



## Summary of Church Council Meeting April 3–6, 2025

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met in Chicago April 3–6, 2025.

### The Church Council took action on the following:

- Received the final report and recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) and acted on the following in response to the CRLC's recommendations:
  - Expressed gratitude to God and to the members of the CRLC for the commission's work
  - Authorized the Executive Committee of the Church Council to consult with the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD) Advisory Team to review their purpose and tasked them with creating an ELCA handbook that would include recommendations for DEIA standards for congregations
  - Directed the Office of the Secretary to explore collaboration with this church's full communion partners to develop processes for conflict resolution that would be independent of the churchwide organization
  - Requested that the Committee on Appeals develop resources to help synods identify candidates with demonstrated competencies in working with persons of varied ethnic backgrounds to serve on synod consultation committees
  - Voted to establish a Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose to assess this church's Statements of Purpose, current governance structure, and how governance structures have or may have perpetuated systemic inequities, as well as to recommend changes to the current synod structure
  - Authorized the Executive Committee to create a Financial Coordinating Task Force to review existing ELCA financial management resources; explore greater collaboration and shared financial processes among the financial functions of the three expressions; and encourage greater collaboration among the financial separately incorporated ministries
  - Encouraged rostered ministers, congregations, and synods to identify and share existing resources on congregational management and governance resources
  - Affirmed the vocation of ministers of Word and Service and encouraged congregations and synods to provide education about the role of ministers of Word and Service and the varied contexts in which they serve
  - Adopted a continuing resolution establishing an Association of Synod Vice Presidents
- Recommended that the 2025 Churchwide Assembly:
  - Adopt the proposed social statement, *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All*
  - Adopt proposed editorial changes to the social statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, in response to the memorial, "Reconsideration of Social Statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*"
  - Receive the 2024 Lutheran-Orthodox "Common Statement on the *Filioque*"
  - Adopt additional bylaw amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* to allow for exchangeability of deacons with certain full communion partners and to establish additional standards for rostered ministers
  - Adopt the "Rules of Organization and Procedure" for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly
  - Approve churchwide organization budget proposals for 2026–2028
  - Archive certain social policy resolutions
- Revised the 2025 current fund spending authorization downward by \$2.5 million to \$65,375,000
- Approved addition of a definition of "hate group" to Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline
- Adopted continuing resolution amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* that relate to the churchwide organization
- Received reports and approved actions related to the following Churchwide Assembly actions and synod resolutions:
  - "Specialized Ministries and On-Leave-from-Call Status" (*affirmed the recommendations of the Task Force on On-Leave-from-Call and Specialized Ministries*)
  - "Fortifying Urban Ministries" (*affirmed the recommendations of the Fortifying Urban Ministries Task Force*)
  - "Land Back" (*received the report from the churchwide organization and urged churchwide organization staff to support ELCA Indigenous Ministries*)
  - "Concurrent Call of Pastors by More than One Congregation" (*requested consideration of possible constitutional amendments to be brought to the 2028 Churchwide Assembly*)

- “Greenhouse Gas Reduction” (*affirmed the work of the Creation Care Network to engage in creation care and environmental advocacy*)
- “Enhancing the Call Process” (*declined to create and implement a procedure to allow congregations to review statements from potential candidates for called positions*)
- “Full Funding for Churchwide Ministries” (*encouraged churchwide organization staff to support diverse ministries*)
- Approved a one-year experiment in selected synods to finalize changes to the proposed revisions to the candidacy process
- Appointed the Elections Committee for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly
- Appointed members to Church Council committees for 2025–2028
- Elected Church Council committee chairs
- Named the slate of nominees and associated restrictions for the churchwide Nominating Committee for election by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly
- Elected or re-elected members of the boards of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University
- Approved minutes of the Fall 2024 meeting of the Church Council and ratified actions taken by the Executive Committee of the Church Council

**The Church Council received/engaged in the following:**

- Update on diversity triennial percentage goals
- Update on the God’s Love Made Real initiative
- Progress report from the Educational Debt Task Force
- Update on the Church Property Resource Hub
- Primer on the role of the Church Council at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly
- Reports from the home areas and teams of the churchwide organization
- Reports and updates from officers and committees of the Church Council
- Report from the chair of the Conference of Bishops
- Racial justice and gender justice education
- Reports from the separately incorporated ministries (Portico Benefit Services, Augsburg Fortress, ELCA Foundation, Mission Investment Fund, and Women of the ELCA)
- Presentations by advisory members of the Church Council concerning their ministries and associations
- Personal reflections on faith from council members
- Recognized the service of Church Council members whose terms will end in August 2025
- Ecumenical greetings from The Episcopal Church, USA, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Moravian Church in America
- Worship, prayer, Bible study, and fellowship