

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN AMERICA**

Church Council

MINUTES

March 31, 2017

**Prepared by the
Office of the Secretary**

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
March 31, 2017
Itasca, Illinois**

The eighty-ninth meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was convened in Red Oak Ballroom A of the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Ill.

The Executive Committee of the Church Council, as well as its Budget and Finance, Legal and Constitutional Review, Program and Services and Planning and Evaluation committees, met Thursday, March 30, 2017, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill. Committee meetings were followed at 4:15 p.m. by worship with Holy Communion in the Chapel of the Lutheran Center. The Rev. Vicki T. Garber presided, and the Rev. Loren D. Mellum preached. Ms. Marjorie B. Ellis served as assisting minister, and Mr. Gary D. Gabrielson was lector. Deacon John E. Weit, program director for music, served as musician.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

The following people were present for all or part of the meeting:

Voting members

Officers:

Pr. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop
Mr. William B. Horne II, vice president
Pr. Wm Chris Boerger, secretary
Pr. Linda O. Norman, treasurer

Chair of the Conference of Bishops:

Pr. William O. Gafkjen, bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod

Church Council:

Mr. Paul G. Archer	Pr. Karin I. Liebster
Mr. Hans E. Becklin	Mr. John W. Lohrmann
Mr. Allan J. Bieber (<i>excused</i>)	Pr. Loren D. Mellum
Ms. Amanda E. Briggs	Ms. Andrea Micovsky
Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman	Mr. Joseph T. Nolte
Mr. Reid A. Christopherson	Pr. Linda Nou
Deacon Christine P. Connell	Mr. Gary A. Pederson
Pr. Elizabeth E. Ekdale	Mr. John M. Pederson
Ms. Marjorie B. Ellis	Ms. Meri Jo Petrivelli
Pr. William E. Flippin Jr. (<i>excused</i>)	Ms. Pamela E. Pritt
Pr. Dena M. Gable	Mr. Clarence M. Smith
Mr. Gary D. Gabrielson	Mr. Ervin F. Sparapani
Pr. Vicki T. Garber	Pr. Jonathan Splichal Larson
Pr. Joyce M. Graue	Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford
Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson	Ms. Leslie J. Swenson
Pr. Stephen R. Herr	Pr. Lorie B. Tatum (<i>excused</i>)
Pr. Chad M. Huebner	Pr. James H. Utt
Ms. Maren Hulden	Mr. Vernon K. Veal
Mr. James M. Hushagen	Pr. William O. Voss
Mr. James J.F. Jennings	Ms. Emma K. Wagner
Ms. Carolyn D. Jewett	Pr. Michael R. Ward
Pr. Peder J. Johanson	Mr. Seth M. Zimmann
Ms. Emilee M. Le Blanc	

Representatives of the Conference of Bishops

Bp. Suzanne D. Dillahunt, Region 6	Bp. Stephen S. Talmage, Region 2
Bp. Mary B. Froiland, Region 5	Bp. B. Kirby Unti, Region 1
Bp. Richard H. Graham, Region 8	Bp. Herman R. Yoos III, Region 9
Bp. Brian D. Maas, Region 4	Bp. David B. Zellmer, Region 3
Bp. John S. Macholz, Region 7	

Resource people

Office of the Presiding Bishop:

Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration
Mr. Kenneth W. Inskeep, executive for research and evaluation
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop for ecumenical and inter-religious relations
Pr. Walter S. May, assistant to the presiding bishop for synodical relations
Mr. Joseph W. Schmidt, administrative services coordinator
Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, assistant to the presiding bishop for governance
Pr. Kevin L. Strickland, assistant to the presiding bishop for worship

Office of the Secretary:

Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, associate general counsel
Mr. Frank F. Imhoff, manager for official documentation
Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, executive for Office of the Secretary administration

Unit Staff:

Pr. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit
Ms. Victoria E. Flood, director for mission support
Ms. Jocelyn Fuller, director for strategic communications
Pr. Ronald T. Glusenkamp, director for *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*
Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, executive director of the Mission Advancement unit
Pr. Rafael Malpica Padilla, executive director of the Global Mission unit
Ms. Evelyn B. Soto, director for operations and programs of the Domestic Mission unit
Pr. Albert Starr Jr., director for ethnic specific and multicultural ministries
Mr. David C. Wunsch, director for operations of the Global Mission unit

Separately Incorporated Ministries:

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director, Women of the ELCA (*excused*)
Ms. Beth A. Lewis, president, 1517 Media (*excused*)
Ms. Eva M. Roby, president, Mission Investment Fund (*excused*)
Pr. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, president, Portico Benefit Services

Press:

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, Mission Advancement

Guest:

Ms. Lyla Rogan, consultant, Called Forward Together in Christ

Friday, March 31, 2017
Plenary Session I

CALL TO ORDER AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

(Agenda I.A.)

Background:

Agenda items had been distributed electronically. Additional items were distributed at the meeting to the members of the Church Council and invited resource people.

Church Council action:

Mr. William B. Horne II, vice president of the ELCA and chair of the Church Council, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed all participants. He opened the meeting with prayer. He told participants how to access meeting materials. He announced the deadlines for new business and to remove items from the *en bloc* recommendation.

A motion to adopt the agenda was made and seconded.

There being no discussion, the chair called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.03.01 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

Vice President Horne declared the agenda was adopted.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

(Agenda I.B.)

Background:

The minutes of the Nov. 10-13, 2016, meeting of the Church Council were provided to council members electronically. The minutes of the council's Executive Committee meetings held Nov. 10-13 and Dec. 13, 2016, and Jan. 17 and Feb. 6, 2017, were also provided electronically. Minutes for meetings held in executive session were added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary.

Opportunity was provided for Church Council members to submit in writing any corrections for the distributed text of the minutes to the Office of the Secretary. Proper corrections were entered into the protocol copies of the minutes. Such corrections did not need to be raised in the plenary session in connection with the approval of the minutes.

Church Council action:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes and to ratify actions of the Executive Committee.

There being no discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

**CC17.03.02 To approve the minutes of the November 10-13, 2016, meeting of the Church Council; and
To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the November 10-13, 2016, December 13, 2016, and January 17, 2017 meetings.**

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

(Agenda I.C.; *Reference*: Report of the Presiding Bishop *and* State of the Church)

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, provided an overview of her written report, highlighting activities related to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the future directions and priorities for this church identified through the Called Forward Together in Christ process, scholarships available through the Bishop Eaton's Leadership Initiative and the ELCA Fund for Leaders, *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* and the Theological Education Advisory Committee.

The presiding bishop responded to questions and comments about the scholarship initiative and the next generation of leaders for this church.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

(Agenda I.D.; *Reference*: Report of the Vice President)

Vice President William B. Horne II referred to his written report and introduced the liaison bishops at the meeting. He talked about attending the March 2017 meeting of the Conference of Bishops and how it had focused on the priorities of leadership and vibrant congregations, which were identified through the Called Forward Together in Christ process. He reflected on the previous meeting of the Church Council and lessons he learned through that meeting to allow for discernment as well as to balance the council's impulses to speak, administer, manage and govern. He said the retreat following this meeting of the Church Council would address the council's governance role and structure. The vice president spoke of his work with a task force drafting a statement on interreligious relations for the ELCA and of his participation in a Martin Luther King Jr. Day event that was hosted by the Delaware-Maryland Synod's chapter of the African American Lutheran Association.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.E.)

Vice President William B. Horne II noted that the Rev. Vicki T. Garber had served as ecumenical liaison to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) since November 2015. At the request of that communion, the Executive Committee appointed [EC17.03.11] Pastor Garber to continue as ecumenical liaison to that church until August 2018.

CONTINUITY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.E.1.)

Background:

The chairs of the Church Council's Budget and Finance, Legal and Constitutional Review, Planning and Evaluation and Program and Services committees serve on the council's Executive Committee. The Church Council terms of Mr. Paul G. Archer, Deacon Christine P. Connell, the Rev. Vicki T. Garber and the Rev. Stephen R. Herr end on Aug. 31, 2017. At their Spring 2017 meetings, the council's committees elected new chairs to begin their terms on Sept. 1, 2017.

Church Council action:

A motion was made and seconded to name the newly elected committee chairs to the Executive Committee.

Vice President William B. Horne II introduced the chairs that were elected at the committees' Spring 2017 meetings to begin their terms on Sept. 1, 2017: Mr. Reid A. Christopherson, Planning and Evaluation Committee; Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson, Program and Services Committee; Mr. James M. Hushagen, Legal and Constitutional Review Committee; and Mr. Clarence M. Smith, Budget and Finance Committee.

There being no further discussion, the chair called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.03.03 To declare that the newly elected chairs of the Budget and Finance Committee, Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, Planning and Evaluation Committee and Program and Services Committee shall be members of the Executive Committee of the Church Council beginning on September 1, 2017.

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

SITE FOR THE 2019 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

(Agenda I.E.2.)

Background:

ELCA bylaw 13.41.02.h. states that the secretary of this church shall “arrange for and manage churchwide meetings, including the Churchwide Assembly.” The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, secretary of the ELCA, told the 2016 Churchwide Assembly that the Office of the Secretary would bring a proposal for the time and place of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to the Church Council’s Spring 2017 meeting, and the information would then be communicated through normal channels.

Church Council action:

A motion was made and seconded to designate the location and dates of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger described the ongoing negotiation process.

There being no further discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.03.04 To designate [the Wisconsin Center, 400 W. Wisconsin Ave.] Milwaukee, Wisconsin — subject to the satisfactory completion of negotiations in the judgment of the secretary of this church — as the site for the Fifteenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, either August 5-10, 2019, or August 12-17, 2019; and
To authorize the Executive Committee to select another venue, if negotiations are not successful.

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

(Agenda I.F.; *Reference:* Presentation of the Treasurer *and* Report of the Treasurer)

The Rev. Linda O. Norman, treasurer of the ELCA, reported that unaudited results for fiscal year 2016 showed the churchwide organization had total operating revenue and support of \$69.0 million for the 12-month period ending Jan. 31, 2017 — \$2.7 million more than expenses of \$66.3 million. A Church Council transfer of \$1.04 million to the mission development fund left net revenue of \$1.63 million that she mentioned could be used, with council approval, to support the churchwide organization’s 2018 budget. In fiscal 2016, mission support of \$45.2 million was the greatest source of income. She presented details on each of the other sources that provided a total \$20.1 million of income. Contributions to ELCA World Hunger for the year totaled \$21.9 million, and expenses were \$21.4 million. Lutheran Disaster Response received \$6.5 million, primarily in support of the response to U.S. Floods and the Middle East-Europe refugee crisis and for general undesignated programs. *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* raised

\$113.4 million in revenue and commitments to date in the five-year campaign — 57.3 percent of the total goal of \$198 million by Jan. 31, 2019.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.G.)

The Rev. Vicki T. Garber chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, presented the committee's report.

ELCA FOUNDATION GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE

(Agenda I.G.1.; *Reference:* ELCA Foundation Task Force Report to the BFC)

Background:

At its November 2016 meeting, the Church Council established [CC16.11.40] “a task force to consider whether the ELCA Foundation should be separately incorporated from the churchwide organization or otherwise reorganized, and to make recommendations on governance and structure.”

The ELCA Foundation Task Force on Structure and Governance prepared a report outlining the potential structures and presented it to the ELCA Endowment Fund board of trustees at its March 16-17, 2017, meeting.

Church Council action:

The Rev. Vicki T. Garber chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, called on Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, executive director of the Mission Advancement unit, to present the report and recommendations of the ELCA Foundation Task Force on Structure and Governance.

Ms. Jackson-Skelton drew the attention of the Church Council to the written report and appendices provided by the task force. She explained the proposal that the task force made to the ELCA Endowment Fund board of trustees. She said the purpose of the transfer would be to strengthen the management of the Foundation's assets and provide donors greater transparency for their investments.

A motion was made on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee to affirm transferring deferred giving programs of the ELCA Foundation to the Endowment Fund.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Hans E. Becklin led the participants in prayer.

Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.03.05

To affirm the direction of the ELCA Foundation Task Force on Structure and Governance to move toward a structure in which the deferred giving programs of the ELCA Foundation are transferred to the Endowment Fund of the ELCA; and

To authorize the task force and staff to lay the groundwork for that transition, including the hiring of such advisors and consultants as reasonably necessary, with the goal of bringing a complete proposal, including the necessary implementing continuing resolutions, to the Church Council at its November 2017 meeting.

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.H.)

Mr. Paul G. Archer, chair of the Program and Services Committee, presented the committee's report. He provided a progress report on the development of a social statement on women and justice. He drew the attention of the Church

Council to the Corporate Social Responsibility succession plan, which the committee included in the *En Bloc* Items document, and to responses to two Churchwide Assembly actions that were also to be addressed *en bloc* regarding Campaign Zero and African descent Lutherans.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE FOR ADMINISTRATION

(Agenda I.I.; *Reference*: Report of the Executive for Administration)

The Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration, described how the comprehensive strategic plan developed through the Called Forward Together in Christ process would succeed the operational plan of the churchwide organization. She talked about how the Church Council retreat would inform implementation of the strategic plan.

REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

(Agenda II.A.; *Reference*: Planning and Evaluation Committee Report)

Deacon Christine P. Connell, chair of the Planning and Evaluation Committee, presented the committee's report.

2016 ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION OPERATIONAL PLAN REPORT

(Agenda II.A.1.; *Reference*: 2016 Annual Plan *and* Report of the Executive for Administration)

Deacon Christine P. Connell, chair of the Planning and Evaluation Committee, presented the committee's recommendation regarding the report of the churchwide organization on the 2016 operational plan. The committee had discussed how best to distribute the churchwide organization report to the congregations of this church. She made a motion on behalf of the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

There being no discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

**CC17.03.06 To receive the ELCA Churchwide Organization Operational Plan Report for 2016;
and
 To thank the staff of the churchwide organization for their ongoing work.**

The chair declared the motion had been adopted.

STRATEGY TOWARD AUTHENTIC DIVERSITY WITHIN THE ELCA (MOTION B)

(Agenda II.A.2.)

Background:

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.05.25] and subsequent actions and responses are recorded in the November 2016 minutes of the Church Council.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (Spring 2017)

The director for ethnic specific multicultural ministries and the racial justice program director convened a video conference (February 2017) with the presidents of the six ELCA ethnic associations to continue visioning relative to CA16.05.25 and current initiatives that intersect the action called for by the resolution. The current leadership/representation of the ethnic associations is comprised of active leaders from six different synods and five different regions. The broad relational reach of the ethnic associations is more than sufficient to produce a team representative of all nine regions as called for by CA16.05.25.

Currently, the ethnic associations with support of the Ethnic Specific Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice (ESMMRJ) team are engaged in updating and/or developing new strategic plans for mission and ministry relative to our

ELCA community with and among people of color. All previously adopted strategic plans will be ready for review by Church Council at its November 2018 meeting and, if needed, submitted for adoption at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

The racial justice program director convened a webinar, "Transforming White Privilege" <https://vimeo.com/200713450> (January 2017), to offer resources to assist synods in furthering work of cross cultural and racial justice engagement within synods and congregations. The link for the resource site for "Transforming White Privilege: A 21st Century Leadership Capacity" is: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/module/overview/transforming-white-privilege>.

The racial justice program director represented the ESMMRJ team at the March 2017 Conference of Bishops to introduce the work of the team and the ethnic associations as a resource to bishops, synods and congregations for deepening capacity for racial/cross cultural engagement. At that Conference of Bishops meeting, the racial justice program director and the executive for research and evaluation made a presentation to further the work of equipping synods and congregations towards becoming a more authentically diverse church.

Following are the recommendations to Church Council from the Domestic Mission unit:

- In lieu of creating a task force, the Domestic Mission unit recommends that Church Council authorize the collaborative efforts of the ethnic associations in concert with the Domestic Mission unit Ethnic Specific Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice Team as designated agency to develop a plan for implementation of action called for by CA16.05.25.
- The Church Council will receive a full report and further recommendations at its November 2017 meeting, including an analysis of the scope of work called for by the resolution, configuration of implementation team (pending consultation with Women of the ELCA and ecumenical partners) and projections of funds/support for implementation.

Church Council action:

Deacon Christine P. Connell, chair of the Planning and Evaluation Committee, made a motion on behalf of the committee.

Ms. Maren Hulden noted that the authors of the Churchwide Assembly motion expressed their appreciation for this response to the motion.

There being no further discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.03.07

To authorize the Domestic Mission unit and representatives of the ethnic specific ministry associations, in consultation with Conference of Bishops, Women of the ELCA, and ecumenical partners, to provide recommendations of names of persons to be appointed to the task force for implementation of action CA16.05.25;

That the task force be convened by the Domestic Mission unit comprised of both association and non-association participants with attention to regional representation, lay/clergy and gender balance; and

To receive a progress report and further recommendations including analysis of scope of work called for by Motion B, names of recommended members to the task force, and a projection of funds to support implementation at the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

U.S.A. NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

Vice President William B. Horne II announced that, in keeping with ELCA bylaw 14.41.01.g., the Executive Committee had met as members of the U.S.A. National Committee of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) on Feb. 6,

2017. The committee discussed the process for nominating someone for possible election as president of the LWF and decided not to make a nomination.

In response to a question, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton explained that tradition would indicate that the next LWF president would be from Africa, and it would be more appropriate for the U.S.A. National Committee to affirm the nomination of an African church if it was to take any action.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Agenda I.J.)

The Spring 2017 meeting of the Church Council went into executive session at 10:25 a.m. to receive a legal briefing from Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, associate general counsel, and to discuss a personnel matter. Minutes for meetings held in executive session are added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary.

The Church Council returned to open session at 10:30 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President William B. Horne II announced that the deadlines to introduce new business and to remove items from *en bloc* for separate consideration was at 10:30 a.m.

BREAK

The March 2017 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 10:31 a.m.

**Friday, March 31, 2017
Plenary Session II**

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the second plenary session to order at 10:48 a.m. in Red Oak Ballroom A of the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Ill.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

(Agenda II.B.; *Reference*: Report of the Secretary)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger highlighted several elements of his written report, including the revision of the roster manual, developing alternatives to the *Model Constitution of Congregations* for use by synodically authorized worshipping communities, digitization of the ELCA Yearbook and Office of the Secretary records, planning for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and transitions in the Office of the Secretary.

The secretary responded to questions about the digitization of records and the revised roster manual.

REPORT OF THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Agenda II.C.; *Reference*: Legal and Constitutional Review Committee Report)

The Rev. Stephen R. Herr, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, presented the committee's report. He explained a number of issues to be addressed *en bloc* by the Church Council, including designation of churchwide organization representatives to synod assemblies in 2017, authorization of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and Vice President William B. Horne II to designate the executor of a certain estate, adoption of the revised "Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," affirmation of the Luther Seminary Foundation bylaws and approval of amendments to the governing documents of 1517 Media (the Publishing House of the ELCA), the ELCA Deaconess Community, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Luther Seminary, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (subsequently to be a supporting organization of United Lutheran Seminary).

Pastor Herr responded to a question regarding changes to seminary governing documents and how they may relate to the recommendations of the Theological Education Advisory Council.

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY ASSET ACQUISITION OF TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY

(*Reference*: CU-TLS Asset Transfer Agreement, CU-TLS Cover Letter and CU Bylaws *and* Principles Regarding CU-TLS Reunion)

Background:

The boards of Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary, both in Columbus, Ohio, decided together to create a unified institution through an asset acquisition of Trinity Lutheran Seminary by Capital University. The Church Council considered the draft bylaws for Capital University, which incorporate Trinity Lutheran Seminary as a school of the university. In addition, the council considered a draft asset transfer agreement, to address how Capital University will acquire and utilize the assets of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, and a statement of principles regarding the Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary reunion.

Church Council action:

The Rev. Stephen R. Herr, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, drew the attention of the Church Council to documents provided by Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary regarding the university's acquisition of the seminary's assets. He indicated that the approval of the acquisition may be on the agenda of the council's November 2017 meeting.

A motion was made and seconded.

There being no further discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.03.08

To receive with appreciation the draft documents relating to the proposed asset acquisition of Trinity Lutheran Seminary by Capital University;

To thank the administrations and boards of Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary for engaging in thoughtful, forward-looking, spirit-filled discussions about the future of these institutions within the ecology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To state that merger actions involving these schools must comply with the requirements in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

The chair declared the motion had been adopted.

REPORT FROM THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

(Agenda II.D.; *Reference:* Report of the Conference of Bishops)

The Rev. William O. Gafkjen, bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, shared that almost half of the members of the Conference of Bishops met with members of Congress during a recent visit to Washington, D.C., with conversations focusing on federal immigration and refugee policies. He reflected on the changing roles of bishops in this church and society. He announced that six synods would hold elections for bishops at their spring assemblies, with at least three of those synods electing new bishops; and two other synods will elect new bishops later in 2017. In response to the Called Forward Together in Christ process that identified leadership and vibrant congregations as priorities for this church, the Conference of Bishops adopted a resolution calling this church to prayer. Bishop Gafkjen distributed the resolution and asked the Church Council to distribute it and accompanying prayers as widely as possible.

REPORT OF THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(Agenda II.E.; *Reference:* Communication Plan Outline, Communications Plan Matrix, Report of the Advisory Committee, Report Out Grid to Church Council *and* Theological Education Advisory Committee Report)

Mr. John W. Lohrmann, chair of the Theological Education Advisory Committee, presented the committee's reports. He discussed the objectives identified by the Theological Education Advisory Council and the advisory committee's efforts to implement those objectives. He detailed the work of the committee's six work groups: seminary health and sustainability, funding revisions and benchmarks, young adult leadership and discernment, ethnic specific education, assessment criteria and communications. He described the current context of ELCA seminaries and the committee's efforts to assess their progress toward achieving the objectives. He stated that the seminaries were already working toward many of the objectives when the committee was organized. He noted changes in seminary leadership and governance and attempts to improve relationships among seminaries and their supporting synods.

On behalf of the committee, Mr. Lohrmann made a motion to designate churchwide funding for a collaborative project among the seminaries to expand the number of persons of color preparing for rostered ministries in this church.

Mr. Lohrmann and the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration, responded to questions about the collaboration of ELCA seminaries and how the funds would be distributed. They said the designated funding would support an ongoing initiative among several of the seminaries and would encourage the participation of all seminaries.

Church Council members discussed how the motion related to the priorities identified by the Called Forward Together in Christ process and the specific goals for the project.

There being no further discussion, the Rev. Elizabeth E. Ekdale led the participants in prayer.

Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.03.09 To designate five percent of churchwide funding for seminaries in 2018 fiscal year for a focused, collaborative project among all seminaries that expands the number of persons of color preparing for rostered ministry in this church.

The chair declared the motion had been adopted.

Council members continued to discuss ways the Church Council may support the seminaries and their collaboration, as well as ways the seminaries might collaborate with other seminaries ecumenically and internationally.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

The Rev. Stephen R. Herr requested a point of personal privilege to announce that the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic had awarded Mr. Hans E. Becklin the 2016 A.R. Wentz Prize in American Lutheran History for his paper "Herbjorn Gausta's Good Shepherd (1895) at First Lutheran Church, Decorah, Iowa: Printed American Visual Culture as Painted Norwegian-American Propaganda."

NEW BUSINESS

(Agenda II.F.)

Vice President William B. Horne II announced that no Church Council members had proposed new business.

CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM *EN BLOC*

(Agenda II.G.)

Vice President William B. Horne II announced that no Church Council members had asked for an item to be removed from *en bloc* consideration.

***EN BLOC* APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ITEMS**

(Agenda II.H.; *Reference: En Bloc* Items, Responses to Synodical Resolutions *and* Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions)

Background:

An *en bloc* resolution or consent calendar was presented to the Church Council of routine or noncontroversial actions prepared by the council's committees (*En Bloc* Items). Responses to Synodical Resolutions and Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions were consent calendars of recommendations from staff of the churchwide organization regarding specific synod resolutions and Churchwide Assembly actions. Opportunity was provided to members of the Church Council to remove items from *en bloc* for separate consideration by the council. A single vote on those items remaining *en bloc* is taken without debate or amendment.

Church Council action:

A motion was made and seconded to take *en bloc* action on the recommendations on the consent calendars.

There being no discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.03.10 To take action *en bloc* on those items listed in *En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions and Responses to Synodical Resolutions that were not considered separately.

A. Audit Committee report

(Reference: Audit Committee Report)

Background:

ELCA continuing resolution 14.41.E15 provides that the Church Council's Audit Committee "shall assist the Budget and Finance Committee and the Church Council in fulfilling oversight of the churchwide organization's accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems, and audit functions, consistent with its responsibilities as specified in the charter recommended by the Audit Committee, reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee, and approved by the Church Council. ... In consultation with the executive for administration, the Audit Committee approves the appointment and dismissal of the director for internal auditing."

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10a To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing the review of the audited financial statements, management letter, and response of management for the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust's year ending December 31, 2016.

B. Revisions to 2017 synod mission support plans

Background:

ELCA provision 10.71 provides:

Each synod shall remit to the churchwide organization a percentage or amount of all donor-unrestricted receipts contributed to it by the congregations of the synod. The actual percentage or amount shall be determined through individual consultations with each synod. Consultations may recognize and include receipts other than unrestricted receipts in establishing and reporting the synod's remittance to the churchwide organization.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10b1 To acknowledge with appreciation the action of the following synods to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2017 mission support contributions by congregations for synod and churchwide ministries but estimating an adjustment in the projected amount to be shared:

Nebraska, Southeastern Pennsylvania and Upper Susquehanna synods; and

To further affirm that we will steward these gifts to maximize their impact in mission for the sake of "God's work. Our hands." in the world.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10b2 As a grateful church that affirms the partnership of congregation, synod and churchwide expressions, we affirm the percentage of sharing of 2017 mission support by congregations for synod and churchwide ministries:

Rocky Mountain, Western North Dakota and Northern Great Lakes synods;

As a Church Council, we thank the bishops and synod leaders of every synod as they strive to be faithful to shared commitments within the ELCA and to direct synod and churchwide staff, including the directors for evangelical mission, to deepen their partnership in efforts to strengthen financial support for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

We will steward these gifts to maximize their impact in mission for the sake of “God’s work. Our hands.” in the world.

C. Synod mission support plans for 2018

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10c

As a grateful church that affirms the partnership of congregation, synod and churchwide expressions, we acknowledge with gratitude the actions of the following synods and to affirm the percentage of sharing of 2018 mission support by congregations for synod and churchwide ministries:

Alaska, Northwest Washington, Southwestern Washington, Eastern Washington-Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, Pacifica, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountain, Western North Dakota, Eastern North Dakota, South Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, Northeastern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, Saint Paul Area, Southeastern Minnesota, Nebraska, Central States, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Southwestern Texas, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, Metropolitan Chicago, Northern Illinois, Central/Southern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Western Iowa, Northeastern Iowa, Northern Great Lakes, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, La Crosse Area Synod, Southeast Michigan, North/West Lower Michigan, Indiana-Kentucky, Northeastern Ohio, New Jersey, New England, Metropolitan New York, Upstate New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Lower Susquehanna, Upper Susquehanna, Delaware-Maryland, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., West Virginia-Western Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Southeastern, Florida-Bahamas and Caribbean synods;

As a Church Council, we thank the bishops and synod leaders of every synod as they strive to be faithful to shared commitments within the ELCA, and to direct synod and churchwide staff, including the directors for evangelical mission, to deepen their partnership in efforts to strengthen financial support for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

We further affirm that we will steward these gifts to maximize their impact in mission for the sake of “God’s work. Our hands.” in the world.

D. Establishment of a Church Council designated fund

Background:

Income projections indicated that the churchwide organization will experience a significant budget gap during fiscal year 2018 between estimated current fund income and usual expense levels. The Budget and Finance Committee

reviewed plans to navigate the implications of this gap in alignment with strategic directions identified during the Called Forward Together in Christ process.

A new Church Council designated fund was proposed equal to the excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2016 or \$1,630,000. These funds would be released in fiscal year 2018 to support budgeted operations of the churchwide organization. Notwithstanding this amount, the organization has exceeded its target cash position and continues to be compliant with the organizational cash flow policy.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10d **To approve a Church Council designated fund in the amount of \$1,630,000 representing the excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2016 for release in fiscal year 2018 for the budgeted operations of the ELCA churchwide organization.**

E. Designation of churchwide organization representatives at synod assemblies

(Reference: 2017 ELCA Synod Assemblies)

Background:

Provision S7.23. of the *Constitution for Synods* provides:

The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and such other official representatives of this church as may be designated from time to time by the Church Council shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly....

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton named the official representatives for the synod assemblies. The grid, "2017 ELCA Synod Assemblies," identified each representative to a respective synod assembly.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10e **To designate the persons identified in the "2017 ELCA Synod Assemblies" grid with voice but not vote in the meetings of the assigned Synod Assembly.**

F. Revised "Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America"

(Reference: Report of the Secretary *and* Roster Manual)

Background:

The Office of the Secretary, in consultation with other churchwide offices and units, reviewed and proposed changes for the "Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the ELCA." The last revision was approved by the Church Council at its November 2010 meeting. The secretary has provided periodic updates to reflect new or revised policies adopted by the Church Council and incorporated the constitutional amendments of subsequent churchwide assemblies. A summary of the significant changes was outlined in the Report of the Secretary.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10f **To approve the updated *Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* for use by synod bishops, synod staff members, and others who hold responsibilities for such matters in this church; and**
 To authorize the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to provide periodic updates reflecting new or revised policies subsequently adopted by the Church Council.

G. Approval of ELCA Deaconess Community bylaws

(Reference: Deaconess Community Amended Bylaws)

Background:

ELCA continuing resolution 16.12.A16.a. states:

The Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a separately incorporated ministry of theologically trained, professionally prepared women called to ministry and service by congregations, synods, and agencies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. ...

The ministry submitted an amendment to its bylaw 3.2 for the Church Council's consideration.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10g To approve the amended bylaws of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

H. Approval of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago constitution and bylaws

(Reference: Revised Constitution and Bylaws of LSTC)

Background:

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) proposed amendments to its constitution and bylaws. The Executive Committee reviewed the amendments at its January 2017 meeting as the LSTC board was to submit them for accreditation at its upcoming meeting. The Executive Committee recommended [EC17.01.02] the following action.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10h To approve the revised constitution and bylaws of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

I. Approval of Wartburg Theological Seminary bylaws and Articles of Incorporation

(Reference: Wartburg Bylaw Changes)

Background:

ELCA bylaw 8.21.02. provides:

Amendments to the governing documents of each separately incorporated seminary and each seminary cluster shall be submitted, upon recommendation of the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization, to the Church Council for approval.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10i To approve the amended bylaws and Articles of Incorporation of Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.

J. Approval of Luther Seminary bylaws

(Reference: Luther Seminary Bylaw Changes)

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10j To approve the amended bylaws of Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

K. Affirmation of Luther Seminary Foundation bylaws

(Reference: Luther Seminary Foundation Bylaw Changes)

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10k **To affirm the amended bylaws of Luther Seminary Foundation, Saint Paul, Minn.**

L. Approval of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia bylaws as a supporting organization for United Lutheran Seminary

(Reference: LTSP-ULS Bylaws 2017.2.6 draft)

Background:

Revised bylaws for the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia allowed it to continue administering the seminary's property as a supporting organization for the United Lutheran Seminary effective July 1, 2017.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10l **To approve the amended bylaws of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, to be subsequently a supporting organization for United Lutheran Seminary.**

M. Approval of 1517 Media Restated Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

(Reference: 1517 Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation Changes)

Background:

The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — also known as 1517 Media — is a separately incorporated ministry of this church. In accordance with ELCA bylaw 17.40.02., the Church Council reviews its procedures and programs to assure that churchwide purposes, policies, and objectives are being fulfilled.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10m **To approve the amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

N. Execution of a document

(Reference: Nomination by ELCA of Personal Representative)

Background:

Church Council authorization was needed for Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and Vice President William B. Horne II to execute a document nominating Ms. Nancy Lee Nelson to be a personal representative for the estate of Mr. Gary Mazzone.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10n **To authorize Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and Vice President William B. Horne II to execute the "Nomination by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of Personal Representative and Renunciation of Priority of Appointment."**

O. Corporate Social Responsibility succession plan

Background:

Ms. Patricia Zerega carries out the ELCA's corporate social responsibilities through a half-time contract arrangement with the Domestic Mission unit and Portico Benefit Services. At its November 2015 meeting the Church Council affirmed [CC15.11.52k] a succession plan developed by the unit to ensure the future of corporate social responsibility work beyond Ms. Zerega's planned retirement in June 2018. The succession plan was revised to specify that her successor begin service in January 2018, allowing a transition period of training. The revised plan included budgetary and contract considerations.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10o To affirm the succession plan proposed by the Domestic Mission unit for the Corporate Social Responsibility position.

P. Church Council nomination and elections

(Reference: Biographies)

Background:

The bylaws of certain organizations authorize the Church Council to nominate or elect members of their governing boards. ELCA bylaws 8.21.03. and 8.21.04. outline the parameters for the election or nomination of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries.

In keeping with ELCA constitutional provision 14.15., the Church Council filled vacancies on the governing boards of separately incorporated ministries created by the transition from a biennial to a triennial Churchwide Assembly.

Likewise, ELCA continuing resolution 20.62.A16. states:

In the event that the term of any member of the Committee on Appeals expires before that member's successor is elected, the Church Council may elect an individual in the same category—minister of Word and Sacrament or layperson—to serve on the Committee until the next Churchwide Assembly. A member elected by the Church Council who serves less than one-half of a term shall be eligible for election to a full term by the Churchwide Assembly.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10p1 To nominate to serve as chair of the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary advisory committee beginning June 1, 2017: The Rev. David C. Nagler.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10p2 To elect to the board of directors of Luther Seminary for a four-year term expiring in 2021: Ms. Joyce A. Thompsen, Mr. John E. Haugo, Mr. David L. Hayes, Mr. Thomas Holtz, Mr. David L. Rutlen, Mr. Carlos E. Peña and Ms. Kathleen Brekken;
To elect to the board of directors of The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago for a three-year term expiring in 2020: Mr. Harry C. Mueller;
To re-elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary for a three-year term expiring in 2020: The Rev. Gus Vinajeras and Ms. Danette Miller; and
To elect to the board of trustees of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, to be subsequently known as United Lutheran Seminary, for a three-year term expiring in 2020: The Rev. Nancy J. Deming.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10p3 To elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc., for a three-year term expiring in 2020: The Rev. Daniel F. Forehand.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10p4 To elect to the board of trustees of Portico Benefit Services (Board of Pensions of the ELCA) for a two-year term expiring in 2019: Ms. Lori A. Kirkland, Ms. Jennifer L. McGinnis and Mr. Morris L. Larson;
To elect to the board of trustees of the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA for a two-year term expiring in 2019: The Rev. Martín J. Lopez-Vega, Ms. Lori S. Fedyk and Ms. Nicole Hudson; and
To elect to the board of trustees of 1517 Media (Publishing House of the ELCA) for a two-year term expiring in 2019: The Rev. Pedro M. Suarez, Ms. Julie M. Stecker, Ms. Susan G. Worst and Mr. Fred D. Halvin.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.03.10p5 To elect to the Committee on Appeals for a two-year term expiring in 2019: The Rev. Paul J. Blom, the Rev. Christine A. Timm, Ms. Lesley M. Houston and Mr. George K. Rahdert.

Q. 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 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. The Office of the Presiding Bishop Synodical Relations team is trying to establish communication with the new director and new unit. We will report results in Spring 2017.

Church Council action [CC16.11.46mm]

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and to request 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.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (Spring 2017)

On December 1, 2016, the Rev. Walter S. May, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for synodical relations, met with Mr. Jan Engkasser, director for member engagement strategies at Thrivent Financial, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill. Pastor May informed Mr. Engkasser of the resolution brought to the Church Council and received feedback on the resolution. There was no further action taken. Mr. Engkasser agreed to share this information with Thrivent, and time for further discussion would be scheduled if needed. No date has been determined.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

**CC17.03.10q To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding Thrivent Choice Neutrality Policy;
To acknowledge that the intent of the resolution was shared with Thrivent Financial; and
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

R. Examining the Opportunities and Implications of Campaign Zero, a policy platform in affirmation of Black Lives Matter

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03d] and subsequent actions and responses are recorded in the November 2016 minutes of the Church Council.

Church Council Action [CC16.11.46bb]

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

Response from the Domestic Mission Unit (Spring 2017)

The ELCA social statement, “The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries” (2013), affirms the fundamental principles of the U.S. criminal justice system such as due process of law and the presumption of legal innocence. Yet, this church hears people’s cries that reflect the current system’s serious deficiencies. This church has long recognized that racism pervasively infects and affects all aspects of U.S. society. The social statement acknowledges that racism is central to the deep abiding problems of the current criminal justice system in the racial disparities, and the implicit and explicit racism that persists within.

In response to systemic racism, violence and the extrajudicial killings of black and brown people at the hands of law enforcement; #BlackLivesMatter originated from the African American community as a social media campaign in 2013. Black Lives Matter is an international community-based led movement of networks. The ELCA across its three expressions (churchwide organization, synods and congregations) has expressed support and participated in the Black Lives Matter movement in a variety of ways. Campaign Zero is a policy platform created by the Black Lives Matter movement to address and improve relationships between local law enforcement and the communities in which they serve.

The churchwide organization currently does not have resources to support an educational and/or organizing campaign primarily in support of Campaign Zero. However, Campaign Zero’s policy platform is in alignment with the social statement, “The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries.” The social statement encourages “members, congregations, synods, social ministry organizations and churchwide ministries to advocate intentionally and creatively for system reform consistent with the principles and recommendations set forth in this social statement.” A link to Campaign Zero has been added to the www.elca.org/blacklivesmatter webpage.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10r To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit on “Examining the Opportunities and Implications of Campaign Zero, a policy platform in affirmation of Black Lives Matter;” and

To acknowledge the Campaign Zero policy platform is in alignment with this church’s criminal justice social statement, but to recognize the insufficient resources for the churchwide organization to provide an educational or organizing campaign in support of Campaign Zero.

S. Call to Discernment on U.S. Foreign and Military Policy

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.06.32] and subsequent actions and responses are recorded in the November 2016 minutes of the Church Council.

Church Council action [CC16.11.46dd]

- To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop on a proposed timeline and outcome for 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.

Response from Office of the Presiding Bishop (Spring 2017)

The Office of the Presiding Bishop continues its work on convening up to 40 faith leaders, scholars and academics, ethicists, government and faith-based social service personnel with ecumenical and interfaith observers to reflect on expanding war efforts and their consequences. ELCA Federal Chaplaincy will synchronize a one-day “round table” with specialists and others at the Lutheran Center in conjunction with the 2018 ELCA Federal Chaplains Education and Training event (Thursday, July 26, 2018). Results will be a “Report on a Day of Discernment.” The report provides a resource that will be shared with others and used as a guide for underpinning further action. Participants invited to attend the “round table” will travel at their own expense. Presenters will be provided travel.

The basic framework for the “Day of Discernment” will structure sessions around major questions using teachings of social statements to provide an approach to the questions:

- 1) Context: “What’s going on? What are the facts?” (focused by questions and topics in the social policy resolution)
 - a) What does this expansion mean? For example:
 - i) Increased security and protecting the homeland vs. non-military use of power
 - ii) Government budget priorities and economic trade-offs: effects on social services
 - iii) Moral injury and care of vets
 - iv) Stand-off systems and use of drones
 - v) Militarization of domestic law enforcement
 - vi) Cybersystem warfare
 - b) Are there other elements from the memorial?
- 2) “What are theological perspectives (from statement) used for viewing such issues?”
- 3) “What are key discernment issues?”
- 4) “What Can/Should Be Done? A practical discernment (Results will be a report on content, experience and process)
- 5) “How do we turn this into a churchwide discernment?” — Lessons that may be central to aid churchwide discernment – provide resources (e.g., Study guide for elective use: adult forum, college classrooms, seminary classrooms, Bible studies, women’s studies (Women of the ELCA)

Budget planning continues to define costs for a temporary staff position one day per week for administrative support from January through June 2018. Estimated staff cost plus program costs provide an initial rough estimate between \$15,000 and \$20,000. The Office of the Presiding Bishop will work with the Office of the Treasurer to identify a possible source of funds for this event.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10s To receive with gratitude the progress report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop on the round table “Day of Discernment” event; and
To request that a final report be provided by the November 2018 Church Council meeting.

T. African Descent Lutherans

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.05.17] and subsequent actions and responses are recorded in the November 2016 minutes of the Church Council.

Church Council action [CC16.11.46gg]

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.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (Spring 2017)

Update on African descent observance of the 500th anniversary

The historical relevance of the 500th observance of the Reformation is not important to many of the ELCA’s African descent congregations. The financial demands in maintaining buildings in need of repair, declining worship attendance and the long-term effects of concentrated poverty have left these congregations in survival mode. Many also have had extended rostered pastoral vacancies and therefore do not have leadership to provide the educational background of the Reformation or news and information about Reformation observances. Many ELCA African descent worshipping communities hold in common a focus on culturally relevant worship as a communal practice with less of an emphasis on a culturally Euro-centric Lutheran identity. The language of the people is the language through which the gospel is to be heard, proclaimed, sung, danced and sacramentally embodied during worship and lived experiences (as referenced in the ELCA African Descent Strategic Plan, “Many Voices, Tell the Story, Create the Vision: Build Our Future”).

Staff members have met to 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. To ensure that the African American experience within the ELCA is represented in communication projects and storytelling, the African descent focus will weave into several projects in partnership with the Office of the Presiding Bishop. The ELCA Reformation Anniversary Grant Program, drawn from the Thrivent Financial Foundation Reformation Anniversary Grant, awarded grants to assist with 500th anniversary observances. Support has gone to those who seek to promote a wider understanding of the Reformation message and its significance for faith and life in the 21st century. In addition, the Office of the Presiding Bishop has promoted and/or recognized the following initiatives:

- **Storytelling Pilot Projects** – By using three known formal storytelling projects (Her-Stories, Rostered Women of Color, and Our Lutheran Life), the African descent focus will be elevated via individual stories and small group experiences. Using the communication channels in place, African descent leaders can share story posts (e.g., blogs) and encourage submissions to build and sustain the storytelling effort.
- **Grant Program Participation** – Several African descent congregations have already applied for grant funding to create culturally relevant programs within their communities.
- **Speakers Bureau** – African descent leadership can carve out a niche within this church to educate and raise awareness of the experiences of Lutheran identity from an African descent perspective.
- **The African Descent Catechism (ADC)** – This project is currently being developed by the Conference of International Black Lutherans. The ADC will be posted on elca500.org/With New Voices. There are also plans

to share the ADC at the African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA) biennial gathering in July 2017. Members attending will gain an understanding of the ADC, its intent and purposes. Following the ADLA biennial, a formal communication will be shared with congregations to lift up the ADC and encourage invitations to the Speaker's Bureau. Doing so opens dialogue about the ADC and creates an opportunity for a broader discussion about race relations along with opportunities for congregations to experience their faith in action. With intentional effort given to expanding the conversation, this discussion can live on past 2017.

- **African Descent Lutheran Association Biennial assembly** - The ADLA's 16th biennial gathering theme is, "Like a Rolling Stream, Let Justice Roll... Absalom, Jehu, and Beyond." In spirit of ecumenical activities, this gathering will be a partnership between the ADLA and the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE). In observance of the U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent, both organizations share a vital commitment to vigilance and action aimed at achieving justice for all people. A joint worship service will be held in honor of the 500th observance of the Reformation.
- **The Twelfth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation** will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation at a global level. The Domestic Mission unit's African Descent, African National & Latino ministries through consultation with executive director of the Global Mission unit, executive director of Domestic Mission unit and the executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations will participate in the assembly.

Update on the U.N. International Decade of People of African Descent

The International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 to 2024) was proclaimed in 2013 by U.N. General Assembly resolution 68/237. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action acknowledged that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism, and continue to be victims of these actions. Two hundred million people who identify themselves as being of African descent live in the Americas. Many millions more live in other parts of the world, outside of the African continent. The International Decade provides "a solid framework for the United Nations, member states, civil society and all other relevant actors to join together with people of African descent and take effective measures for the implementation of the program of activities in the spirit of recognition, justice and development."¹ The decade: 1) promotes respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; 2) promotes a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution; 3) adopts and strengthens national, regional and international legal frameworks and ensures their full and effective implementation.

Domestic Mission staff consulted with others and note that the ELCA has connected and will continue to connect with the Decade in the following ways:

- Members of the ADLA attended the launch of the Decade.
- Members of ADLA and the Ethnic Specific, Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice staff will continue attending events related to the Decade (when possible).
- ELCA assembly action CA16.05.15 affirms African Descent Lutheran Lives matter as well supports observing the Decade.
- Close collaboration with the Lutheran Office for World Community, Lutheran World Federation and ELCA's advocacy office at the U.N.
- A preaching workshop in Liberia; At the request of the Rev. D. Jensen Seyenkulo, bishop of the Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL), a preaching workshop was held in November 2016. This workshop, sponsored by Global Mission, was part of a pilot project to enhance leadership and capacity building of church companions. At the same time, it gave ELCA pastors of color a glimpse of mission in Africa. The workshop was facilitated by members of the Madagascar West and Central Africa team along with two congregationally called African American pastors of the ELCA. There were 82 participants from the LCL, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone and the Lutheran Church in Guinea (LCG). The LCG is a young and growing church being nurtured by the leadership of the LCL. The workshop consisted of three days of instruction emphasizing preaching law and gospel and practicing the art of "Celebration," an element of the Black (American) preaching

¹ From <http://www.un.org/en/events/africandescentdecade/background.shtml>.

style. Along with plenary sessions the participants worked in six small groups. On the fourth day, two participants from each small group preached a 12-minute sermon. The workshop was well received and facilitators from the ELCA who had never visited West Africa grew in their understanding of mission and their capacity to engage cross culturally.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.03.10t

To receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit on actions related to the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and the U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent; and

To thank the churchwide staff and the ethnic associations for their intentional efforts to educate and raise awareness of the contributions of African descent Lutherans as part of these observances.

Vice President Horne declared the motion had been adopted.

HONORING THE CHURCH COUNCIL CLASS OF 2017

(Agenda II.I.)

Background:

The 2011 Churchwide Assembly elected the following people to a six-year term on the Church Council: Mr. Paul G. Archer, Deacon Christine P. Connell, the Rev. Elizabeth E. Ekdale, Ms. Marjorie B. Ellis, Mr. Gary D. Gabrielson, the Rev. Vicki T. Garber, the Rev. Stephen R. Herr, the Rev. Loren D. Mellum, Mr. John M. Pederson and Ms. Pamela E. Pritt. The council elected the Rev. Karin I. Liebster to complete the unexpired term of the Rev. Robert G. Moore. Their service on the Church Council ends on Aug. 31, 2017.

Church Council discussion:

Vice President William B. Horne II invited forward all those Church Council members whose terms ended on Aug. 31, 2017.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton read a citation prepared for each of those members. She led the meeting's participants in prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda II.J.)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger shared several announcements regarding evaluations and scheduled activities.

HYMN AND PRAYER

(Agenda II.K.)

The Rev. Vicki T. Garber led the participants in singing "Lord, listen to your children praying," and she closed the meeting with prayer.

ADJOURNMENT

The eighty-ninth meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adjourned Friday, March 31, 2017, at 12:20 p.m.