




Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

November 16, 2016

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 of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Administrative Team of the churchwide organization
 Chief executive officers of separately incorporated ministries
 Seminary presidents
 Regional coordinators

FROM:  The Rev. Wm Chris Boefger, secretary

SUBJECT: Report of Church Council Responses to Synod Resolutions
 and Churchwide Assembly Actions (Nov. 10-13, 2016)

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I. RESPONSES TO SYNOD RESOLUTIONS

A. Campus Ministry

Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2016]

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod in assembly encourages its congregations to pray frequently for ELCA Lutheran Campus Ministries in Iowa; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations of the Southeastern Iowa Synod are encouraged to invite the students and staff of ELCA Lutheran Campus Ministries to worship with them and to tell them about the impact of their ministries on campus; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregational leaders, members and staff in the Southeastern Iowa Synod are encouraged to visit ELCA Lutheran Campus Ministry sites to express support to and also become familiar with its staff, students and ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations of the Southeastern Iowa Synod be encouraged to include ELCA Campus Ministries in Iowa in their annual budgets as an outreach above and beyond mission support to synod and churchwide ministries, and/or provide opportunities for members to make annual special gifts and offerings to ELCA campus ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations are asked to notify ELCA campus ministries of the names of their member students who are attending their respective universities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly directs the Southeastern Iowa Synod Council to request the Church Council to lift up the importance of campus ministries throughout the ELCA, and explore ways to reverse the trend of decreasing financial support toward the important work they do in partnership with, and on behalf of, Christ and His Church.

Executive Committee action [EC16.06.19a]

To receive the resolution from the Southeastern Iowa Synod concerning the importance of campus ministry;

To refer the resolution to the Domestic Mission unit for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

The Domestic Mission unit is working in close partnership with the board of the newly created, Lutheran Campus Ministry Network (LuMin), to lift up the importance and the visibility of campus ministries across the church. The Domestic Mission unit supports the work of LuMin with an annual partnership grant. The program director for campus ministry also serves on the LuMin board.

A comprehensive review and revision of ELCA Campus Ministry Policies and Procedures, last revised by the Church Council in 2006, is currently underway. The goal is to replace this document with an updated resource that describes the current context for campus ministry and defines the interdependent nature of this ministry within the life of the ELCA, including congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. The Domestic Mission unit anticipates completion of this resource during 2017, with a report back to the Church Council in November 2017.

The Domestic Mission unit also notes that churchwide financial support and staffing for the campus ministry program has remained steady for the past six years. Over the past several years, many campus ministry agencies have been reporting declining financial support from synod budgets. The Southeastern Iowa Synod resolution provides a good model for synods and their congregations to reconnect with the campus ministries in their area. Significant efforts have been made over the past several years to equip campus ministry boards and staff with new knowledge and tools to help them expand their levels of financial support among alumnae, friends and supporting congregations.

Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude the response from the Domestic Mission unit;

To anticipate a revised ELCA Campus Ministry Policies and Procedures at the November 2017 Church Council meeting; and

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

B. Immigration

New Jersey Synod (7A) [2016]

RESOLVED, that the congregations of the New Jersey Synod become aware of the needs of unaccompanied migrant children and strengthen this church's ministry among, with and for the most vulnerable of newcomers, and to continue to advocate for immigration, refugee and asylum laws that are fair and generous; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod congregations advocate for appropriate legal representation for children and families fleeing violence and war by communicating with our elected officials; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod encourage the ELCA in assembly to encourage all congregations to advocate for laws and policies that protect children and people fleeing persecution and address the situation of migrants in transit.

The New Jersey Synod reported the resolution as "Resolution referred through the Synod Council to the Church Council."

Executive Committee action [EC16.06.19b]

To receive the resolution from the New Jersey Synod concerning immigration;

To refer the resolution to the Domestic Mission unit for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

The adoption of the AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) strategy at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly increases the capacity of AMMPARO staff to connect with ELCA synods to create greater awareness of the needs of unaccompanied children and how congregations can strengthen their ministries with them. Staff has been in contact with the New Jersey Synod and will have further conversation in order to develop a plan to work with congregations on accompaniment, advocacy and awareness-building. New materials will be created in the first quarter of 2017 for congregations and synods, in addition to the materials that are already available. For more information about unaccompanied children from Central America, please visit the AMMPARO page (www.ELCA.org/ammparo).

As part of this capacity-building effort, ELCA Advocacy (www.ELCA.org/advocacy) and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (www.LIRS.org) will continue to connect congregations to advocate for immigration, refugee resettlement and asylum laws that are fair and generous. Faith leaders can go to LIRS's Action Center and ELCA Advocacy's web pages and take action to advocate for laws and policies that protect children, their families and others fleeing persecution.

Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude the response from the Domestic Mission unit;

To encourage congregations to advocate for laws and policies that protect children and other people fleeing persecution;

To commend the ministry that is being done through the AMMPARO strategy to address the situation of migrants in transit; and

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

C. Supporting a Proposed U.S. Constitutional Amendment Stating That Corporations Are Not People and Money Is Not Speech

Florida-Bahamas Synod (9E) [2015]

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod welcome the action of the Interfaith Caucus of Move to Amend and its partners and affiliates in seeking to educate congregations and ministries across the synod so that our members may more fully engage in civic responsibilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Florida-Bahamas Synod in Assembly direct the Synod Council to request the Church Council of the ELCA to give focus to this issue.

Executive Committee action [EC16.06.19c]

To receive the resolution from the Florida-Bahamas Synod concerning action of the Interfaith Caucus of Move to Amend;

To refer the resolution to the Domestic Mission unit, in consultation with legal counsel in the Office of the Secretary, for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit and Office of the Secretary (November 2016)

The Domestic Mission unit, in consultation with the ELCA general counsel, recommends against endorsing the goal of the “Move to Amend” Interfaith Caucus to support a constitutional amendment that states “Only human beings, not corporations, are endowed with constitutional rights.” Seeking to amend the Constitution of the United States is not the appropriate or necessary means to address the concerns raised in the resolution. In addition, such an amendment could impinge upon the freedom of the ELCA, its congregations and related agencies to advocate or speak publicly on issues of importance. The Domestic Mission unit addresses the issue of money in politics through the advocacy ministry of the ELCA Washington Office and state advocacy offices, in an ongoing response to the Social Policy Resolution U.S. Election Campaign Finance Reform [CA95.07.67]. The ELCA Washington Office continues to provide leadership in the “Faithful Democracy” coalition, which focuses on campaign finance reform, evaluates policy riders that would further exacerbate the role of money in politics and evaluates legislative packages.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit, in consultation with legal counsel in the Office of the Secretary;

To decline to endorse the goal of the “Move to Amend” Interfaith Caucus to support a constitutional amendment that states “only human beings, not corporations, are endowed with constitutional rights”;

To commend the ELCA Washington Office and state advocacy offices in their continued efforts to address the issue of money in politics; and

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

D. Thrivent Choice Neutrality Policy

Southeast Michigan Synod (6A) [2016]

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod meeting in assembly ask Bishop Donald P. Kreiss to contact Thrivent Financial for Lutherans on the behalf of this synod and urge Thrivent to allow for individual freedom and choice in supporting charitable giving without restriction; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly ask the bishop and its Synod Council to communicate with the ELCA Church Council and presiding bishop, expressing the disappointment of this synod with Thrivent’s current practice regarding Choice Dollars and requesting that the ELCA Church Council and presiding bishop advocate to have the current practice regarding Choice Dollars discontinued and allow for individual freedom and choice.

Executive Committee action [EC16.06.19d]

To receive the resolution from the Southeast Michigan Synod concerning Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Choice Dollars;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution 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 Presiding Bishop (November 2016)

Thrivent is an independent corporation with its own governing board and has all but dropped its church body relationships. It has changed the former Church Relations Church and Community Engagement unit including a new name and adding a new director. Synodical relations staff of the Office of the Presiding Bishop is trying to establish communication with the new director and new unit, and it plans to report results in Spring 2017.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and to request that a report be received by the April 2017 Church Council meeting; and

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

E. Photovoltaics (PV) for Phebe Hospital in Liberia

Northwest Minnesota Synod (3D) [2016]

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod in assembly recommit to the resolution passed in 2015 in support of the PV for Phebe project; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod in assembly encourage the intentional effort of each congregation throughout the synod to raise awareness and funding for this project in the month of August in the years 2016 and 2017; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwestern Minnesota Synod in assembly direct the Northwestern Minnesota Synod Council to forward this resolution to the ELCA Church Council, encouraging it to find ways to support PV for Phebe or other similar projects by urging synods and congregations to support such projects with their companion synods.

Executive Committee action [EC16.06.19e]

To receive the resolution from the Northwestern Minnesota Synod concerning Photovoltaics for Phebe Hospital in Liberia;

To refer the resolution to the Global Mission unit for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Global Mission unit (November 2016)

The Global Mission unit continues to work with the Women of the ELCA to coordinate the fundraising effort to bring solar power to Phebe Hospital in Liberia. To date, approximately \$300,000 has been raised. A Global Mission staff member in Liberia, who has an engineering background, is liaising with the Rural Renewal Energy Alliance for the planning and implementation phases of this project which will begin once the required funds (\$350,000 to meet the matching grant conditions) have been received.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Global Mission unit;

To affirm the response of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly [CA16.02.03i] related to “Supporting Mission Phebe Hospital through Photovoltaics”;

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

F. “Find a Congregation” Feature on the ELCA Website

Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2016]

RESOLVED, that [the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly direct] the Synod Council [to] request the Church Council’s Executive Committee to:

- Eliminate access to parochial reports through the “Find a Congregation” feature. Make this information accessible in a research area, as opposed to an area trafficked by likely visitors to a congregation; and

Create a different template for the snapshot profile that would include information essential for a prospective visitor, such as contact information, address, website, worship times, accessibility, language and average weekly worship attendance. This template should also include qualitative data, such as a congregation’s mission statement, self-identified strengths of the congregation and a photo. This information could be gathered through a revised parochial report.

Executive Committee action [EC16.08.22e]

To receive the resolution from the Lower Susquehanna Synod concerning the “Find a Congregation” feature on the ELCA website;

To refer the resolution to the Mission Advancement unit, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization units, for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention; and
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Response from the Mission Advancement unit (November 2016)

In the coming year, the Strategic Communications team in the Mission Advancement unit expects to consider the requests identified in this resolution along with other digital media matters. Mission Advancement will continue to consult with other churchwide organization units and offices. We expect to bring a report to the Church Council at the end of 2017 or early 2018.

Church Council action:

**To receive the response from the Mission Advancement unit and to anticipate a report no later than the April 2018 Church Council meeting; and
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

G. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2016]

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Assembly encourage the congregations of the synod to engage in thoughtful and prayerful study of the United Nation's "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" goals and consider activities in the light of that study and to inform the synod bishop annually on their progress in study and responses for the next five years; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Assembly direct the bishop of the synod to forward this resolution to other synod bishops in the ELCA and encourage them to promote and engage in similar processes; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Assembly direct the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and possible action.

Executive Committee action [EC16.08.22f]

To receive the resolution from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod concerning United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;

To refer the resolution to the Domestic Mission unit, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization units, for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

National governments are the primary implementers of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the assistance of civil society (including faith-based organizations) and the private sector as well as national parliaments, regional and local authorities, academia and volunteer groups. Governments will submit voluntary national reviews that will assess progress toward each goal, based on globally-agreed indicators, and identify challenges that will inform recommendations for follow-up at various levels of government.

The Domestic Mission unit consulted with the Global Mission unit concerning this resolution. Global Mission will address the resolution by focusing on efforts to promote the SDGs at various workshops and companion project visits. Global Mission is reviewing the proposals and concept notes with SDGs lens and encourage companions to engage with other stakeholders during planning and implementation. For now, the priority is for companions to be aware of SDGs and find ways to align their resources to meet those goals that they prioritize through their work. Depending on their capacity, some companions have already started to indicate what goals they intend to address through their programs. Staff of the Lutheran Office for World Community, part of the Global Mission unit, attend the annual U.N. meeting where the reviews are presented as well as share findings from the Secretary-General's reports.

Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude the response from the Domestic Mission and Global Mission units;

**To encourage the Global Mission unit to promote the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at workshops and companion project visits; and
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

H. Current American Political Discourse

Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2016]

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in assembly rejects the public expressions of hatred, fear and bigotry being made during current political campaigns and encourages national and local leaders to boldly, unequivocally and responsibly embrace the values of compassion, honor, respect, cooperation and compromise that are the heart and soul of America; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Assembly direct the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Church Council and to relevant local and national political organizations for consideration and possible action.

Executive Committee action [EC16.08.22g]

To receive the resolution from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod concerning Current American Political Discourse;

To refer the resolution to the Domestic Mission unit, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization units, for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

The ELCA values public discourse that is conducted with civility and fairness. The ELCA social statement “The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective” (1991) reads: “Christians need to be concerned for the methods and the content of public deliberation.”

In September 2016, the ELCA addressed the substance of this resolution by endorsing standards of conduct for the U.S. presidential debates. The standards proposed by the National Institute for Civil Discourse expect candidates to demonstrate respect of others in speech and behavior and make ideas and feelings known without intentionally disrespecting others. Standards for the audience include, when faced with incivility, speaking against it by reminding candidates it is not acceptable. Moderators are expected to hold candidates accountable by challenging each candidate to speak the truth and act with integrity.

The support for debate standards was shared in a press release that included quotes from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, who addressed civic discourse in her May 2016 column for *Living Lutheran* magazine. She emphasized that “political speech that doesn’t ensure that the ‘other’ is treated with the same respect and care that we would wish for our own brother or sister or father or mother is not what God intends for God’s beloved community.”

Following the 2016 election, ELCA Advocacy will continue the ELCAvotes campaign with a focus on civil discourse and healing after a contentious election season.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit;

To acknowledge the communication already made by ELCA Advocacy regarding appropriate political discourse;

To affirm the continued focus of the ELCAvotes campaign on civil discourse and healing after the 2016 election season;

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

II. RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

A. DEEPENING OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH HISTORIC BLACK CHURCHES

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorial to that assembly under category A3: Deepening Relationships with Historic Black Churches.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.03.05]

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Southwestern Texas Synod calling for Deepening Relationships with Historic Black Churches;

To refer the memorial to the presiding bishop and appropriate churchwide staff to develop a churchwide strategy for deepening relationships with Historic Black Churches in consultation with the African Descent Lutheran Association, Conference of Bishops, Church Council and ecumenical partners;

To encourage synod leaders to initiate and/or continue local efforts to strengthen and expand partnerships with Historic Black Churches in consultation with synod bishops, synod leaders of the African Descent Lutheran Association and synod members of the Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network; and

To encourage congregations to initiate and/or continue their efforts to strengthen and expand partnerships with Historic Black Churches.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2016)

Ecumenical and inter-religious relations staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop have carried out follow-up work with AME Zion Church partners following the Churchwide Assembly with the senior bishop, with the episcopal district bishops and with the general officers who were present in New Orleans. This work has included sharing our gratitude for our partnership and the presence of these leaders, and affirming our desire for next steps. Further relationship-building with the bishops, building upon the 2010 Statement of Mission, will be important work.

Staff have also met with the new President of the AME Council of Bishops, Bishop John White, at his office in Chicago to explore next steps in re-engaging the bilateral partnership. Information about the discourse from the 1990s and early 2000s is being prepared and will be shared with the president and the new Ecumenical Bishop Frank Reid III. Bishop Eaton has invited both Bishop White and Bishop Reid to participate in a joint AME-ELCA Epiphany service with the Conference of Bishops' Academy in Charleston, in January 2017.

Staff have confirmed a commitment to participate in the second annual cross-racial dialogue to be hosted by the Conference of National Black Churches in December 2016.

The ELCA continues to deepen its relationships with the Historic Black Churches at several ecumenical tables, especially those on racial justice and reconciliation: Churches Uniting in Christ (recognition of ministries/racial justice), the The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (mass incarceration), the World Council of Churches (living letters delegation on racism), and Christian Churches Together in the USA (racial justice and poverty).

These various streams of the ELCA strategy are a continuation of ongoing work.

In response to recent racial tensions and protests in Charlotte following the shooting death of Keith Scott, churchwide staff for racial justice and ethnic specific ministries partnered with the North Carolina Synod and its bishop and local ELCA and ecumenical leadership, including the synod's African Descent Strategy Team and AME Zion partners in North Carolina to host a day of conversation, presence in the community, and prayer in early October.

Before the spring 2017 Church Council meeting, Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop for ecumenical and inter-religious relations, will convene a conversation with these colleagues in order to strengthen work and partnerships:

- Program director for racial justice
- Director for ethnic specific and multicultural ministries
- President of the African Descent Lutheran Association
- Chair of the Conference of Bishops' Ecumenical & Inter-Religious Liaison Committee
- Church Council liaison

This initial meeting should include consideration for the history and current state of existing bilateral relations and coalition work. It should focus new energy on strengthening partnerships between ecumenical and inter-religious relations and the African Descent Lutheran Association leadership. It should give attention to identifying or developing resources that might be shared with synod bishops in order to encourage the actions related to synod leaders and congregations.

Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding the relationship-building already underway to deepen relationships with Historic Black Churches; and

To request a report to the April 2018 Church Council meeting on the development of a strategy to further this goal.

B. TOWARD A RESPONSIBLE ENERGY FUTURE

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category B3: Toward a Responsible Energy Future.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.06.30]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Saint Paul Area, Metropolitan New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Upper Susquehanna and Northwestern Pennsylvania synods related to climate change and fossil fuels;

To urge all ELCA members, congregations and synods to inform and educate themselves about the effects of climate change through the lens of the “Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice” social statement, and to advocate for policies that reduce energy use and our dependence on fossil fuels and encourage development of renewable energy sources as an expression of our commitment to address climate change and caring for God’s creation;

To affirm the action of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly and subsequent action of the Church Council in 2014 related to the development of revised or additional investment screens on fossil fuels, and to support and commend ELCA members, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and related institutions and agencies such as ELCA Endowment Fund and Portico Benefit Services for their leadership efforts to invest in companies that are taking steps toward a sustainable environment;

To affirm Portico’s balanced approach to supporting this church’s principles and directives as stated in the social statements — including the commitment to help transition to an economy less dependent on fossil fuels. That approach has included:

1. shareholder advocacy (filing and supporting resolutions on environmental issues, including 150 resolutions in 2015),
2. focused investment screening, which has identified 113 companies screened for environmental reasons, and
3. ramping up positive social investments, such as investments in companies that develop solar, wind and water power generation systems, repurposing waste products and reducing toxic emissions; and now

To call upon Portico to evaluate the viability of an optional fossil -free fund for retirement plan participants;

To call upon the ELCA to heed the call of the Lutheran World Federation Council in 2015 to member churches “not to invest in fossil fuels and to support energy efficiency and renewable energy companies, and to encourage their institutions and individual members to do likewise”;

As part of this church’s response to the Lutheran World Federation’s call, to request that the ELCA churchwide organization review the ELCA’s applicable social teachings and Corporate Social Responsibility policies and procedures, with the goal of not investing in, and removing the largest fossil fuel companies as identified by Carbon Tracker, and investing in corporations which are taking positive steps toward a sustainable environment;

To support the ELCA network of affiliated social ministry organizations with programs to address unemployment caused by changing patterns of fossil fuel use, to advocate for retraining workers — especially for renewable energy jobs, to advocate for programs that will support those in transition, and to encourage congregations and ministries to address the resulting unemployment and poverty; and

To urge ELCA members, congregations and synods to set measurable goals to reduce their consumption of fossil fuels and improve their stewardship of energy resources, transition to renewable energy sources and promote care for God’s creation.

Response from the Corporate Social Responsibility review team (November 2016)

At the request of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly, the Corporate Social Responsibility review team explored the ELCA social criteria environmental screen and the issue papers on the environment and climate change. All of the documents were updated, and the environmental screen added the language “certain fossil fuel companies” in the

definition of the problem which was approved by Church Council in November 2014. The issue papers were revised in November 2015. Since that time the Lutheran World Federation's call has been issued.

It is proposed that the Corporate Social Responsibility review team will do the following:

1. Review the relevant social teachings of the ELCA with assistance from the Theological Discernment Team.
2. Seek input from Lutheran World Federation as to the steps that organization has taken, plans to take and feedback received since adoption of the resolution.
3. Review the Corporate Social Responsibility policies and procedures to examine the best steps forward.
4. Review the status of 'Carbon Tracker' as an appropriate tool for identifying the largest fossil fuel companies, aided by Portico Benefit Services.
5. Take into consideration the Social Impact First investment program of Portico in light of the request for positive investments.
6. Seek input from partners such as Ceres and other research groups for additional information on assessing corporation's positive steps toward a sustainable environment which might be named as positive investments.
7. Seek input from the Endowment Fund, Mission Investment Fund and Portico to discern the feasibility of this goal and the impact on their work.

The Corporate Social Responsibility review team will meet regularly during 2017 to review the information discovered in the steps above and prepare an interim report for Church Council in November 2017. When this is completed, the Corporate Social Responsibility review team will meet to analyze and synthesize what has been discovered with the intention of presenting a brief report and recommendation to Church Council by April of 2018 with final work expected to be completed by November 2018.

Church Council action:

**To receive the response from the Corporate Social Responsibility review team on the timeline; and
To anticipate interim reports in November 2017 and April 2018 with a final report by the November 2018 Church Council meeting.**

C. INCREASED FUNDING FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION RESEARCH

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorial to that assembly under category B5: Increased Funding for Suicide Prevention Research.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03h]

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Southeastern Synod regarding Increased Funding for Suicide Prevention Research;

To affirm the commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in its social message on "Suicide Prevention" to call upon this church to advocate for efforts to prevent suicide;

To request that the presiding bishop communicate to the U.S. President and members of Congress the support of the ELCA for doubling, over five years, the federal funding to the National Institutes of Health for suicide prevention research; and

To encourage ELCA synods, congregations, members and the ELCA Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., to add their voices in support of such action.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

ELCA Advocacy has taken the lead for the Domestic Mission unit by consulting with the authors of the memorial to discuss the scope of work and opportunities for engagement. Advocacy staff are reaching out to the National Foundation for Suicide Prevention in Washington, D.C., to examine coalition engagement and funding priorities in the 115th Congress that begins January 2017. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton will be communicating the intent of the memorial to the Administration and members of Congress in consultation with the advocacy staff for the most effective timing. The authors of the memorial, in collaboration with ELCA Advocacy, are currently compiling a list of existing ELCA suicide prevention stakeholders to update their website to support advocacy efforts of congregations and members. A final report will be made in November 2017 following activity in the 115th Congress and engagement with the relevant congressional committees and leaders.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit on the timeline and to request that a report be received by the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

D. WELCOMING REFUGEES

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category B6: Welcoming Refugees.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.05.18]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Eastern Washington-Idaho, Metropolitan New York, Northwestern Pennsylvania and Southeastern synods regarding refugee resettlement;

To reaffirm the work of ELCA leaders and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in working to welcome refugees from across the globe;

To support bishops, pastors and other Lutheran leaders as they continue to call on members of Congress and state legislators to open their hearts to the suffering of refugees around the world and support legislative actions to welcome these newcomers to new communities;

To request that the presiding bishop communicate this church's commitment for the resettlement of refugees in the United States and encourage steadfast support for this program to the U.S. President and members of Congress;

To encourage and support all Lutherans in welcoming refugees by building awareness, volunteering, hosting refugees, speaking out against hate, advocating for a more generous U.S. response and observing Refugee Sunday, and to open up congregations, seminaries and all able Lutheran organizations to help house refugees; and

To request that units of the churchwide organization, in cooperation with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, provide easy access to resource materials for congregations to learn about and take part in ministries with refugees.

Response from Domestic Mission, Global Mission and Mission Advancement units (November 2016)

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton issued a statement, accompanied by a press release, on November 19, 2015 restating this church's commitment to supporting the resettlement of refugees in the United States. The statement specifically encourages members of this church to call upon elected officials to welcome refugees and provides a link to a relevant action alert by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). To bring light to the plight of refugees internationally, Bishop Eaton visited Syrian refugees at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Peace Oasis in the Zaatari refugee camp, Jordan. This visit was highlighted in Living Lutheran on January 25, 2016. All relevant units within the churchwide organization, working together with partners such as LIRS and LWF, continue to be committed to finding spaces where the presiding bishop's voice is crucial to bring attention to and support of refugees and their resettlement in the United States.

The Domestic Mission, Global Mission and Mission Advancement units, together with LIRS, are discerning the best way to provide easy access to resource materials for congregations to support refugees and their resettlement. Today, information about how the ELCA accompanies refugees abroad can be found in the Lutheran Disaster Response "Our Impact" page. More information can also be found in the ELCA Advocacy, and AMMPARO pages. Information about refugee resettlement can be found through LIRS. Congregations can find information about what they can do by going to www.LIRS.org/act.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit;

To encourage the Domestic Mission, Global Mission and Mission Advancement units to seek ways to promote easy access to refugee resettlement resources;

To commend the presiding bishop for speaking out on this church's commitment to resettling refugees; and

To encourage others to join the presiding bishop in continuing to express this church's commitment to this task.

E. GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category B12: Gun Violence Prevention.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Saint Paul Area and the Upper Susquehanna synods concerning legislation on background checks and gun violence;

To reaffirm this church's commitment to addressing the broad issues of violence in society through worship, education, service, advocacy and ongoing moral deliberation as called for in the 1994 social message on "Community Violence" and the 2013 Conference of Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Violence;

To reaffirm that ELCA social policy does not reject gun ownership or the recreational activities associated with guns as morally wrong;

To encourage bishops, pastors and Lutheran leaders to communicate with members of Congress and state legislators this church's long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales;

To urge bishops, pastors and Lutheran leaders to communicate to members of Congress and state legislators this church's sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (expired in 2004), including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013; and

To refer to the Church Council, in consultation with staff of the churchwide organization, consideration of the request for establishing an ELCA task force to organize actions consistent with ELCA policy that addresses gun violence prevention.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

The Domestic Mission unit addresses gun violence in a manner consistent with ELCA Social Policy through the education and advocacy work of ELCA Advocacy in the Washington, D.C., office and state advocacy ministries. For example, on July 8, 2016, ELCA Advocacy invited its network to take action through an alert on gun violence urging Congress to take action on gun safety. This action was in response to a call from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton to ELCA ministries and members to be present in their communities in the wake of violence.

Presiding Bishop Eaton will be working with the Public Policy Procedures Group (PPPG), which includes ELCA Advocacy staff and other colleagues, to determine the most effective timeline for communicating with members of Congress regarding "this church's sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013." This letter will also state "this church's long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales." Often when such a letter is sent, it is followed up with an ELCA Advocacy alert to its network to encourage others to write their own letters to members of Congress and state legislators.

The hope is that this work can be completed before the end of the 2016-2017 legislative session. This letter may also be timed with the work of state advocacy ministries, such as Faith Action Network, the ELCA advocacy ministry in Washington state, in their work to pass gun safety legislation (Extreme Risk Protection Order and Safe Gun Storage). The churchwide organization does not at this time have financial resources to devote to the work of a national task force "to organize actions consistent with ELCA policy that addresses gun violence prevention."

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit;

To decline to establish an ELCA task force addressing gun violence prevention;

To commend the ongoing efforts of the ELCA Advocacy in addressing gun violence in a manner congruent with this church's social teaching documents; and

To request that a follow-up report be provided to the April 2018 Church Council meeting.

F. PEACE WITH JUSTICE IN THE HOLY LAND

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category C1: Peace with Justice in the Holy Land.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.05.15]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Northwest Washington, Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, Rocky Mountain, Minneapolis Area, Southwestern Texas, Southeastern Iowa, South-Central Wisconsin, Southeast Michigan, Indiana-Kentucky, Metropolitan New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Upper Susquehanna and West Virginia-Western Maryland synods related to Israel and Palestine;

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to:

1. Continue its awareness-building, accompaniment, and advocacy on behalf of a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine;
2. Take steps to assist the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and other Christians in sustaining their endangered presence in the Holy Land;
3. Promote the economic empowerment of Palestinians, including investment in Palestinian projects and businesses;
4. Promote the protection of the human rights of Palestinians and Israelis and oppose all violence and actions which discriminate against or deny any people their basic freedom, dignity or human rights;
5. Embrace the principles of restorative justice as part of the ELCA's advocacy and engagement for the just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and actively seek ways to support Palestinians and Israelis engaging in restorative justice dialogue and other projects; and
6. Continue to pray for the ELCJHL and the work of The Lutheran World Federation Jerusalem program;

To encourage this church's members, congregations, synods, and agencies as well as the presiding bishop to call on the U.S. President, in coordination with the United Nations Security Council, to offer a new, comprehensive and time-bound agreement to the governments of Israel and Palestine, resulting in a negotiated final status agreement between Israel and Palestine leading to two viable and secure states with a shared Jerusalem;

To urge this church's members, congregations, synods, agencies and presiding bishop to call on their U.S. Representatives, Senators and the Administration to take action requiring that, to continue receiving U.S. financial and military aid, Israel must comply with internationally recognized human rights standards as specified in existing U.S. law, stop settlement building and the expansion of existing settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, end its occupation of Palestinian territory, and enable an independent Palestinian state; and

To encourage this church's members, congregations, synods, and agencies to call on the U.S. President to recognize the State of Palestine and not prevent the application of the State of Palestine for full membership in the United Nations.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2016)

The churchwide organization's communication with this church's members and congregations regarding Israel and Palestine matters are handled through the Peace Not Walls network. Ecumenical and inter-religious relations staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop have provided communication and interpretation of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly's actions with inter-religious partners, as foundational work in support of communications within and beyond this church. Concerning the three requests for communications to the President and Congress, political developments will be monitored closely in order to discern the most propitious time for such communications after the election season is completed. The Church Council will receive a response by its November 2017 meeting.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and to request that a report be provided by the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

G. JUSTICE FOR THE HOLY LAND THROUGH RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category C2: Justice for the Holy Land through Responsible Investment.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.06.31]

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, Metropolitan New York and Delaware-Maryland synods regarding Justice for the Holy Land through Responsible Investment;

To reaffirm the actions of the 2005, 2007, 2011 and 2013 Churchwide Assemblies regarding responsible investment in Israel-Palestine;

To direct the ELCA's Corporate Social Responsibility review team to develop a human rights social criteria investment screen based on the social teachings of this church and, in the case of Israel and Palestine, specifically based on the concerns raised in the ELCA Middle East Strategy;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, agencies and institutions to increase positive investment in Palestine and other under-resourced areas where human rights abuses materially impact the well-being of all people; and

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, agencies and institutions to engage in shareholder advocacy in support of human rights, exercising the right of a shareholder to submit resolutions at a corporation's annual meeting.

Response from the Corporate Social Responsibility review team (November 2016)

In order to meet the call of this assembly action, an initial survey of the social teachings of this church indicates that it would be useful to write a social message on human rights to underpin the development of a general human rights screen as requested. It is expected this message could be prepared and sent to Church Council by November 2017. At that point the Corporate Social Responsibility review team will follow the protocol for developing a new screen as outlined in the Policies and Procedure for the Development of Social Criteria Investment Screens.

The initial screen development process is projected for the fall and winter of 2017. Some specific work that will be needed includes:

1. Review the relevant social teachings of the ELCA with assistance from the Theological Discernment team.
2. Additional input along the way from the Peace Not Walls team as well as the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations team.
3. Review of the scope and prioritization of human rights issues/violations which might be covered in such a screen.
4. Receive input from the Endowment Fund, Mission Investment Fund, and Portico Benefit Services regarding any concerns and impact on their work.

This screen development process will be followed by a first draft for review by Church Council in April 2018. Revisions and additional input will be incorporated, and the screen is projected to come for final action to the Church Council in the fall of 2018. The extended time frame for development allows for multiple consultations due to the sensitive nature of the subject.

Due to the urgency of this matter, prioritizing this work will require that other work assigned to the Corporate Social Responsibility review team and the Theological Discernment team will need to be re-prioritized.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Corporate Social Responsibility review team on the timeline;

To request the development of a social message on human rights, noting that this takes priority over work of developing other social messages;

To acknowledge the development of a general human rights social criteria investment screen will be postponed until the approval of the human rights social message;

To acknowledge that this ongoing work may delay other work assigned to the Corporate Social Responsibility review team and Theological Discernment team; and

To request periodic reports on the progress of implementing the intentions of the Churchwide Assembly action.

H. URGING STEWARDSHIP OF THE GIFT OF WATER (MOTION C)

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.05.26]

To adopt Motion C: Resolution Urging Stewardship of the Gift of Water.

RESOLVED, that the ELCA, in assembly, asks the Church Council to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to provide every active rostered minister with resources to locate each congregation within its watershed district, so that

waters may be named and known in worship and intercessory prayers, and that theological and biblical themes may build awareness, care and thanksgiving for the gift of these waters; and let it be further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA, in assembly, asks the Church Council to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to provide resources to congregations and individual members to encourage and support conservation and prayerful stewardship of water resources; and let it be further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA, in assembly, asks the Church Council to direct the appropriate churchwide unit to continue to develop strategies and provide resources to support areas struggling with natural or human-caused disasters that impact access to clean water, such as water contamination, drought and floods, with an awareness that the impact of our environmental actions have disproportionate implication for communities of color with lower incomes; and let it be further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA, in assembly, encourages congregations to plan events outside their doors and within their watersheds, utilizing the many biblical themes of renewal and liberation that water affords.

Response from Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

ELCA Advocacy has developed and will disseminate a watershed identification resource that one can use to locate a watershed by using a zip code, so that the waters may be named and known in worship and intercessory prayer. ELCA Advocacy will address the need for congregational resources by making available World Council of Churches resources such as the Water of Life brochure, which concentrates on the important role of community-based initiatives and the right to water; Creation Justice Ministries' The Water Stewardship: A Toolkit for Congregational Care of Local Watersheds; the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Watersense Partnership Program that promotes the value of water efficiency, provides consumers with easy ways to save water, addresses how the average person can actively conserve water, and promotes water conservation among children at USEPA WaterSense for Kids.

Through Lutheran Disaster Response, the ELCA addresses immediate and long-term needs in the wake of natural and human-caused disasters, including flood relief. Lutheran Disaster Response-International sent emergency funds to respond to drought in Malawi, Madagascar and Ethiopia in 2016. Lutheran Disaster Response will contribute to build up community resilience through distribution of "smart seeds" better adapted to climate change, income generating schemes (cash program), and climate smart agriculture. Lutheran Disaster Response also plans to promote and support water self-supply — a family or a small group typically relies on low-cost technologies to collect shallow groundwater or rainwater to build appropriate water sources and community response plans for future emergency situations. Lutheran Disaster Response can provide special funds for a construction of new boreholes and rainwater harvesting systems to alleviate the scarcity of water in the long term. Lutheran Disaster Response also plans to provide a special training on water treatment, purification and maintenance of the boreholes.

ELCA World Hunger continues to coordinate a response to lead-tainted water in Flint, Mich., by providing immediate relief through emergency food and water and long-term accompaniment through support for local ministries building resilience during the recovery period. This includes attention to the role of environmental racism and vulnerability of communities of color in environmental disasters. ELCA World Hunger offers tools for learning and acting on water issues, including Walk for Water and a Water brochure.

ELCA Advocacy will monitor legislation and offer advocacy opportunities to shape policy that addresses water safety in Flint and nationally. ELCA Advocacy will lift up World Water Day on March 22 as an opportunity for education and action, utilizing resources such as the Creation Justice Ministries Toolkit for Events on World Water Day. The toolkit includes sermon starters, study resources for youth and adults, and a call to action for people of faith to respond to the global water crisis. Lutherans will be invited to attend the Trinity Institute for a Water Justice Conference March 22-24, 2017, to focus on developing a deeper appreciation for water as a sacred gift, exploring the relationship between water issues and climate change, and address how churches can be agents of change.

Church Council action:

To receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit; and

To affirm the work of ELCA Advocacy to:

- **provide watershed identification resources in order that congregations can use it to locate a watershed by using a zip code, so that the waters may be named and known in worship and intercessory prayer;**

- provide resources to congregations and individual members to encourage and support conservation and prayerful stewardship of water resources;
- continue to develop strategies and provide resources to support areas struggling with natural or human-caused disasters that impact access to clean water, such as water contamination, drought and floods, with an awareness that the impact of environmental actions have disproportionate implication for communities of color with lower incomes.

I. GENDER IDENTITY

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorial to that assembly under category D1: Gender Identity.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03q]

- To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Sierra Pacific Synod regarding Gender Identity;
- To refer this memorial to the Church Council for study of gender identity;
- To ask the Church Council, the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Office of the Secretary to review existing definitions and policies in light of the council's study; and
- To report to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA actions and proposals for additional actions as may be required.

Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2016)

The Office of the Secretary will be working with Theological Discernment in the Office of the Presiding Bishop to recommend how the council might engage this study process. The hope is that this will start by Spring 2017.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary and to anticipate a progress report by the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

J. GENDER IDENTITY (MOTION D)

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.05.27]

To refer Motion D: Resolution on Gender Identity to the Church Council and that the Church Council use the resolution to help inform the study of gender identity and the review of existing ELCA definitions and policies regarding gender identity as referenced in the above approved Memorial, and urge all three expressions of our church, whenever possible, and when not otherwise guided by current constitution and/or policy, consider using event registration and other forms that:

- 1) Include additional options for gender, for transgender, non-binary and/or gender non-conforming people; and
- 2) When asking for a person's personal information, include asking for the person's pronouns; and
- 3) When asking for a person's honorific or title, include a gender neutral option.

Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2016)

The Office of the Secretary recommends weaving in the intentions of this resolution to help inform the study of gender identity that will be underway with Theological Discernment in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

Church Council action:

**To incorporate the intentions of Motion D into the gender identity study process; and
To acknowledge that the action of the Church Council regarding the Gender Identity memorial of the Sierra Pacific Synod will be the response to this resolution.**

K. COMPENSATION FOR THE COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT (MOTION E)

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.06.34]

To adopt Motion E: Resolution on Compensation for the Council Vice President.

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly requests the Church Council study the removal of constitutional bylaw 13.32.02., which prohibits compensation for the vice president except for reimbursements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly requests the Church Council study compensation or reimbursement for child or elder care and salary or stipend for service related to the duties of the vice president; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Church Council bring a report and recommendation to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2016)

The Office of the Secretary will be working with the Research and Evaluation team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop to recommend how the council might engage this study process. The hope is that this will start in Spring 2017.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary and to anticipate a progress report by the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

L. TIME OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP RESOURCES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category B11: Time of Prayer and Worship Resources on Human Trafficking.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03k]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin and La Crosse Area Synod calling for a dedicated time of prayer to end human trafficking and to create resources to support congregations in this endeavor;

To encourage congregations to incorporate attention to the issue of human trafficking in their communication and resource development plan and to foster ecumenical and inter-religious cooperation, including dedicated times of prayer each year, such as January 11, Human Trafficking Awareness Day; and

To refer to the worship team within the Office of the Presiding Bishop for its deliberation and discretion the creation of worship resources surrounding the issue of human trafficking and the creation of prayers and litanies for the dedicated time of prayer.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2016)

In early November, the Worship team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop will be meeting with colleagues in Global Mission, Domestic Mission, Theological Discernment and Women of the ELCA to discuss the creation of worship resources regarding human trafficking. A report on the activities will be provided by the end of 2017.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and to anticipate a report by the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

M. EXAMINING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPLICATIONS OF CAMPAIGN ZERO, A POLICY PLATFORM IN AFFIRMATION OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category A6: Examining the Opportunities and Implications of Campaign Zero, a policy platform in affirmation of Black Lives Matter.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03d]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Greater Milwaukee and Northwest Washington synods in affirmation of Black Lives Matter; and

To refer to the Domestic Mission unit through the African Descent Ministries Desk, in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association, consideration of the request to examine the opportunities and implications of Campaign Zero's initiatives and actions and request a report and possible recommendations be provided to the Church Council.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

Over the next six months, the African Descent Ministries, program director for racial justice, director for advocacy, program director for domestic policy and the African Descent Lutheran Association will consider the opportunities for engagement, education and encouragement of advocacy in alignment with the 10-point policy solutions outlined in Campaign Zero. A full report will be prepared for the April 2017 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit and to anticipate a report by the April 2017 Church Council meeting.

N. SUPPORTING MILITARY PERSONNEL, VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category B10: Supporting Military Personnel, Veterans and their Families.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.06.33]

To receive with gratitude, the memorials of Eastern Washington-Idaho, Pacifica, Southeastern Minnesota, Southwestern Texas, East-Central Wisconsin, Southern Ohio, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Allegheny, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., West Virginia-Western Maryland and Southeastern synods regarding their interest and vision for ministry affirming those called to military service, veterans, their families and this church's support for chaplaincy ministries;

To recognize with gratitude ELCA members, congregations, agencies and institutions which have initiated creative ministry and mission engaging members of the military, veterans, ELCA chaplains and their families;

To encourage congregations, agencies, families and individuals to assist those considering military service and those continuing in service through moral discernment and vocational guidance concerning the life-changing decisions they must make involving justice, service and the ethical application of force;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop to establish a Sunday of prayer and action near Veterans Day each year to unite this church in prayer and encourage assistance for military members, veterans, ELCA chaplains and families;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations and synods to offer care and support for returning veterans;

To encourage congregations to seek out incarcerated veterans to thank them for their service and to help them access veterans' benefits so that they might have a more successful transition upon release;

To affirm the publication of the Prayer Book for the Armed Services and to encourage congregations to present gift copies to veterans, military personnel and chaplains;

To encourage synod bishops, candidacy committees, congregations and seminaries to make known the need for ordained pastors to serve as chaplains in the military, Veterans Affairs hospitals, federal corrections and other chaplaincies;

To urge ELCA members and congregations to contribute to the ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministries Fund for Leaders Scholarship to attract the next generation of chaplains; and

To encourage ELCA seminaries, colleges and universities to integrate practicing chaplains to teach about specialized ministries, preach in chapel, and foster awareness and consideration of a call to chaplaincy ministry.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2016)

The assembly action grew out of 14 synods passing memorials addressing this topic. This action was adopted at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly as a unanimous vote of the assembly. The follow-up is assigned to Office of the Presiding Bishop with the assistant to the presiding bishop for federal chaplaincy taking the lead.

ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministries launched and is sustaining a voluntary network of individuals implementing initiatives to support military personnel, veterans and their families called "Centurion Connections," based on biblical

accounts of Jesus and other New Testament encounters with soldiers by Jesus and the apostles (see Mark 15:39, Matthew 8:8, Acts 10:1-8).

Below are updates and recommended next steps.

Church Council members may pray for and celebrate initiatives of the “Centurion Connections” volunteers. As a starting point, 23 synods have identified contacts for “Centurion Connections.” Four other synods expressed interest. These initiatives proceed only with the awareness and support of the synod bishops. Expand “Centurion Connections” to every synod.

In keeping with directions from the assembly action, staff work has been completed to support the presiding bishop designating the Sunday closest to Veterans Day as an opportunity to unite the ELCA in prayer and action in support of military personnel, veterans and their families.

The Fall 2016 issue of “Seeds for the Parish” (page 6) provides information and ideas to aid rostered ministers and congregations planning worship and activities.

The volunteer network “Centurion Connections” has developed and actively maintains a single website as a help to congregations and synods, providing prayer forms, children’s sermon and program ideas: <http://ELCAchaps.com>.

Three pilot synods (Southern Ohio, South Carolina and West Virginia-Western Maryland) have a formal, collaborative initiative with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community Clergy Training Program (CCTP). CCTP fosters interfaith, ecumenical support of veteran ministries.

The Federal Chaplaincy Ministries (FCM) Advisory Committee, appointed by the presiding bishop, inaugurated a new ELCA Fund for Leaders Chaplaincy Scholarship Endowment. Through the “quiet” phase of the campaign, over \$87,000 has been given by the chaplain community and select individual and congregational supporters. In December 2017, the Rev. Murray D. Finck, former bishop of the Pacifica Synod, will lead a development team to maximize the expansion of the chaplaincy scholarship to support seminary students open to serving in federal chaplaincy ministries.

Through a sustained, structured and nearly completely voluntary network focused on congregations and synods, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries will implement all eight recommendations of the assembly action.

Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude the response of the Office of the Presiding Bishop in supporting military personnel, veterans and their families;

To pray for and celebrate initiatives of the “Centurion Connections” volunteers;

To thank the ELCA Federal Chaplaincy staff and the presiding bishop for their work in designating a Sunday near Veterans Day for prayer and action and to commend this time as an opportunity to unite the ELCA in support of military personnel, veterans and their families; and

To commend the churchwide staff, synods, congregations and volunteers for their continued efforts to implement the assembly action.

O. CALL TO DISCERNMENT ON U.S. FOREIGN AND MILITARY POLICY

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorial to that assembly under category B1: Call to Discernment on U.S. Foreign and Military Policy.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.06.32]

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Minneapolis Area Synod regarding its call for the ELCA to study, reflect, search and act in light of ongoing and widening war efforts;

To recognize with gratitude the efforts of the current and previous presiding bishops, the Church Council, synod bishops, clergy and the laity to engage as responsible citizens living out the baptismal calling;

To issue a call for congregations to engage in prayer, Scripture-study and communal reading of the teaching resources of this church, particularly “Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective,” “For Peace in God’s World” and “Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues”;

To invite this church to a particular time of prayer and communal discernment over the next three years to promote robust examination of the consequences of expanded U.S. war efforts since 1990. To refer to the Church Council to formulate the next steps, including any budgetary implications. To encourage the Office of the Presiding Bishop to

consider dialogue with Called Forward Together in Christ, Declaration on the Way and other ecumenical partners in planning this initiative, including inviting, scholars whose work focuses in these areas, activists, seminaries, colleges/universities, synods, VA and other federal chaplains. We especially hope to include those whose lives are most impacted by these developments in the United States and world.

Topics of inquiry could include:

The impact on well-being of all military personnel and veterans: active, reserve, retired, and national guard, contractors, affiliates, and their families:

- Chronic disabilities and loss (including chemical dependencies and brain injury),
- Collateral involvement with criminal justice system,
- Diminished lives and early deaths of veterans and their families from toxins, PTSD symptoms, and violence,
- Moral injury,
- Character and skill development, and

Broader societal impacts, such as:

- Climate change and global pollution load,
- Changes in policing practices,
- Engagement with and prejudice against neighbor Muslims,
- Policy decisions due to commercial motivations for the proliferation of arms,
- Social needs met and unmet due to prioritizing public spending on expanding war efforts;

with Church Council to recommend next steps by April 2017; and

To direct the presiding bishop to communicate this church's time of prayer and discernment to the U.S. President and members of Congress and to encourage ELCA members in this election season of 2016 to communicate the same to candidates for federal office.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2016)

The Office of the Presiding Bishop, with the assistant to the presiding bishop for federal chaplaincy, is taking the lead. The Office of the Presiding Bishop will continue its work in consultation with Domestic Mission, Office of the Treasurer and other colleagues in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

ELCA Advocacy issued an Advocacy Alert calling the ELCA to prayer and action regarding broadening war efforts. Below are the recommended next steps:

- Church Council identifies two members of the council to serve as advisors on behalf of the Church Council to Federal Chaplaincy in developing recommended next steps before the April 2017 meeting.
- Federal Chaplaincy requests input for possible ELCA colleagues, ecumenical partners and interfaith representatives, synod leaders, scholars, academics, government service providers and non-government social service representatives who may be interested in participating in a day-long convening to address selected issues from the memorial.
- Budget planning develop costs for a temporary staff position for one day per week administrative support from January through June 2018 to initiate contact with potential participants, arrange details at the Lutheran Center for a one-day "round table" with up to 40 participants (including facilitating lodging, local transportation, meals and support services).
- Federal Chaplaincy, along with two members of the Church Council, plan and present recommended next steps at the April 2017 meeting of the Church Council.

Proposed Outcome: ELCA serves as a convener for faith communities, academics, government and faith-based social service agencies to advance reflection on war and its consequences. ELCA Federal Chaplaincy synchronizes a one-day "round table" with interested participants to be held at the Lutheran Center in conjunction with the 2018 ELCA Federal Chaplains Education and Training event (likely June 18 or July 16 or 23, 2018). The result and outcome will be a "Report on a Day of Discernment." The purpose of the report is to provide a concrete outcome to be read and shared with others as well as a potential guide for underpinning further action.

NOTE: Participants will be invited to attend and join in the "round table" at their own expense. In addition to the estimated 40 participants for the "round table," the program will be open to ELCA federal chaplains (military, VA and Bureau of Prisons) attending the annual chaplains education and training event.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop on a proposed timeline and outcome to the initiative;

To authorize the Executive Committee to identify two people from the Church Council to serve as advisors with Federal Chaplaincy on developing next steps; and

To anticipate a progress report with possible recommendations by the April 2017 Church Council meeting.

P. EXAMINING THE IMPLICATIONS OF BECOMING A SANCTUARY DENOMINATION

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorial to that assembly under category B9: Examining the Implications of Becoming a Sanctuary Denomination.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03j]

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Oregon Synod regarding the sanctuary movement;

To reaffirm the ELCA's partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in calling for fair and compassionate immigration policies and practices that keep families together;

To encourage ELCA synods, congregations and members to advocate for legislation that welcomes the stranger to this country and to their communities;

To refer the request to the Domestic Mission unit to examine the opportunities and implications of endorsing the practice of congregations offering sanctuary and of the ELCA declaring itself a sanctuary denomination and request a report and recommendations be provided to the Church Council.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit and Office of the Secretary (November 2016)

The Domestic Mission unit, the general counsel of the ELCA, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) discussed next steps for the Domestic Mission unit to examine the endorsement of congregations offering sanctuary and to consider the ramifications of the ELCA declaring itself a sanctuary denomination. The group intends to pursue additional conversations with leaders from the Oregon Synod to further understand the purpose and to define terms in the memorial. This conversation may lead to consultation with other denominations and will be followed by research and analysis. The unit expects to bring a report and possible recommendations to the November 2017 meeting of the Council.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary and the Domestic Mission unit; and

To anticipate a report with possible recommendations by the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

Q. RESOLUTION ON CALL PROCESS (MOTION F)

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.06.35]

To adopt Motion F: Resolution on Call Process.

RESOLVED, that the assembly asks the ELCA Church Council, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to initiate a conversation including synod leadership regarding rostered minister vacancies throughout this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the assembly encourages the Conference of Bishops to continue their work of facilitating and always reforming the call process for congregations and institutions in our changing contexts; and be it further

RESOLVED, that regions, institutions, synods, and congregations be encouraged to raise up leaders in this church for rostered leadership with the encouragement and oversight of the Theological Education Advisory Committee of the Church Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Conference of Bishops communicate with the ELCA Church Council and mutually review the status of this work every year and a half for three years.

Response from the Conference of Bishops (November 2016)

The Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops has not yet had a chance to consider a response to “Resolution on Call Process” (Motion F) [CA16.06.35], which was passed at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly and for which the Conference of Bishops has been designated to take the lead. In consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Domestic Mission and the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops will establish a working group at its Spring 2017 meeting with the expectation of an initial report, including a plan for addressing the resolution, at the Fall 2017 Conference of Bishops meeting to be presented, in turn, to the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Conference of Bishops and to anticipate a report with possible recommendations by the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

R. AFRICAN DESCENT LUTHERANS

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category A4: African Descent Lutherans.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.05.17]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Arkansas-Oklahoma, Metropolitan Chicago, Southeast Michigan, New Jersey, Metropolitan New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., North Carolina and Southeastern synods regarding African Descent Lutheran Lives Matter;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Domestic Mission unit and the Global Mission unit to assist in connecting, supporting and involving ELCA representation (particularly though not exclusively) of the people of African descent with the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and the initiatives of the U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent; to be intentional in the inclusion of the contributions of African descent Lutherans as part of these observances;

To confess and repent of the Lutheran church’s complicity in 400 years of enslavement, oppression and marginalization of African descent people and other marginalized populations;

To acknowledge with regret that the ELCA as an institution has and continues to contribute to racial harassment and discrimination against people of African descent through corporate action, policy and practices and to request the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization units, to review and report on current governing documents in light of these concerns;

To encourage synods and ELCA related institutions to do the same in its review and report of current governing documents related to setting policy and procedures on workplace harassment and discrimination, including racial harassment and discrimination;

To request the Domestic Mission unit through its African Descent Ministries desk, in consultation with the African Descent Lutheran Association, to create a “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community” and to bring this declaration with recommendations of how to include the declaration in this church’s governing documents by the April 2018 meeting of the Church Council;

To urge the seminaries, colleges, universities and other academic institutions of this church to work with the Conference of International Black Lutherans (CIBL) to recognize and dismantle white hegemony by lifting up, encouraging and incorporating the academic exploration of Black Liberation Theology and Womanist Theologians;

To urge the seminaries, colleges, universities and other academic institutions of this church to develop anti-racism resources;

To reaffirm the Church Council action to call upon the seminaries, in collaboration with churchwide organization units and partners, to develop networked theological education programs, resources and opportunities for ethnic-specific communities;

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to create, sustain and reinvest in African descent communities, congregations and ministries including an update of the African Descent Ministry Strategy;

To request the Domestic Mission unit, in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association, to find ways to increase the number of African descent leaders, congregations and communities served by at least 10 percent; and

To recommit this church to growing its ethnic and racial diversity.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

There are numerous resolves within this assembly action. The initial response from the Domestic Mission unit is to address the ones that directly impact the churchwide organization.

Part of this action of the assembly represents two separate though intersecting initiatives: the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent 2015 – 2024. Other parts are related to a review of governing documents, creation of a ‘Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community,’ and an increase in the numbers of African descent leaders, congregations and communities served.

Regarding the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation

The 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation will be observed by gatherings and conversations of a global Lutheran community. Lutheran churches from across the African continent will take part and be fully represented members of this worldwide Lutheran family. Unless there is particular attention as the ELCA shapes delegations and teams representing this church, African American, African Caribbean and other ELCA members of African ancestry will not be afforded equitable access and involvement in this historic chapter of the continuing reformation of the church.

The director of ethnic specific, multicultural and racial justice ministries in consultation with the executive director of the Domestic Mission unit, the African Descent Strategy Team, the African National Steering Committee, the African Descent Ministries desk, Global Mission unit, the African Descent Lutheran Association and the director for racial justice ministries, will formulate a plan and approach for implementing the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and report to Church Council at the April 2017 meeting.

Within the next three months, the director of ethnic specific, multicultural and racial justice ministries will discuss the incorporation of the presence and participation of the African descent diaspora and other people of color in the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop (to include specifically the executive for theological discernment and executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations) and report to Church Council at the April 2017 meeting.

Regarding U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent

The U.N. General Assembly proclaimed 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent (resolution 68/237) citing the need to strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society.

The Domestic Mission unit will convene a consultation inclusive of African Descent Lutheran Association, African Descent Ministries staff, Global Mission and Domestic Mission executive directors, executive for theological discernment, director for Lutheran Office for World Community, and additional advisors as needed. This team will formulate a plan for intentional representative engagement of ELCA persons of African descent in the U.N. initiative to be presented to Church Council at the April 2017 meeting.

Regarding the “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community”

The African Descent Ministries desk and the director for racial justice ministries, will consult with the African Descent Lutheran Association (the resolution originated at the 2015 biennial assembly of the African Descent Lutheran Association) regarding the work to create a “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community.” A progress report on the development of the declaration will be presented to the Church Council at the November 2017 meeting.

Regarding a review and report on current governing documents

The assembly action requested that this church’s governing documents be reviewed regarding its contribution to racial harassment and discrimination against people of African descent. Within the next six months, the director for ethnic specific, multicultural and racial justice ministries will schedule a conversation with a representative from the Church Council, the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the African Descent Lutheran Association, the director for racial justice ministries, and the African Descent Ministries desk. A report will come to Church Council at the November 2017 meeting.

Regarding ways to increase the number of African descent leaders, congregations and communities served

In consultation with the Conference of Bishops, Domestic Mission unit leadership team, the African Descent Lutheran Association, executive for administration, director for leadership and candidacy and Mission Advancement unit,

the Domestic Mission unit will create a plan to assess current and proposed work as first steps toward implementation. A report will come to Church Council by its November 2017 meeting.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit on a proposed timeline to address the implementation of the African Descent Lutherans assembly action;

To anticipate a report on actions related to the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and the U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent by the April 2017 Church Council meeting; and

To anticipate a report on actions related to the “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community,” review on current governing documents and ways to increase the number of African descent leaders, congregations and communities served at the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

S. STRATEGY TOWARD AUTHENTIC DIVERSITY WITHIN THE ELCA (MOTION B)

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.05.25]

To refer Motion B to the Church Council.

Motion B: Resolution for a Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA

RESOLVED, the Churchwide Assembly direct the ELCA Church Council to form a task force for the purpose of developing a comprehensive set of strategies to equip congregations and synods to work towards becoming a more authentically diverse church. The work of the Task Force shall include but is not limited to:

- consulting with Women of the ELCA, the ethnic specific ministry associations, the multicultural and racial justice team, the Conference of Bishops and ecumenical partners
- collecting existing resources such as those available from Women of the ELCA and the ethnic specific ministry associations and beyond the ELCA
- identifying needs for additional resources
- supporting synods in identifying their specific opportunities for growth
- assessing the effectiveness of diversity strategies across the three expressions church in order to identify strategies that have yielded authentic diversity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the task force be composed of one person from each of the nine regions and one bishop who will serve as co-chair. The composition of the task force shall conform with the representational principles in section 5.01.f. of the ELCA constitution except that persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English shall comprise 100 percent of the task force, and the task force shall be ethnically diverse. The members of the task force shall be appointed by the Church Council in consultation with the ELCA director of ethnic specific and multicultural ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Church Council designate funds to support the work of the task force as soon as funds become available, no later than April 2017. The work of the task force shall begin no later than August 2017 and conclude at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the task force submit a report and recommendations to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly that includes:

1. a summary of the information gathered by the task force and
2. a proposal of recommendations for metrics and supports to provide mutual accountability for our commitment to diversity across the three expressions of the church and a proposal for funding these efforts.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

Work toward becoming a more authentically diverse church is currently being carried out through the ethnic specific ministry associations and the Ethnic Specific, Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice team. In addition, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton was asked by Church Council at its November 2015 meeting “to include the current efforts in a broader, comprehensive strategy toward becoming a racially and ethnically diverse church committed to dismantling racism” [CC15.11.55]. It is worth noting that the Called Forward Together in Christ process identified a goal that this church becomes “an inviting, inclusive church that reflects the diversity of our communities and embraces the gifts and

opportunities that diversity brings.” More time is needed for consultations and further reflection before advising on a proposed task force and the scope of work prescribed. A full report will be prepared for the April 2017 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit and to anticipate a report by the April 2017 Church Council meeting.

T. REPUDIATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

The Report of the Memorials Committee of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly includes the full text of the synod memorials to that assembly under category B7: Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.04]

To receive with gratitude memorials from the Alaska, Northwest Washington, Montana, Southwest California, Rocky Mountain, Eastern North Dakota, South Dakota, Minneapolis Area, Saint Paul Area, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Northwest Wisconsin, East-Central Wisconsin, Indiana-Kentucky, Upstate New York, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., North Carolina and Southeastern synods regarding the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery;

To repudiate explicitly and clearly the European-derived doctrine of discovery as an example of the “improper mixing of the power of the church and the power of the sword” (Augsburg Confession Article XXVIII, Latin text), and to acknowledge and repent from this church’s complicity in the evils of colonialism in the Americas, which continue to harm tribal governments and individual tribal members;

To offer a statement of repentance and reconciliation to native nations in this country for damage done in the name of Christianity;

To encourage the Office of the Presiding Bishop to plan an appropriate national ceremony of repentance and reconciliation with tribal leaders, providing appropriate worship resources for similar synodical and congregational observances with local tribal leaders, at such times and places as are appropriate;

To direct the Domestic Mission unit, together with the American Indian and Alaska Native community and ecumenical partners, to develop resources to educate members of the ELCA and the wider community about the doctrine of discovery and its consequences for native peoples;

To direct the Domestic Mission unit to develop a strategy with the American Indian and Alaska Native community during the next triennium to be referred to the Church Council for action, including a mechanism to grow the Native American Ministry Fund of the ELCA; and

To affirm that this church will eliminate the doctrine of discovery from its contemporary rhetoric and programs, electing to practice accompaniment with native peoples instead of a missionary endeavor to them, allowing these partnerships to mutually enrich indigenous communities and the ministries of the ELCA.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

As was described in the 2016 Churchwide Assembly Memorials Committee report, the “doctrine of discovery” is a theological justification of colonization that later became nationalistic justification. Initiated when European monarchies invasively arrived in the Western Hemisphere in the 15th, 16th and later centuries, during the so-called “Age of Discovery,” they claimed the lands, territories and resources of the indigenous peoples, asserting that the monarchies had a right to appropriate on behalf of Christendom.

The doctrine of discovery is a key premise for non-indigenous government claims to legitimacy on and sovereignty over indigenous lands and territories. It is used in particular by former British colonies, specifically Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America.

For additional information on what is found in the doctrine of discovery and what its effect has had on indigenous peoples, we recommend reading the entire background information included in the Report of the Memorials Committee.

The repudiation of the doctrine of discovery by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly provides an invaluable teaching moment for ELCA congregations to understand the systemic and continuous impact of racism on the daily lives of indigenous peoples in the United States. The assembly voted to eliminate the doctrine within this church’s contemporary policies, programs, outreach, structures and engagement with native communities. The assembly action acknowledged

the profound brokenness of this church's relationship with indigenous people that is deeply embedded in the identity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that calls us to a path for healing and reconciliation.

The doctrine of discovery, and the legal ramifications of it to this day, have profound effects on the issues of migration, and racial and economic justice for indigenous people. This church is to promote efforts with indigenous communities within which its congregations and synods reside. In order to assist this church in its work to eliminate the doctrine of discovery from its contemporary rhetoric and programs, the Domestic Mission unit recommends the development of synod native accompaniment teams with American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries to help strengthen community leadership as well as provide structural support and relationship building with the directors for evangelical mission and synods, and reduce isolation of ministry leadership.

In the assembly action, this church is "to offer a statement of repentance and reconciliation to native nations in this country for damage done in the name of Christianity." The Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Native Ministry team will draft a statement that acknowledges the benefit of past apologies and bring attention to communities and issues of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes in the United States. The statement should also include the acknowledgment of the impact that the Lutheran church has had in American Indian and Alaska Native communities and bring attention to communities and issues of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes in the United States. Specifically, it should mention the Lutheran involvement of violating the Indian Child Welfare Act, in removing American Indian and Alaska Native children and placing them in non-native homes. Given the critical consultations and the importance of this statement, the statement will be read publicly in conjunction with the national ceremony of repentance and reconciliation.

The Office of the Presiding Bishop will work with the program director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministry, worship staff and the American Indian community to plan and implement a national ceremony of repentance and reconciliation. In consultation with the program director and American Indian and Alaska Native community leaders, the national ceremony and the reading of the statement of repentance and reconciliation will be done at the site of Pe' Sla, in the lands held sacred by the Dakota tribes in the Black Hills region of South Dakota. Doing the public announcement of the statement in this place not only commemorates sacred lands being reclaimed by indigenous people, the action speaks to seeking a more meaningful relationship with American Indian and Alaska Native people. The intended time frame for this ceremony is during Spring 2017 or 2018 in partnership with the local tribes and Tribal Colleges and Universities when they allow visitors to the land.

The program director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries and the community will work with synod bishops, synod leaders and congregations to assist them in planning observances with local tribal leaders. These actions acknowledge the statement of repentance and reconciliation on behalf of this church, and bring attention to the communities and issues of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes in the United States.

Through the 2016 Churchwide Assembly action, the visibility of the doctrine of discovery has been raised and is itself a means of educating people about that doctrine and its continuing effects on indigenous nations and peoples. An immediate implementation plan on the repudiation of the doctrine of discovery will include educational resources about the doctrine. Educational resources will be developed in partnership with the denominations that have currently repudiated the doctrine of discovery, Lutheran theological leaders, and foremost native nation and indigenous leaders. The program director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries will work with synod bishops, synod leaders, and congregations to organize educational opportunities to better understand the realities and impact of the doctrine of discovery. A series of informational resources, info-graphics, web videos and other resources will be developed in collaboration with our ecumenical partners and leaders within the ELCA's American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Native Ministry team and association members will be utilized to develop an implementation plan and timeline for the development of these resources in the next triennium.

The assembly action also requested the development of a strategy with the American Indian and Alaska Native community. There is a strategic plan for the American Indian and Alaska Native ministry that was adopted by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly. Updating the strategy will include the work of developing strategic implementation for the repudiation of the doctrine of discovery. The next triennium will be a time for discernment and conversations with communities as well as ecumenical partners to develop an overall strategy. In addition to updating the strategy, the program director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries will establish a process with the community to review the Native American Ministry Endowment Fund, including its guidelines, priorities and philanthropy structure for growth and implementation. A draft strategy will be prepared for the Church Council's consideration at its April 2019 meeting to be forwarded to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

A progress report on the work of this memorial will be provided at the November 2018 meeting of the Church Council.

Church Council action:

To receive with appreciation the response from the Domestic Mission unit regarding the work underway to implement the repudiation of the doctrine of discovery;

To commend American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries in its work with synods and congregations to educate people about the doctrine of discovery and its continuing effects on indigenous nations and peoples;

To anticipate a progress report on the work at the November 2018 Church Council meeting; and

To request a revised American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan be presented at the April 2019 Church Council meeting.