

Revised April 9, 2024

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
April 11-14, 2024
Chicago, Illinois

AGENDA

Participants

Voting Members

Pr. Lisa Ahlness	Ms. Cherrish Holland
Mr. Kevin Anderson	Mr. Rindra Josoa (<i>excused</i>)
Ms. Tracey Beasley	Pr. Gwendolyn King
Pr. Benjamin Bergren	Mr. David Lenz
Pr. Marcus Bigott (<i>excused</i>)	Pr. Tara Lynn
Pr. Nick Billardello	Ms. Olivia Martin-Call
Ms. Susan Boxberger	Mr. Mitch McCartney
Pr. Heather Brown	Mr. Joel Miller
Ms. Jamie Bruesehoff	Mr. Ethan Miller-Perez
Pr. Bill Callister	Mr. Keoni Newman (<i>excused</i>)
Pr. Leroy Cannon	Deacon Kari Olsen
Bp. Yehiel Curry	Mr. Iván Perez
Ms. Divine	Ms. Linda Rivera
Bp. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop	Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, Secretary
Pr. Joanne Engquist	Mr. Noah Roux
Ms. Lori Fedyk, Treasurer	Ms. Valerie Shaw (<i>excused</i>)
Ms. Kerry Fehrman	Mr. Imran Siddiqui, Vice President
Ms. Sheena Foster	Ms. Andraine Sinaga
Mr. Hans Giller	Mr. Loren Solberg
Pr. Emily Hartner	Pr. Kjersten Sullivan
Ms. Kristy Henriksen	Ms. Loni Taylor
Pr. Pamela Hoh	Ms. Jennifer Trom

Liaison Bishops

Bp. Laurie Jungling, Region 1	Bp. Suzanne Dillahunt, Region 6
Bp. Brenda Bos, Region 2	Bp. Christopher deForest, Region 7
Bp. Craig Schweitzer, Region 3	Bp. James Dunlop, Region 8
Bp. Scott Johnson, Region 4	Bp. Pedro Suárez, Region 9
Bp. Amy Current, Region 5	

Resource People

Operations: Office of the Presiding Bishop

Pr. Wyvetta Bullock, interim executive for administration
Ms. Jennifer DeLeon, director for racial justice
Ms. Victoria Flood, senior director, Mission Support
Pr. Louise Johnson, executive for vision (*excused*)
Ms. Rhondean Johnson, executive for People and diversity, equity, and inclusion (*excused*)
Ms. Kathryn Lohre, executive, ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment
Ms. Judith Roberts, senior director, diversity, equity, and inclusion
Ms. Mary Streufert, director for gender justice and women's empowerment & director for Quality of Call Initiative
Deacon John Weit, executive, worship
Pr. Roger Willer, director, theological ethics
Ms. Rachel Wind, executive, development
Ms. Andrea Young, senior director, People Solutions

Operations: Office of the Secretary

Mr. Thomas Cunniff, general counsel
Mr. Dan Eppley, manager for official documentation
Pr. Keith Fry, executive, Office of the Secretary administration
Mr. Paul Irwin, associate general counsel
Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe, executive, synod relations (*excused*)
Ms. Jodi Slattery, executive, governance

Christian Community and Leadership (CCL)

Pr. Philip Hirsch, executive director
Pr. Sara Cutter, senior director, operational effectiveness

Service and Justice (SJ)

Pr. Khader El-Yateem, executive director
Pr. Barbara Lund, senior director, operations and innovation

Innovation (INO)

Mr. Iain Chester, executive director

Press

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, public relations manager, and interim senior director, strategic communications

Separately Incorporated Ministries

Mr. Tim Blevins, president and CEO, 1517 Media
Mr. David Quello, chief investment officer, Portico Benefit Services
Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director, Women of the ELCA
Ms. Eva Roby, president and CEO, Mission Investment Fund (*excused*)
Ms. Annette Shoemaker, interim president and CEO, ELCA Foundation

Ecumenical Guests

Pr. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, The United Methodist Church (*excused*)
Pr. Dale Buettner, The Reformed Church in America (*excused*)
Pr. Mark Goodman, The Episcopal Church
Ms. Linda Grainger, national secretary, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Pr. Betsy Miller, The Moravian Church
Ms. Elona Street Stewart, Presbyterian Church in America (*excused*)

Advisory Members

Pr. Alejandro Mejia, president, Latino Ministries Association
Pr. Larry Thiele, representative, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association
Mr. Albert Asfour, acting president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
Ms. Desta Goehner, president, Association of White Lutherans for Racial Justice
Pr. Moses Penumaka, president, Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders
Pr. Jesse W Brown Jr, president, African Descent Lutheran Association
Mr. Dan Michel, representative, ReconcilingWorks

Thursday, April 11, 2024

- 11:00 a.m. Lunch available for Budget Prioritization Task Force, outside Epiphany
- 12:00 p.m. Budget Prioritization Task Force update, Epiphany I and II
- 12:30 p.m. Executive Committee, Epiphany I and II
- 2:00 p.m. Officer Performance Reviews
- 3:00 p.m. **HOLY COMMUNION**, 1st Floor Chapel
Presider: Pr. Leroy Cannon
Preacher: Pr. Nick Billardello
Assisting Minister: Olivia Martin-Call
Lector: Kevin Anderson

PLENARY SESSION ONE

Council Room
April 11, 2024
4:15 – 6:00 p.m.

I.A Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda items have been distributed electronically. Additional items will be distributed at the meeting to the members of the Church Council and invited resource people. The times noted in the agenda are estimates and provided for information only.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

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

I.B Report from the Presiding Bishop

I.C Report of the Executive Committee

I.C.1 Election of Executive for Administration – *Executive Session*

The Executive for Administration is the chief administrator of the churchwide organization.

According to ELCA 15.12.A22.: “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.”

Previously, the Rev. Dr. M. Wyvetta Bullock served as the executive for administration from 2007 to 2021. More recently, she began serving as the interim executive for administration in January [EC(ES)23.12.59] when the Rev. Louise N. Johnson moved into the executive for vision position. Pr. Bullock has served the ELCA since 1987, and prior to that, served the LCA beginning in 1981.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will present Pr. Bullock as nominee for the executive for administration to the Executive Committee at its April 11 meeting.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To elect the Rev. Dr. M. Wyvetta Bullock as the executive for administration for a term coterminous with the term of the presiding bishop, as provided in churchwide continuing resolution 15.12.A22.

I.C.2 U.S. Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue 12th Round

Next year will mark 60 years of dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics in the United States. During these decades, significant strides have been made in uncovering the unity we share, detailed in what are now twelve common statements. In late 2023, Fortress Press published [*Faithful Teaching: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue XII*](#).

The common statement of the twelfth round of the U.S. Lutheran-Catholic dialogue is presented as an ecumenical resource by the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations section in the ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop in cooperation with the Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

In a time of significant social and ecclesial change, Round XII was borne out of the mutual recognition that *how* the church discerns what to teach the faithful is crucial. Thus, the common statement explores the different processes by which Lutherans and Catholics discern and declare the truth of the Gospel. This includes “different approaches to consulting the faithful, differing theologies of episcopal office and church governance, [and] differing structures of deliberation and decision-making” (*Preface, xiii-xiv*). In offering this assessment, significant areas of agreement are also identified, and implications for unity are posited. With a shared sense of urgency, these implications support Lutherans and Catholics in teaching the Gospel *together* today.

The twelfth round was co-chaired by the Rev. Dr. Lowell G. Almen (ELCA) and Bishop Denis. J. Madden (USCCB). Representatives from both churches formed the dialogue team, along with co-staff (*See: Appendix 1*)

As we commemorate the 25th anniversary of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Committee of the ELCA Conference of Bishops recommends the Church Council receive the Common Statement.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To receive “Faithful Teaching,” the Common Statement of the Twelfth Round of the U.S. Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue.

I.D Q&A on Vice President, Secretary, and Chair of Conference of Bishops reports

This is an opportunity to ask questions on the written reports provided by the [vice president](#), [secretary](#), and [chair of the Conference of Bishops](#), approximately 15 minutes is allotted for this time.

10-minute Recess

I.E Greetings from Ecumenical Guests

I.F Personal Reflection on Faith, Loni Taylor

6:00 p.m. Welcome Dinner, Augsburg Room
Assorted sodas (complimentary); Wine and beer available (\$5 suggested donation)

Friday, April 12, 2024

- 6:30 a.m. Breakfast, Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 a.m.)
- 7:00 a.m. Board Development Committee, Pentecost (*working breakfast*)

PLENARY SESSION TWO

Council Room
April 12, 2024
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

II.A Racial Justice and Gender Justice Education

This three-hour agenda time is devoted to education on racial justice and gender justice.

II.B Announcements

- 12:15 p.m. Mid-Day Prayer, 1st Floor Chapel
Led by Pr. Alejandro Mejia
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch, Augsburg Room
Ecumenical Liaison Lunch, reserved seating in Augsburg Room
- 2:00 p.m. Committees meet
Budget and Finance, Epiphany I and II
Christian Community and Leadership, 5th Floor Screening Room
Faith, Society, and Innovation, Pentecost
Legal and Constitutional Review, Advent
Service and Justice, 6th Floor Planning Room
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner, Augsburg Room

Saturday, April 13, 2024

- 6:30 a.m. Breakfast, Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 a.m.)
- 8:30 a.m. Hearing for [draft social statement on civic life and faith](#), Council Room (*optional*)
- 9:45 a.m. Break
- 10:00 a.m. *Deadline for Removal of Items from En Bloc*
Deadline for New Business

PLENARY SESSION THREE

Council Room
April 13, 2024
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

III.A Personal Reflection on Faith, Pr. Joanne Engquist

III.B Update on Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) has divided its work into committees. A summary of their meetings can be found at www.ELCA.org/CRLC.

CRLC co-chairs, Pr. Carla Christopher and Leon Schwartz, will be present to share an update with the Church Council. This 45-minute agenda time will include an opportunity for council members to ask questions about the CRLC work.

III.C Report of the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee

The following report is provided by the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee's meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee section of Microsoft Teams.

III.C.1 [Consideration of a Social Message on Gun-related Violence and Trauma](#)

CC ACTION [Two-thirds approval required]

Recommended:

To adopt “Gun-related Violence and Trauma” as a social message of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

III.C.2 [Consideration of next social message](#)

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To authorize the development of a social message on child protection and maltreatment as requested by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly [CA22.01.05r], in light of existing social teaching and in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018).

III.D Update from Budget Prioritization Task Force

At its November 2023 meeting, the Church Council established a task force “to address the need for Council and Administrative Team (with advisors) to explore needed changes to budget work and priorities.” [CC23.11.6]

The task force is composed of members of the Executive Committee (or designees of the committee chairs), the Administrative Team and its advisors, two members from the Advisory members, and one liaison bishop. They are to bring a report to this Spring 2024 meeting. Approximately 30 minutes have been allotted for this update.

- 12:00 p.m. **ADVISORY MEMBER LUNCH PRESENTATIONS** ([see assignments](#))
African Descent Lutheran Association, Epiphany I and II
Association of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, 5th Floor Screening Room
Latino Ministries Association, Pentecost
Association of American Indians and Alaska Natives of the ELCA, Advent
Asian and Pacific Islander Association, 6th Floor Planning Room
Association of White Lutherans for Racial Justice, 10th Floor HR Training Room
Reconciling Works, Augsburg Room

PLENARY SESSION FOUR

Council Room
April 13, 2024
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

IV.A Report from the Administrative Team

IV.B [Report from the Treasurer](#)

IV.C Report of the Budget and Finance Committee

The following report is provided by the Budget and Finance Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee’s meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the Budget and Finance Committee section of Microsoft Teams.

IV.C.1 FY24 Spending Authorization in ELCA World Hunger

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To request the Office of the Treasurer, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide organization home areas, to review the FY24 revenue and expense performance of ELCA World Hunger through May 2024 and to share any recommendations with the Budget and Finance Committee; and

To authorize the Executive Committee to approve any necessary revisions to the FY24 Spending Authorization in ELCA World Hunger if recommended by the Budget and Finance Committee.

- 3:30 p.m. Break

PLENARY SESSION FIVE

Council Room
April 13, 2024
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

V.A Legal Briefing (*executive session for Church Council, Liaison Bishops, Administrative Team, Minutes Team, and Legal Counsel*)

V.B Report of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

The following report is provided by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee’s meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee section of Microsoft Teams.

V.B.1 Consideration of Roth Option for ELCA Retirement Plan

In accordance with ELCA Constitution bylaw 17.20.02., the ELCA Church Council shall approve plan amendments involving a significant change in policy or a significant change in cost or benefits and shall approve trust amendments initiated by Portico Benefit Services.

The significant amendment proposed is to add Roth as an option for member elective contributions for the plan year beginning January 1, 2025. Roth contributions to a 403(b) plan are made with income that’s already been taxed, and upon meeting certain requirements, may be withdrawn upon retirement without additional federal income tax. This may be advantageous to certain members in the retirement plans and, beginning next year, members would have the option to make Roth elective contributions. Members may make this election during annual enrollment in the 4th quarter of 2024 to begin contributions January 1, 2025.

Portico Benefit Services’ proposed changes received the approval of its Board of Trustees at the meeting on February 23, 2024. In accordance with the approval requirements, the changes are summarized in the [Proposed Portico Plan Amendments](#) document located in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee section of Microsoft Teams.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To approve adding Roth as an option for member elective contributions for the plan year beginning January 1, 2025; and

To approve the proposed amendments by the Portico Benefit Services, as outlined in the “Proposed Portico Plan Amendments” document.

V.B.2 ELCA Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies

Several revisions are being proposed for the Personnel Policies of the Churchwide Organization. They include 1.) minor editorial changes and corrections; 2.) updates to clarify and reflect current practices; and 3.) additions and changes recommended by legal counsel to ensure compliance with preexistent, new, and forthcoming labor laws. Any formatting inconsistencies will be addressed prior to publication. The updated Personnel Policies reflecting the proposed changes and revisions can be found [here](#).

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

Revised April 9, 2024

CC ACTION

Recommended:

**To approve the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies; and
To authorize the Office of the Secretary, *in consultation with People Solutions in the Office of the Presiding Bishop*, to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.**

V.C Announcements

5:30 p.m. Dinner (on your own)

Sunday, April 14, 2024

6:30 a.m. Breakfast, Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 am)

9:00 a.m. **HOLY COMMUNION**, 1st Floor Chapel

Presider: Pr. Lisa Ahlness

Preacher: Deacon Kari Olsen

Assisting Minister: Linda Rivera

Lector: Iván Perez

Offering: ELCA World Hunger

PLENARY SESSION SIX

Council Room

April 14, 2024

10:15 – 11:30 a.m.

VI.A Personal Reflection on Faith, David Lenz

VI.B Brief reports from other committees

The following reports are provided by the Christian Community and Leadership Committee, Service and Justice Committee, and the Board Development Committee.

Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following committee meetings. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in this plenary session. Background information can be located in the relevant committee section of Microsoft Teams.

VI.C New Business

VI.D Consideration of Items Removed from *En Bloc*

VI.E *En Bloc* Approval of Certain Items

The following *en bloc* resolution includes agenda items that will be considered on the last day of the Church Council meeting. Inclusion of these items in the *en bloc* action reflects a judgment that these items are relatively non-controversial in nature and may not require plenary discussion and a separate vote.

Each of the items is noted as [*En Bloc*] in [En Bloc Items](#), [Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions](#), and [Responses to Synod Actions](#). On the first day of the Council meeting, the chair will remind members of the deadline to remove items from *en bloc* consideration in order to discuss separately any of the items listed in the *en bloc* resolution; any such item will be removed from the *en bloc* resolution and discussed at the appropriate point in the agenda.

The chair will not call for a discussion or separate vote on those items that are not removed from the *en bloc* resolution. The items remaining in the *en bloc* resolution normally will be considered as one of the last items of council business.

CC ACTION [Two-thirds approval required]

Recommended:

To adopt the following amendment to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*:

19.01.A2~~34~~ 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~~ **30** days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To take action *En Bloc* on the remaining items listed in *En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions, and Responses to Synod Actions.

VI.F Unfinished Business

VI.G Evaluation and Debriefing

VI.H Announcements and Adjournment

11:45 a.m. Lunch, Brown bag lunch available outside Council Room (*upon request*)