



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

April 9, 2024

To: Bishops of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Vice presidents of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Secretaries of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Members and advisory members of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Administrative Team
Chief executive officers of separately incorporated ministries
Seminary leaders

From: Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary

Subject: Report of Actions of the Church Council (April 3–6, 2025)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill., April 3–6, 2025. The following is a summary of Church Council actions along with background information.

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1. ELCA MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS PLANS

Background:

In November 2025, the Church Council will be asked to consider ELCA medical and dental plan amendments that will implement recommendations made by the Benefits reExamined Project Team. At the April 2025 Church Council meeting, Portico Benefit Services requested endorsement of the recommended changes in order to begin to communicate changes to plan members. *[Note: Details of the changes will be announced by Portico after Easter.]*

Church Council action:

To endorse changes to the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plans as outlined in the “Proposed changes to ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plans” for the plan year beginning Jan. 1, 2026.

2. COMMON STATEMENT ON THE *FILIOQUE*

Background:

Recent developments in Lutheran-Orthodox relations present the possibility of continuing the journey toward reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christianity after nearly a millennium of church division, an important cause of which was addition of “*filioque*” to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed by churches in the West. In 2024, the Joint International Commission on Theological Dialogue between The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Orthodox Church developed a “Common Statement on the *Filioque*,” offering a unique breakthrough. Reception of this text by the Churchwide Assembly would reflect the acceptance of the invitation to live into the commitments reflected therein, namely further reflection on our Trinitarian theology and the role of the Holy Spirit and continued steps toward local dialogue, mutual understanding, and reconciliation between Lutheran and Orthodox siblings in light of our common affirmation that the *filioque* is no longer a cause for division between the churches of LWF and the Orthodox Church.

Church Council action:

To recommend the following for reception by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

WHEREAS, 2025 is the 1,700th anniversary of the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea, and a year in which the Eastern and Western churches will celebrate a common date for Easter, which presents a unique opportunity for reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christianity; and

WHEREAS, the end-result of the Council of Nicaea—later expanded in 381—was the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which has served as a common confession of faith for Christians around the world ever since; and

WHEREAS, the addition to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of the *filioque*—meaning “and the son”—by the Latin church in an attempt to resolve a dispute, resulted in the division between the Eastern and Western churches in the year 1054; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, talks between the ELCA and the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas arrived at “A Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity,” coming to a shared understanding of history and the emphases of each tradition with regard to the Creed; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, the ELCA Church Council adopted “A Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity,” and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* was published with a footnote to the Nicene Creed that says it is appropriate to confess the Creed without the phrase; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is a member church of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the LWF has been in dialogue with the Orthodox Church for more than 40 years; and

Whereas, in 1990, at the Eighth LWF Assembly in Curitiba, the LWF approved omitting the *filioque* clause in ecumenical services when the Orthodox Church is present, setting a precedent later adopted by other world communions; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, the Joint International Commission on Theological Dialogue between the LWF and the Orthodox Church affirmed a “Common Statement on the *Filioque*,” affirming that the *filioque* is not a church-dividing issue and encouraging renewed theological reflection on the Trinity and the role of the Holy Spirit, which was adopted by the LWF Council that June; and

WHEREAS, this Common Statement presents a ground-breaking opportunity to understand our history in light of our dialogue with the Orthodox, and to begin to heal millennium-old divisions in the body of Christ; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the ELCA prayerfully engage in commemorating the 1,700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council at Nicaea, and the common date of Easter, as an opportunity for continued theological reflection on the Trinity and the role of the Holy Spirit and reconciliation between the Western and Eastern churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Churchwide Assembly prayerfully receive the 2024 Lutheran-Orthodox “Common Statement on the *Filioque*,” understanding such reception to be an intention to lean into a fuller understanding of this issue and the promise of greater unity in the Body of Christ.

3. COMMISSION FOR A RENEWED LUTHERAN CHURCH

Background:

In late March 2025, the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church submitted a final report that included 13 recommendations. The report and recommendations were shared with Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting. The Church Council had already taken action in response to recommendations 7–13 at its meeting of November 2024. At this meeting the Church Council took action in response to the remaining recommendations (recommendations 1–6 and 9) and provided a response to the report as a whole. The complete report is being sent along with this notification.

Church Council action:

To receive with appreciation “Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism” Recommendation 1 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, which urges the creation of mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination;

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to consult with the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD) Advisory Team and their resource staff to review the purpose of the advisory team;

To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Christian Community and Leadership and Service and Justice home areas, to identify possible individuals for service on the STAD Advisory Team and to provide those names to the Executive Committee;

To authorize the Executive Committee to appoint members, including a bishop and a Church Council member, to the STAD Advisory Team;

To authorize the Executive Committee to identify persons from the Church Council to work with the STAD Advisory Team to create an ELCA handbook, including recommended diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) standards for congregations;

To commit the Church Council to continue to work on cultural competency training in every official meeting of the Church Council;

To encourage the Conference of Bishops to work on creating DEIA standards for synods (including synod staff and councils), and to continue to work on cultural competency training within the conference;

To request the senior director, diversity, equity, and inclusion to report annually to the spring meeting of the Church Council regarding diversity of the synods and of the churchwide organization relative to historically underrepresented groups and assessments of initiatives that enable and advance anti-racism and diversity measures across all expressions of this church; and

To designate financial and human resources to incentivize engagement in multicultural educational events and creation of materials for ongoing leadership development (rostered and lay) across this church.

Church Council action:

To receive with appreciation “Accountability within the ELCA” Recommendation 2.1 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To direct the Office of the Secretary to continue to explore collaboration with this church’s full-communion partners to develop processes for conflict resolution within this church that are endorsed by, but independent of, the churchwide organization and which are responsive to the needs of historically underrepresented groups, referring, as appropriate, to the considerations outlined in the rationale of “Accountability within the ELCA;” and

To consult with the Conference of Bishops on such resources and present a report by the Fall 2026 meeting of the Church Council.

Church Council action:

To receive with appreciation “Accountability within the ELCA” Recommendation 2.2 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To request that the Committee on Appeals:

- a. develop resources to help synods identify candidates with the appropriate spiritual gifts and demonstrated competencies in working with varied ethnic backgrounds to serve on synod consultation committees, referring, as appropriate, to the considerations outlined in the rationale of “Accountability within the ELCA;” consult with the Conference of Bishops on such resources; and present a report by the Fall 2026 meeting of the Church Council;
- b. develop resources for training synod consultation committees in conflict resolution, referring, as appropriate, to the considerations outlined in the rationale of “Accountability within the ELCA,” consult with the Conference of Bishops on such resources, and present a report by the Fall 2026 meeting of the Church Council; and

To direct the Office of the Secretary and the Christian Community and Leadership home area to provide staff support to the Committee on Appeals for such work.

Church Council action:

To receive with appreciation “Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose” Recommendation 3 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To establish a task force on interdependence and purpose that will be grounded and rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ and guided by Scripture and our theological discernment as we live into the gospel through the leading of the Spirit. The task force will consist of no more than 14 voting members, at least four of whom shall be members of historically underrepresented groups, and of whom no more than five shall also have been voting members of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, and include the presiding bishop and secretary of this church;

To direct the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint the task force, fulfilling the responsibilities of the Church Council related to nominations in accordance with 14.41.01.c.;

To populate the task force according to the representational principles of this church;

To request the appointment process be completed prior to the November 2025 Church Council meeting;

To direct the task force to undertake the following:

- Assess the adequacy and clarity of the several purpose statements in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and make recommendations for modification;
- Assess the impact of the current governance structures and interdependence of the three expressions of this church on the fulfillment of its mission, and in so doing, develop recommendations for governance improvements; and
- Consider how existing governance structures have (or may have) perpetuated systemic inequalities, and in so doing, develop recommendations to promote inclusion and equity;
- Evaluate the current structure of the synods (including number, geographic boundaries, governance structure, and other relevant factors) and make recommendations for change;

To direct the task force to consult with the Conference of Bishops regarding its work;

To direct the task force to present its report and recommendations to the Fall 2027 meeting of the Church Council;

To direct the task force to make periodic progress reports to the Executive Committee as the committee may request from time to time;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Secretary to provide staff support to the task force; and

To invite this church to join us in prayer as this church embarks on this process.

Church Council action:

To receive with appreciation “Financial Coordinating Task Force” Recommendation 4 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To authorize the Executive Committee to create a Financial Coordinating Task Force by the Spring 2026 Church Council meeting that will be composed of no more than eight members with financial expertise representing all three expressions of this church, including a synod bishop and at least half from historically underrepresented communities. In addition, a member of the Budget and Finance or Audit committees will be

appointed as a member. The ELCA treasurer will be an *ex officio* member. Staff support will be provided by the Office of the Treasurer and the Office of the Presiding Bishop;

To request that the task force, guided by the Holy Spirit:

- a. review existing resources of the ELCA or educational institutions which support financial management;
- b. explore opportunities where greater collaboration or shared processes/resources among the financial functions of the three expressions of this church may be beneficial;
- c. commit to sharing best practices, resources, and tools related to financial management;
- d. affirm the commitment of the financial separately incorporated ministries (ELCA Foundation, Mission Investment Fund, Portico Benefit Services) to continue collaboration amongst themselves and to identify possible ways to enhance operational efficiencies, to leverage synergies, to align strategic initiatives, and to identify opportunities for cost savings and to receive a report from the financial separately incorporated ministries to the Financial Coordinating Task Force by December 2026; and

To present a report on the work of the task force at the Spring 2027 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action:

To receive with appreciation the “Creation of a Task Force to Develop a Comprehensive Congregational Management and Governance Toolkit and Orientation Program” Recommendation 5 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To encourage rostered ministers, congregations, and synods to identify and share knowledge of existing congregational management and governance resources from the churchwide organization, seminaries, and the Publishing House of the ELCA, but to decline the establishment of a task force.

Church Council action:

To receive with appreciation “Strengthening the Framework for Ministers of Word and Service” Recommendation 6 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To affirm the vocation of ministers of Word and Service to equip the baptized for ministry in daily life and to serve this church’s mission in the world through teaching, advocacy, and service;

To affirm the existing educational resources about the theology and practice of Word and Service ministry;

To direct the churchwide organization to post such educational resources on the ELCA website; and

To encourage congregations and synods to provide education about the role of ministers of Word and Service and the varied contexts in which they serve, emphasizing their contributions to this church’s mission and ministry.

Church Council action:

To adopt the amendments in Chapter 10 of the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as described in “Proposed Amendments—Continuing Resolutions” as amended.

10.31.B25 Association of Synod Vice Presidents: *The Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall be composed of the synod vice presidents of this church. The churchwide vice president shall be a member with voice but not vote. The Church Council may appoint a member to serve as a liaison to the association with voice but not vote. The Conference of Bishops may appoint a synod bishop as a liaison to the association with voice but not vote. Triennially, the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall elect a chair and vice chair to preside at meetings.*

- a. *The Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall provide to synod vice presidents opportunities for orientation, worship, spiritual renewal, continuing education, collaboration, and leadership development. To fulfill these responsibilities, the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall:*
 - 1) *meet at every Churchwide Assembly and may hold one additional in-person meeting each triennium and periodically gather informally as desired;*
 - 2) *provide a forum in which goals, objectives, and strategies concerning lay leadership may be developed and shared;*
 - 3) *participate in cultural competency training at each in-person meeting;*
 - 4) *serve as a resource for training and guidance in the governance of this church;*
 - 5) *assist the vice presidents in their role as collaborative leaders with bishops in fostering the work of the synods; and*

- 6) when requested, provide advice and counsel to the Church Council and others holding leadership positions in this church.
- b. The Association of Synod Vice Presidents may establish committees as the members from time to time may determine to assist in fulfillment of its responsibilities.
- c. Staff services for meetings of the Association of Synod Vice Presidents shall be provided by the synod relations staff in the Office of the Secretary.

Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude the findings and recommendations from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) to be shared with the 2025 Churchwide Assembly;

To give thanks to God for the faithful, dedicated, and conscientious members of the CRLC who gave tirelessly of their time and energy to the commission's mandate "to reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism;" and

To encourage the members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and related institutions, organizations, and ministries of this church to use this report in their continued discernment and engagement to live more fully into God's mission in this changing world.

4. SOCIAL MESSAGE ON WHITE SUPREMACY

Church Council action:

To authorize staff of the Theological Discernment Team, in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018), to review and bring a recommendation regarding the request for a social message on White Supremacy to the November 2025 Church Council meeting.

5. DESIGNATION OF CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION REVENUE FROM FY24

Church Council action:

To approve adding \$159,399 (the balance of net revenues over expenses for the year ended Jan. 31, 2025) to the Church Council designated fund, "Support for Possible Work from Churchwide Assembly Actions."

6. REVISION OF THE FY25 SPENDING AUTHORIZATION

The Office of the Treasurer recommended revising the churchwide organization undesignated spending authorization for FY25 in light of revised Mission Support projections.

Church Council action:

To revise the 2025 fiscal year current fund spending authorization from \$67,875,000 to \$65,375,000.

7. PROPOSED 2026–2028 TRIENNIUM BUDGET

Background:

The Church Council is responsible for submitting budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorizing expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets [ELCA Constitution 14.21.05.].

Church Council action:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

2026 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2026 current fund spending authorization of \$61,500,000;

To approve a 2026 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$21,550,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to revise the spending authorizations after periodic review of revised income estimates.

2027 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2027 current fund income proposal of \$56,915,000;

To approve a 2027 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$21,300,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

2028 Budget Proposal

- To approve a 2028 current fund income proposal of \$56,320,000;
- To approve a 2028 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$21,050,000; and
- To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

8. AMENDMENT OF DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

Background:

A recommendation of the DEIA audit of the governing documents of this church submitted to the Church Council in November 2023 was that rostered ministers of this church be explicitly prohibited from membership in hate groups. Implementation of this recommendation required that a clear definition of “hate groups” be added to Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline.

Church Council action:

To approve the additional definition of “hate groups” to the definitions section within Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline and the related modifications to the Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers and Members of Congregations as set forth in “Proposed Changes to Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline.”

9. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTIONS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE ELCA

A. AMENDMENTS TO CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS IN CHAPTER 10 OF THE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE ELCA

Background:

The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church recommended creation of an Association of Synod Vice Presidents. This amendment establishes such an association. The process for adopting or amending continuing resolutions is specified in Chapter 22 of the ELCA Constitution. A two-thirds vote of the Church Council is required for adoption. (See section 3 of this memorandum for the text of the continuing resolution.)

Church Council action:

Two-Thirds Vote

To adopt the amendments in Chapter 10 of the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as described in “Proposed Amendments—Continuing Resolutions” as amended.

B. PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTIONS, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE ELCA

Background:

Since the November 2024 Church Council meeting, additional amendments to certain bylaws have been identified for consideration by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council action:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

*To adopt, *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, the amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and*

*To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make appropriate changes in the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations* congruent with the ELCA Constitution as amended.*

C. ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS TO CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS IN THE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE ELCA

Background:

The Executive Committee of the Church Council and the Office of the Secretary recommended additional amendments to various continuing resolutions in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. The process for adopting or amending continuing resolutions is specified in Chapter 22 of the ELCA Constitution. A two-thirds vote of the Church Council is required for adoption.

Church Council action:

Two-Thirds Vote

To amend continuing resolution 5.01.D24. of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* as follows: “. . . The ~~minimum~~ goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.”

Church Council action:

Two-Thirds Vote

To adopt the amendments, other than amendments to Chapter 10, to the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as described in “Proposed Amendments – Continuing Resolutions.”

10. APPOINTMENT OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE OF THE 2025 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

Background:

Bylaw 12.51.04. provides for the appointment of a Churchwide Assembly Elections Committee to conduct and supervise elections.

Church Council action:

To appoint the members of the Elections Committee for the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:

- Ms. Jennifer Trom (*chair*)
- Ms. Bobbie Ochoa
- Mr. Kenny Olmedo
- Mr. Casy Goslin
- Mr. Erik Rehms; and

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Elections Committee for the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as needed.

11. RATIFICATION OF CHURCH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Background:

Following elections at the Churchwide Assembly, newly elected Church Council members will indicate their committee preferences prior to the October 2025 meeting of the council. A final listing of committee membership for the triennium will be ratified by the Church Council at its October 2025 meeting upon recommendation by the Executive Committee. At its October 2025 meeting, the Church Council also will appoint members to related advisory or liaison appointments for the time period from 2025 to 2028. Members of the Board Development Committee will be appointed by the Executive Committee in October 2025.

Church Council action:

To ratify the following appointments of continuing members of the ELCA Church Council to Church Council committees for the 2025–2028 time period beginning at the close of the Churchwide Assembly on Aug. 2, 2025:

- Budget and Finance Committee: the Rev. Lisa Ahlness, the Rev. Heather Brown, Deacon Kari Olsen, and Mr. Rindra Josoa;
- Christian Community and Leadership Committee: Ms. Sheena Foster, Mr. Hans Giller, Mr. Joel Miller, and Ms. Linda Rivera;
- Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee: Ms. Jamie Bruesehoff, the Rev. Gwendolyn King, and Ms. Olivia Martin-Call;
- Legal and Constitutional Review Committee: the Rev. Leroy Cannon, Mr. Mitch McCartney, and Ms. Jennifer Trom; and
- Service and Justice Committee: Ms. Kristy Henriksen and Mr. Iván A. Pérez.

12. ELECTION TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Background:

Executive Committee terms of all the elected executive committee members end at the conclusion of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Newly elected chairs of the standing committees of the Church Council will serve on the council’s Executive Committee beginning at the close of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, or soon thereafter when a chair is elected. The chair of the Christian Community and Leadership Committee will begin serving immediately as there is a current vacancy.

At their Spring 2025 meetings, the council's other standing committees elected their chairs to begin their terms on Aug. 2, 2025. In order to allow for a smoother transition of this committee, newly elected chairs were invited to participate with voice but not vote in Executive Committee meetings from the time of their election until the Churchwide Assembly. At-large members to the Executive Committee will be elected at the October 2025 meeting of the Church Council

Church Council action:

To declare that the newly elected chair of the Christian Community and Leadership Committee shall be a member of the Executive Committee of the Church Council effective immediately.

Church Council action:

To declare that the newly elected chairs of the Budget and Finance Committee; Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee; Legal and Constitutional Review Committee; and Service and Justice Committee shall be members of the Executive Committee of the Church Council beginning at the close of the Churchwide Assembly on Aug. 2, 2025, or soon thereafter when a chair is elected.

13. 2025 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY RULES OF ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

Background:

The Church Council submits a recommendation to each Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding proposed "Rules of Organization and Procedure." These rules have been developed and refined based on the history of previous Churchwide Assemblies as well as the experience of predecessor church bodies. Voting members of the assembly act on the rules in the first plenary session.

Church Council action:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

To adopt the "Rules of Organization and Procedure" for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that are already in force).

Church Council action:

To authorize the presiding bishop and secretary of this church to prepare further editorial and scheduling revisions that may be found necessary for the Rules prior to their publication in the Churchwide Assembly Bulletin of Reports; and

To report any changes to the Church Council at its July 2025 meeting.

14. ARCHIVING OF CERTAIN SOCIAL POLICY RESOLUTIONS

Background:

Social policy resolutions (SPRs) serve as this church's policy directives until a) replaced by subsequent resolutions, b) rendered moot by subsequent social teaching documents, or c) sent to archive by a Churchwide Assembly. A review for relevance of each SPR is initiated 25 years after adoption to consider whether a resolution should continue to represent the policy of this church in light of changing circumstances.

The list of SPRs to be considered for archiving was provided to Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting. In accordance with *Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns* (2018), SPRs that are 25 years old automatically are considered, but can be "retired" only by action of the Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council action:

To recommend the following en bloc action for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

To archive the social policy resolutions identified in the "2025 Archiving of Certain Social Policy Resolutions" document, in accordance with the "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018).

15. EXPERIMENT WITH CANDIDACY PROCESS

Background:

The Candidacy Development Working Group is recommending a competency-based theological education process as normative for the formation of this church's rostered ministers. A competency-based process will require candidates to be assessed at the beginning of the candidacy process, and based on the outcomes of the assessment, a tailored formation plan will be recommended for each candidate. Throughout the candidacy process, candidates will

be required to demonstrate competence for public ministry. Prior to being approved for ordination, candidates will be assessed using a variety of screening tools developed by subject matter experts.

The Candidacy Leadership Development Working Group sought the Church Council's approval to allow several synods to experiment with the new process in an initial launch process beginning fall 2025. A summary of the draft process outline for the revised candidacy process was provided to Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting.

Church Council action:

To affirm a one-year experiment, beginning fall of 2025 and ending in the fall of 2026 and involving several synods selected by the Candidacy staff of the churchwide organization based on demographic criteria and willingness of synods to partner to finalize the proposed revisions to the candidacy process;

To request that the synods in the experiment continue to form candidates for ministry utilizing the proposed process and give feedback to the Candidacy Working Group and Candidacy staff for process improvement; and

To request that the director for candidacy consult with experimenting synods and provide updates to the Church Council throughout the duration of the one-year period.

16. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Background:

The minutes of the Church Council meeting on Nov. 14–17, 2024, were provided to council members electronically.

The draft minutes of the Executive Committee of the Church Council meetings on Dec. 18, 2024, Jan. 21, 2025, and Feb. 18, 2025, were provided to Executive Committee members electronically.

Church Council members were asked to provide any notations or typographical errors in the distributed text of the minutes in writing to the Office of the Secretary prior to the meeting.

Church Council action:

To approve the minutes of the Nov. 14–17, 2024, meeting of the Church Council; and

To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the Oct. 29, 2024, Nov. 14, 2024, Dec. 18, 2024, Jan. 21, 2025, and Feb. 18, 2025, meetings.

17. CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Background:

The Church Council is responsible for electing people to fill terms on boards of separately incorporated ministries (SIMs), social ministry organizations, and seminaries. Bylaws 8.21.03. and 8.21.04. outline basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. Pursuant to 14.22. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*, the Church Council is also to elect nominees to a vacancy on a board or committee of the churchwide organization.

Biographical information for nominees was provided to Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting.

A. ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a term beginning June 1, 2025, and expiring May 31, 2029: Ms. Courtney Wiler.

B. ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CHICAGO

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago to a term beginning Oct. 1, 2024, and expiring Sept. 30, 2028: Ms. Carmen Teresa Cintron-Figueroa; and

To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago to a term beginning April 3, 2025, and expiring Sept. 30, 2026: Mr. Tony Johnston.

C. ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY AT CAPITAL UNIVERSITY

Church Council action:

To re-elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University to a second term beginning July 1, 2025, and expiring June 30, 2028: the Rev. Jack Sullivan and the Rev. Stephen Donald Wachtman.

18. NOMINATIONS TO THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Background:

The Church Council nominates individuals for possible election to the Nominating Committee by the Churchwide Assembly, in accordance with 12.51.03 and 19.11.01 of *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The committee has 12 to 18 members, at least one but no more than three of which must be from each of the nine regions of this church. Members serve one six-year term (or until a successor is elected) and are not eligible for re-election. Biographical forms for nominees were shared with Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting.

Church Council action:

To receive the written report of the Office of the Secretary on nominees for the churchwide Nominating Committee;

To note that bylaw 19.11.01 states in regard to the Nominating Committee: “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 as an alternative to a 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 criteria applicable to each category that must be met by persons nominated from the floor”;

To request, therefore, that the Church Council restrict the tickets to the following: lay woman (Region 1); lay woman (Region 2); lay woman (Region 3); lay woman (Region 4); lay woman (Region 6 or 9); lay man (Region 8); rostered minister (Region 1); rostered minister (Region 2 or 8); and rostered minister (Region 5, member of historically underrepresented group);

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Nominating Committee for the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as needed; and

To request that the Church Council transmit the following slate of nominees to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly:

Churchwide Nominating Committee

Group 1: Lay Woman (Region 1)

1. Ms. Carolyn Beth Adams, Southwestern Washington Synod (1C)
2. Ms. Kasey Miranda Schultz, Northwest Washington Synod (1B)

Group 2: Lay Woman (Region 2)

1. Ms. Diane L. Brauer, Rocky Mountain Synod (2E)
2. Ms. Karen Michele McClain, Southwest California Synod (2B)

Group 3: Lay Woman (Region 3)

1. Ms. Kristine Kay BJORKE, Minneapolis Area Synod (3G)
2. Ms. Kathy Fick, Eastern North Dakota Synod (3B)

Group 4: Lay Woman (Region 4)

1. Ms. Elizabeth Ann Dieringer, Southwestern Texas Synod (4E)
2. Ms. Susan Humphrey, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C)

Group 5: Lay Woman (Region 6 or 9)

1. Ms. Ginger Mildred Cutrell, Southeastern Synod (9D)
2. Ms. Jillian Marie Russell, Northwestern Ohio Synod (6D)

Group 6: Lay Man (Region 8)

1. Mr. Kevin D. Anderson, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G)
2. Mr. John Henderson, Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F)

Group 7: Rostered Minister (Region 1)

1. The Rev. Susan Marie Halvor, Alaska Synod (1A)
2. The Rev. Martin Wells, Northwest Intermountain Synod (1D)

Group 8: Rostered Minister (Region 2 or 8)

1. The Rev. Nicole Raddu Ferry, Rocky Mountain Synod (2E)
2. [to be determined]

Group 9: Rostered Minister (Region 5, member of historically underrepresented group)

1. The Rev. Anthony Acompanado, Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J)
2. The Rev. Lukas E. Harris-Ferree, Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A)

19. CONSOLIDATING PROPOSED CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

Background:

It was judged that combining proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* that were approved separately in November 2024 would be more convenient for the Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council action:

To combine CC24.11.14 and CC24.11.19 for consideration by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to now read:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

To adopt, *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, certain amendments recommended by the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church to the Articles of Incorporation and *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, and other amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make appropriate changes in the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations* congruent with the ELCA Constitution as amended.