

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
Oct. 2-3, 2025
Minneapolis, Minn
AGENDA

Participants

Voting Members

Pr. Lisa Ahlness	Ms. Olivia Martin-Call
Pr. Ryan Anderson	Mr. Mitch McCartney
Pr. Heather Brown	Mr. Joel Miller
Ms. Jamie Bruesehoff	Pr. CeCee Mills, Secretary-elect (<i>non-voting member</i>)
Pr. Leroy Cannon	Pr. Alvaro Nova
Mr. Ben Caseley	Ms. Deb Nyquist
Pr. Daniel Collins	Deacon Kari Olsen
Bp. Yehiel Curry, Presiding Bishop	Pr. Moses Penumaka
Ms. Lori Fedyk, Treasurer	Mr. Iván Perez
Ms. Sheena Foster	Ms. Linda Rivera (<i>excused</i>)
Mr. Hans Giller	Pr Ms. Terri Robertson (<i>excused in-person</i>)
Ms. Jessi Grieser	Pr. Barbara Rossing
Ms. Pat Harper	Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, Secretary
Ms. Deidre Hayes	Ms. Spencer Sanders
Ms. Kristy Henriksen	Mr. Matt Schur
Mr. Tim Hiller	Mr. Imran Siddiqui, Vice President
Pr. Chad Huebner (<i>excused</i>)	Mr. Andrew Stevens
Bp. Deborah Hutterer, Acting Chair, COB	Ms. Jillian Stierwalt
Mr. Rindra Josoa	Ms. Jennifer Trom
Mr. Moses Kavishe	Mr. Christopher Vergara
Pr. Gwendolyn King	Ms. Emma Witt

Liaison Bishops

Bp. Meggan Manlove, Region 1	Bp. Suzanne Dillahun, Region 6
Bp. Brenda Bos, Region 2	Bp. Christopher deForest, Region 7
Bp. Craig Schweitzer, Region 3	Bp. Bill Gohl, Region 8
Bp. Scott Johnson, Region 4	Bp. Kevin Strickland, Region 9
Bp. Amy Current, Region 5	

Resource People

Operations: Office of the Presiding Bishop

Pr. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration
Mr. Aaron Cooper, senior director, strategic communications
Ms. Jennifer DeLeon, director for racial justice
Pr. Ernie Hinojosa, associate executive for vision
Pr. Louise Johnson, executive for vision
Ms. Rhondean Johnson, executive, human resources and diversity, equity and inclusion
Ms. Kathryn Lohre, executive, ecumenical and inter-religious relations
Ms. Mary Streufert, executive, theological discernment
Deacon John Weit, executive, worship
Ms. Rachel Wind, executive, development

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
Ms. Jodi Slattery, executive, governance

Christian Community and Leadership (CCL)

Pr. Sara Cutter, interim executive director

Service and Justice (SJ)

Pr. Khader El-Yateem, executive director

Innovation (INO)

Ms. Rahel Mwitula-Williams, interim executive director

Press

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, public relations manager

Separately Incorporated Ministries

Mr. Tim Blevins, president and CEO, Augsburg Fortress Publishers
Mr. Andrew DeYoung, president-elect and CEO-elect, Augsburg Fortress Publishers
Ms. Jennifer Hockenbery, interim executive director, Women of the ELCA
Mr. Christopher Johnson, president and CEO, Portico Benefit Services
Ms. Eva Roby, president and CEO, Mission Investment Fund
Ms. Annette Shoemaker, interim president and CEO, ELCA Foundation

Ecumenical Guest

Pr. Deborah Jackson, The Episcopal Church (*online*)

Advisory Members

Pr. Alejandro Mejia, president, Latino Ministries Association
Pr. Joan Conroy, president, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association
Mr. Ryan LaHurd, president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
Ms. Desta Goehner, president, Association of White Lutherans for Racial Justice
Pr. Bimen Limbong, president, Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders
Pr. Jesse W Brown Jr, president, African Descent Lutheran Association
Ms. Aubrey Thonvold, executive director, ReconcilingWorks

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2025

- 12:00 p.m. Lunch for new Church Council member orientation, Symphony I
- 1:00 p.m. New Church Council member orientation, Symphony II (*see separate agenda*)
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner, Symphony I
- 7:00 p.m. Executive Committee, Symphony II

Thursday, Oct. 2, 2025

- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast, Symphony I
- 8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer, Conrad B/C
Installation of the newly elected Church Council members

PLENARY SESSION ONE

Symphony III
Oct. 2, 2025
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 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.B.1 Presentation of Welcome Gift from Latino Ministries Association

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

This is an opportunity to ask questions on the written reports provided by the vice president, secretary, and acting chair of the Conference of Bishops, approximately 20 minutes is allotted.

I.D Report from the Administrative Team

15-minute Recess

I.E Unfinished Business from 2025 Churchwide Assembly

At the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, there were three memorials that were not considered by the assembly. In accordance with the Churchwide Assembly Rules of Organization and Procedure, “upon adjournment of the Churchwide Assembly, all remaining unfinished items of business shall be referred to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for disposition.” (p. 6)

The three memorials to be considered are C2: Update the Social Statement on Abortion, C8: Social Message on Rural Life and Ministry, and D1: Justice for Palestinians and Israelis. The full text of the memorials and the background responses are [here](#).

I.E.1 C2: Update the Social Statement on Abortion

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Northern Illinois Synod on updating the social statement on *Abortion* (1991) or to create a new social statement on this issue;

To re-affirm the theological and ethical teachings of the social statement on *Abortion* and its study guide because of its attention to complexity and nuance and its continued use in discernment and conversation;

To encourage study of recent resources such as the book *ReEngaging ELCA Social Teaching on Abortion* by Caryn D. Riswold (Augsburg Fortress, 2024) that analyzes the foundations and contemporary applications of this social statement;

To refer the memorial to churchwide organization staff members of Theological Ethics and Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment to develop additional study resources to address the concerns expressed in this memorial;

To decline at this time the request to update, revise, or create a new social statement on *Abortion*; and

To direct that the ELCA Church Council authorize the development of a social policy resolution that applies the ELCA statement on *Abortion* to the challenging personal struggles and pastoral issues brought about because some social conditions have changed since 1991.

I.E.2 C8: Social Message on Rural Life and Ministry

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Montana Synod for development of a new social message on the challenges facing rural, remote communities, and sovereign Tribal Nations, and gifts provided by ministry in rural and remote contexts;

To direct Theological Discernment staff in the ELCA churchwide organization to review the request for a new social message on rural, remote communities, and sovereign Tribal Nations and bring a recommendation to the ELCA Church Council no later than the Spring 2026 meeting on what means should be authorized to address the questions involved; and

To direct Christian Community and Leadership staff in the ELCA churchwide organization to assess available resources on rural congregations and communities and to provide a report and recommendation for resource development to the ELCA Church Council no later than Fall 2026.

I.E.3 D1: Justice for Palestinians and Israelis

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To receive with gratitude the memorial on "Justice for Palestinians and Israelis" from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod;

To reaffirm this church's commitment, set forth in the social statement *For Peace in God's World* (1995), to serve as a reconciling presence, including through promoting respect for human rights, particularly for "groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children";

To lament the trauma experienced by Palestinians and Israelis and encourage congregations to recognize and respond to the need to confess shared responsibility for the suffering;

To reaffirm this church's sense of urgency for ongoing advocacy, awareness, and accompaniment through the Sumud initiative;

To request that the Service and Justice unit, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, implement the recommendations in the memorial for continuing accompaniment, awareness-raising, and advocacy efforts to end the Israeli occupation in Palestine, to stop the unconditional supply of weapons and military aid to Israel, and to support and participate fully in the restoration of infrastructure in the Gaza Strip; and

To request that the Service and Justice unit provide a report to the Church Council at its Spring 2026 meeting.

I.F. Report of the Executive Committee

I.F.1 Ratification of appointments to committees

At its April 2025 meeting, the Church Council ratified the appointments of the continuing members of Church Council for its five standing committees: Budget and Finance; Christian Community and Leadership; Faith, Society, and Innovation; Legal and Constitutional Review; and Service and Justice. [CC25.04.24c]

Following the elections at the Churchwide Assembly, newly elected Church Council members indicated their committee preferences. At its September 2025 meeting, the Executive Committee completed its review of the requests and recommended ratification by the Church Council during the first plenary session of its October 2025 meeting. The committee assignments are [here](#).

New members of the Board Development Committee and Resource Development Committee will be approved by the Executive Committee during its November 2025 meeting. Appointments for the Audit Committee will come through the Budget and Finance Committee for Church Council approval.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To ratify the appointments to the Church Council standing committees for the 2025-2028 triennium.

I.F.2 Church Council Member Interaction with Synods

Since its November 2005 meeting, the Church Council has committed itself to building relationships between the churchwide organization and synods, congregations, and related institutions, organizations, and ministries at the beginning of the triennium.

Previously, the expenses for Church Council members to attend synod council meetings and synod assemblies were reimbursed by the churchwide organization. Due to budget constraints, this is no longer feasible.

Church Council members are encouraged to engage with their synods whenever possible and commit to doing so.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To acknowledge the commitment of the Church Council to have greater interaction of members of the Church Council with synod councils and synod assemblies in their respective areas; and

To encourage members of the Church Council to accept this responsibility and interact with their own synods in various ways.

I.F.3 Election Process for Executive Committee At-Large Positions

At the first meeting after the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council elects members to at-large positions to the Executive Committee. In addition to the four officers of this church and the chair of the Conference of Bishops, eight members of the Church Council will serve on this committee for the 2025-2028 triennium.

To facilitate its work between regular meetings by ensuring input and perspective from each of its standing committees, the chairs of those committees are elected to the Executive Committee. This was acted upon at the April 2025 Church Council meeting [CC25.04.24d2].

The remaining three members of the Executive Committee will be selected through the following process.

- a. The first ballot shall be a nominating ballot for each of the following identified categories:
 - 1). Rostered Man from Class of 2031 (one position). Vote for only one eligible nominee.
 - 2). Lay Man from Class of 2031 (one position). Vote for only one eligible nominee.
 - 3). Lay Person (one position). Vote for only one eligible nominee.
- b. Anyone wishing to withdraw may do so prior to the established deadline.
- c. The second ballot for the first two categories shall be conducted first. Each ticket shall be limited to the two people (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of nominations on the ballot who have not withdrawn. The one candidate on each ticket receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be elected.
- d. The second ballot for the third category shall list all remaining eligible lay persons who have not withdrawn. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected.
- e. Upon completion of the balloting, the Executive Committee shall be deemed constituted.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

To affirm the process for the election of the Executive Committee for the 2025-2028 triennium.

I.G Personal Reflection on Faith

12:00 p.m. Lunch, Symphony I
Committees meet separately

3:00 p.m. ***Deadline for Removal of Items from En Bloc
Deadline for New Business***

PLENARY SESSION TWO

Symphony III
Oct. 2, 2025
3:00 – 5:30 p.m.

II.A Cultural Competency/Justice through Faith Education

At its November 2023 meeting, Church Council voted to “intentionally participate in racial justice education when it gathers.” [CC23.11.18] Later at the April 2025 meeting, council committed itself “to continue to work on cultural competency training at every official meeting of the Church Council.” [CC25.04.04]

Jennifer DeLeon, director of racial justice ministries, and Mary Streufert, executive of theological discernment, will facilitate a 30-minute session to frame the council’s responsibilities and how this church’s commitments to justice are rooted in faith.

II.B Update from ELCA Vision Team

The ELCA Vision Team, led by Pr. Louise Johnson, executive for vision, and Pr. Ernie Hinojosa, associate executive for vision, will present a 20-minute update.

II.C First Ballot for Executive Committee At-Large Member Positions

15-minute Recess

II.D Report of the Executive Committee

I.D.1 Interim Appointment of Executive for Administration *(executive session for Church Council, Secretary-elect, Executive for Human Resources and DEI, Liaison Bishops, and Minutes Team)*

In accordance with ELCA continuing resolution 15.12.A25., the Executive for Administration serves coterminous with the term of the presiding bishop. The Rev. Wyvetta Bullock’s current term ends on Sept. 30. Presiding bishop Yehiel Curry is recommending an interim full-time appointment for this position until the search process begins, and a new person is identified.

CC ACTION

Recommended:

[To be provided during executive session]

I.D.2 Updates on certain Church Council actions

The Church Council acted on a number of recommendations from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. The Executive Committee is responsible for following up as needed on these actions. This is an opportunity to hear updates on the following matters:

- *Appointment of members to the Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose* ([CC25.04.07](#)): This task force has several directives for its work, including:
 - 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;
- 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;

In addition, the Churchwide Assembly referred three memorials to this task force:

1. B1: Accompaniment and Accountability of Bishops
2. B6: Legal Action in Support of ELCA Communities
3. B7: Congregation Constitutions

The task force will make periodic progress reports to the Executive Committee and present a report and recommendations to the Fall 2027 Church Council meeting.

- *Addition of a timeline to “immediate action on dismantling racism” response* ([CC25.04.04](#)): At its April 2025 meeting, the Church Council acted on a recommendation from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church titled “Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism,” 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.” [CC25.04.04]

In addition, the 2025 Churchwide Assembly voted to direct the Church Council “to add a timeline to its actions taken in response to CRLC Recommendation 1 and to provide progress updates to this church with a final report by Fall 2027, including possible constitutional changes, and to recommend that if this work is not accomplished by Fall 2027, the Church Council consider calling a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the governing documents of this church.” [CA25.02.08]

The Church Council will discuss a timeline to consider for action at its November meeting.

- *Deferment of consideration of ELCA Name Change* ([CC24.11.20u](#)): At its November 2024 meeting, the Church Council received a response from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church regarding the complexities surrounding the question of whether the denomination name, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,” should be changed. The council voted to defer consideration until after the 2025 Churchwide Assembly when at such time a task force may be authorized to address the matter.

II.E Greetings from ecumenical and international guests

II.F Personal Reflection on Faith

II.G Elections Report: First Ballot for Executive Committee At-Large Positions

II.H Announcements

6:30 p.m. *Deadline to remove name from Executive Committee ballots*

6:30 p.m. Dinner, Symphony I

Friday, Oct. 3, 2025

8:00 a.m. Breakfast, Symphony I

PLENARY SESSION THREE

Symphony III

Oct. 3, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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

III.B Second Ballot for Executive Committee Certain At-Large Member Positions

III.C Report from the Treasurer

III.D 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. Any *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.

III.E Elections Report: Second Ballot for Executive Committee Certain At-Large Positions

15-minute Recess

III.F Second Ballot for Executive Committee Third Category At-Large Member Position

III.G 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. Any *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.H Debrief of 2025 Churchwide Assembly

Adam DeHoek, senior director for Research and Evaluation, will provide a 20-minute overview of the preliminary survey results from the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Time is allotted for questions. A comprehensive written report will be provided at the November Church Council meeting.

III.I Elections Report: Second Ballot for Executive Committee Third Category At-Large Member Position

III.J Personal Reflection on Faith

III.K Announcements and Table Grace

12:00 p.m. Lunch, Symphony I

PLENARY SESSION FOUR

Symphony III
Oct. 3, 2025
2:00 – 3:45 p.m.

IV.A Brief reports from other committees

During this 40-minute agenda time, the following reports will be provided by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, 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. Any *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.

IV.B New Business

IV.C Consideration of Items Removed from *En Bloc*

IV.D *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

Recommended:

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

IV.E Personal Reflection on Faith

IV.F Evaluation and Debriefing

IV.G Rehearsal Information for Church Council Role in Installation

Deacon John Weit, executive for worship, will provide information about the Church Council role in the [installation of the presiding bishop](#). Holy Communion with installation will be held on Saturday, Oct. 4 at 2 pm.

IV.H Announcements

Adjournment

4:00 p.m. Executive Committee, Symphony III

6:30 p.m. Dinner, Symphony I

Saturday, Oct 4

9 – 11 a.m. Brunch available, Minneapolis Grand Ballroom Salon EFG

2:00 p.m. Holy Communion with Installation, Central Lutheran

4:00 p.m. Public Reception, Central Lutheran (*follows worship*)

6:00 p.m. Banquet Reception, Minneapolis Grand Ballroom Foyer

6:30 p.m. Banquet in honor of Presiding Bishop Curry, Minneapolis Grand Ballroom Salon EFG
(*invitation only*)