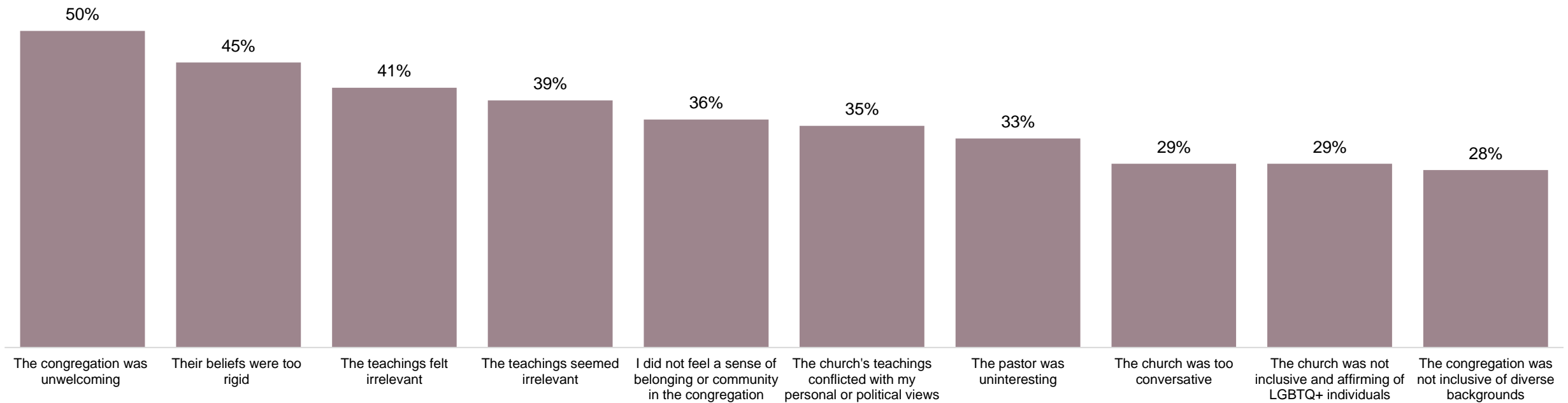
“I would continue attending a church I visited if...”

*% among adults who are not connected with a Christian church
Top 10 Responses Shown*



“I would not be interested in a church if...”

*% among adults who are not connected with a Christian church
Top 10 Responses Shown*



Share:



What are your assumptions or hypotheses about the ELCA, that you'd like this research to be able to test or answer?



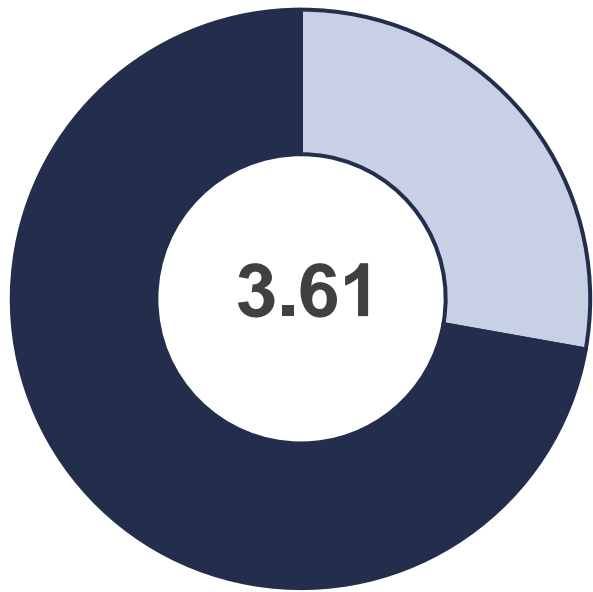
***As we identify strategic next steps,
consider the following early
observations...***



STRENGTHS

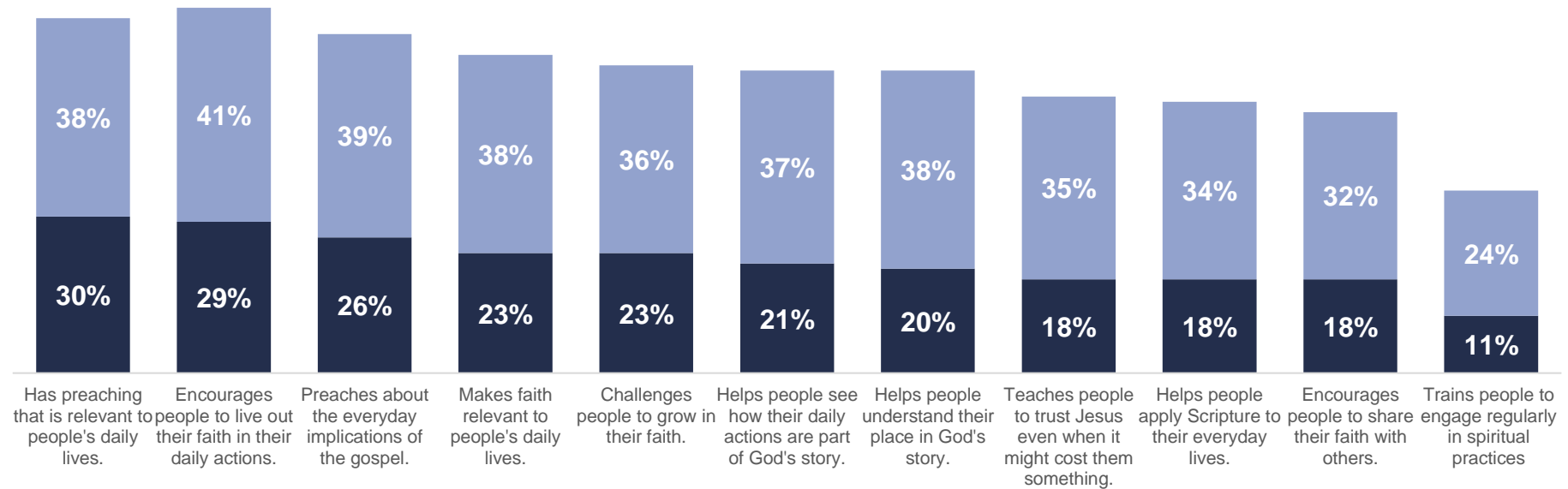
Takes Jesus' Message Seriously

Scored



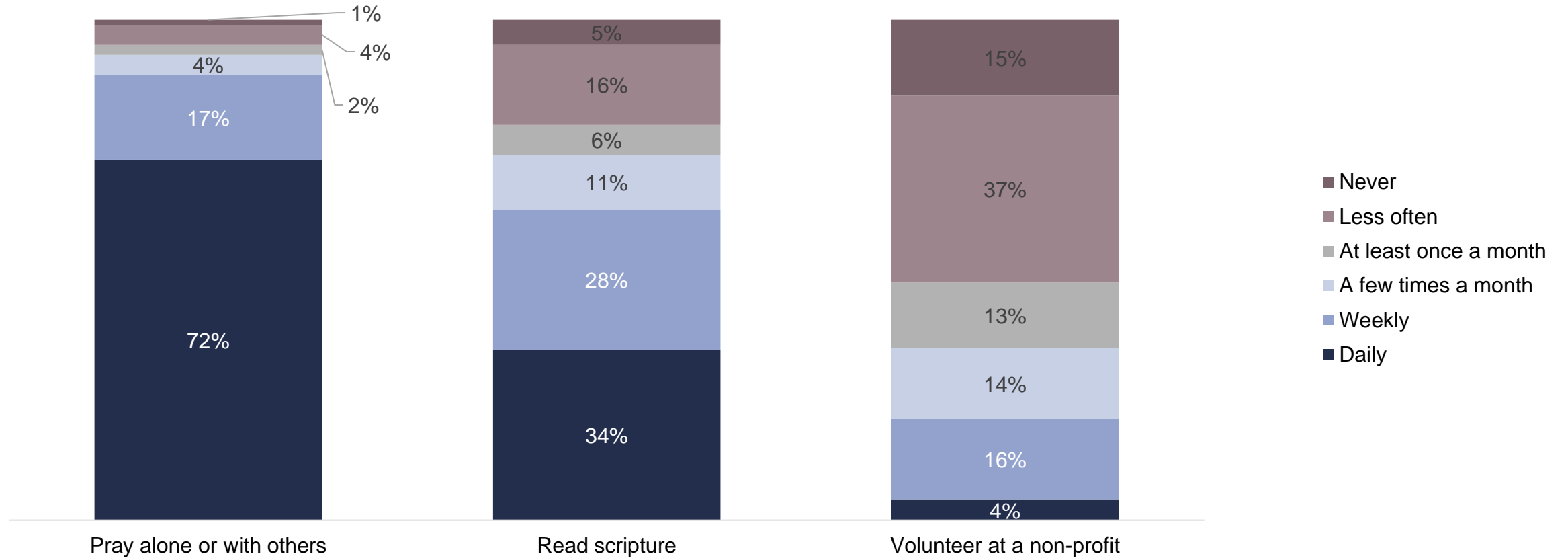
Our Church...

■ Completely true ■ Very true



Church and Ministry Engagement

*How often do you do any of the following?
% among ELCA Congregants and Participants*



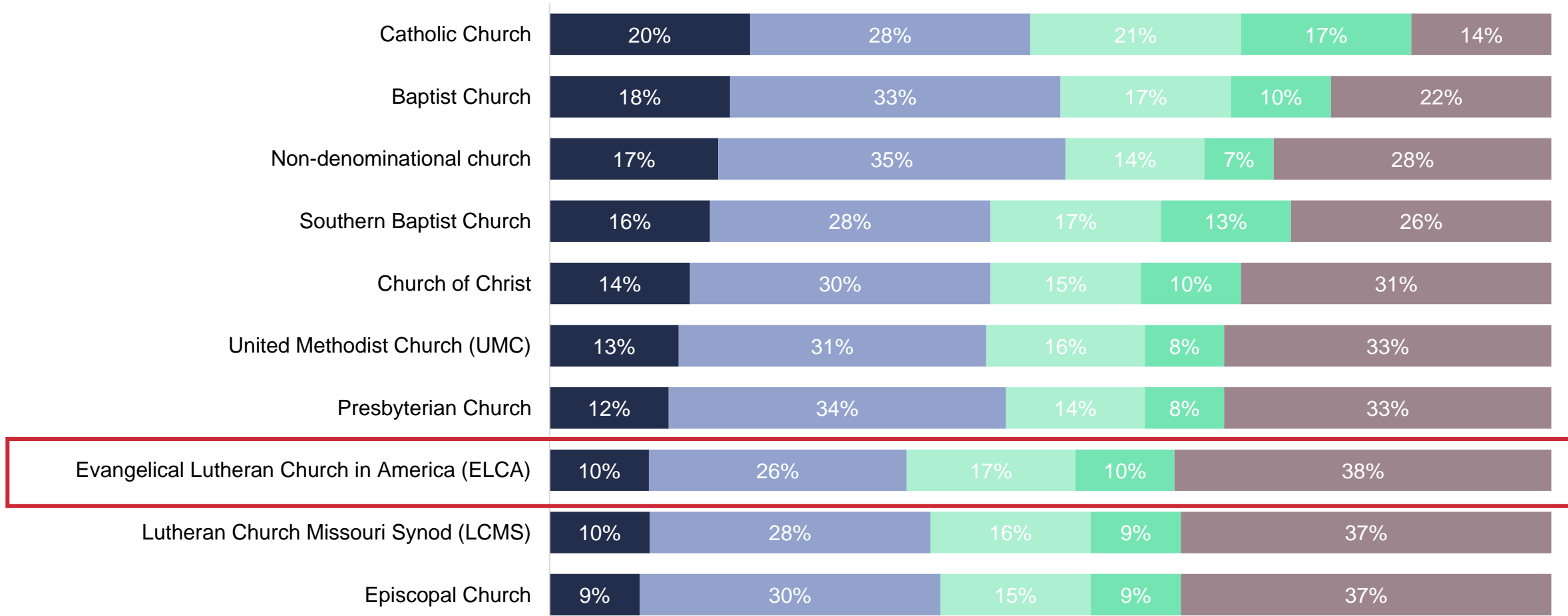


NEW

Denomination Favorability

The following is a list of religious groups. For each listed, please indicate if you have a favorable or unfavorable impression. | % Among those who have heard of each

Very favorable
 Somewhat favorable
 Somewhat unfavorable
 Very unfavorable
 Heard of, but no opinion



Net Promoter

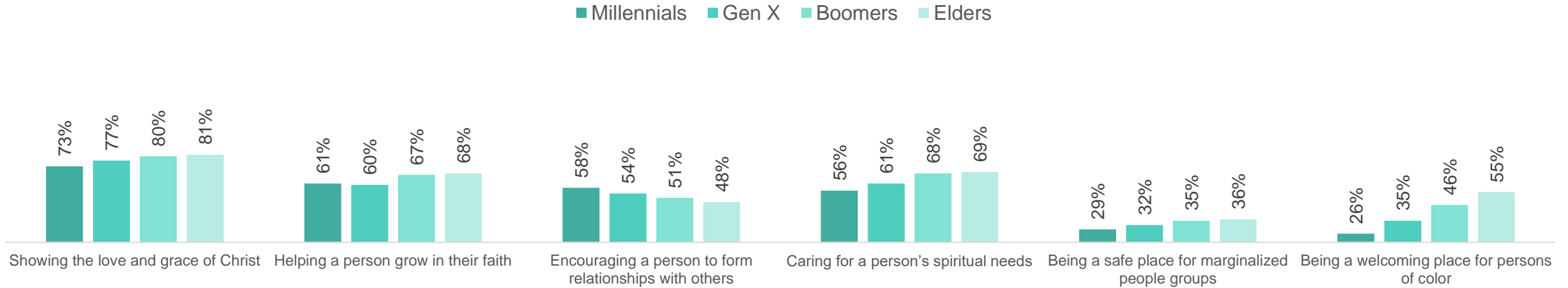
	Total	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers	Elders	Non-White	White
Promoters	60%	44%	46%	52%	62%	67%	49%	61%
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Detractors	20%	36%	26%	23%	17%	15%	30%	19%



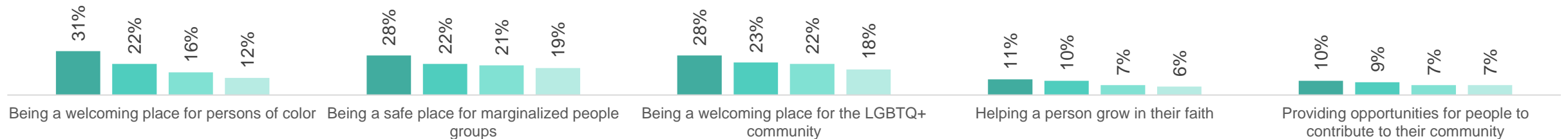
YOUNGER

Generational Differences

Would you say that your church is very effective at any of the following? *Select all that apply*

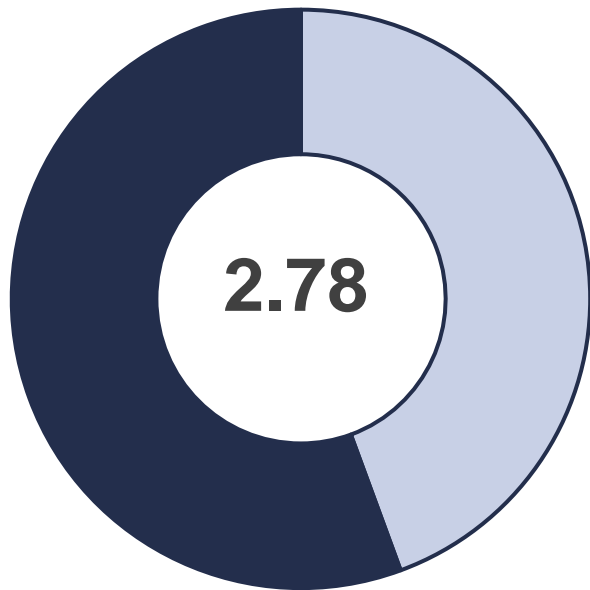


Would you say that your church is not effective at any of the following? *Select all that apply*



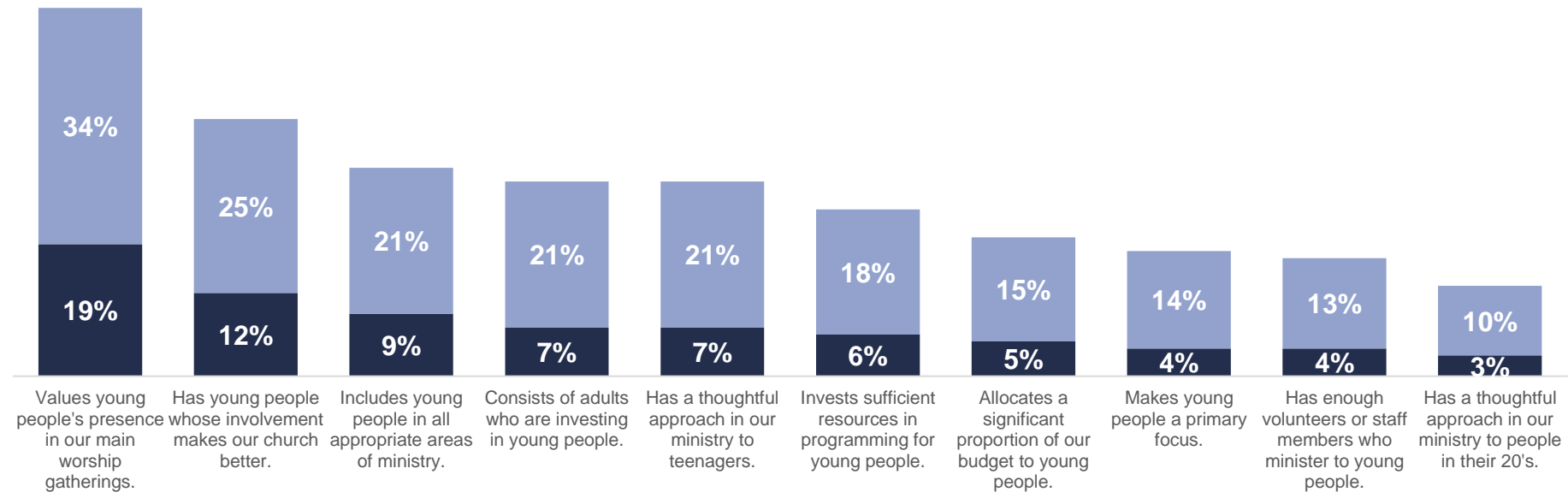
Prioritize Young People (and families) Everywhere

Scored



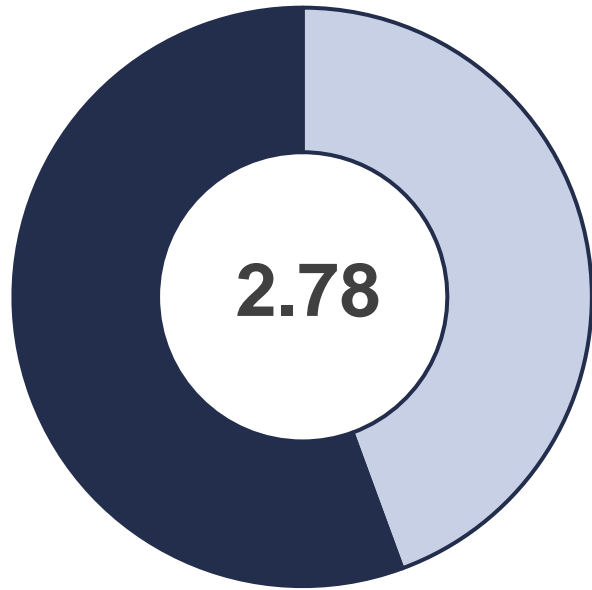
Our Church...

■ Completely true ■ Very true



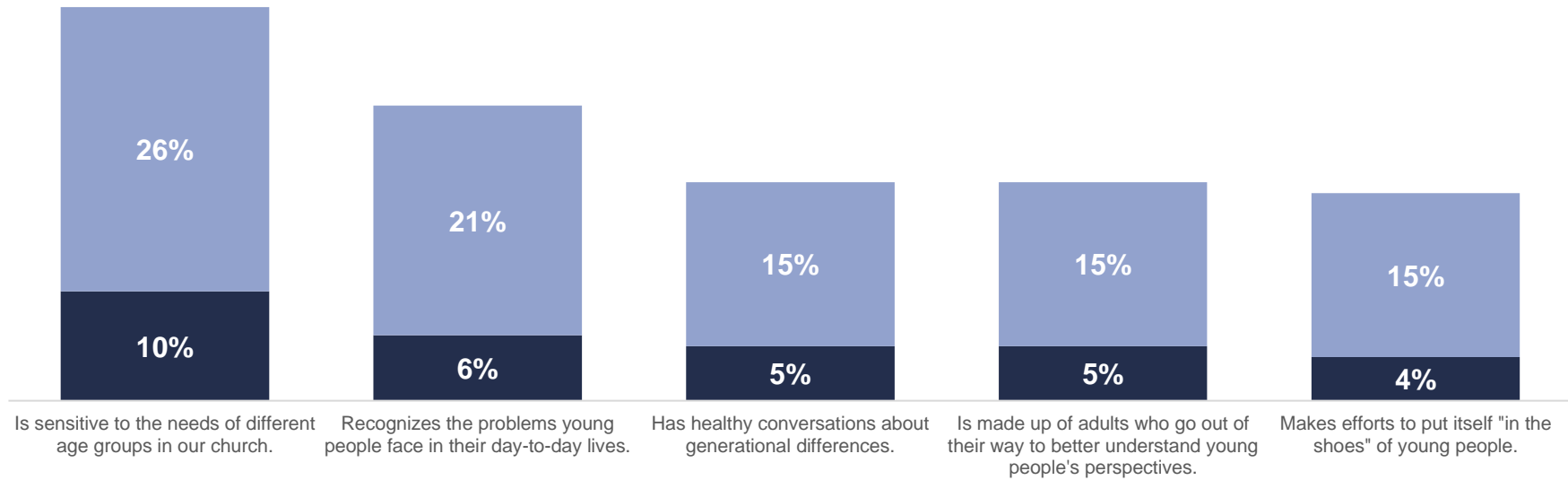
Empathize With Today's Young People

Scored



Our Church...

■ Completely true ■ Very true



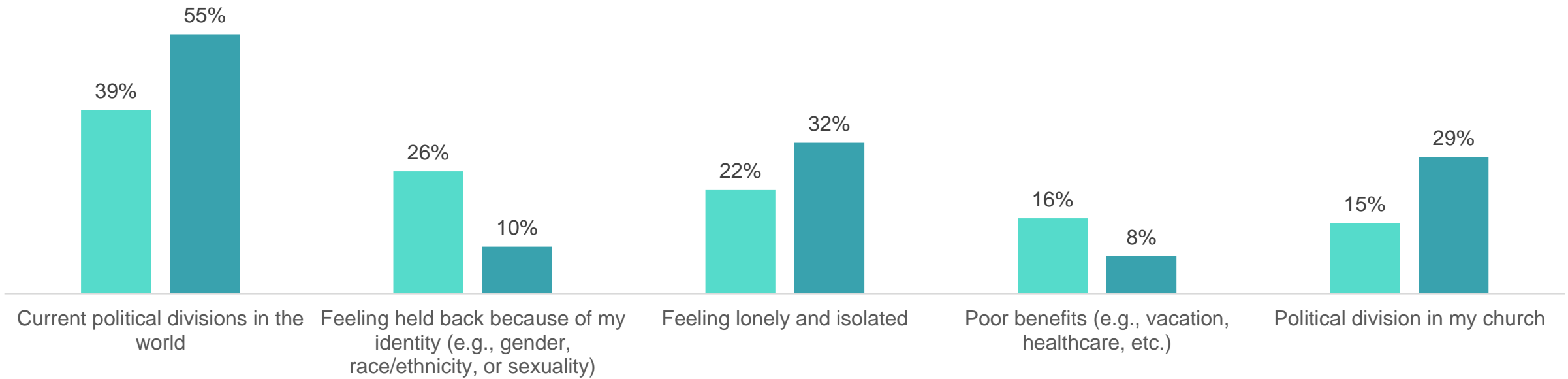


MORE DIVERSE

What Holds Leaders Back

Read the following list of items. Of these, which five would you say have the most significant, negative impact on your ability to lead? Select five
Only showing statistical differences

■ Non-White Rostered Leaders ■ White Rostered Leaders

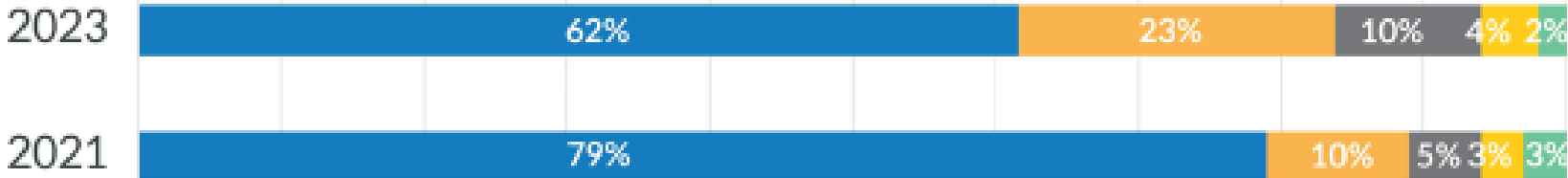




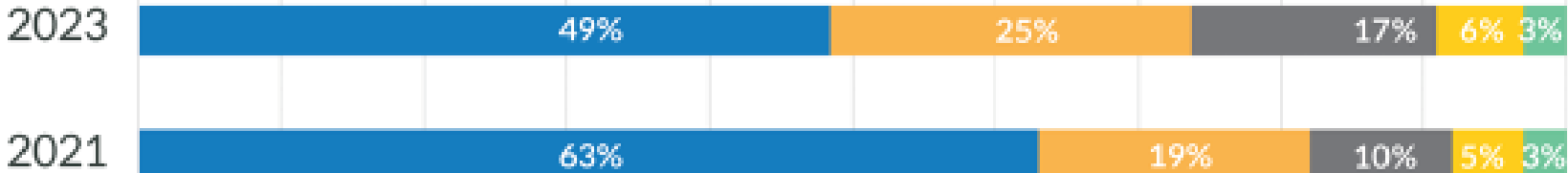
EXPLORING THE
PANDEMIC IMPACT
ON CONGREGATIONS

Clergy Discontent

Seriously considered leaving this congregation



Seriously considered leaving pastoral ministry



■ Never
 ■ Once or twice
 ■ A few times
 ■ Fairly often
 ■ Very often

Source: Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations study, Hartford Institute for Religion Research

"An in-depth look at who is most likely to think about quitting the pastoral ministry shows it is more likely clergy with any of the following traits: younger, female, parttime, bi-vocational, more recently hired, and those who see a poor fit between themselves and the membership. Ministers in more challenging circumstances are also more prone to consider quitting."

Recap of New, Younger, More Diverse insights:

- You have a wonderful theology of grace and focus on the gospel
- Leverage prayer
- You have an image problem...elevate and differentiate what makes your tradition unique
- Empower younger generations to shape the church so they'll invite their peers
- Equip and train older generations and white members to welcome ALL
- Make teenagers and young adults a top priority, increase your understanding and ability to step into their world, and recruit/train more adults to invest
- Examine and engage structures, culture, and processes for how more diverse rostered leaders are held back

WHAT'S NEXT?

Where We're Headed:

We're moving into a process for the next 4-6 months that will:

- Invite engagement and feedback from a community of interpreters
- Lead to an extensive report of the findings
- Provide strategy recommendations and action items to help the ELCA make God's love real to even more people—including those who are new, younger, and more diverse.

WHAT'S NEXT?



Where We Hope To Be:

The ELCA ecology feels heard and is hopeful

There's a broadening understanding of the current landscape of the ELCA

People are gathering around strategic experiments and ideas

The denomination is being equipped with foundational pieces to a strategy

Bright spots are being better understood and shared

What Will Help Us Get There:

Data Journalism:

The storytelling and communication of what we found in the research.

Resourcing:

Equipping people around the ecology with insights and tools.

Strategy:

Creating guidepaths for effective resourcing, ongoing management.

Communications & Storytelling:

Telling the stories of impact, opportunities through creative expressions.

Ideas & Experimentation:

Building out sustainable and impactful ways of engaging people in their faith formation.

Share:



What surprises you or stands out to you most?

What questions can we answer?



Future Church: God's Love Made Real

Overview and Updates



Church Council Presentation

Future Church: God's Love Made Real



Meeting the Possibilities and Challenges Ahead



What we have tried (among other things)...



- Reorganized the CWO and proposed a 20% staff reduction (we cut about 5%).
- Challenged staff to shift their budgets and work to reflect a 70-20-10 ratio.
- Worked two consultants to determine our priorities with the Ad Team.
- Designed a decision matrix that embodied our core commitments to help determine budgets and work.
- Implemented a budgeting tool called “Adaptive” to help us budget based on our vision, purpose, and priorities.
- Trained our innovation and treasurer’s staff to work with teams to help them lean into new work.
- Analyzed our work to find efficiencies.

Competing Initiatives: Can't stop doing "mandated" things; no capacity to take on new things.



- Strategy for Authentic Diversity
- Constitutionally-Mandated Purposes for the Churchwide Organization (17 of these in chapter 11 of the Constitution)
- 2019 and 2022 Churchwide Assembly Resolutions (7 from 2019, including STAD; 14 from 2022)
- Future Church: God's Love Made Real
- Ongoing and Historic Work of the ELCA
- Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church
- Triennium Goals (Section 5.01 of the Constitution)

Current Initiatives and Priorities: Quotes from Listening Sessions



- “We’re trying to do TOO MUCH at the CWO level.”
- “We need to better align our areas to serve the needs of our synods and congregations.”
- (On reviewing the list of CWA memorials) “No wonder we are tired.”



“You can drive a truck through our priorities.”

- **A Welcoming Church:** Engaging new, young and diverse people
- **A Thriving Church:** Rooted in tradition and radically relevant
- **A Connected, Sustainable Church:** Raising the bar together

Declining Resources: Needing to do more with less.

- Need to close a \$4.4MM spending gap in the unrestricted budget.
- Need for new resources (\$5MM and staff time and energy) to have runway to live into our vision, purpose, and priorities.
- Additional resources needed to fund CWA Memorials.
- Need to identify at least \$10 MM in a \$68 MM budget.
- Cuts into mandated programs and priorities.



The need and opportunity for substantive change



"The price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change."

- Bill Clinton

Recap



- New opportunities before us! (ELCA data, CRLC, STAD, and much more!)
- Competing Initiatives (Mandated by governance documents and actions)
- Declining Resources (And the need to reallocate about 15% of the current unrestricted budget)
- Unclear/non-specific “Priorities” (Everything fits in these!)
- Opportunity cost of not making substantive changes (slow decline)

What we don't want to happen...



- The CWO proposes a 15% budget reduction/shift and the proposal that does not pass because it cuts into core programs.
- We remain stuck in our current patterns and miss the opportunity to develop new, important ministries and initiatives.
- We ignore commitments we have made, particularly to and with our communities of color and other marginalized communities.
- We ignore the pain and struggle of many of our congregations, synods and ministry partners and the need for new and innovative ways of doing ministry.

Embracing change and opportunity together: How can we work together over the next year to exercise our respective responsibilities and find the best way forward for the ELCA?



For discussion tomorrow:

- Should the Church Council and the Administrative Team and Advisors work more closely together to propose changes to our budget, work, and priorities?
 - If no, why not? What counsel do you have for the Ad Team and Advisors?
 - If so, how? Who should be at the table?
- What are the roles and responsibilities we would need to be clear on to do our work well?
- Other thoughts?





ELCA Vision

A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

The top left corner of the page features a series of thin, light brown lines that intersect to form several overlapping, irregular polygons. These lines create a complex, abstract geometric pattern that tapers towards the right side of the page.

The ELCA Quality of Call Initiative for Women in Ministry

prepared by Deacon Shannon Johnson
shared by Dr. Mary J. Streufert

The ELCA Quality of Call Initiative

ONE VISION

A church that is equitably served by people who are empowered to serve with their gifts, irrespective of identity markers heretofore targeted by systems and individuals for bias, discrimination and oppression.

THREE FOCI

For Women In Ministry

- Director: Dr. Mary Streufert
- began in 2020

For Rostered Ministers Who Are BIPOC

- Director: Ms. Jen De Leon
- began in 2023

For Rostered Ministers Who Identify As LGBTQIA+

- Director: to be determined

QUALITY OF CALL FOR WOMEN IN MINISTRY TEAM, UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2023



**Deacon Shannon
Johnson**
Project Coordinator
for the Quality of
Call Initiative for
Women in Ministry



Ms. Heather Dean
Program
Coordinator for
Theological
Discernment in the
Office of the
Presiding Bishop



Rev. Ramie Bakken
Candidacy and
Leadership Manager,
Region 5, through the
Christian Community
and Leadership
Home Area



**Rev. Christina
Montgomery**
Team Associate,
Quality of Call for
Women in Ministry and
for Rostered Ministers
who are BIPOC
Chicago




Dr. Mary Streufert
Director, Quality of
Call Initiative and
ELCA Gender Justice
and Women's
Empowerment



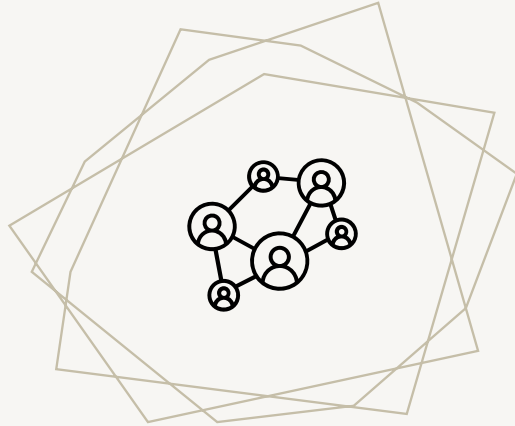
GOALS INCLUDE

Equip and empower ELCA members, collectively and individually, to “resist and dismantle” patriarchy in the ELCA in order “to transform life in the church and in society” toward a religious and social system of gender justice.

Empower rostered women to thrive in their calls.



OUR APPROACH TO CHANGE



Build relationships



Shape policy and
practices



Support contextual
culture change



STRATEGIC GOAL 1:

Cultivate relationships with and support synods in their roles to foster intersectional gender justice for women in ministry.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2:

Increase compensation for women in ministry.

Family & Parental Leave Policy Report

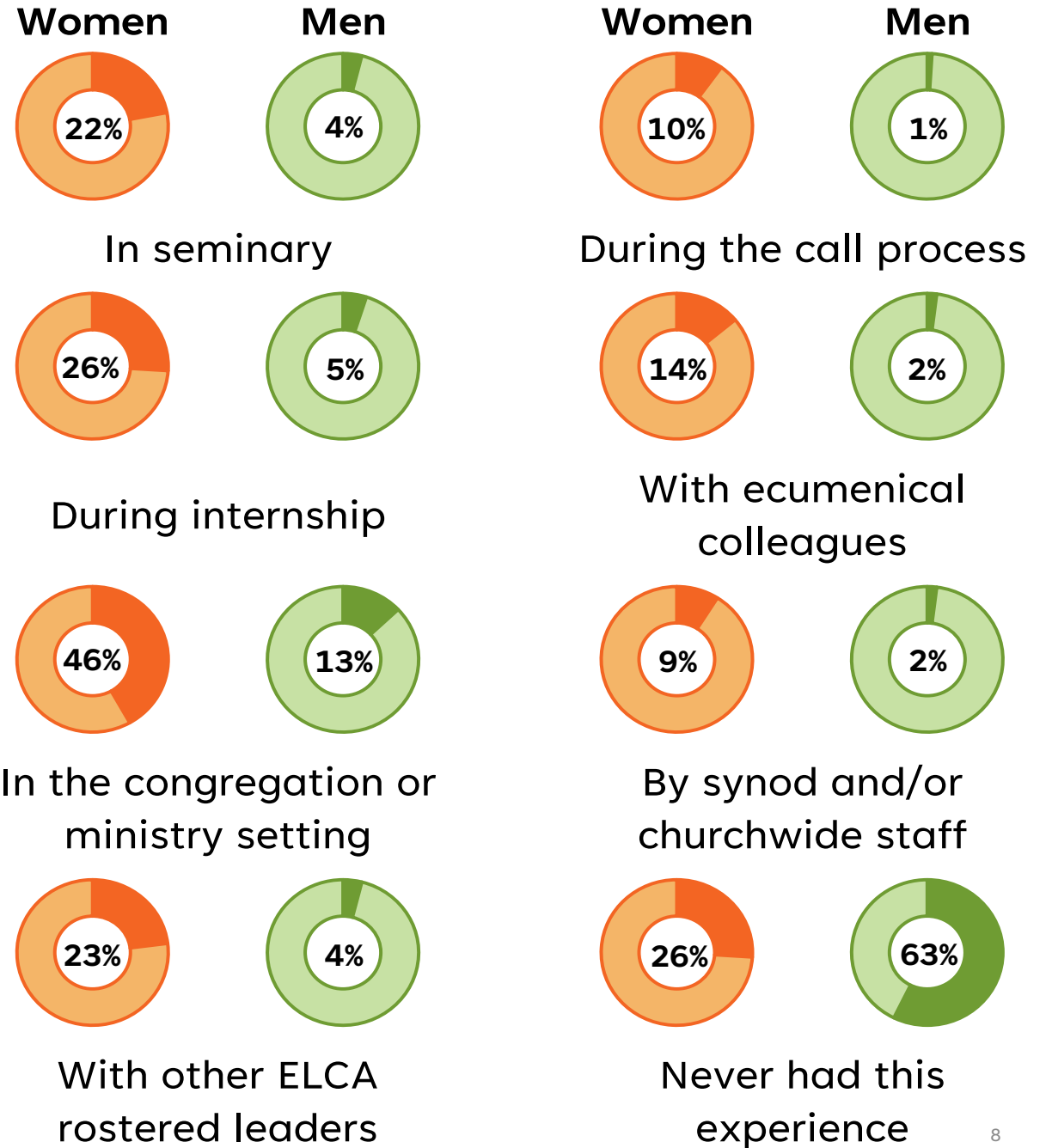
The COB received the parental leave policy in the spring of 2021.

Since then, **21 synods have updated their parental leave policies.**

STRATEGIC GOAL 3:

Respond to and prevent sexual harassment.

I have experienced sexual harassment (i.e., any sexually-related behavior that is unwelcome, offensive, or which fails to respect the rights of others) **in the following contexts or relationships of ministry:**



STRATEGIC GOAL 4:

Decrease instances of gender-based discrimination.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5:

Increase opportunities for women in ministry.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6:

Collaborate with ELCA partners to address sexism and patriarchy through an intersectional lens.



The Quality of Call Initiative for Women in Ministry

This work is possible because of a generous donation from an anonymous donor.



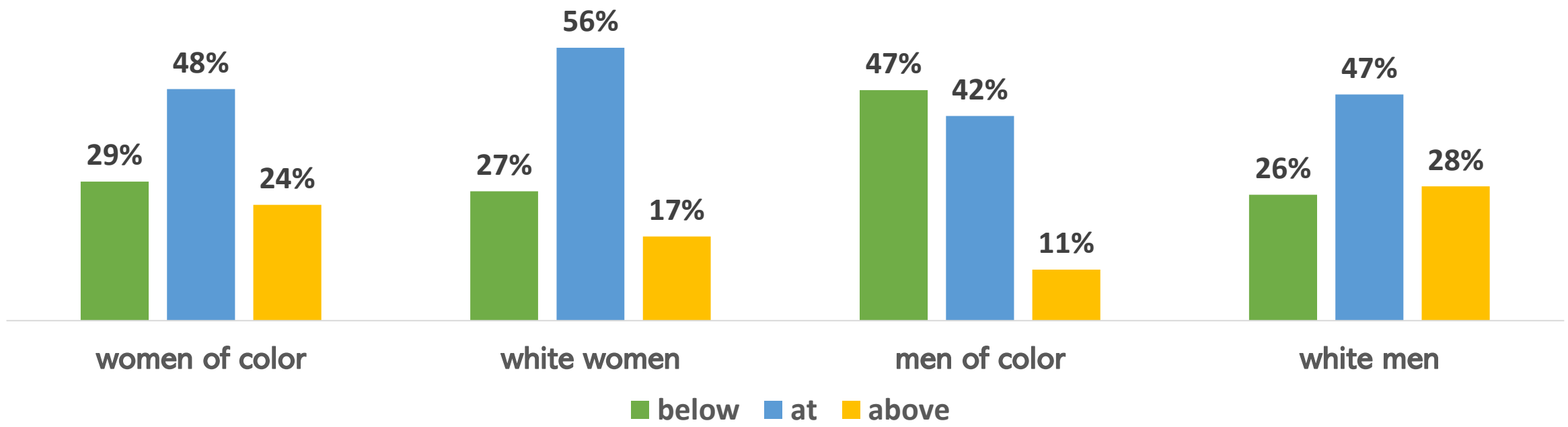
www.elca.org/qualityofcall



Use the QR code above to view the full survey report for the 50th Anniversary of the Church's Decision to Ordain Women

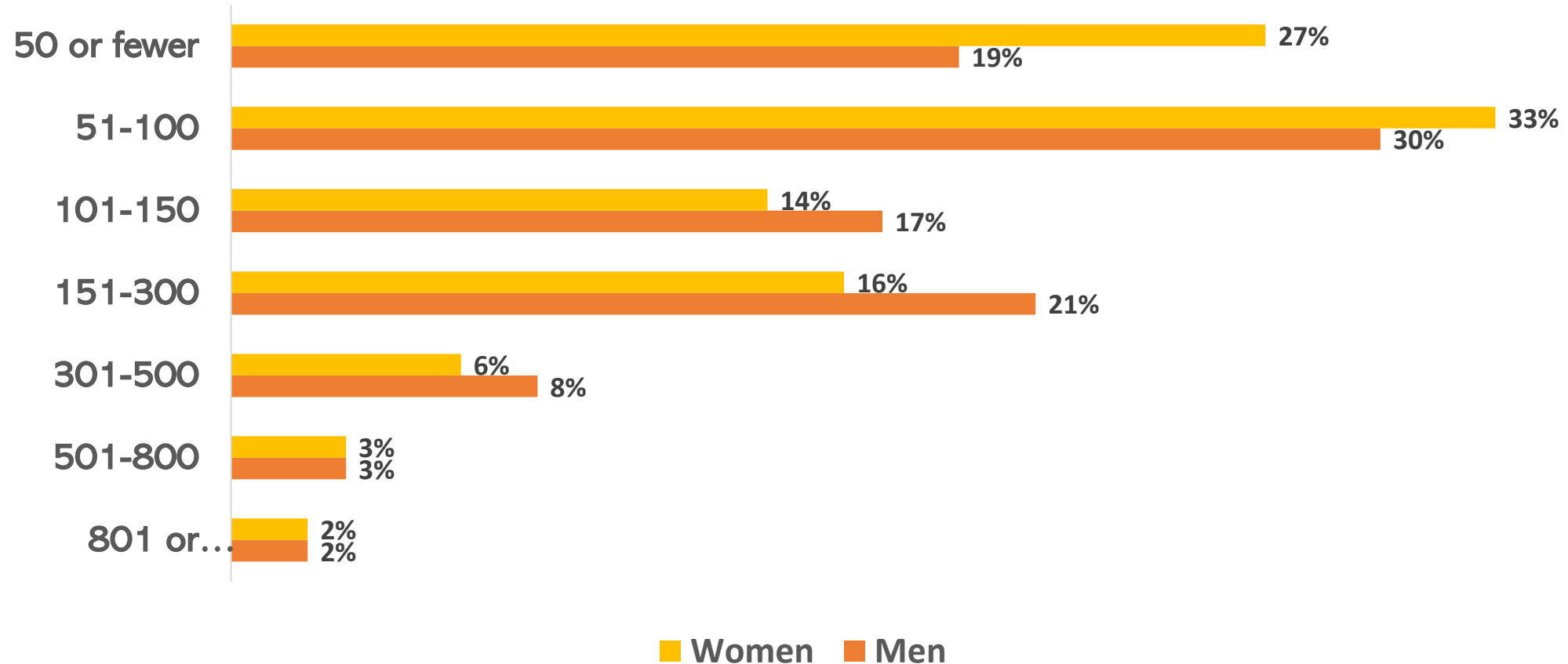
Differences among Rostered Ministers with Respect to Compensation Guidelines

From the 50th Anniversary Survey Report



Size of Congregations Served by Gender

From the 50th
Anniversary Survey
Report



Trends in Types of Calls: Percentage of Persons in Each Role Who Are Women

From the 50th
Anniversary Survey
Report

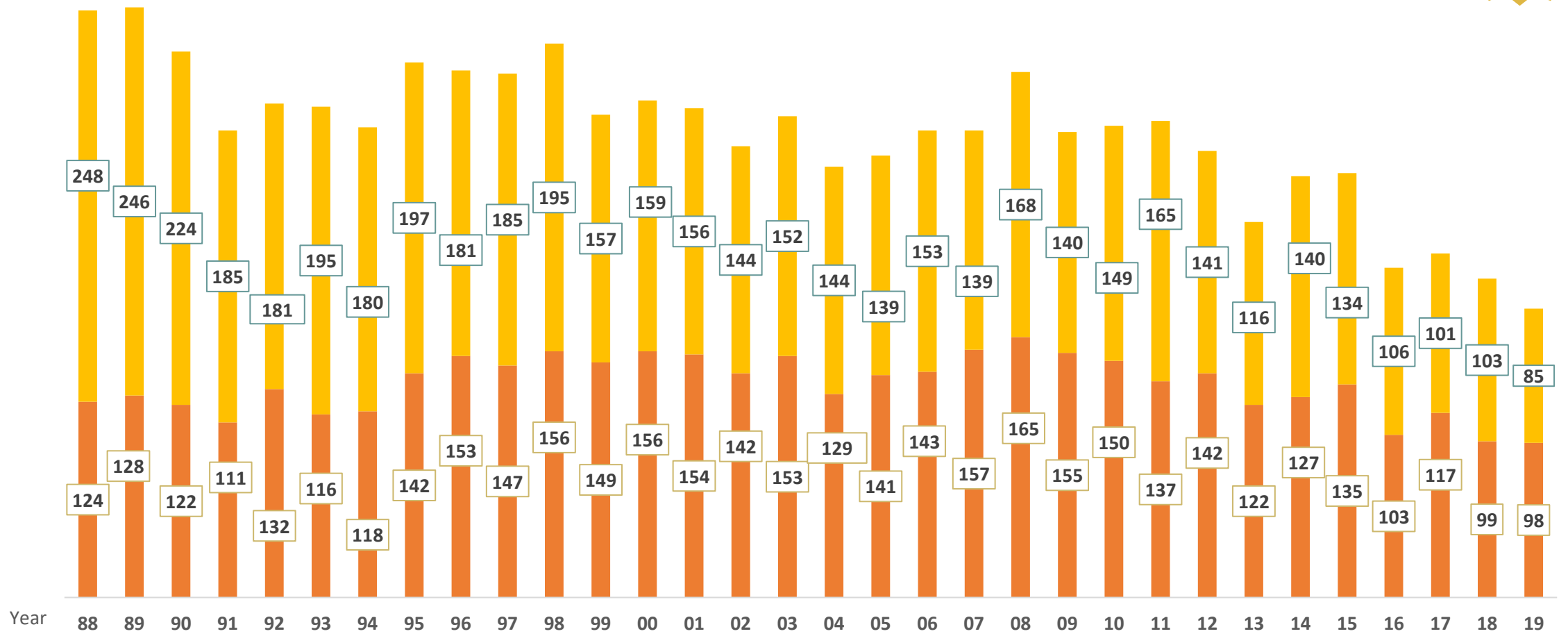
Role	2015	2020
Senior pastor	16% (86)	22% (88)
Bishop	15% (10)	46% (30)
Synod or churchwide staff	40% (77)	50% (85)
Social service agency	34% (44)	55% (47)
Chaplain	38% (189)	48% (173)



Number of Ordinations by Gender in the ELCA, 1988-2019

From the 50th
Anniversary Survey
Report

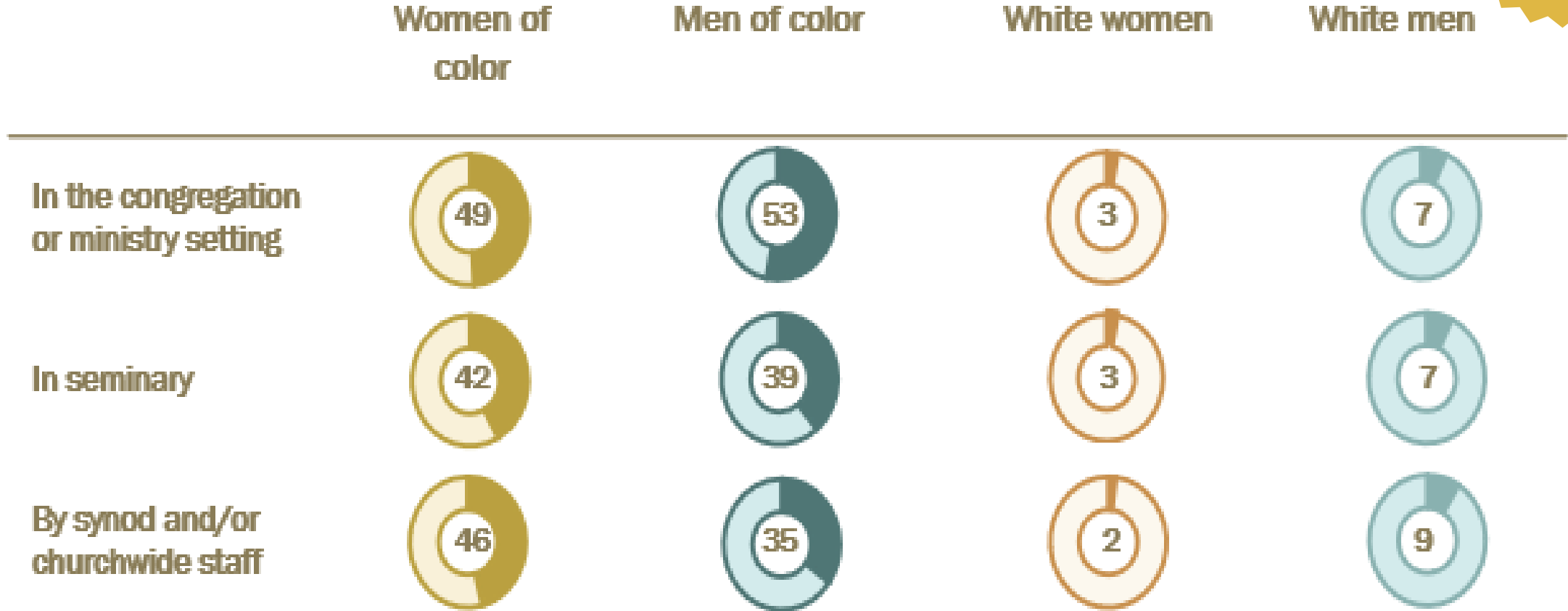
Women Men



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Racial Discrimination by Gender and by Race and Ethnicity

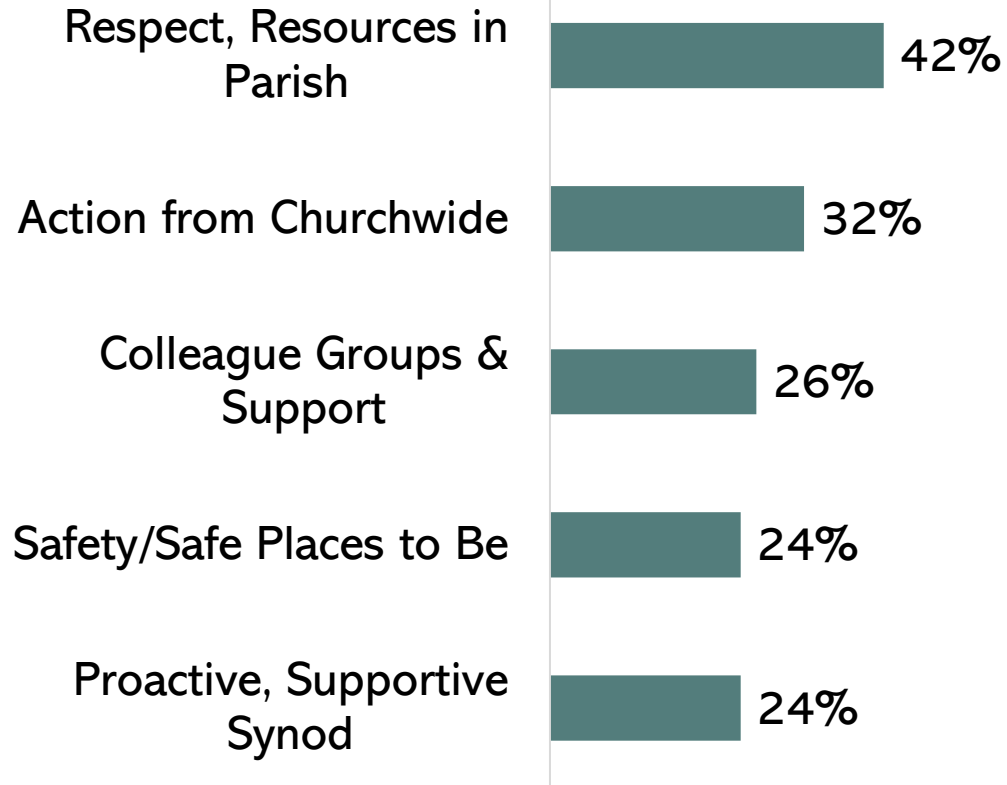
From the 50th Anniversary Survey Report



Greatest Needs in Ministry for Women

From the 50th
Anniversary Survey
Report

Women of Color



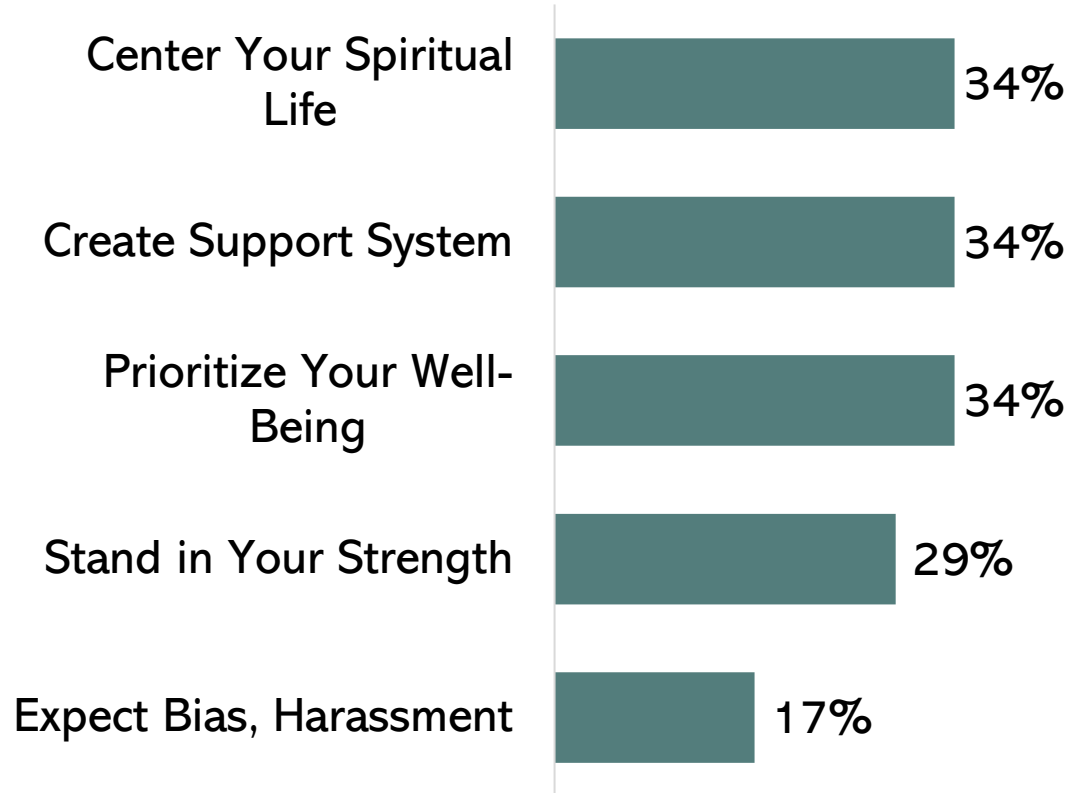
White Women



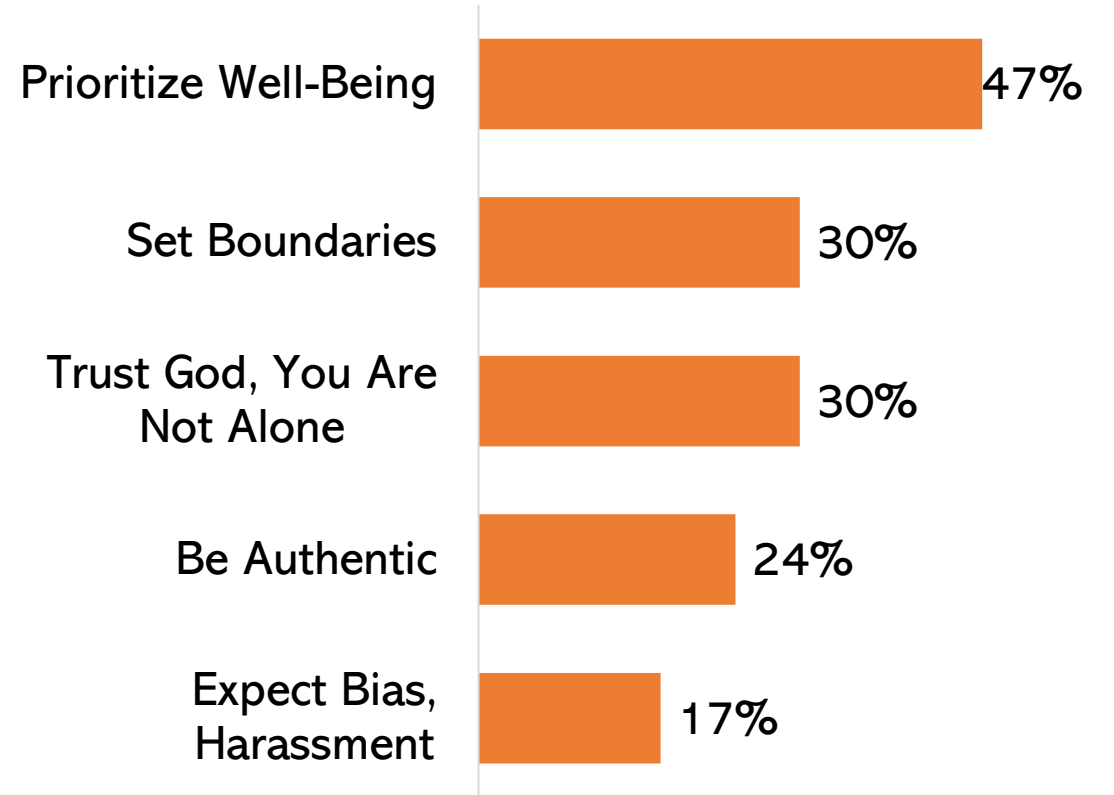
Core Themes: Advice to Women Entering Ministry

From the 50th
Anniversary Survey
Report

Women of Color



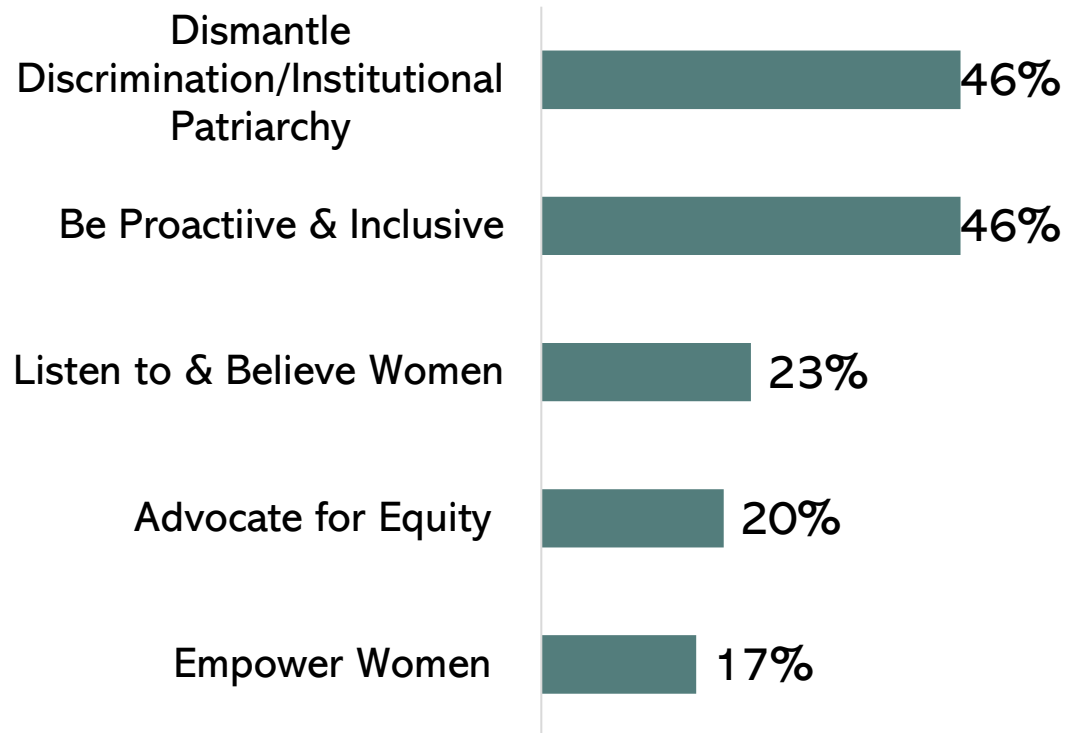
White Women



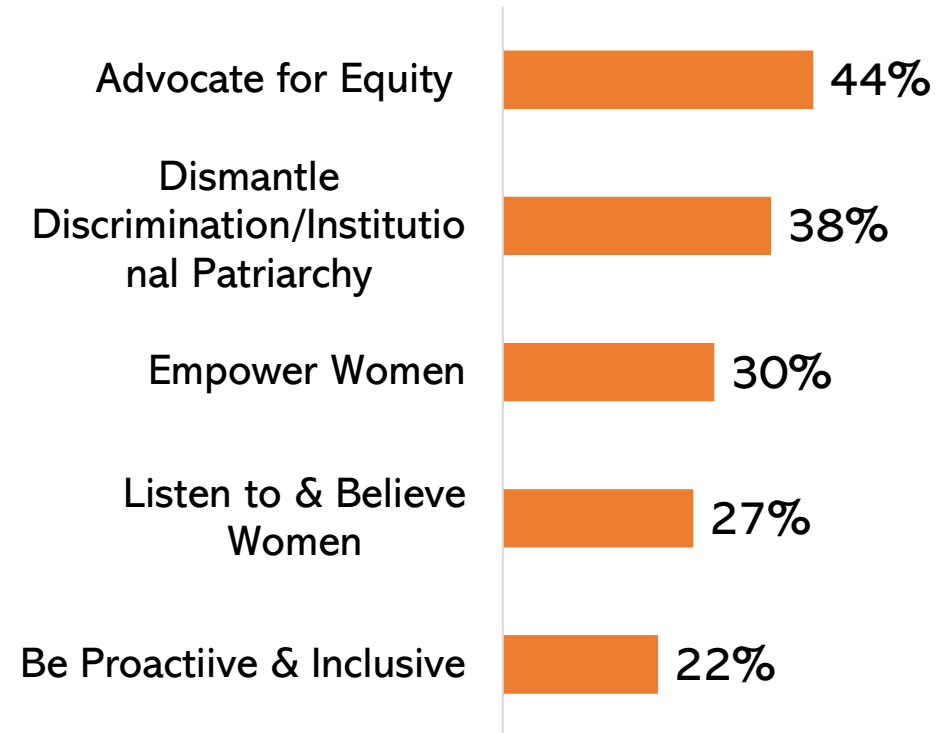
Advice for Bishops, Synod Councils or Churchwide Staff Members

From the 50th Anniversary Survey Report

Women of Color



White Women



ELCA Rostered Ministers at the Katie Geneva Cannon Womanist Leadership Conference



Learn more about
the Katie Geneva
Cannon Center
for Womanist
Leadership



**Womanist
Theology** is an
understanding of
God and the world
that centers on
the experiences
and insights of
Black women.

The Quality of Call Initiative sponsored women in ministry to attend the KGC Womanist Leadership Conference

Sexual Boundary Violations Addressed by Synods

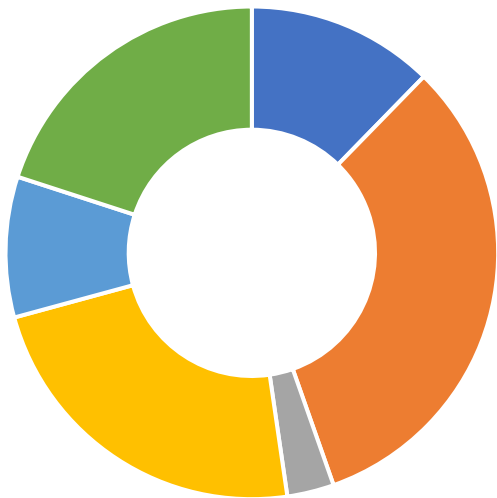


Check out the full report

What do synods have for policies, information, and resources to address different sexual boundary violations?

With multiple types of sexual boundary violations, synods need policies that prevent and respond to the different types of sexual boundary violations.

Which sexual boundary violations do synods address on their website?



■ a ■ b ■ c ■ d ■ e ■ f

- a. Ministerial sexual misconduct, sexual abuse of minors, and sexual harassment: eight synods (12%).
- b. Both ministerial sexual misconduct and sexual abuse of minors but not sexual harassment: 21 synods (32%).
- c. Both ministerial sexual misconduct and sexual harassment but not sexual abuse of minors: two synods (3%).
- d. Only ministerial sexual misconduct: 15 synods (23%).
- e. Only sexual abuse of minors: six synods (9%).
- f. Nothing found: 13 synods (20%).

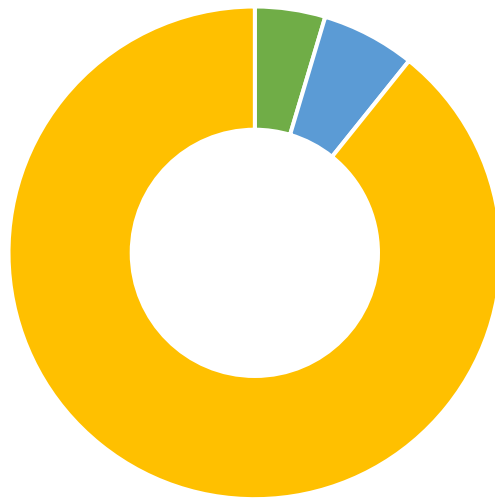
Sexual Harassment Addressed by Synods



Check out the full report

Even though 46% of women in ministry reported that they have experienced sexual harassment in their congregational call setting, only seven synods (11%) address sexual harassment in the church through a policy or resource.

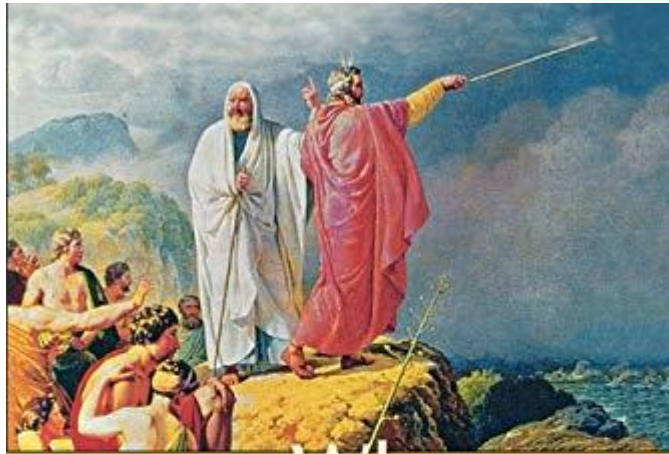
How do synods address sexual harassment?



■ a ■ b ■ c

- a. A policy or resource addressing sexual harassment of persons working in the church (e.g., rostered ministers, staff, and volunteers): three synods (5%).
- b. A sample policy for congregations to use to prevent and respond to instances of sexual misconduct: four synods (6%).
- c. Nothing found to address or respond to sexual harassment: 58 synods (89%).

Stepping Up to Supervision Sponsorship



When Moses Meets Aaron

STAFFING AND SUPERVISION
IN LARGE CONGREGATIONS

GIL RENDLE & SUSAN BEAUMONT

The Quality of Call Initiative for Women in Ministry sponsored 24 women in ministry to participate in the online course, *Stepping Up to Supervision*, facilitated by Rev. Susan Beaumont.



How will participation in this course affect your current and/or future ministry?

“I feel more equipped to be a supervisor. It will be extremely beneficial in my current ministry and I imagine even more so in a future ministry.”

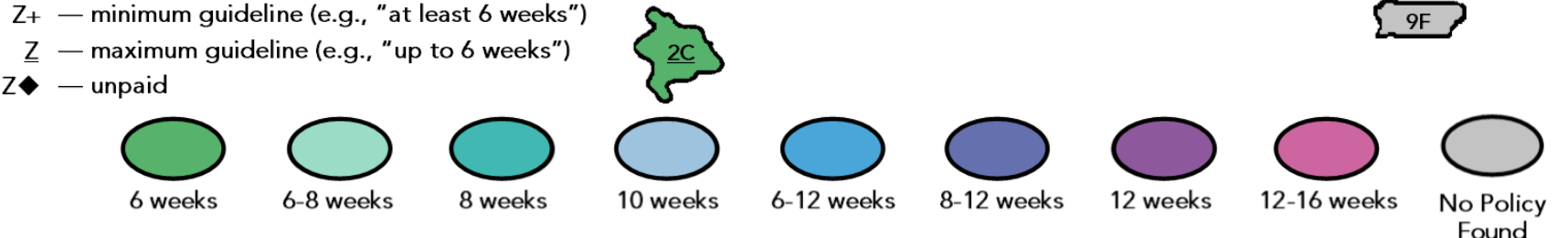
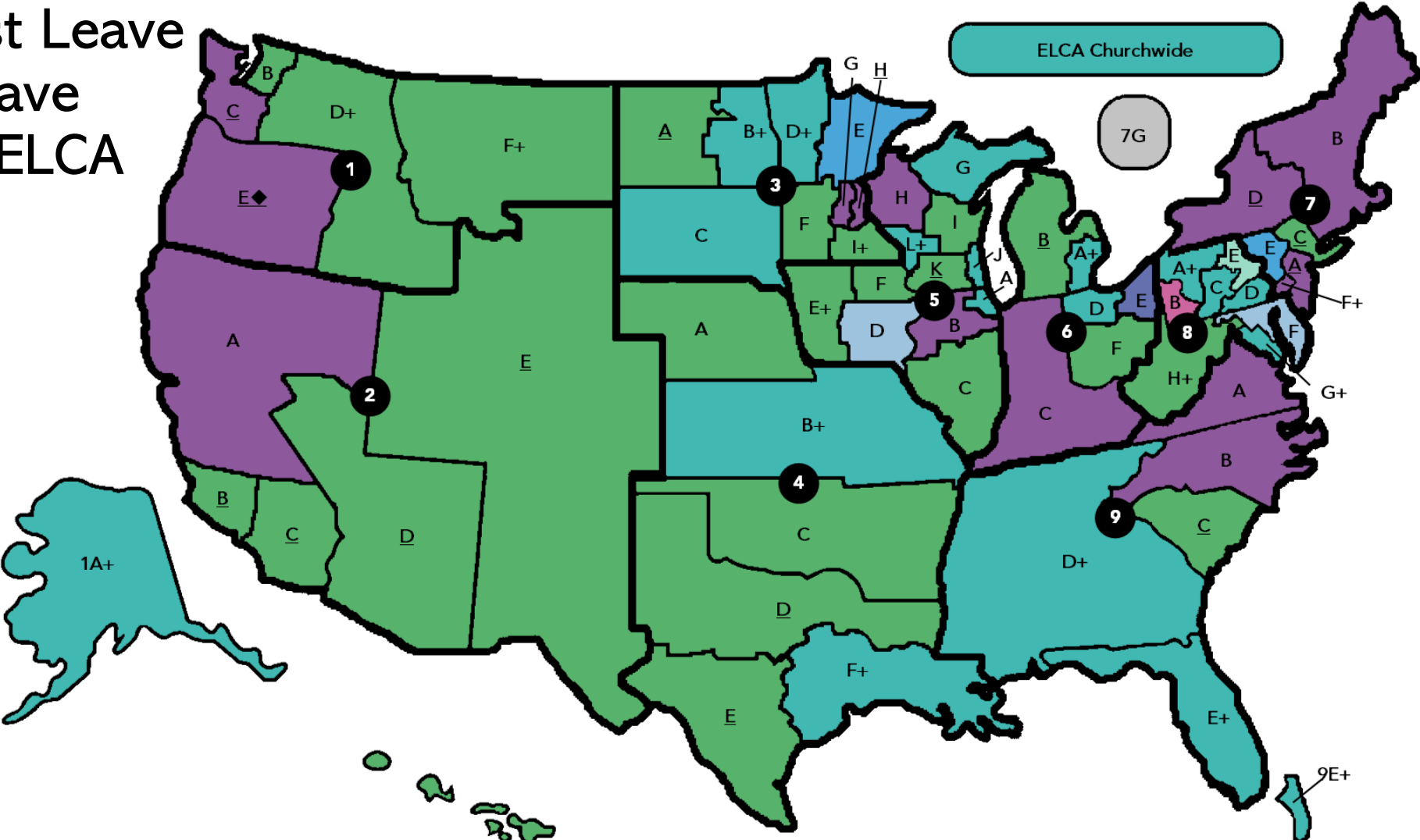
“This course gave me language and confidence for employment relationships versus pastoral relationships. It has given me a couple of great action steps to create better patterns of feedback for the coming year.”

Recommended Most Leave Time in Parental Leave Policies across the ELCA

The parent terminology used in synod policies for this role includes:

- primary caregiver
- maternity leave
- parent
- rostered minister

51 synods (78%) and the churchwide organization have the same amount of leave time regardless of parental role.

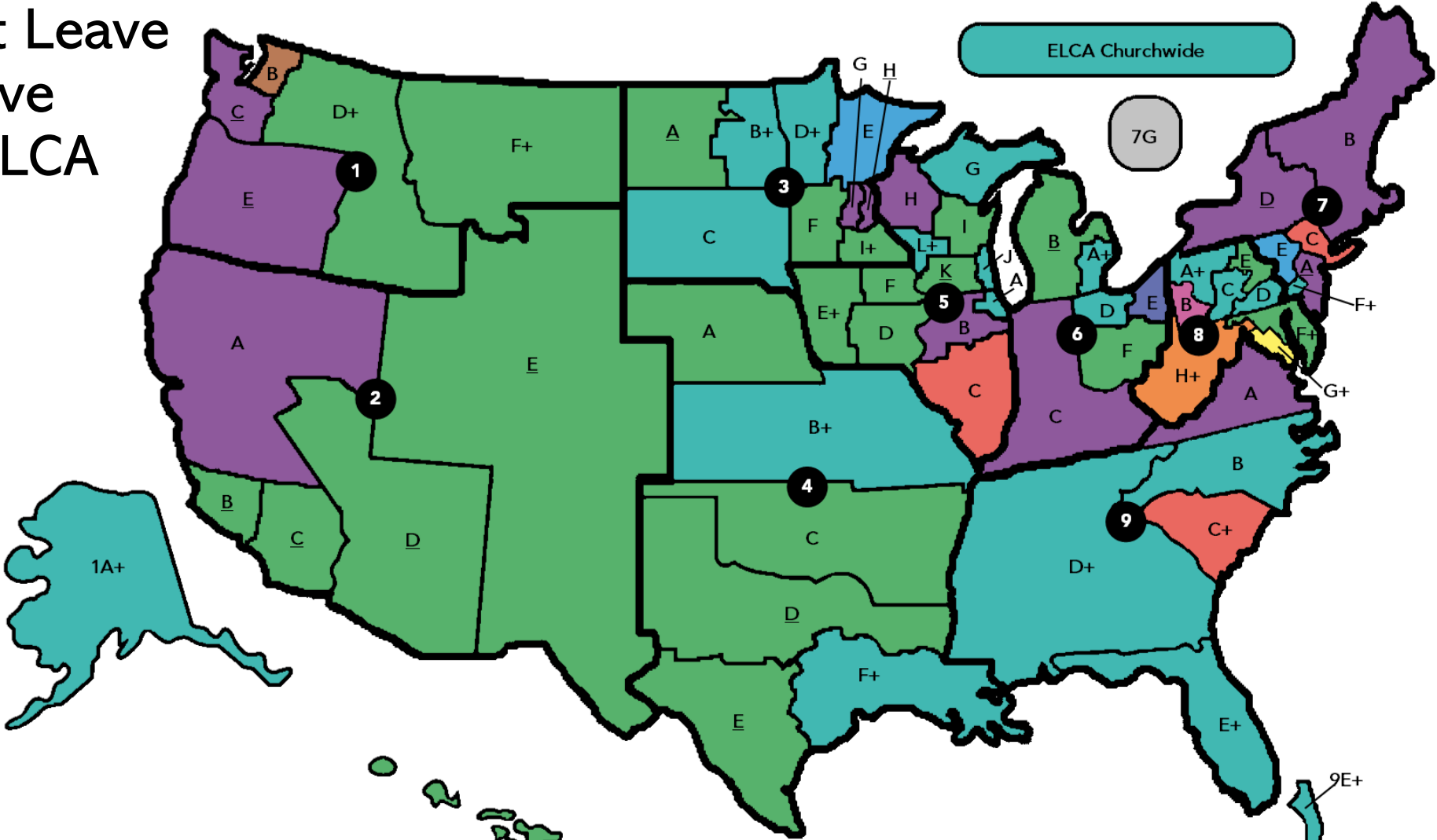


Recommended Least Leave Time in Parental Leave Policies across the ELCA

The parent terminology used in synod policies for this role includes:

- secondary caregiver
- paternity leave
- parent
- rostered minister

51 synods (78%) and the churchwide organization have the same amount of leave time regardless of parental role.



Z+ — minimum guideline (e.g., "at least 6 weeks")
 Z — maximum guideline (e.g., "up to 6 weeks")
 Z♦ — unpaid

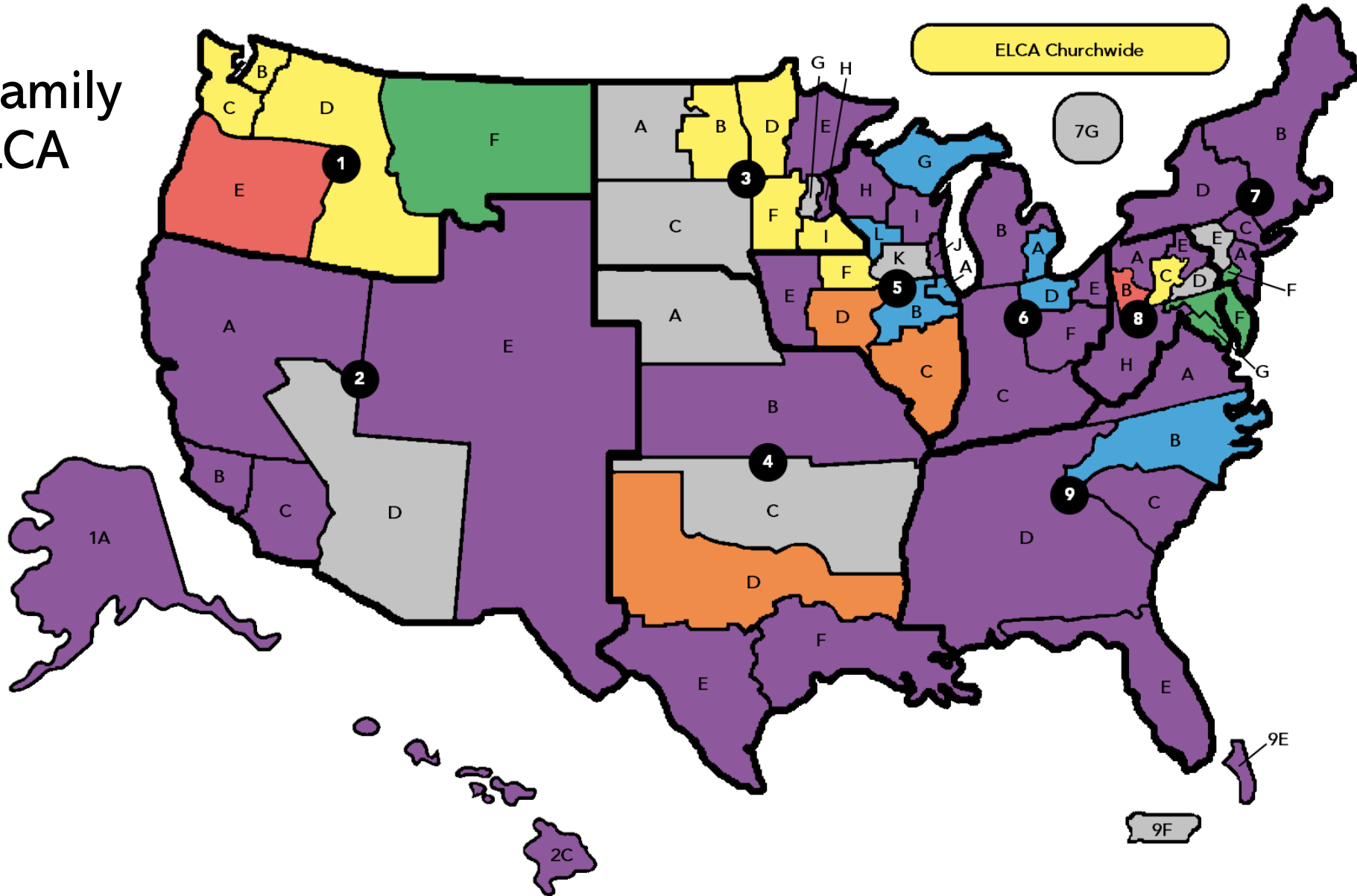
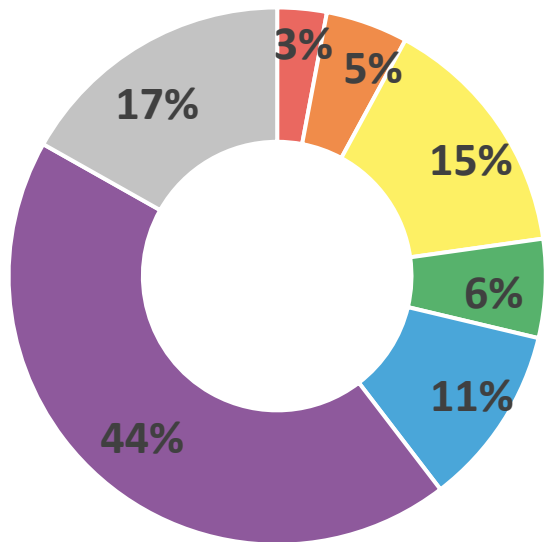


Recommended Compensation for Family Leave across the ELCA

Check out the full report



Family leave compensation in the ELCA



Unpaid



Not Stated



Accrued Sick Leave



Combination Paid/Unpaid



Negotiate Pay



Paid



No Policy Found

Doctoral Scholar in Residence, Denise Rector, ABD



Teaching:
"Revisioning History for Justice," a look at American history through the eyes of those oppressed during that history; and
"Perspectives in Christian Ethics," a course where students read ethical perspectives from Lutheran and other protestant liberation scholars, as well as examine ELCA social statements and messages.
"Introduction to Womanist Theology," where students are reading original womanist works, Lutheran womanists, and other recent writing in the Womanist Academy



ELCA Churchwide Organization
Treasurer's Report to Church Council
November 2023

Financial Results

as of September 30, 2023

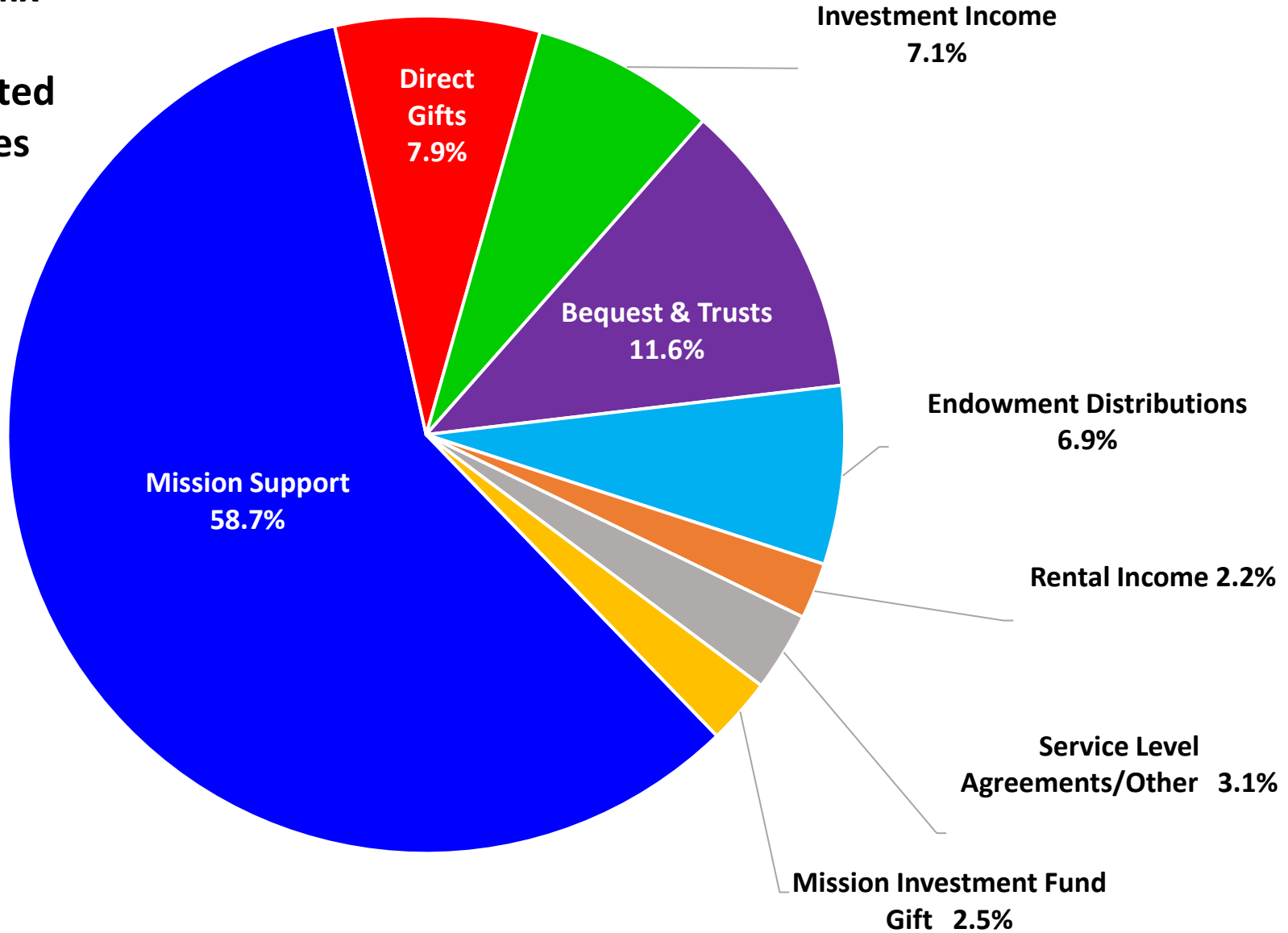


Unrestricted Fund Results thru 9/30/2023

(in Thousands)

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2022 Actual
Revenue	\$39,638	\$38,390	\$37,591
Expenses	<u>(40,062)</u>	<u>(46,421)</u>	<u>(39,349)</u>
Revenues in Excess of Expenses	\$(424)	\$ (8,031)	\$(1,758)

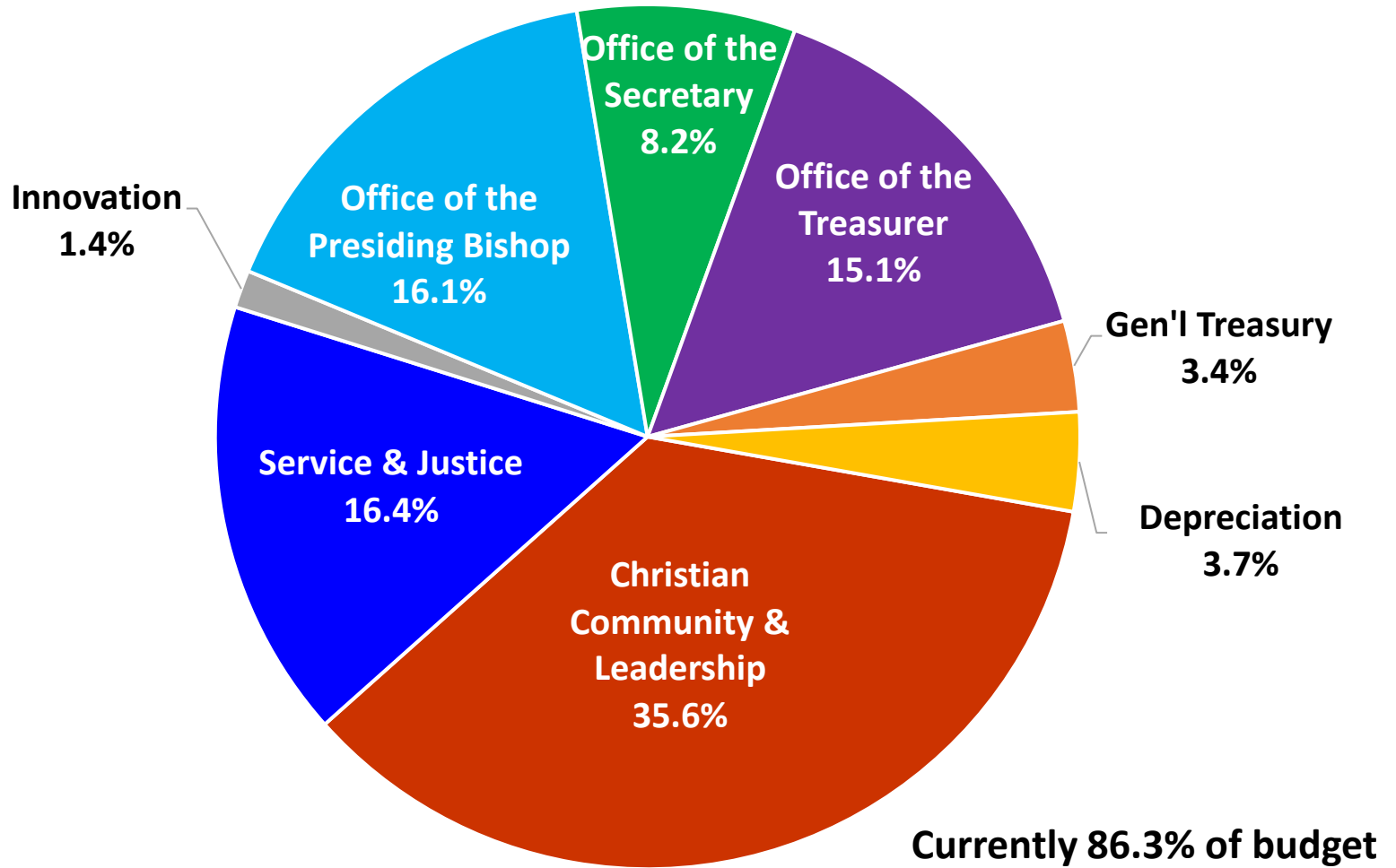
**Actual Mix
of
Unrestricted
Revenues**



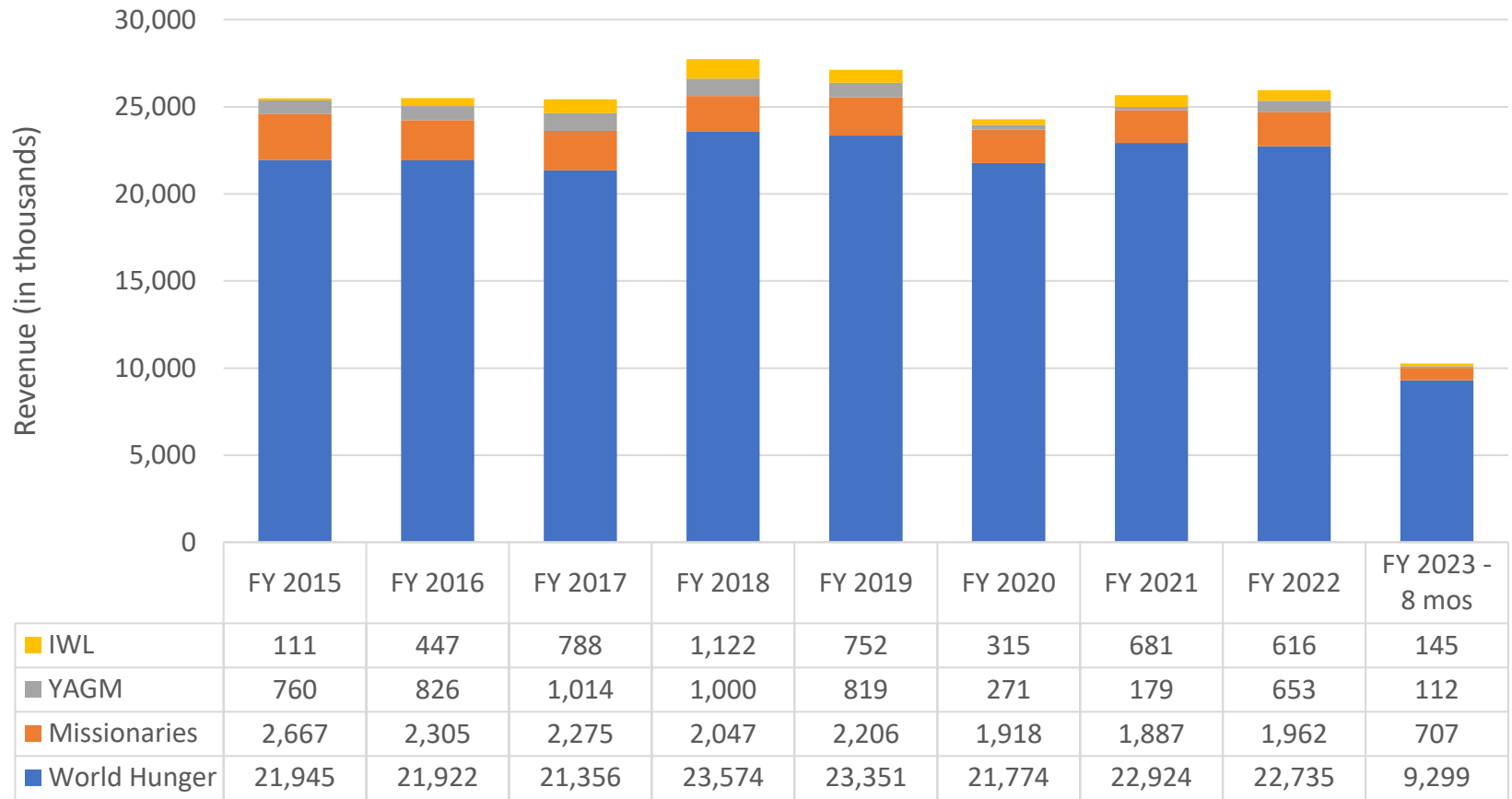
Certain Unrestricted Revenues through 9/30/2023 (in Thousands)

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2022 Actual
Mission Support	\$23,032	\$23,868	\$24,476
Direct Gifts	<u>3,101</u>	<u>5,180</u>	<u>5,108</u>
“Core Support”	\$26,133	\$29,048	\$29,584
	(11.3%)		(11.7%)
Investment Income	2,791	1,234	(1,148)
Bequests & Trusts	<u>4,554</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>2,574</u>
“Other Income”	\$7,345	\$3,234	\$1,426
Total – these categories	\$33,478	\$32,282	\$31,010

Expenditures by Home Area/Office



Direct Giving



ELCA World Hunger Fund Balance through 9/30/2023 (in Thousands)

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2022 Actual
<i>Beginning Balance</i>	\$13,007		\$13,694
Income	9,299	12,540	10,584
Expense	<u>12,907</u>	<u>15,948</u>	<u>(12,836)</u>
Net	(3,608)	(3,408)	(2,252)
Ending Balance	\$9,400		\$11,442

Statement of Financial Position

	<u>9/30/2023</u>	<u>1/31/2023</u>	<u>Change</u>
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	21,911,146	74,070,232	(52,159,086)
Accounts receivable	4,639,514	6,860,999	(2,221,485)
Loans receivable	403,655	658,781	(255,126)
Due from related organizations	10,018,777	7,354,689	2,664,088
Investments	563,609,607	522,700,757	40,908,850
Prepaid expenses and other assets	7,424,429	7,140,162	284,267
Property, furniture, and equipment, net	16,379,384	17,609,986	(1,230,602)
Beneficial interest in irrevocable, split-interest agreements, held by ELCA Foundation	12,089,038	12,089,038	0
Beneficial interest in perpetual trusts	18,326,340	18,326,340	(0)
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>654,801,890</u>	<u>666,810,984</u>	<u>(12,009,094)</u>

Statement of Financial Position

	<u>9/30/2023</u>	<u>1/31/2023</u>	<u>Change</u>
LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable	246,320	234,125	12,195
Deferred revenue	1,177,435	848,681	328,754
Due to related organizations	3,109,789	1,283,291	1,826,498
Accrued liabilities	2,169,410	3,837,483	(1,668,073)
Annuities payable	2,532,686	2,643,865	(111,179)
Funds held for others	5,398,263	5,278,076	120,187
Funds held for others in perpetuity	99,799,346	102,164,676	(2,365,330)
	-	-	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>114,433,248</u>	<u>116,290,196</u>	<u>(1,856,949)</u>
NET ASSETS			
Without donor restrictions	143,869,112	147,967,946	(4,098,834)
With donor restrictions	396,499,531	402,552,843	(6,053,312)
TOTAL NET ASSETS	<u>540,368,642</u>	<u>550,520,788</u>	<u>(10,152,147)</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>654,801,890</u>	<u>666,810,984</u>	<u>(12,009,096)</u>



What does this mean?

- 1) This is not a message of doom and gloom. We are part of a generous church and have an abundance of resources.
- 2) We do need to be transparent about the actual results and mindful of the trends.
- 3) We need to prioritize the work that the churchwide organization does and to work with you, on governance matters, and others in the ecology to ensure our work aligns with our vision and to understand how we can work better together.

A WELCOMING CHURCH

A THRIVING CHURCH

A CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

Service and Justice Committee

Overview

- Gathered around some lines of Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength, our safety in times of trouble.

We are calm though the whole earth trembles and the cliffs fall into the sea

Our trust is in the Unnamable, the God who makes all things right.

- Reflected on these times of trouble and how we know and proclaim God as refuge and strength...

- Updates

- Ms. Tammy Jackson, Interim Executive Director
- Rev. Barbara Lund, Senior Director for Operations and Innovation



Service and Justice Home Area

The Service and Justice home area fosters and facilitates the ELCA's **engagement** in service and **promotes** efforts to call and act for justice.

It shall engage in mission, service, and justice in *accompaniment* with:
***churches and organizations in other countries;**

serve as the means through which *churches in other countries engage in mission to this church and society;

engage with *communities, coalitions and networks, congregations, and synods in service and justice work within the territorial jurisdiction of this church; and

***provide guidance to members on matters of social justice.**



Service and Justice Home Area

The ELCA Service and Justice home area builds its strategy and prioritizes its work around five core justice foci:

Migration justice

Economic justice

Racial justice

Gender justice

Environmental justice



Service and Justice Areas of Responsibilities

- Accompanying People, Communities, and Networks
 - global church-to-church relationships and mutual endeavors for evangelical witness and sharing of mission personnel; support ethnic specific and multicultural ministries and the commitment of this church to diversity and inclusivity
- Building Resilient Communities
 - meet human need and enhance human dignity; work to overturn oppression and injustice; and engage collaboratively toward the flourishing of human community and creation through advocacy, development, and disaster response programming internationally and domestically
- Witness in Society
 - empower members to engage with systems and processes to promote the well-being of the human community and creation in the public square, local and federal government, and the international community; equip and encourage members to seek dignity and peace; advance justice in response to human suffering, marginalization, and exclusion; and promote equality, justice, and respect for the value of every person to reduce the systemic injustices impacting communities and societies
- Administration
 - oversees the work of the home area and the relationships with Independent Lutheran Organizations (LSA, LIRS, LWR), Deaconess Community, Lutheran World Federation, and ecumenical partnerships



Staff Reports

- Updates on the situation in Gaza
 - Rev. Gabi Aelabouni, Director Middle East and North Africa
 - Rev. Khader Khalilia, Program Director, Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries
 - Rev. Dr. Meghan Aelabouni, Theologian in Residence
- Senior Director programmatic reports



Staff Reports

- **Mr. Vance Blackfox**, Interim Senior Director, Accompanying Peoples Communities and Networks—Ministries of Diverse Cultures and Communities
 - Focused area - Truth and Healing movement and ELCA engagement
- **Ms. Paulina Dasse**, Senior Director, Accompanying Peoples Communities and Networks—Global Engagement and Global Personnel
 - Focused area – Mission Personnel and the Latin America and Caribbean Companion Synod Consultation and related learning
- **Ms. Marie Anne Sliwinski**, Senior Director, Building Resilient Communities
 - Focused area – the changing reality of disasters and the related humanitarian work changes and adaptations; World Hunger upcoming 50th Anniversary
- **Rev. Amy Reumann**, Senior Director, Witness in Society
 - Focused area—ELCA’s distinctive work and role in Advocacy



Highlights

- Relationships / Accompaniment
concerns raised about the value of accompaniment in churchwide
- Advocacy
- Theological underpinning and constitutional mandates for this work
- Awareness that these ministries are particularly *churchwide*



En Bloc Items

Corporate Social Responsibility Documents

- The Church Council is responsible for reviewing this church's ongoing work in corporate social responsibility.
- Service and Justice Committee encourages adoption of [three issue papers and two social criteria investment screens](#).

These recommendations from Service and Justice Committee are *en bloc* actions for Church Council approval.

Action will come during Plenary Session 7 on Nov. 12.



A WELCOMING CHURCH

A THRIVING CHURCH

A CONNECTED AND SUSTAINABLE CHURCH

Thank You





ELCA World Hunger's 50th Anniversary Initiative



MINISTERING TO A HUNGRY WORLD



Over \$650 Million in
impact.

As we have served the
world, so we have
formed the church.

50
years



50 YEARS

of ELCA World Hunger



50
years



ELCA
World Hunger

World Hunger 50th Core Activities

- Interpretation
- Story
- Appeal



The Appeal Plan

- Beginning late this year and culminating in 2024, we'll implement an **ambitious all-church plan to commemorate the first 50 years of ELCA World Hunger**, including but not limited to:
 - Stretch all-Development goal to **increase revenue** available for program spending each year, with the goal of reaching sustained annual income \$25 million in 2025.
 - Ambitious **marketing plan** with special, above-and-beyond appeals and advertising.
 - Special emphasis on **transformational and planned giving** that can lead the program into the far future through new commitments to World Hunger's endowment.
 - Collaborate with **ELCA Youth Gathering** to invite a new generation into the work of ELCA World Hunger.





50
years



ELCA
World Hunger

2024 ELCA Youth Gathering

CREATED

TO
the tAble

BE

MYLE
Young
Adult
Gathering



slido



What comes to mind when you think about ELCA World Hunger and its impact on our church and the world?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



**Will your congregation participate in the
2024 National Youth Gathering**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



Have you, or your family, given a "Good Gift" in the past two years?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



**Which ways would you consider supporting
ELCA World Hunger in 2024?**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

An
Opportunity!





Share

ONE-TIME

MONTHLY

Gift Total: \$50.00

+ I would like to choose an area for this gift to support

Click on an area and enter the gift amount below.

ELCA World Hunger ?

50

Use my gift where it's needed most

Donor Information

* Required fields

* Title:

Title

* First Name:

* Last Name:

* Address:



Click the “+” sign to expand to select designation.





Church Council Giving Stats

- This FY, Church Council Members have given \$19,675 to ministries of the ELCA Churchwide Organization
 - 48% of all Church Council members (including officers and liaison bishops) have made a gift this FY
 - The Class of '25 is currently in the lead with 65% of the class giving this FY compared to Class of '28 with 33% of the class giving this FY.

A Challenge:

WITH 100% PARTICIPATION,
THE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE OF CHURCH
COUNCIL NOW CHALLENGES
THE CHURCH COUNCIL AT
LARGE TO FOLLOW SUIT.

WILL THE CHURCH COUNCIL
JOIN US IN SUPPORTING THE
WORK OF THE CHURCH THAT
WE HAVE BEEN CALLED TO
GOVERN AND ADVISE?

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

Lilly Endowment, Inc. informed us in mid-June that we were awarded a **\$1.25 million implementation grant** as part of its “Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer” initiative. Distributed over 5 years, the grant will be used to fund research and product development in the areas of worship education resources for children and families, resources for congregational education, and new worship music resources for children.

We were delighted to connect in person with the 700+ attendees at the **ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering (RMG)** in July in Phoenix. Our store in the Interaction Center provided a welcome opportunity for attendees to browse our newest publications and discover things they may have missed during the disruption of the pandemic. 1517 Media staff served on the RMG planning team (Deacon Laura Gifford), the worship planning team (Deacon Jennifer Baker-Trinity), and as workshop leaders (Dr. Dawn Rundman, Rev. Suzanne Burke, and Rev. Marissa Sotos).

Three recent publications serve particular communities. *Oye mi voz: Un libro de oraciones para la prisión* is the **Spanish-language version** of *Hear My Voice: A Prison Prayer Book* (2019), supporting those who are incarcerated and those who accompany and care for them. The prayer book is a collaborative effort sponsored by the ELCA and Augsburg Fortress. The texts of the 200 hymns and songs in *All Creation Sings* are now available in **Braille**. *Unscheduled Grace* is a collection of devotions and prayers to accompany **college students** through the many changes, challenges, and joys of college living.

On October 31 we launched a new book series for ELCA congregations. **Mouth House books** help people of faith navigate and respond to critical societal issues together. All titles are authored by leaders well-equipped to speak about topics that matter in the church and world. The series is inspired by Martin Luther’s words: “The church is not a pen-house but a mouth-house.” By amplifying voices for change, these books compel readers to move beyond the written word into deeper conversations and meaningful action in their communities. augsburgfortress.org/mouthhouse

Books

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, 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)

Hear Us Out: Six Questions on Belonging and Belief. Sue Prior Yoder and Co.Lab.Inq.

The Everyday Advocate: Living Out Your Calling to Social Justice. Ross Murray

Leading Faithful Innovation: Following God into a Hopeful Future. Dwight Zscheile, Michael Binder, and Tessa Pinkstaff

Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle, 40th Anniversary Edition. Ted Loder
Leading While Black: The Intersectionality of Race, Leadership, and God. Torrance J. R. Jones
Freedom and Imagination: Trusting Christ in an Age of Bad Faith. S. D. Giere.

BEAMING BOOKS (beamingbooks.com)

Lullaby for the King. Nikki Grimes and Michelle Carlos
I Love You Mucho Mucho. Rachel Más Davidson
Little Mole Gives Thanks. Glenys Nellist and Sally Anne Garland
What If I Can't Explain God? Jennifer Grant and Hsulynn Pang
Brown Girls Rule. Ashok Banker and Brittney Bond

BROADLEAF BOOKS (broadleafbooks.com)

Ordinary Blessings for the Christmas Season: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations. Meta Herrick Carlson
The Bodies Keep Coming: Dispatches from a Black Trauma Surgeon on Racism, Violence, and How We Heal. Brian H. Williams
Raising Kids beyond the Binary: Celebrating God's Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children.
Jamie Bruesehoff
The Woman They Wanted: Shattering the Illusion of the Good Christian Wife. Shannon Harris
The Sacred Life of Bread: Uncovering the Mystery of an Ordinary Loaf. Meghan Murphy-Gill.

1517 Media Organizational Matters

The trade book publishing industry as whole is experiencing *ongoing* declines in sales. Like many publishers (including the nation's largest) we made the decision to reduce our near-term investment in our trade publishing program. This included reducing our staff by 7 percent and rebalancing our publishing program to achieve better financial results amid weakened market conditions. Already, we are seeing positive results from these changes.

On October 16 we implemented a partial return to the office for employees in the Twin Cities area, believing that more regular in-person interactions are needed to support employees' career development, maintain efficiency within and among teams, foster collegiality and a positive company culture, and preserve the integrity of our mission. Local employees are coming to the office at least 2 days a week; senior leaders at least 3 days a week.

Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) presents both threats and opportunities in our work and beyond. A cross-functional team is monitoring developments in real time, including legitimate uses and potential misuses of A.I. in the publishing industry, and developing and documenting 1517 Media's own philosophy and practices. A clause addressing the use of A.I. in content generation and training A.I. technologies has been added to all publishing agreements.

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.

1517 Media Digest of Board Actions

Submitted by: Tim Blevins, President and CEO

Date of Board Meeting: June 9, 2023

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 that the Board of Trustees of 1517 Media, the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, elect the following persons to serve as members of the Audit and Finance Committee:

1. Audit Committee: Michael Chan
2. Audit Committee: Luther Snow
3. Audit Committee: Cheryl Williams. (PH.23.06.02)

Voted that the 1517 Media 2024 operating budget be approved as presented. (PH/ES.23.06.02)

Category 3: *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

ELCA Foundation Report

Submitted by Annette C. Shoemaker, Interim President and CEO

This year continues to be one of significant change for the ELCA Foundation. Importantly, we moved forward the previously established relationship with Bridge Alternatives and as of August 1st have put in place an outsourced Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer, and a Compliance Director. Although there are specific people in titled positions for ease of communication, in actuality, Bridge is supporting this work with a team of eight staff members.

Thanks to their work and the efforts of our accounting staff, the Foundation received a clean audit from Crowe (external auditor), moved forward many of the recommendations/remediations suggested by Forvis (internal auditor) and started to streamline compliance requirements and reporting. The Foundation has been able to take meaningful steps toward building a stronger infrastructure, establishing new relationships, and exploring potential avenues for growth.

In addition, work has been completed around the search, identification, and selection of an outside provider, Interlinks, an on-line client service portal which will be implemented during the 4th quarter. We have also developed of a 2024 budget that more accurately reflects our costs of doing business; initiated a feasibility assessment and analysis for the Service Level Agreement with the churchwide organization; and a reengaged the Raymont Group to review the implementation timeline for the strategic plan for the remainder of 2023 and identify and initiate strategic changes to gift planning efforts to be implemented in 2024.

Current stats for the first half of 2023 include growth of total assets under management by almost 4% to \$1,060.9 million due to a 10% increase in the total assets under management in the Ministry Growth Fund. Distributions to ministry were up over 26% during the first half, totaling \$10.1 million, compared to the same time period last year as the result of several large bequests that were processed in the first quarter. Because of those gifts, distributions to churchwide programs were up over 20% in the first six months, totaling \$5.6 million, compared to the same period a year ago.

Total gifts and managed assets developed during the first half were significantly higher compared to the first half of 2022 – \$61.0 million versus \$50.8 million – due to a large increase in Ministry Growth Fund additions compared to the same period in 2022 – \$24.4 million versus \$15.0 million. Planned gifts were slightly ahead of the first half of 2022, \$31.0 million versus \$29.0 million, and results for current, and currently funded, gifts lagged somewhat compared to the same period in 2022 – \$5.7 million versus \$6.7 million.

Finally, our relationship with Fund Evaluation Group, investment advisor and OCIO, has already paid dividends both in terms of significant progress toward an updated Investment Policy Statement and enhanced marketing materials and market commentary for the Ministry Growth Fund. They have also provided meaningful assistance in the creation of a database of answers for Requests for Proposal and have participated in several sizeable final presentations – one resulting in an \$8 million new account!

ELCA Foundation Digest of Board Actions

Submitted by: Annette C. Shoemaker, Interim President and CEO

Date of Board Meetings: June 16, 2023, June 27, 2023, Sept. 15, 2023

Category 1: *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit which requires 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.23.06.05 To approve the 2024 distribution rate of 4% for the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust – Ministry Growth Fund.
- FO.23.09.03 To approve the ELCA Foundation’s 2024 operating budget.
- FO.23.04.04 To approve the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust’s 2024 budget.
- FO.23.09.05 To approve the revised Investment Committee Charter.

Category 3: *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

- FO.23.06.03 To vote on the approval of the audited financials via written action.
- FO.23.06.04 To approve Eric Draut as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the ELCA Foundation.
- FO.23.06.06 To approve the organizational chart.
- FO.23.06.07 To approve the audited financial statements of the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust for the year ended December 31, 2022.
- FO.23.06.08 To approve the audited combined financial statements of the ELCA Foundation for the year ended December 31, 2022.
- FO.23.09.06 To approve the following officers of the board for 2024:
- Chair – Heather Marx
 - Vice-Chair – Ingrid Stafford
 - Treasurer – Eric Draut
 - Secretary – Naomi Horsager
 - Assistant Secretary – Kim Kernodle
- FO.23.09.07 To approve the following as members of the Executive Committee:
- Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton
 - Karen Bohn
 - Eric Brudos
 - Kathleen Reed

Mission Investment Fund (MIF) of the ELCA Report

Submitted by Eva M. Roby, President and CEO

As we have progressed through 2023, it has become clear that the challenges that were pervasive throughout 2022—namely, inflationary pressures, escalating interest rates, and market volatility—have settled in for a long-term stay. The Federal Reserve has enacted eleven interest rate hikes since March of 2022, and signs indicate that more hikes are still to come. MIF, along with financial institutions everywhere, has been feeling the effects of these unprecedented conditions. Our biggest challenge has most certainly been interest margin compression resulting from rising interest rates. As it seems likely that the next few years will bring much of the same, we will continue our emphasis on being forward-looking and risk-focused—remaining diligent in managing potential risks on our balance sheet and continuing to monitor economic conditions and the interest rate environment.

We firmly believe that now is the time to stay the course and follow the path laid out before us in our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, the goals of which I shared in my report of November 2022. Our strategic plan is innovative and forward-looking, and positions us well for the future. We have made good progress on the five strategic initiatives that were identified as areas of focus for 2023: 1) Complete the MIF modernization blueprinting phase; 2) Scale the social ministry organization business strategy; 3) Develop brand and marketing strategies; 4) Ensure workforce readiness; and 5) Continue our tradition of strength and stability.

We have made particularly solid progress in our modernization project, which I introduced in my report last November. This is a multi-faceted effort to modernize MIF within the three spheres of people, processes, and technology. We are excited about this wide-ranging initiative that will ensure that MIF is ready and well equipped to meet the evolving needs of our customers.

While challenges remain ahead of us, MIF's proven strength and stability will be our anchor during these currently turbulent waters.

Mission Investment Fund (MIF) Digest of Board Actions

Submitted by: Eva Roby, President and CEO

Date of Board Meeting: October 19, 2023

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.)*

- Adopted the MIF Financial Plan for 2024
- Approved:
 - Revisions to the Loan Policy
 - Revisions to the Investment Policy
 - Revisions to the Allowance for Credit Losses Policy

Category 3: *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None

Portico Benefit Services Report

Submitted by Stacy Kruse, Interim President & CEO



In September, we announced the retirement of Portico's president and CEO, the Rev. Jeff Thiemann, effective Sept. 30, the last day of his third four-year term. Portico's board of trustees has initiated a search process to identify our next CEO. Given my long [tenure with Portico](#) as Chief Operating and Financial Officer and to help ensure a seamless transition, the board has asked me to assume the role of interim CEO.

Jeff always felt God called him to Portico and gave him the gifts to serve our organization, our members, and the church well during his 12-year tenure. We at Portico are grateful for and celebrate his many contributions to the well-being of the ELCA faith community, and will miss his consistently positive outlook and strong, compassionate leadership.

On the Cost of Health Benefits

We all know that, across the nation, the cost of health benefits is always increasing. PricewaterhouseCooper's (PwC) Health Research Institute projected a 7% increase in 2024 medical costs for both group and individual markets,* which means Portico's 2.5% ELCA-Primary health contribution baseline rate increase for 2024, along with individual age, compensation, and coverage adjustments, compares favorably. It is our lowest increase in 10 years.

What drives the cost of health care coverage? Primarily, claims and administrative efficiencies. While we can't change the larger health care system, we do focus intensely on: 1) helping members access health care effectively and efficiently, and 2) investing in efficient administrative processes for the long term, like our current transition to a new SAP business enterprise software system. By prioritizing this significant investment, we're overcoming old inflexibilities and gaining efficiencies so we can continue to serve effectively and efficiently.

*PwC Health Research Institute, Medical cost trend: Behind the numbers 2024, [pwc.com/us/en/industries/health-industries/library/behind-the-numbers.html](https://www.pwc.com/us/en/industries/health-industries/library/behind-the-numbers.html)

Raising Awareness About the PWA Deadline

Due to the ongoing cost of administering personal wellness account (PWA) balances, also known as Health Reimbursement Arrangements, members with a balance and no longer eligible to receive PWA contributions need to take action to avoid forfeiting their balance. Eligible expenses incurred prior to Jan. 1, 2023, must be submitted for reimbursement by Dec. 31, 2023, and claims after Jan. 1, 2023, must be submitted by April 30, 2024.

We began notifying members with a balance September of last year, then sent follow-up communications this year; those with balances of \$500 and more received both a letter and email. We're now implementing more targeted efforts to help members use these dollars before the deadline. So far, our efforts are working; over 1,000 members have spent down nearly \$420,000. Funds not used by the deadline will be forfeited to the health plan.

Upcoming Report from U.S. Government Accountability Office

The U.S. House Committee on Education & the Workforce requested in early 2021 that the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) study church plans. As part of this study, the GAO interviewed several church pension boards and pension rights advocates. Portico was not interviewed. Based on the interviews, the GAO seems interested in two areas — protections afforded members given the ERISA exemption for church plans, and the funding of defined benefit plans. We expect the GAO report to be issued in late October or early November 2023 and are working with the Church Alliance, who is closely monitoring the release of this report. Following its release, I will follow up with any significant findings.

Portico Benefit Services Digest of Board Actions

Submitted by: Stacy A. Kruse, Interim President and CEO

Date of Board Meetings: August 3-4, 2023; November 2-3, 2023

Category 1: *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit which require Church Council approval.)*

ELCA Participating Annuity Trust – effective January 1, 2024

- Approved resolution to remove references to the ELCA Participating Annuity Trust Bridge Fund as of December 31, 2023, all members in the Bridge Fund have annuitized and there are no longer assets or liabilities associated with the Bridge fund.

Category 2: *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

Approved the resolution concerning the 2024 Contribution Rates for the Survivor, Disability and Medical and Dental Benefits Plans, and Retiree Support.

Approved the resolution adopting the 2023 replacement of Core Systems adjusted budget.

Approved the resolution concerning revisions to the Social Purpose Guiding Policies.

PLAN AMENDMENTS

ELCA 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan – effective January 1, 2024

Approved amendments to:

- Sections 9.06, 9.08 – SECURE Act 2.0: Updating age of required minimum distribution.

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – effective January 1, 2024

Approved amendments to:

- Sections 4.06, 5.05 – Removing expired COVID provisions.

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – effective January 1, 2024

Approved amendments to:

- Section 4.06 – Adding additional eligibility provisions for disabled child over age 26.
- Sections 12.07, 12.08 – Increasing the lifetime maximum for certain treatments related to infertility.

ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan – effective January 1, 2024

Approved amendments to:

- Section 4.15 – Removing 15-year service catch-up and adding SECURE 2.0 Roth catch-up.
- Section 8.01 – Adding withdrawal provisions for military.
- Section 8.08 – SECURE 2.0: Update beneficiary distribution timing for surviving spouse.
- Sections 8.14, 11.24 – Update required minimum distribution age and add de minimis incentive provision.

ELCA Retirement Plan – effective January 1, 2024

Approved amendments to:

- Sections 2.26, 2.27, 2.28, 2.40, 2.41, 4.01, 5.04, 5.08, 5.09, 5.11, 5.13, 6.01, 7.04, 7.05, 7.06, 9.01, 9.02, 9.03, 9.04 – Adding Roth contributions in compliance with the Roth catch-up contribution requirement.
- Sections 9.08, 9.14 – SECURE 2.0: Updating beneficiary distribution timing for surviving spouse and required minimum distribution age.

Officer Election(s) and Committee Chairs, and Vice Chairs Approval

Elected the following Board of Trustees Officers for 2023-2025:

Lori A. Lewis, Chairperson
Vincent P. Brown, Vice Chairperson
Angela M. Dejene, Secretary

Approved resolution appointing Stacy A. Kruse, Chief Operating and Financial Officer, to another two-year term as Treasurer, effective November 1, 2023, through October 31, 2025.

Elected the following At-Large Member for 2023-2025:

The Rev. Dr. Thomas P. Schlotterback and Kathie Bender Schwich

November 2023 Resolutions/Actions

Adopted the 2024 Budget.

Approved resolution establishing the annuity adjustment 2.0% and a dividend of 8.70% for 2024 for the ELCA Participating Annuity Investment Fund. For bridge accounts: No longer applicable as all bridge account holders have annuitized.

Approved the resolution extending project expenses related to the 2023 replacement of Core Systems adjusted budget into the 2024 calendar year.

Approved the resolution concerning revisions to the Social Purpose Guiding Policies.

PLAN AMENDMENTS

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – effective January 1, 2024

Approved amendment to:

- Section 4.06 – Adding additional eligibility provisions for disabled child over age 26

ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan – effective January 1, 2024

- Section 8.10 – Small account force-out provisions

ELCA Retirement Plan – effective January 1, 2024

- Sections 2.17, 4.05, 7.01, 7.02, 9.02, 9.07, 9.08, 10.01, 10.04, 10.06 – Removing references to “bridge account”, which has been fully annuitized

Due to the federal government extending the required implementation date, effective January 1, 2024, the following amendments rescind the approval received at the BOT 115 meeting regarding new Roth and SECURE 2.0 Roth provisions:

ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan

- Section 4.15 – Rescinding SECURE 2.0 Roth catch-up provisions previously approved August 2023 BOT115

ELCA Retirement Plan

- Sections 2.26, 2.27, 2.28, 2.29, 2.40, 2.41, 4.01, 5.04, 5.08, 5.09, 5.11, 5.13, 6.01, 7.04, 7.05, 7.06, 9.01, 9.02, 9.03, 9.04, 9.14, 12.18 – Rescinding Roth and SECURE 2.0 Roth catch-up provisions previously approved August 2023 BOT 115

ELCA Retirement Savings Plan

- Sections 2.26, 2.27, 2.28, 2.29, 2.36, 2.37, 4.05, 5.04, 5.06, 5.10, 5.11, 6.01, 7.04, 7.05, 7.06, 9.01, 9.02, 9.03, 9.04, 9.13, 12.19 – Rescinding Roth and SECURE 2.0 catch-up provisions previously approved August 2023 BOT115

Category 3: (Other procedures and board actions.)

Approved the slate of Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs for 2023-2025.

Received the slate of Committee Assignments for 2023-2025.

Approved the resolution concerning the retention of RSM as Independent Auditor for the year ending December 31, 2023.

Received the 2Q2023 Portico Benefit Services Management Report and all committee reports, *en bloc*.

November 2023 Resolutions/Actions

Approved the resolution relating to the Augustana Annuity Trust appointment of trustees.

Approved the resolution designating a portion of 2024 remuneration as rental/housing allowance for the following Portico Benefit Services employees:

The Rev. Shelley Cunningham
The Rev. Tara Lynn
The Rev. Catherine Schibler-Keegan
The Rev. Timothy J. Schroeder

Approved the resolution designating retirement and disability payments as rental/housing allowance for 2024.

Approved the resolution relating to the Execution of Instruments pursuant to Section 9.4 of the Bylaws of this Corporation.

Received the 3Q2023 Portico Benefit Services Management Report and all committee reports, *en bloc*.

Reviewed *en bloc*, all Committee Charters and Calendars with no changes.

Received Employee Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements.

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:

Upcoming programming

In December, two online offerings will be available. The first, A Topsy Turvy Advent, will occur on December 3 at 3 p.m. CT. It's a spirit-filled Advent devotional sponsored by *Gather* magazine and hosted by the Rev. Hannah Hawkinson, who wrote the Advent devotion appearing in the November/December issue of the magazine. The second is a virtual Blue Christmas Service at 7 p.m. on December 21, the Winter Solstice. This well-loved service includes brief readings, reflective music and prayers offered in a safe place to bring one's grief, fear, and loss. [Learn more about both events and register in advance.](#)

Scholarships

The organization's annual scholarship program is designed for women who have had their post-secondary education interrupted or for those who match the particulars of certain scholarship funds. The application period opens December 15. [Learn more online.](#)

\$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. So far, gifts from about 300 individuals and over 230 groups have been received. A Mother's Day challenge occurred in the spring based on a generous gift from a former churchwide executive board member. Seed grants of \$1,000 were given to the organization's 64 synod women's organizations; we look forward to learning about the grants' uses at a year-end deadline. As part of the campaign, a five-session online series called "God's Gift of Money: Stewarding Money Wisely" was held this fall. Recordings of those sessions can be viewed at welca.org/katiesfund. Non-participants in Women of the ELCA might consider making a gift to the campaign in honor or in memory of someone who made a difference in their spiritual journey. [Gifts can be made online](#) or [sent by mail](#).

Twelfth Triennial Convention (2023)

Over 200 voting members from synod women's organizations across the church met in Phoenix, Arizona two months ago for the Twelfth Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA. Acting on resolutions brought to the floor, voting members encouraged Women of the ELCA participants to participate in the [ELCA Truth and Healing Movement](#) and to ask their congregations to create their own land acknowledgments. Voting members also recommended that Women of the ELCA participants engage in the study, [Now Is the Time: A Study Guide for ELCA Declaration to People of African Descent](#).

Several changes to churchwide bylaws relating to more inclusive language were approved. A \$1.9 million budget for FY2024 was adopted. Four officers and 11 board members were elected to lead the organization in the 2023-2026 triennium. [A summary of the convention can be found online.](#)

Just Love Gathering

Over 700 attendees gathered in Phoenix for the Just Love Gathering. Plenary speakers included Dr. Jacqueline Bussie, Dr. Kelly Sherman-Conroy (Bible study leader), Ms. Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, the Rev. Angela !Khabeb, and eight women from the ELCA International Women's Leadership program. Worship, always a highlight, included the preaching of the Rev. Irma Banales and the Rev. Tiffany Chaney. Workshops, servant events, and a 5K fundraiser for the organization's health initiative rounded

out the programming along with an interactive center and in-kind giving. [A summary of the gathering can be found online.](#)

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](#).

Women of the ELCA Digest of Board Actions

Submitted by: Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director

Meeting dates: April 23, 2023 (via Zoom), August 19, 2023 (via Zoom) Sept. 18, 2023 (via Zoom),
October 2023

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)*

April 2023:

- The board approved a request from The Table to form a special unit of Women of the ELCA. [The Table, located in Nashville, Tenn.](#), is a LGBTQIA+ centered faith collective.

August 2023:

- The board approved a draft budget for FY2024 to be sent to the voting members of the Twelfth Triennial Convention for their consideration and adoption.
- Relating to the Twelfth Triennial Convention (2023), the board
 - Designated offerings from the opening worship 25% to the Dream Center, a Phoenix-based ministry to those who have been trafficked; 25% to the Alleluia Better Chance Diaper Closet, a Phoenix-based ministry that grew out of an ELCA congregation; and 50% to the ongoing ministry of the churchwide women's organization;
 - Elected the nominating committee and alternates for the convention;
 - Approved the appointment of members and alternates for the memorials committee and the reference and counsel committee.
- Designated the offerings to be collected at the Just Love Gathering as Thankofferings for the opening worship and for the closing worship, 50% to the ongoing ministry of the churchwide women's organization and 50% to **2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years**.
- Selected Des Moines, Iowa as the site for the Thirteenth Triennial Convention and Gathering (2026).

September 2023:

- The board approved amendments to its policy concerning the annual review of the executive director.
- The board authorized its secretary, in consultation with its constitutional review committee and the executive director, to make any necessary corrections in the organization's churchwide constitution as acted upon at the most recent triennial convention.

October 2023:

- The board established a plan for the 2023-2026 triennium such that offering collected at churchwide executive board meetings will be designated 50% to the ongoing churchwide ministries of the organization, 25% to **2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years**, and 25% to be determined by the executive committee prior to each meeting.
- The board elected three members to the executive committee: Sheena Foster (8G), Yma Mulero (9F), and Ginger Cutrell (9D). They will serve in this triennium with the newly elected officers: Myrna Wells-Ulland, president (2D); Lorie Garcia, vice president (4D); Gwendolyn Edwards, secretary (4A); and Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer, treasurer (8B).

Category 3: *(other procedures and board actions)*

April 2023:

The board received committee and staff reports and heard updates on the Twelfth Triennial Convention (2023) and the Just Love Gathering.

August 2023:

The board received committee and staff reports and heard updates on the Twelfth Triennial Convention (2023), the Just Love Gathering, and **2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years.**

September 2023:

The board received committee and staff reports and heard updates on the Twelfth Triennial Convention (2023) and the Just Love Gathering.

October 2023:

- The board received committee and staff reports and heard summaries about the Twelfth Triennial Convention (2023) and the Just Love Gathering.
- The board began discussions on its commitment to racial justice advocacy education and the setting of norms for the board's operations.
- The president's assignments and appointments were shared with the board.
- The president announced the creation of a task force to review election procedures first approved by the triennial convention in 2021.



**Luther College Corporation meeting
Report from President Ward
November 11, 2023**

Located in Decorah, Iowa, and founded in 1861, Luther College is grounded in its history as the first college in the United States founded by Norwegian immigrants, in its mission steeped in the Lutheran intellectual tradition, and in its identity as a welcoming residential community of living and learning. Luther is proud of its membership in the Associated Colleges of the Midwest and the American Rivers Conference in Athletics, and currently offers an exclusively undergraduate education leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Luther has just completed the development of a [strategic framework for 2023-2025](#). Instead of creating a multi-year plan, which would require a lengthy process and has a high potential of becoming out-of-date in this era of rapid change, the framework will enable Luther to lay the groundwork for adapting its strategies and operations going forward, while also aligning us with the college's historical mission and values, which call us to be a community where we are enlivened and transformed by encounters with one another. The framework's vision states that the college is both grounded in its place and mission and also global in its reach and impact, and it focuses on three core areas: expanding our reach, aligning our resources, and strengthening our organization.

As a college of the church, Luther continues a tradition of offering robust weekly worship opportunities, including:

Weekday Chapel (Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 10:30 a.m.)

Emmaus – Evening Communion (Monday 8:00 p.m.)

Focus – Contemporary Worship (Sunday 8:00 p.m.)

We also join in worship on select Sundays for special events such as fall orientation week, Family Weekend, Homecoming Weekend, and Reconciling in Christ Celebration Sunday.

Pastor Melissa Bills serves as Director of College Ministries and College Pastor. She received her Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, and her B.A. in religion and English from St. Olaf College. She completed her Lutheran seminary residency at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Bills received the David Allan Weadon Prize in Sacred Music at Princeton Theological Seminary. She is the co-author of "Families Celebrate Advent and Christmas" and a contributor to "A Place For You Interactive Edition: My Holy Communion Book," both published by Augsburg Fortress Press / 1517 Media. Joining her in College



Ministries is Dr. Alexander Meszler, Assistant Professor of Music and Organist, as well as Amanda Severtson, Program Coordinator.

Luther College received a NetVUE Reframing the Institutional Saga grant of nearly \$40,000 from the Council of Independent Colleges to prepare and publish a collection of essays that explore the college's identity as a Norwegian-Lutheran liberal arts college. The grant began in February 2022 and runs through January 2024, with publication of the anthology occurring in advance of the bicentennial celebration of Norwegian immigration to the United States in 2025. The anthology will contain 10-12 essays written by current and retired faculty and staff, as well as local partners and global collaborators; the diverse group will contribute their unique perceptions and understanding of the Norwegian and Lutheran identities of the college, historically, now and their potential role in the future. The anthology will be made available to the public, and it will also be integrated into the orientation programs for new members of the campus community.

Since the last report shared at the Churchwide Assembly in Columbus, Ohio, Luther has welcomed and reappointed the following individuals to its Board of Regents and asks for ratification of their appointments by the Luther College Corporation:

Recommended Action by the Corporation:

- I. Ratification of Election of Regents
 - a. To ratify the action of the Board of Regents of Luther College in electing the following persons to the Board for first four-year terms:
 - Brent Asplin (Barrington, IL)
 - Kelly Woods Birkenholz (Chanhassen, MN)
 - Brad Miller (Luck, WI)
 - b. To ratify the action of the Board of Regents of Luther College in electing the following persons to the Board for second four-year terms:
 - Ann Leon (Madison, WI)
 - Corey Schmidt (Naperville, IL)
 - c. To ratify the action of the Board of Regents of Luther College in electing the following persons to the Board for third four-year terms:
 - Sandee Joppa (Plymouth, MN)



- Jeff Anderson (Des Moines, IA)
- Jim Young (Bloomington, MN)

Luther College continues to be enlivened by its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and is grateful for the opportunity to convene its Corporation as part of the meeting of the Church Council.

Respectfully submitted,

President Jenifer K. Ward
October 27, 2023