

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN AMERICA**

Church Council

MINUTES

November 9-12, 2017

**Prepared by the
Office of the Secretary**

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**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
November 9-12, 2017
Chicago, Illinois**

The ninetieth meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was convened in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center at Chicago, Ill.

The Executive Committee of the Church Council met on Thursday, Nov. 9, 2017, followed at 1:30 p.m. by worship with Holy Communion in the Chapel of the Lutheran Center. The Rev. Kevin L. Strickland, assistant to the presiding bishop for worship, presided; the Rev. Linda Nou preached. Mr. James J.F. Jennings served as assisting minister, and Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman 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. Hans E. Becklin
Mr. Allan J. Bieber
Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman
Mr. Reid A. Christopherson
Pr. William E. Flippin Jr.
Pr. Dena M. Gable
Pr. Joyce M. Graue
Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson
Pr. Chad M. Huebner
Ms. Maren Hulden
Mr. James M. Hushagen
Mr. James J.F. Jennings
Ms. Carolyn D. Jewett (*excused*)
Pr. Peder J. Johanson
Ms. Emilee M. Le Blanc
Mr. John W. Lohrmann
Ms. Andrea Micovsky

Mr. Joseph T. Nolte
Pr. Linda Nou
Mr. Gary A. Pederson
Ms. Meri Jo Petrivelli
Mr. Clarence M. Smith
Mr. Ervin F. Sparapani
Pr. Jonathan Splichal Larson
Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford
Ms. Leslie J. Swenson
Pr. Lorie B. Tatum
Pr. James H. Utt
Mr. Vernon K. Veal
Pr. William O. Voss
Ms. Emma K. Wagner
Pr. Michael R. Ward
Ms. Man-Hei Yip
Mr. Seth M. Zimmann (*excused*)

Representatives of the Conference of Bishops

Bp. H. Jeffrey A. Clements, Region 5
Bp. Steven H. Delzer, Region 3
Bp. Suzanne D. Dillahunt, Region 6
Bp. R. Guy Erwin, Region 2
Bp. Richard H. Graham, Region 8

Bp. Brian D. Maas, Region 4
Bp. John S. Macholz, Region 7
Bp. B. Kirby Unti, Region 1
Bp. Herman R. Yoos III, Region 9

Resource people

Office of the Presiding Bishop:

Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration
Mr. Kenneth W. Inskip, executive for research and evaluation
Ms. Kathryn L. Johnson, director for ecumenical and inter-religious relations
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop for ecumenical and inter-religious relations
and assistant to the presiding bishop for theological discernment
Pr. Walter S. May, assistant to the presiding bishop for synodical relations
Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, assistant to the presiding bishop for governance
Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for justice for women
Pr. Kevin L. Strickland, assistant to the presiding bishop for worship
Ms. Barb Whalen, director for compensation, benefits and employee relations
Pr. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics

Office of the Secretary:

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

Office of the Treasurer:

Mr. Christopher J. Carpenter, director for budget planning

Unit staff:

Pr. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit
Ms. Mary Campbell, program director for the AMMPARO Strategy
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
Ms. Alaide Vilchis Ibarra, assistant director for migration policy and advocacy (*by telephone*)
Pr. David C. Wunsch, director for operations of the Global Mission unit

Separately incorporated ministries:

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director, Women of the ELCA
Mr. Doug Haugen, executive director, Lutheran Men in Mission
Ms. Beth A. Lewis, president, 1517 Media
Ms. Eva M. Roby, president, Mission Investment Fund
Pr. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, president, Portico Benefit Services

Press:

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, Mission Advancement

Ethnic Specific Ministry Association Guests:

Ms. Stephanie S. Baccam, representative, Asian and Pacific Islander Association
Pr. Joan A. Conroy, president, American Indian Alaskan Native Lutheran Association
Pr. Khader N. El-Yateem, president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
Pr. Martín J. López Vega Sr., president, Asociación Luterana de Ministerios Latinos
Pr. Russell L. Meyer, president, European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice
Pr. Lamont A. Wells, president, African Descent Lutheran Association

Ecumenical Guests:

Pr. Daniel Meeter, The Reformed Church in America
Pr. Elizabeth D. "Betsy" Miller, Moravian Church in America (*excused*)
Mr. Steven Nishibayashi, The Episcopal Church
Ms. Elona Street-Stewart, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Pr. Kyle R. Tau, The United Methodist Church (*excused*)

Thursday, November 9, 2017
Plenary Session I

CALL TO ORDER AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

(Agenda I.A.)

Background:

Agenda items were 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 3:01 p.m. and welcomed all participants. He introduced Ms. Man-Hei Yip, who had been nominated to fill a vacancy on the Church Council. The chair invited guests to identify themselves. He drew attention to the meeting resource materials and the deadlines for proposing new business and for removing items from *en bloc* consideration. He reminded Church Council members to update their ethics policy statement if necessary. He reviewed various elements of the proposed agenda.

A motion was made to adopt the agenda.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.11 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 March 31, 2017, meeting of the Church Council were provided to council members electronically. Minutes for meetings held in executive session were added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary.

The minutes of the council's Executive Committee meetings on March 30, May 22, June 20, Aug. 29 and Oct. 24, all in 2017, were provided electronically to Church Council members. 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 to approve the minutes and to ratify the actions of the Executive Committee.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.12 To approve the minutes of the March 31, 2017, meeting of the Church Council; and

To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the March 30, 2017, May 22, 2017, June 20, 2017, August 29, 2017, and October 24, 2017, meetings.

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

(Agenda I.C.; *Reference: Presiding Bishop Presentation and Presiding Bishop Report*)

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, summarized many of the activities around the world to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, including:

- worship at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 29, 2017;
- an event related to *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 29, 2017; and
- “Looking Back and Called Forward: A Commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation” on Oct. 31, 2017, at Lutheran Church of the Reformation, Washington, D.C.

The presiding bishop spoke about the Church Council's retreat, ELCA Future Directions 2025 and the combined meeting of the Future Directions Table with representatives of the council, Conference of Bishops and churchwide organization, especially as they influenced the agenda of this meeting. She mentioned the work of Lutheran Disaster Response in the aftermath of recent hurricanes, the Rostered Ministers Gathering in August 2017, news media placement through strategic communication, and *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

Presiding Bishop Eaton looked back at the Reformation observances, as well as the process and product of Called Forward Together in Christ. “There are some things that we said about who we believe God is calling us to be. How can we lead, woven together — congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, agencies and institutions — as the ELCA?”

“It is not culture or cuisine that makes us Lutherans. When we look at how we are knit together with other Lutherans around the globe, it is not about being from Europe,” she said. “My emphasis that ‘we are Lutheran’ is going to be a helpful way for us to get at how we are going to be ‘church together.’ I encourage us to continue to study the Small Catechism. It is our confessions, our theology that can bind us together. Probably one of the most frequently uttered sentences in the Lutheran world is ‘This is most certainly true.’ or ‘What is this?’ or ‘What does this mean?’ How do we find our identity and cohesion in that?”

“We serve in very different contexts. How do we balance the needs of our contexts with the catholicity of the Church? What do we all have in common and how much can we bend in order that the gospel might have free course in our particular parts of the world? This is a conversation we have been having in the Conference of Bishops and will continue to have. It is something I would like the Church Council to think about as well,” said the presiding bishop.

“If we continue to try to define ourselves by nationality, region of the country, age or craft, we are not being faithful to the gospel. That is an impediment to the gospel having free course in the world, and we are not going to hold together as the Church.”

Church Council members shared some of their experiences with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The presiding bishop talked about this church continuing with the theme of reconciliation which ran throughout the commemorations, not only with the Roman Catholic Church but with ecumenical partners, inter-religious representatives and with people of all races and ethnicities.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

(Agenda I.D.)

Ms. Elona Street-Stewart brought a greeting to the Church Council from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She serves as executive of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Ms. Street-Stewart reported on her church body's recognition of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and efforts to deal with racism.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

(Agenda I.E.; *Reference: Vice President Presentation and Vice President Report*)

Vice President William B. Horne II led the assembly in prayer and reflected on his roles as city manager of Clearwater, Fla., and as vice president of this church. He reported on his visits to the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Southeastern Iowa and Montana synod assemblies and to the Rostered Ministers Gathering, especially to a pre-gathering meeting of federal chaplains. He spoke of his work on a task force drafting a statement on inter-religious relations for consideration by the Conference of Bishops, Church Council and 2019 Churchwide Assembly. The vice president talked about a September 2017 meeting of the Executive Committee with the Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops, Administrative Team of the churchwide organization and the Future Directions Table, emphasizing commitments made to address issues of congregational vitality and sustainability in existing programs and in new initiatives. Commitments were also made to build leadership for the future of this church through continuing education, accountability, coaching and seminary reform. He noted that Mr. Reid A. Christopherson and he attended the October 2017 meeting of the Conference of Bishops with synod vice presidents. He mentioned his experiences with the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. He shared Ephesians 4:1-6 and contrasted it to a television news segment that highlighted the difficulty U.S. citizens have with listening to each other as they express their fears and pain about past injustices, current problems and the future. Among his expectations of Church Council members, the vice president listed: maintain a sense of humor, stay connected to our diverse spiritual practices, stay focused on priorities and what really matters to us as decision makers, and engage our ecumenical guests, churchwide staff and other visitors. He asked council members to communicate their expectations of him.

In response to a question, Vice President Horne commented on the involvement of representatives from the ELCA's colleges, universities and seminaries in conversations about this church's leadership priority, especially through the council's Theological Education Advisory Committee and through the Conference of Bishops.

SHARING OF CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY LESSONS

(Agenda I.F.)

Background:

Stemming from actions of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly to implement recommendations of the Living into the Future Together task force, the Domestic Mission unit engaged Ms. Linda D. Bobbitt to coordinate the Congregational Vitality Project. The project developed a Congregational Vitality Survey to describe and measure congregational vitality beyond membership growth and financial sustainability. Four pilot synods conducted the survey in their congregations.

Congregational vitality was an immediate priority that surfaced from the Called Forward Together in Christ process and the goals identified in ELCA Future Directions 2025.

Church Council discussion:

The Rev. R. Guy Erwin is bishop of the Southwest California Synod, one of the synods participating in the Congregational Vitality Project. The project put forward the idea that, to strengthen a congregation's vitality, it needs to think about its relationship with God, about relationships within the congregation and about its relationships with the community around it. Using a grant from the churchwide organization, the synod recruited several congregations with worshiping communities of 50 to 150 members and some financial stability to commit to an 18-month program of coaching and conversation. Members were encouraged to talk about what it was about the congregation that was important to them. Bishop Erwin said the congregations benefited from their members looking in the same direction

toward the future of the congregation. The synod was preparing to repeat the experiment with a second set of congregations.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.G.)

Vice President William B. Horne II presented the report of the Executive Committee.

CHURCH COUNCIL NOMINATION AND ELECTION

(Agenda I.G.1.; *Reference:* Biographies)

Background:

The 2013 Churchwide Assembly elected Ms. Amanda E. Briggs to a six-year term on the Church Council in an at-large position designated as Lay Female (person of color and/or whose primary language is other than English, preference for young adult). Ms. Briggs resigned her position on the council.

In accordance with ELCA bylaw 13.41.05., Secretary Wm Chris Boerger declared a vacancy on the Church Council. According to provisions 14.15. and 19.03., the Church Council elects someone to serve the balance of the term.

Acting as the council's nominating committee, the Executive Committee nominated [EC17.11.26] Ms. Man-Hei Yip, Quincy, Mass., to serve the balance of the term, which ends in 2019.

Church Council action:

Vice President William B. Horne II presented the background information.

A motion was made on behalf of the Executive Committee to elect Ms. Man-Hei Yip to the Church Council.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.13 To elect Ms. Man-Hei Yip, Quincy, Mass. (7B), to the Church Council for a term ending in 2019.

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted, and he welcome Ms. Yip as a member of the council.

FIRST BALLOT FOR THE ELECTION OF AN AT-LARGE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

(Agenda I.G.2.)

Background:

According to ELCA bylaw 14.41.01., the Executive Committee of the Church Council is composed of the churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and seven members of the Church Council elected by the council. At its November 2016 meeting, the Church Council elected [CC16.11.34] Ms. Marjorie B. Ellis, Ms. Maren Hulden and Mr. Allan J Bieber to a term ending in 2019 on the council's Executive Committee. The council also elected [CC17.03.03] the chairs of it four standing committees — Mr. Reid A. Christopherson, Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson, Mr. James M. Hushagen and Mr. Clarence M. Smith — to the Executive Committee. The term of Ms. Ellis on the Church Council ended on Aug. 31, 2017.

The process for the election of the Executive Committee member was to be as follows:

- a. The first ballot shall be limited to eligible members of the Church Council.
- b. Anyone wishing to withdraw may do so immediately after the announcement of the first ballot results and before the casting of the second ballot.
- c. The second ballot shall be limited to the two people (plus ties) receiving the greatest number of votes on the first ballot. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes cast on the second ballot shall be elected.
- d. Upon completion of the balloting, the Executive Committee shall be deemed constituted.

Church Council action:

Vice President William B. Horne II asked that the ballots be distributed among the members of the Church Council, and the chair invited Mr. Hans E. Becklin to lead the participants in prayer.

After all the ballots had been completed and collected, Vice President Horne declared that the first ballot was closed.

ELECTION OF A NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBER

(Agenda I.G.3.; *Reference:* Biographies)

Background:

The 2013 Churchwide Assembly elected the Rev. Ruth E. Hamilton, Atlanta, Ga. (9D), to a six-year term on the Nominating Committee in a position designated for a minister of Word and Sacrament. Pastor Hamilton resigned that position. ELCA bylaw 19.11.01. states that the Nominating Committee “shall consist of at least one member but no more than three members from any region.” Pastor Hamilton’s resignation resulted in no member of the Nominating Committee serving from Region 9. In accordance with ELCA bylaw 13.41.05., Secretary Wm Chris Boerger declared a vacancy on the committee.

According to provisions 14.15. and 19.03., the Church Council elects someone to serve the balance of the term.

Acting as the council’s nominating committee, the Executive Committee nominated [EC17.11.25] the Rev. Tiffany C. Chaney, Montgomery, Ala. (9D), and the Rev. Richard (Rick) J. Goeres, Norfolk, Va. (9A), for possible election to serve the balance of the term, which ends in 2019. A majority of votes cast by members of the Church Council will elect.

Church Council action:

Vice President William B. Horne II presented the background information. He asked that ballots be distributed among the Church Council members with the names of the Rev. Tiffany C. Chaney and the Rev. Richard (Rick) J. Goeres for possible election to the Nominating Committee.

After all the ballots had been completed and collected, the chair declared that the ballot was closed.

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION (LWF) GENDER JUSTICE POLICY

(Agenda I.G.4.; *Reference:* LWF Gender Justice Policy)

Background:

The Administrative Team reported to the Executive Committee in October 2017 that it had affirmed the principles and methodology sections of the Lutheran World Federation Gender Justice Policy to inform and guide the work of the churchwide organization.

Church Council action:

Vice President William B. Horne II noted that the Executive Committee was recommending that this whole church study and consider using the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Gender Justice Policy.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton called the LWF Gender Justice Policy a comprehensive document being studied by member churches of the LWF. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land had adopted the policy. The presiding bishop spoke of some of the gender justice issues that women raised at the LWF assembly in Namibia.

A motion was made on behalf of the Executive Committee to commend the LWF Gender Justice Policy to this church for study and consideration.

Council members discussed how the LWF Gender Justice Policy related to the social statement on women and justice being developed for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.14 To commend the Lutheran World Federation Gender Justice Policy to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for study and consideration.

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Agenda I.G.5.)

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council went into executive session at 4:30 p.m. 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 4:40 p.m.

REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Agenda I.G.6.)

Vice President William B. Horne II announced that the Church Council had elected [CC17.11.15] the treasurer of the ELCA in executive session. The name of the treasurer was being held in confidence until the appropriate entities had been informed.

ELECTION OF A NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBER (CONTINUED)

(Agenda I.G.3.)

Vice President William B. Horne II announced the results of the election of a Nominating Committee member.

VOTED:

CC17.11.16 To elect the Rev. Tiffany C. Chaney, Montgomery, Ala. (9D), to the Nominating Committee for a term ending in 2019.

Vice President Horne declared that Pastor Chaney had been elected to the Nominating Committee.

REPORT OF THE FIRST BALLOT FOR THE ELECTION OF AT-LARGE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

(Agenda I.G.7.)

Vice President William B. Horne II presented the results of the first ballot for the election of Executive Committee members. The names of Ms. Meri Jo Petrivelli and Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford would appear on the second ballot.

REPORT OF THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.H.; *Reference:* Joint Leadership Table Summary, TEAC [Advisory Committee] Presentation, TEAC [Advisory Committee] Report *and* TEAC Recommendations and Implementing Strategies)

Background:

At its April 2016 meeting, the Church Council created [CC16.04.05] its Theological Education Advisory Committee, while accepting and referring to the committee the recommendations of the former Theological Education Advisory Council.

On March 31, 2017, the council voted [CC17.0.09]:

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.

Church Council discussion:

Mr. John W. Lohrmann, chair of the Theological Education Advisory Committee, presented the committee's report to the Church Council. He outlined how the ELCA had addressed matters of theological education since this church was established and until the committee was constituted. The committee had a shared sense of urgency regarding identifying, developing and continually forming leaders. The overarching objectives of the committee were to study system conversion, seminaries, lay schools and training sites, and assessments and best practices. The committee organized itself into working groups to review elements of each objective. Mr. Lohrmann described the metrics being used to analyze the theological education network, as well as some of the changes that had occurred since the committee began its work. A theological roundtable was forming a network of theological education networks.

Participants discussed the number of M.Div. students at ELCA seminaries, the willingness of seminary administrations to consider a single-seminary governance structure, the role of the Church Council in the governance of the seminaries and the possibility of gaining citizenship for undocumented seminarians.

A motion was made to direct the committee to define a single-seminary governance structure, to adopt enterprise-wide seminary fiscal metrics and to request a report.

Participants talked more about the fiscal metrics developed to assess the sustainability of the theological education network.

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

VOTED:

**CC17.11.17 To direct the Theological Education Advisory Committee to define a single seminary governance structure; and
To adopt enterprise-wide seminary fiscal metrics and to request that a report on results be brought to the April 2018 meeting of Church Council.**

The chair declared that the motion had been adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ELCA FOUNDATION TASK FORCE ON STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE PROPOSAL
(Agenda I.J.; *Reference:* ELCA Foundation Task Force Presentation, ELCA Foundation Task Force Proposal, Endowment Fund Bylaws *and* Proposed Continuing Resolution Changes)

Background:

Staff of the churchwide organization initiated conversations regarding the possibility of separately incorporating the ELCA Foundation, which currently relates to the churchwide organization through the Mission Advancement unit. Continuing resolution 16.12.D11. states:

The ELCA Foundation shall provide major gift and deferred giving programs, including educational and support services, for individual donors, congregations, synods, agencies, and related institutions, and shall promote pooled investment services for endowment funds of this church, its congregations, synods, agencies, and affiliated institutions.

External firms that supply legal counsel, fundraising consulting and investment consulting provided advice.

At its November 2016 meeting, the Church Council voted [CC16.11.40]:

To establish 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 task force gave the Endowment Fund of the ELCA board of trustees and the Church Council a progress report, and on March 31, 2017, the council 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 task force presented its summary report and recommendations to the October 2017 meeting of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA board of trustees, which acted on the proposals contingent upon Church Council approval.

Church Council discussion:

Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford, chair of the ELCA Foundation Task Force on Structure and Governance, presented the task force's assignment and discussed the progress report provided in March 2017. She said the task force was now proposing a series of actions that would be considered in detail by the Budget and Finance, Legal and Constitutional Review, and Planning and Evaluation committees. The task force had considered the governance structure needed to best steward this church's investment assets. She described the management of annuities, trusts and funds through the ELCA Foundation and the Endowment Fund of the ELCA and how they were governed. She outlined how those assets would be managed through a proposed governance structure and what would need to happen to put the proposed governance in place. The task force identified risks associated with the changes and methods to mitigate each risk. She laid out a time line for the proposed changes. She mentioned that the task force presented its report and recommendations to the October 2017 meeting of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA board of trustees, which affirmed the proposals.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE SCHEDULED RECESS

Vice President William B. Horne II asked for and received consensus to extend the plenary session.

UPDATE ON *ALWAYS BEING MADE NEW: THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ELCA*

(Agenda I.I.)

Background:

The 2013 Churchwide Assembly approved [CA13.05.20] the 25th Anniversary Campaign, which came to be known as *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. The campaign began on Feb. 1, 2014, and its five-year goal was to raise \$198 million in support of specific new and expanded churchwide ministries above and beyond those supported by regular offerings.

Church Council discussion:

Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, executive director of the Mission Advancement unit, noted that the Rev. Ronald T. Glusenkamp, director for *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, would present a detailed progress report on the campaign to the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council. Pastor Glusenkamp would not be available for the update to the Church Council which was postponed until the second plenary.

UPDATE ON LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

(Agenda I.K.; *Reference:* Lutheran Disaster Response Presentation)

Ms. Marie Anne Sliwinski, program director for disaster response and sustainable development in the Global Mission unit, presented statistics about this church's international disaster responses for 2017. She commented on relief efforts in Cuba in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma and in Nepal following a 2015 earthquake and aftershocks.

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit, talked about the ELCA's response to human-made disasters such as the strategy to Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO). He also mentioned the relationship between congregational vitality and this church's need to help congregations as they cope with natural disasters.

The Rev. Michael R. Stadie, program director for Lutheran Disaster Response, described the ELCA's response to the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey in Texas.

The Rev. Joseph K. Chu, associate program director for Lutheran Disaster Response, reported on work being done in Florida in response to Hurricane Irma.

Relief efforts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in response to Hurricanes Maria and Irma were detailed by Pastor Chu and the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, executive director of the Global Mission unit.

Pastor Stadie talked about the damage caused by wildfires burning in several western states, especially Montana and California.

The Rev. Martín J. López Vega Sr., pastor of Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Getsemani in Dorado, Puerto Rico, expressed appreciation for the ELCA's relief efforts being carried out throughout the Caribbean Synod.

HYMN AND PRAYER

(Agenda I.L.; *Reference: Veterans Day Prayer 2017*)

The Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson asked specific individuals for ways in which others may pray for them.

Mr. Reid A. Christopherson led the gathering in a prayer in recognition of Veterans Day.

Mr. Clarence M. Smith provided musical accompaniment for the singing of a hymn.

RECESS

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council recessed for Thursday, Nov. 9, 2016, at 6:43 p.m.

**Friday, November 10, 2017
Plenary Session II**

Members of the Church Council gathered in meetings of the council's Budget and Finance, Legal and Constitutional Review, Planning and Evaluation and Program and Services committees beginning at approximately 9:00 a.m. in the Lutheran Center. The meetings recessed for a Midday Prayer Service that began at 12:15 p.m. in the Chapel of the Lutheran Center led by the Rev. Brian D. Maas, bishop of the Nebraska Synod. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton installed Ms. Man-Hei Yip as a member of the Church Council.

Committee meetings resumed at approximately 1:30 p.m. and adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the second plenary session to order at 3:44 p.m. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Agenda II.A.)

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council went into executive session for a legal briefing. 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 4:01 p.m.

SECOND BALLOT FOR THE ELECTION OF AN AT-LARGE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

(Agenda II.B.)

Vice President William B. Horne II asked that ballots be distributed among the Church Council members with the names of Ms. Meri Jo Petrivelli and Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford for possible election to the Executive Committee.

The Rev. Joyce M. Graue led the council in prayer.

After all the ballots had been completed and collected, the chair declared that the second ballot was closed.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

(Agenda II.C.; *Reference: Secretary Presentation and Secretary Report*)

The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, secretary of the ELCA, reported on planning for the Churchwide Assembly to be held August 5-10, 2019, in Milwaukee, Wis. The allocation of voting members by synod was included as an appendix to the secretary's written report. Deacons will be counted among lay voting members; the 2019 Churchwide Assembly may decide to change that for future assemblies. The secretary requested that the Church Council allocate an additional nine voting members to five certain synods so that each synod would have at least six voting members at the assembly. He advised the council that it would receive a proposal to allow voting members to identify possible candidates for secretary of this church in advance of the assembly. He explained that the 2019 Churchwide Assembly would need to elect at least five Church Council members in addition to those elected from synod nominations.

Secretary Boerger announced that Mr. Phillip H. Harris would retire on Dec. 31, 2017. On Nov. 1, 2017, Mr. Harris became of counsel and Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff became general counsel of the ELCA. The council expressed its appreciation with applause.

The summary of congregational annual reports was included as an appendix to the secretary's written report. The secretary referred to the summary as a report of this church's health. He presented and interpreted specific statistics from the summary. He emphasized that 68.5 percent of ELCA congregations averaged fewer than 100 people in worship each week; congregations shared 4.8 percent of their receipts in mission support and 5.2 percent in other benevolence; and the annual reports included information about how congregations assess their vitality.

Secretary Boerger described responses prepared by the Office of the Secretary regarding matters referred from the 2016 Churchwide Assembly — gender identity, vice president compensation and a review of governing documents for items that contribute to structural racism. He also outlined a variety of constitutional changes being considered for possible proposal to the Church Council and transmission to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, including those that would grant Church Council members, not elected voting members by their synods, voice and vote at churchwide assemblies.

SECOND BALLOT FOR THE ELECTION OF AT-LARGE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER (CONTINUED)

(Agenda II.B.)

Vice President William B. Horne II presented the results of the second ballot for the election of an Executive Committee member.

VOTED:

CC17.11.18 To elect Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford to a term ending in 2019 on the Executive Committee of the Church Council.

Vice President Horne declared that Ms. Stafford was elected to the Executive Committee.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

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

The Rev. William O. Gafkjen, bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, reported on several elements of the conference's October 2017 meeting. The Synodical-Churchwide Relations Committee met with staff of the Domestic Mission unit to assess the consequences of eliminating the position of regional coordinator. The meeting of the Conference of Bishops featured interest groups on two topics: who presides at Holy Communion; and congregations that are closing and the legacy of a congregation.

Bishop Gafkjen reflected on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, noting that members of the Conference of Bishops had been involved in many commemorations.

UPDATE ON THE HEARING PROCESS FOR THE WOMEN AND JUSTICE SOCIAL STATEMENT

(Agenda II.E.; *Reference:* Women and Justice Social Statement Briefing)

Background:

Ms. Leslie J. Swenson and the Rev. James H. Utt served as Church Council liaisons to the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ, which was developing a social statement on women and justice for consideration by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for justice for women, and the Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics, provided staff support to the task force.

Church Council discussion:

Vice President William B. Horne II announced that members of the Church Council would receive copies of the draft social statement on women and justice on Nov. 13, 2017, and the document would become public on Nov. 15, 2017.

Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for justice for women, explained the five-year process used to develop the draft social statement. The task force produced a study document that attracted responses from 1,100 individuals and 450 groups. The draft social statement was structured in two parts, a basic statement and a fuller explanation. Ms. Streufert presented the outline of the draft social statement.

The Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics, indicated that copies of the draft social statement would be mailed to ELCA congregations on Nov. 15, 2017, when the document becomes public. The task force will receive comments on the draft statement until Sept. 30, 2018. The task force will use feedback on the draft statement to prepare

a proposed statement that it will issue in February 2019. The Conference of Bishops and Church Council will review the proposed statement, synod assemblies will likely send memorials regarding the proposed statement to the Churchwide Assembly, and the Church Council will recommend the text of the statement to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for consideration. The comment period until Sept. 30, 2018, is when ELCA members are encouraged to read the draft social statement and respond. Synods authorize hearings on the draft statement. Pastor Willer asked council members to serve as ambassadors for the draft, urging each synod to host a hearing with a recorder and a representative of the task force. He asked that the Church Council hold a hearing in Spring 2018.

Ms. Leslie J. Swenson and the Rev. James H. Utt also asked the council members to hold a hearing and to serve as ambassadors for the draft statement in their congregations and synods.

PRIMER ON THE AMMPARO STRATEGY

(Agenda II.F.; *Reference*: AMMPARO Presentation)

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit, Ms. Mary Campbell, program director for the AMMPARO Strategy, and Ms. Alaide Vilchis Ibarra, assistant director for migration policy and advocacy in the ELCA Washington Office, provided a primer for the Church Council about the AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Representation and Opportunities) Strategy.

UPDATE ON *ALWAYS BEING MADE NEW: THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ELCA* (CONTINUED)

(Agenda I.I.; *Reference*: Campaign for the ELCA Presentation)

Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, executive director of the Mission Advancement unit, said that in the first 44 of 60 months, *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* received \$122.6 million in cash and \$5.7 million in outstanding commitments for a total \$128.2 million or 64.8 percent of the campaign's \$198 million goal. The comprehensive campaign established goals according to several priorities, and donors could make undesignated gifts to be used where needed most among the campaign priorities. The \$7 million goal for the global ministries priority, supporting 14 evangelism projects in companion churches, was adjusted to \$5.75 million because three of the projects proved not to be feasible. The \$1.25 million portion of the goal was moved to the "Where Needed Most" category, which had received more than \$5.5 million and was projected to receive more than \$9 million.

Ms. Jackson-Skelton said it was expected that ELCA World Hunger would receive \$113 million, which was slightly short of its five-year goal of \$115 million, but the priority set annual records in giving during the course of the campaign. Since Aug. 25, 2017, Lutheran Disaster Response had received \$10.8 million in gifts, bringing total disaster giving to \$12.44 million as of Nov. 5, 2017. This generous response, largely in reaction to hurricanes, may have an effect on end-of-year giving to ELCA World Hunger.

Ms. Jackson-Skelton outlined the strengths and challenges of the campaign, and she analyzed some of the lessons learned during the campaign that may inform future fund-raising efforts of the ELCA. The final year of the campaign will focus on leadership, which was one of the priorities of this church identified through the Called Forward Together in Christ process.

Mr. Joseph T. Nolte, the Church Council's representative on the campaign committee, talked about the roles of council members in the campaign. He requested that Church Council members review the campaign and submit the names of prospective donors. He suggested that council members involve their congregations, invite campaign interpreters to visit, make additional gifts and talk with their friends and networks about the campaign.

ECUMENICAL GREETINGS

(Agenda II.G.)

Mr. Steven Nishibayashi brought a greeting to the Church Council from The Episcopal Church. He previewed the Episcopal Triennial General Convention to be held in July 2018 in Austin, Texas. He thanked the council for the service of the Rev. Stephen R. Herr as the ELCA's ecumenical liaison to the Episcopal Executive Council for the past five years.

The Rev. Daniel Meeter brought a greeting from the Reformed Church in America. He is pastor of Old First Reformed Church in Brooklyn, N.Y. He reflected on the full communion relationship between the Reformed churches and the ELCA, which the Reformed Church in America was preparing to re-examine.

POSTPONEMENT OF THE SCHEDULED RECESS

Vice President William B. Horne II asked for and received consensus to extend the plenary session.

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON FAITH

(Agenda II.H.)

Ms. Maren Hulden shared a personal reflection on faith that sustained her through a difficult year and through the joys of childbirth and parenting.

CHURCH COUNCIL JOYS AND CONCERNS

(Agenda II.I.)

The Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson asked specific individuals for ways in which others may pray for them.

Ms. Meri Jo Petrivelli led the gathering in prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda II.J.)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger asked Church Council members to complete evaluations of their committee meetings. He reminded the council of the deadline for new business and for removing items from *en bloc* consideration.

HYMN AND PRAYER

(Agenda II.K.)

Mr. Clarence M. Smith provided musical accompaniment for the singing of a hymn.

RECESS

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 6:17 p.m. for Friday, November 10, 2017.

Saturday, November 11, 2017
Plenary Session III

The Board Development Committee met at 7:00 a.m. in the Advent Conference Room of the Lutheran Center.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the third plenary session to order at 9:01 a.m. in the Augsburg Conference Room of the Lutheran Center.

BIBLE STUDY

(Agenda III.A.)

The Rev. Herman R. Yoos III, bishop of the South Carolina Synod, led the participants in a study of Matthew 15:21-28, the story of the Syrophenician woman, reflecting on current immigration discussions in the United States.

CAFÉ CONVERSATION WITH ETHNIC SPECIFIC MINISTRY ASSOCIATIONS

(Agenda III.B.; *Reference:* Ethnic Specific Ministries Reports)

The Rev. Albert Starr Jr., director for ethnic specific and multicultural ministries, noted that the six ethnic specific ministry associations work together to provide this church with a collective voice, from its membership, leading the ELCA to become the multicultural church God is calling it to be.

The Rev. Martín J. López Vega Sr., president, Asociación Luterana de Ministerios Latinos, related the story of a young man who was deported during the process of naturalization. He emphasized this church's role in proclaiming God's grace for immigrants as the United States prepared to rescind its Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy.

The Rev. Khader N. El-Yateem, president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, said the liberty of everyone in this church is bound together. Being liberated by grace demands that the ELCA be intentional about treating others as equal partners and not as guests. He called on the Church Council to reaffirm this church's commitment to peace in the Middle East in light of current affairs there, every congregation of the ELCA welcoming the most vulnerable as they make this church their new spiritual home.

The Rev. Joan A. Conroy, president, American Indian Alaskan Native Lutheran Association, told the story of a young man who had become discouraged during the ELCA's candidacy process. She asked the Church Council to do what it could to consider the culture of the candidate while lifting up people to become leaders in this church.

The Rev. Russell L. Meyer, president, European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice, talked about recent events across the United States surrounding the removal of confederate monuments. He said the association was intent on doing a moral inventory of the systemic privilege that people of European descent have in this church and society.

Ms. Stephanie S. Baccam, representative, Asian and Pacific Islander Association, noted that the Rev. Gigie Sijera Grant was the association's president. Ms. Baccam raised a series of changing issues the ELCA faces ministering in the United States, and she challenged this church to train pastors coming from Asia in Lutheran theology. She described the Asian Lutheran International Conference in February 2017 in Indonesia and plans for the association's assembly in April 2018 in Rochester, Minn.

The Rev. Lamont A. Wells, president, African Descent Lutheran Association, spoke of the association's 2017 assembly in Philadelphia and plans for its next biennial assembly to accompany the 2019 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee with the other ethnic specific ministry associations. The recent assembly, held jointly with the Union of Black Episcopalians, emphasized ecumenical and cross-cultural relations as well as internalized oppression, strengthening the ELCA and communities, and health and wellness. He asked that cultural proficiency be an element of this church's priorities of congregational vitality and leadership, that diversity be given a more prominent place in the churchwide organization and that the communication staff and its work illustrate diversity.

In small groups, each facilitated by one of the association representatives, participants discussed where in the practices and principles of the ELCA that this church inadvertently fails to make room for the full engagement of the gifts of people of color in every aspect of its life. Notes from the conversations were given to the association representatives.

BREAK

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 10:40 a.m. and reconvened at 10:50 a.m.

OPEN DISCUSSION ON SUSTAINABILITY AND CHURCH STRUCTURES

(Agenda III.C.; *Reference:* Discussion starter on Governance and the ELCA *and* Sustainability and Church Structures Presentation)

Vice President William B. Horne II recalled a request raised during the Church Council's retreat in Spring 2017 to consider the governance of the ELCA in more detail. He referred to the reference documents to illustrate results from the retreat. He asked Church Council members to organize themselves in the same groups as the previous session but with a liaison bishop in each group. Each group was to discuss the following four questions and prepare to report two or three themes from its discussion.

- What does sustainability mean in our changing context?
- What are the criteria to determine sustainability?
- How could the Future Directions Table assist the Church Council in developing a process or framework for sustainability?
- In what ways could the council emphasize a sustainability framework at every meeting?

One group reported discussing topics of engaging communities of color and the church as a whole — re-rooting in the community by addressing the community's mission, retooling leaders with the necessary information, education and practices, and reinvesting resources to make these things happen.

Another group described its themes as legacy vs. innovation — understanding the past and being able to move forward, new forms and techniques of theological education, all expressions of this church being flexible with the other expressions, and using the mission of this church to guide change.

Vice President Horne led the participants in small-group discussions of church structures by considering six points.

- What are the most important factors contributing to the effective governance of the ELCA by the Church Council?
- What are the boundaries in authority and decision making among the Church Council, the presiding bishop and other officers, and the churchwide organization's Administrative Team?
- How can we continue to strengthen the way the Church Council, Conference of Bishops and Administrative Team share the leadership of this church?
- How can we strengthen the advice and input of the Conference of Bishops to the Church Council?
- What does a culture of willing accountability mean in the way leadership and relationships are conducted? (Goal 5 of ELCA Future Directions 2025)
- Are there alternatives to typical governance that are right for our context and time — permission giving, exploration, action, reflection rather than command and control?

One group mentioned discussing the need to enhance communication among the leadership groups and staff, to pass on the history and lessons of one leadership cohort to the next, and to make all leaders feel welcome to contribute.

Another group reported talking about themes of strengthening the relationship between the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, clarifying the council's relationship with the Administrative Team, and sorting out where the authority is to allocate resources between churchwide assemblies.

Vice President Horne collected notes from each of the groups.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER

(Agenda III.D.)

Vice President William B. Horne II announced the deadline for new business and for removing items from *en bloc* consideration.

Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford led the gathering in prayer and table grace.

RECESS

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 12:05 p.m.

Saturday, November 11, 2017
Plenary Session IV

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the fourth plenary session to order at 1:01 p.m. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Agenda IV.A.)

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council went into executive session to receive a confidential report. 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 1:37 p.m.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

(Agenda IV.B.; *Reference*: Treasurer Presentation *and* Treasurer Report)

The Rev. Linda O. Norman, treasurer of the ELCA, reported on the financial results of the churchwide organization for the eight-month period ending Sept. 30, 2017. She said that total operating revenue and support for the churchwide organization was \$41.8 million — 66.2 percent from mission support. Expenses were \$41.9 million or \$3.7 million more than budgeted. Units and offices were spending within about 91.4 percent of authorization. ELCA World Hunger began the year with a \$5.3 million balance, received \$9.8 million and distributed \$11.8 million to have a current balance of \$3.3 million. ELCA World Hunger was expected to receive less than its \$24 million goal for 2017. *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* received \$128.2 million in revenue and commitments or 64.8 percent of its five-year goal of \$198 million. The treasurer reviewed the management of the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust and ELCA deferred gift programs, especially as it may apply to the structure and governance of the ELCA Foundation. She noted that cash flow had fluctuated during the year but well within this church's cash management policy.

PRESENTATION OF THE *SERVUS DEI* AWARD TO TREASURER LINDA O. NORMAN

(Agenda IV.C.)

Background:

The established practice of a predecessor church body, bestowing the *Servus Dei* award, was carried forward into the ELCA as a way of expressing special gratitude for those completing their service as an officer of the church.

Church Council action:

Vice President William B. Horne II read the following citation.

There being no discussion, the chair called for a vote by acclamation.

VOTED:

CC17.11.19

To approve the following citation by acclamation:

The Rev. Linda Norman has for six years devoted generous amounts of time and steadfast commitment and offered her exceptional gifts of leadership in her calling as treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As treasurer, she has shared her financial expertise and has conducted her work with conscientious ability and a gracious manner. We are grateful for Linda's sound financial advice, collaborative spirit, effective stewardship of resources and support of the mission of

this church. During her tenure, Linda demonstrated forthright commitment to the faith and genuine compassion for the people in congregations and communities throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We give thanks to God for the contributions Linda has made to the life of this church.

Treasurer Linda O. Norman talked about God's abundance, developing a theology of stewardship and being a witness to God's work through this church.

CONSIDERATION OF THE ELCA FOUNDATION TASK FORCE ON STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE PROPOSAL
(Agenda IV.D.; *Reference*: ELCA Foundation Task Force Proposal)

Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford, chair of the ELCA Foundation Task Force on Structure and Governance, reported that the Budget and Finance, Legal and Constitutional Review, and Planning and Evaluation committees had each reviewed the respective components of the task force report.

A motion was made to accept the task force report.

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

VOTED:

**CC17.11.20 To accept and affirm the report of the Task Force on the Structure and Governance of the ELCA Foundation; and
To express appreciation to the members of the Task Force for their diligent and thoughtful work.**

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

Ms. Stafford summarized the information introduced during the first plenary session. In response to a question, she suggested that all possible safeguards were in place and that the transition would need to focus on relationships.

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger noted that the ELCA constitution states that all separately incorporated ministries would abide by bylaw 14.21.02., which provides for Church Council oversight "to assure that churchwide purposes, policies and objectives are being fulfilled."

Mr. Reid A. Christopherson made a motion on behalf of the Planning and Evaluation Committee to approve the proposed governance and organizational structures.

In response to a question, Mr. Christopherson said the committee had discussed the role and demands on the executive director of the Mission Advancement unit, as well as how the Endowment Fund of the ELCA related to other separately incorporated ministries.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.21 To approve the proposed governance structure and organizational structures by functions as outlined in the "Report of the Task Force on the Structure and Governance of the ELCA Foundation."

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

Mr. Clarence M. Smith made a motion on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee to approve the process of transferring the activities of the ELCA Foundation.

In response to a question, Mr. Smith commented on the technicalities considered in committee that required the necessary transfers to happen gradually.

Ms. Stafford explained that revenue generated from annuity-related fees would be transferred with the functions they supported.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.22

To approve and start the process of transferring the activities of the ELCA Foundation to the Endowment Fund of the ELCA, including authorizing the churchwide organization staff to proceed with the following:

- **transferring trusteeship of the existing charitable remainder trusts from the ELCA to the Endowment Fund of the ELCA;**
- **gradually transferring ownership of the existing charitable gift annuities from the ELCA to the Endowment Fund of the ELCA;**
- **as the ownership of the charitable gift annuities is gradually transferred, gradually transferring the asset pools supporting the charitable gift annuities from the ELCA to the Endowment Fund of the ELCA;**
- **as the ownership of the charitable gift annuities is gradually transferred, gradually transferring sufficient additional assets from the ELCA to the Endowment Fund of the ELCA, to ensure that the Endowment Fund of the ELCA does not incur any unfunded liabilities (currently estimated at \$2,150,000 for the entire annuity pool);**
- **transferring assets from the ELCA to the Endowment Fund of the ELCA of an amount, currently estimated to be \$3,200,000, reasonably believed to be sufficient to render the Endowment Fund fully operational on January 1, 2018, after taking into account its expanded functions and responsibilities; and**
- **entering into the Memorandum of Understanding that sets forth how contingent future liabilities under the charitable gift annuity program are to be shared between the ELCA and the Endowment Fund of the ELCA.**

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

Mr. James M. Hushagen made a motion on behalf of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee to amend certain continuing resolutions. He explained that the committee had reviewed the proposal, its timing and structural liability protection.

Secretary Boerger added that the continuing resolutions would need to be amended to implement the proposal. The 2019 Churchwide Assembly could consider including the ELCA Foundation among separately incorporated ministries established in Chapter 17 of the ELCA constitution.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.23

To adopt the following amendments to continuing resolutions in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:*

TWO-THIRDS VOTE

- 15.14.A1017. *Responsibilities of the Office of the Treasurer*
- a. *This office shall be related to the treasurer, who shall be its full-time executive officer.*
 - b. *This office shall have the sole authority and responsibility to establish and maintain banking relationships for the churchwide organization.*
 - ...
 - j. *This office, in consultation with the Foundation-Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, shall recommend:*
 - 1) approved policy for the valuation process for noncash gifts;
 - 2) the management of assets of its life-income agreements;
 - 3) gift acceptance policies for the establishment and management of memorial funds received-administered by the foundation Endowment Fund of the ELCA in cooperation with the Mission Advancement unit; and
 - 4) the distribution of earned-income payments to remainder beneficiaries as regulated by the life-income, trust, and other fiduciary donor agreements held by the churchwide organization.

- 15.15.A17. The Endowment Fund of the ELCA shall:
- a. offer, promote, administer, and oversee endowment, deferred giving, life income, and similar planned giving programs for individual donors, congregations, synods, the churchwide organization and related institutions and agencies in support of ELCA ministries;
 - b. offer pooled investment services for endowment funds of this church and its congregations, synods, churchwide organization and related institutions and agencies;
 - c. manage assets of endowment, deferred giving, life-income agreements, donor advised funds, and funds held for external participants;
 - d. oversee the administration of earned-income payments to donors and to remainder beneficiaries as regulated by life-income, trust, and other fiduciary donor agreements;
 - e. determine annual endowment fund distribution rate;
 - f. set fees associated with endowment and deferred giving programs;
 - g. hire and oversee such managers, service providers, consultants, advisors, and sub-advisors as it deems appropriate;
 - h. develop and approve an annual budget that will be financed through revenue from its gift planning and investment activities and programs; and
 - i. coordinate programs and ministries with the priorities of the ELCA and other stewardship and financial-resource development activities of this church.

j. Constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 11.34.01.,14.21.02., 14.21.03., 14.21.06. and 14.21.07. shall apply to the operation of the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

16.12.C~~15~~¹⁷. *Mission Advancement Unit*

~~The Mission Advancement unit shall be responsible for planning, coordinating and carrying out this church's communications through publications and other tools. It shall also be responsible for mission support interpretation and consultations, the management of constituent data and shall lead its fundraising and development efforts including current, major and planned gifts.~~

The Mission Advancement unit shall be responsible for planning, coordinating and executing this church's strategic communications activities and for its fundraising and development efforts, in coordination with the Endowment Fund of the ELCA.

16.12.D~~11~~¹⁷. ~~The ELCA Foundation shall provide major gift and deferred giving programs, including educational and support services, for individual donors, congregations, synods, agencies, and related institutions, and shall promote pooled investment services for endowment funds of this church, its congregations, synods, agencies, and affiliated institutions. The ELCA Foundation shall also:~~

~~a. conduct—on behalf of this church, its congregations, synods, churchwide units, and related institutions—a program of major gifts and deferred giving.~~

~~b. provide educational materials and resources in the area of deferred giving.~~

~~c. provide advice to the Office of the Treasurer in the recommendation and establishment within that office of policies and procedures for processes governing valuation of noncash gifts, the management of assets of life-income agreements and endowment funds, and the distribution of earned-income payments to donors and to remainder beneficiaries as regulated by life-income, trust, and other fiduciary donor agreements.~~

~~d. engage—in cooperation with congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions of this church—in efforts to:~~

~~1) identify and cultivate prospective major and deferred-gift donors;~~

~~2) seek gifts, bequests, and investments for the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;~~

~~3) seek gifts, bequests, and investments for endowment funds that support ministries of this church; and~~

~~4) coordinate its programs and ministries with the objectives and programs of other stewardship and financial-resource development activities of this church.~~

The Mission Advancement unit shall:

- a. guide churchwide strategic communications through publications, digital media, social media, direct mail, and other communication tools;**
- b. oversee brand, messaging and content development and management;**
- c. provide for Mission Support interpretation and consultations;**
- d. develop and execute programs to seek current, major, and deferred gifts, bequests, and endowment funds to support ministries of this church;**
- e. engage members, congregations, synods, agencies, and institutions of this church in efforts to raise financial support for the ministries of the ELCA;**
- f. provide advice to the Office of the Treasurer in the recommendation and establishment within that office of policies and procedures for gift acceptance and management;**
- g. manage ELCA constituent data; and**
- h. coordinate its programs with other stewardship and financial-resource development activities of this church and in alignment with its mission objectives.**

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

Mr. Hushagen made a motion on behalf of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee to approve the amended bylaws of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.24 To approve the amended bylaws of the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Agenda IV.E.; *Reference:* Budget and Finance Presentation)

Mr. Clarence M. Smith, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, presented the committee report.

2018 REVISED INCOME ESTIMATES AND SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS

(Agenda IV.E.1.)

Background:

As part of the 2017-2019 budget for the churchwide organization, the 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA16.03.08]:

To approve a 2018 current fund income proposal of \$64,057,220; and

To approve a 2018 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$25,000,000; and

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

Church Council action:

On behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee, Mr. Clarence M. Smith made a motion to approve revised spending authorizations for 2018. He explained income estimates for the churchwide organization were decreased from 2017 to 2018 in mission support, rental income and ELCA World Hunger, and increased in investments, unrestricted bequests and trusts, endowment and other income. The revised current fund income estimate for 2018 was \$69,355 less than it was for 2017, and the spending authorization was proposed to be reduced by the same amount. The proposed 2018 spending authorization included a \$2.2 million increase (with a 2 percent pool for salary and benefit increases) and a \$2 million reduction in unit spending. The ELCA World Hunger income estimate and proposed spending authorization were about \$1 million less than the previous year.

Participants discussed the impact a reduction in unit spending may have on staff workloads and measures being taken to adjust, how the reduction aligned with the goals and priorities identified in ELCA Future Directions 2025, and how decisions about spending would be reported to the Church Council.

There being no further discussion, Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson led the gathering in prayer.

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

VOTED:

**CC17.11.25 To approve a revised 2018 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$67,140,670; and
 To approve a revised 2018 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$23,750,000.**

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

Mr. Smith reported that the Budget and Finance Committee had approved the 2018-2019 capital budget authorization, engaged Crowe Horwath LLP as the external auditor, reviewed the committee's work and reporting framework in light of ELCA Future Directions 2025, and discussed synod-specific mission support goals.

RECESS

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 2:46 p.m.

**Saturday, November 11, 2017
Plenary Session V**

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the fifth plenary session to order at 3:15 p.m. in the Augsburg Conference Room of the Lutheran Center.

OPEN DISCUSSION ON THE JOINT LEADERSHIP TABLE COMMITMENTS

(Agenda V.A.; *Reference*: Sept Leadership Table Executive Summary *and* Sept Leadership Table Minutes)

Background:

A combined meeting of the Executive Committee of the Church Council, the Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops, the Administrative Team of the churchwide organization and the Future Directions Table was held Sept. 13-14, 2017, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago. The Future Directions Table had led the ELCA in the Called Forward Together in Christ process that resulted in the goals outlined in ELCA Future Directions 2025. The September meeting was to name next steps for the Church Council, Conference of Bishops and churchwide organization, as well as to develop collaborative leadership and to affirm the strategies that joint leadership would support regarding the priorities of congregational vitality and leadership.

Church Council discussion:

Vice President William B. Horne II drew the attention of the participants to an executive summary of the September 2017 meeting of the leadership tables, especially its “matrix of commitments.” He asked Church Council members to organize themselves in same groups, with a liaison bishop in each group. Each group was to discuss the following questions and prepare to report two or three themes from its discussion.

- What is the Church Council’s role in our shared commitments? What does this mean?
- In what ways can the Church Council be supportive in embracing a fourfold identity — we are church, we are Lutheran, we are church together and we are church for the sake of the world?
- How can the Church Council be supportive in growing leaders for vital congregations in leadership formation and leadership development?

The themes reported from the conversations included:

- o setting clear outcomes with robust accountability
- o redefining “congregations” and asking the Conference of Bishops for its definition of “congregational vitality”
- o creating a culture of governance
- o being accountable for achieving the mission and vision
- o leveraging what influence the Church Council has, across committee lines, for resource allocation
- o supporting an identity with a more positive appeal, emphasizing grace
- o leveraging resources to broaden the invitation to lay leaders and rostered ministers
- o keeping the fourfold identity in front of the Church Council
- o asking that reports to the council be based on the goals and priorities
- o letting the vision drive the budget, keeping campaign staff to build the Fund for Leaders
- o growing leaders by example
- o bringing the names of potential rostered ministers
- o studying things being done in synods and camps to shape leaders for vital congregations
- o connecting budgets and asset allocation to congregational vitality and leadership
- o aligning committees to units or to goals, using executive sessions to meet with unit executives
- o welcoming direction from the Conference of Bishops on what congregational vitality looks like
- o improving communication among the committees, especially regarding the goals
- o giving direction to innovative leadership models, learning from global partners

Vice President Horne asked each group also to discuss the following three questions and prepare to report two or three themes from its discussion.

- Across the five goals, how are we as a church stewarding resources, communication and becoming a multicultural church?
- How can the council best align resources with priorities?
- How is this church reinvesting in ethnic specific communities, rural communities and people in poverty?

The themes reported from the conversations included:

- o evaluating the effectiveness of how things are currently aligned
- o using demographic data to challenge congregations to invest in rural, ethnic specific and poverty ministries
- o rewarding congregations that share their wealth and reach out to their communities
- o working with full communion partners to create ecumenical parishes
- o supporting rural, ethnic specific and poverty ministries where sustainability is different
- o helping congregations to accept today's candidates for rostered ministry
- o developing leaders who are culturally competent
- o shaping the work of the committees around the goals and priorities
- o determining how to hold this church accountable for an even treatment of ethnic specific, rural and poverty ministries across the synods
- o defining "multicultural church" and how to become one
- o confronting this church's willingness to share place, privilege and power
- o ascertaining metrics for sustainability, even if they are not financial
- o customizing mission support expectations by several templates, hosting symposiums instead of consultations
- o communicating honestly about what the ELCA is doing

Vice President Horne collected written notes from each group. He was asked to develop a reporting process that would track the Church Council's progress in meeting its commitments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda V.C.)

Vice President William B. Horne II made several announcements regarding the schedule and plans for worship the following morning.

HYMN AND PRAYER

The Rev. Peder J. Johanson led the Church Council in prayer and provided musical accompaniment for the singing of a hymn.

RECESS

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 4:51 p.m. for Saturday, November 11, 2017.

**Sunday, November 12, 2017
Plenary Session VI**

Church Council members gathered at 9:00 a.m. in the Chapel of the Lutheran Center for a service of Holy Communion. The Rev. Suzanne D. Dillahunt, bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod, presided; Mr. Steven Nishibayashi, ecumenical guest from The Episcopal Church, preached; and Ms. Emma K. Wagner served as assisting minister. Mr. Hans E. Becklin was lector. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, the Rev. Peder J. Johanson, Mr. Clarence M. Smith and the Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson served as musicians. An offering of \$1,551 was received for the Renewing Congregations category of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the sixth plenary session to order at 10:14 a.m. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center.

**REPORT OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE
(Agenda VI.A.)**

Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson, chair of the Program and Services Committee, presented the committee report. The committee received a progress report on the woman and justice social statement, reviewed the revised social message on human rights, considered an amended environmental investment screen and a new human rights screen, recommended to defer developing social messages on aging or the U.S. National Drug Policy, studied the proposed guidelines and recommendations on campus ministry, and re-examined the committee's charter in light of the goals in ELCA Future Directions 2025. Ms. Gustavson noted that in April 2018 the committee would consider the human rights investment screen, conduct a hearing on the women and justice social statement and receive an update from the Entrance Rite Discernment Working Group regarding the appropriate entrance rite for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service.

**PROPOSED SOCIAL MESSAGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
(Agenda VI.A.1.; Reference: Proposed Social Message)**

Background:

In response to memorials from four synods regarding Justice for the Holy Land, the 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA16.06.31]:

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....

A proposed social message on human rights was drafted to support and inform the development of a human rights social criteria investment screen, while also striving to articulate this church's positions on human rights in a single message.

Church Council action:

The Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics, explained why the ELCA needed a message on human rights at this time to bring together references to human rights across the social teachings of this church. The proposed social message on human rights was based theologically on the concept of universal dignity, which is also expressed in the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Rev. Kaari M. Reierson, contractor to co-draft the document, talked about the process used to develop the message, which included consultations with experts, authors of the memorials to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly and staff of the churchwide organization.

Pastor Willer identified a revision that had been made to include a reference to this church's repudiation of the doctrine of discovery.

A motion was made on behalf of the Program and Services Committee to adopt "A Social Message on Human Rights" as revised.

There being no further discussion, the Rev. Linda Nou led the gathering in prayer.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.26 To adopt the revised social message on "Human Rights" of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. [Appendix]

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

(Agenda VI.B.; *Reference*: Administrative Team Presentation *and* Executive for Administration Report)

The Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration, responded to questions asked earlier in the meeting by drawing attention to data presented in the report of the Theological Education Advisory Committee. She said that ELCA seminaries had registered 1,501 students, 1,053 of whom were members of ELCA congregations and 197 of whom entered the seminaries' master of divinity program in 2017. She introduced members of the Administrative Team of the churchwide organization and provided details of planning for the 2018-2019 operational plan, especially efforts to address this church's priority of leadership.

Pastor Bullock was joined by the Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit, and Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, executive director of the Mission Advancement unit, to describe methods of identifying leaders, forming leaders, funding leaders and placing candidates.

Pastor Bullock invited the participants to consider three questions in small groups.

- What do you want to see changed in this church in the next couple years regarding leadership?
- Where does the churchwide organization have the lead or primary role in making that change?
- What role do the synods and congregations have in making that change?

In plenary, the participants discussed the supply of, demand for and placement of future rostered ministers, taking into account various types of ministry and this church's priorities of congregational vitality and leadership. They talked about how results of the emphasis on leadership would be reported to the Church Council and about emphasizing care and support for candidates as they await their first call.

REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

(Agenda VI.C.; *Reference*: Planning and Evaluation Presentation)

Mr. Reid A. Christopherson, chair of the Planning and Evaluation Committee, presented the committee's report. He noted that the committee had reviewed the proposed governance and organizational structures of the ELCA Foundation. It had also received an update on the strategy toward authentic diversity.

STRATEGY TOWARD AUTHENTIC DIVERSITY WITHIN THE ELCA (MOTION B)

Background:

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [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 of this 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 [CC15.11.55] by the 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.” 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.” While the Domestic Mission unit has continued the work, it requests more time for consultations and further reflection before advising the council 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 [CC16.11.46hh]

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 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 [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.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2017)

The Domestic Mission unit and representatives of the ethnic specific ministry associations recommend the following people be appointed to the task force for implementation of Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA:

Region	Name	
6	Bishop Abraham Allende	To serve as co-convenor of the task force; Bishop of Northeastern Ohio Synod
6	The Rev. Rani Abdulmasih	Pastor, Mother of the Savior, Dearborn Michigan; Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
1	Mr. Abel Arroyo Traverso	Latino association recommendation; 2017 graduate of LSTC (MDiv)
1	The Rev. Priscilla Austin	Pastor, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington; co-author of Motion B
2	Mr. Joseph Castaneda	Latino association recommendation; Southwest California Synod area ministries LGBTQ/advocacy

3	Ms. Cheryl Chatman	To serve as Church Council liaison on task force; Diversity officer, Concordia College Minneapolis
3	The Rev. Joann Conroy	President, American Indian Alaska Native Association; Chaplain Good Samaritan Center St. Paul, Minn.
7	Ms. Grace El-Yateem	Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage; Salem Arabic Lutheran Church Brooklyn N.Y.
8	The Rev. Maria G. Sijera Grant	President, Asian Pacific Islander Lutheran Association; Pastor, First Lutheran Church
4	Ms. Jennifer Kirby	United Nations Forum on Indigenous Women of the ELCA representative; Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Oaks, Oklahoma
9	Ms. Maribel Lorenzana	Attorney and advocate for rights of immigrants in the U.S.; Latino Ministries Diversity Network
6	Ms. Vickie Murph	Women of the ELCA recommendation; Anti-racism facilitator Women of the ELCA Southern Ohio Synod
8	The Rev. Surekha Nelavala	Asian International Lutheran Conference; Steering Committee; Pastor, Global Peace Lutheran Fellowship Frederick, Maryland
3	The Rev. Larry Thiele	Pastor, Dacotah Oyate Lutheran Church, Sheyenne, North Dakota; American Indian Alaska Native Ministries
7	The Rev. Lamont Wells	President, African Descent Lutheran Association; Director of Evangelical Mission, Metro New York Synod

Scope of work for task force:

- Assess and summarize synod and churchwide work toward becoming an authentically diverse church prior to 2016 Churchwide Assembly;
- Develop working definition of “authentic diversity”;
- Prepare report and recommendations for benchmarks, accountability and support for attaining diversity goals in all expressions of this church in advance of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Recommendations for task force:

- Participate in anti-racism/racial justice training;
- Engage ecumenical partners in consultation/advisory capacity;
- Request European American Association for Racial Justice representative(s) to be available in consultation/advisory capacity;
- Review and take into advisement recommendations and action called for by the 2016 Multicultural Summit and 2018 proposed summit follow up;
- Work in concert with the Office of the Secretary, Domestic Mission unit and Research and Evaluation relative to ongoing resolutions calling for synod reporting of diversity and anti-racism work.

Projection of funds to support implementation of task force:

\$150,000 for travel and contract staff. Projecting two in-person task force meetings per year 2018-2019 and additional travel and conferencing as needed.

Timeline:

Upon approval of the November 2017 recommendations by Church Council, participants will be notified. First in-person convening of task force is projected for late January/early February 2018. First task force report to Church Council is scheduled for Spring 2018.

Church Council action:

Mr. Reid A. Christopherson made a motion on behalf of the Planning and Evaluation Committee to appoint a task force on the strategy toward authentic diversity.

Participants discussed the intent of the authors of Motion B to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly and any budget implications of establishing the task force.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.27 **To receive the progress report from the Domestic Mission unit regarding the implementation of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA (Motion B);**

To appoint Bishop Abraham D. Allende [Northeastern Ohio Synod], the Rev. Rani Abdulmasih, Mr. C. Abel Arroyo Traverso, the Rev. Priscilla N. Paris-Austin, Mr. Joseph Castañeda Carrera, Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman, the Rev. Joan A. Conroy, Ms. Grace Kuttub El-Yateem, the Rev. Maria G. Sijera Grant, the Rev. Moses P.P. Penumaka, Ms. Jennifer Kirby, Ms. Maribel Lorenzana, Ms. Vickie L. Murph, the Rev. Surekha Nelavala, the Rev. Lorenzo (Larry) T. Thiele, Mr. Kevin O. Vandiver and the Rev. Lamont A. Wells to the task force assigned with providing benchmarks, accountability and support for attaining diversity goals in all expressions of this church toward becoming an authentic diverse church; and

To request a progress report be submitted to the Church Council at its April 2018 meeting.

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

DRAFT OF THE ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION OPERATIONAL PLAN 2018-2019
(Agenda VI.C.1.; *Reference:* Operational Plan 2018-2019 DRAFT)

Mr. Reid A. Christopherson said the Planning and Evaluation Committee had reviewed a draft of the ELCA Churchwide Organization Operational Plan 2018-2019. He outlined how the plan was presented in relation to the goals identified in ELCA Future Directions 2025.

Participants discussed the metrics to be used in the operational plan to determine benchmarks of the churchwide organization toward achieving specific goals regarding congregational vitality and leadership, how the goals identified in ELCA Future Directions 2025 are to be achieved by all expressions of this church, and how the goals for other expressions would be determined.

Mr. Christopherson mentioned that the committee had talked about organizing its work around the goals and priorities of ELCA Future Directions 2025.

NEW BUSINESS

(Agenda VI.E.)

Background:

The 2013 Churchwide Assembly approved *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* with a five-year goal of raising \$198 million. The comprehensive campaign established goals according to several priorities, and donors could make undesignated gifts to be used where needed most among the campaign priorities.

An update on the campaign for the Church Council noted that the “Where Needed Most” category had received more than \$5.5 million and it was projected to receive more than \$9 million.

Church Council action:

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger stated that two items had been proposed as new business.

The Rev. Michael R. Ward made the following motion.

Moved;

Seconded:

To request that the Called Forward Together in Christ priorities be the lens by which “where needed most” *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* funds, including the \$750,000 allocated to the ELCA World Hunger effort in 2018, be allocated; and

To request that reports be made to the Budget and Finance Committee reflecting that this is how these decisions are made.

Pastor Ward suggested that a policy needed to clarify how “where needed most” money from the campaign would be allocated within the campaign.

Participants discussed the merits of the motion, how the campaign was operating prior to the Called Forward Together in Christ process identifying priorities, whether to name the ELCA World Hunger effort in the motion, how the work of ELCA World Hunger aligned with the goals and priorities identified in ELCA Future Direction 2025, the appropriate role of the Church Council to ask for a policy and reports, whether the motion would be helpful or harmful to the campaign which was already in progress, whether the campaign goals aligned with priorities raised through the Called Forward Together in Christ process, whether the motion could be amended to help staff and keep the council informed, and how judging allocations by congregational vitality and leadership priorities may eliminate Global Mission programs from consideration.

Mr. John W. Lohrmann moved the previous question.

Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote by show of hands.

Moved;

Seconded;

Defeated:

To end debate.

Two-thirds required

Yes-16; No-14

The chair declared that the motion to end debate had been defeated.

Mr. Joseph T. Nolte made a motion to amend.

Moved;

Seconded:

To request that the Called Forward Together in Christ priorities be the lens by which “where needed most” *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* funds, including the \$750,000 allocated to the ELCA World Hunger effort in 2018, be allocated; and

To request that reports be made to the Budget and Finance Committee reflecting that this is how these decisions are made.

To request that the churchwide organization prepare a plan for the process by which “where needed most” dollars in *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* will be allocated and that the plan be reported to the Budget and Finance Committee and the April 2018 Church Council meeting for approval.

Church Council members discussed whether such a plan already existed, what the amendment would change and leave the same from the original motion, and whether the motion was to substitute or to amend.

Mr. James M. Hushagen moved the previous question.

Vice President Horne called for a voice vote.

Moved;

Seconded;

Carried:

To end debate.

Two-thirds required

The chair declared that the motion had been adopted, and he called for a vote on the motion to amend.

Moved;
Seconded;
Carried:

~~To request that the Called Forward Together in Christ priorities be the lens by which “where needed most” *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* funds, including the \$750,000 allocated to the ELCA World Hunger effort in 2018, be allocated; and~~

~~To request that reports be made to the Budget and Finance Committee reflecting that this is how these decisions are made.~~

To request that the churchwide organization prepare a plan for the process by which “where needed most” dollars in *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* will be allocated and that the plan be reported to the Budget and Finance Committee and the April 2018 Church Council meeting for approval.

Vice President Horne declared that the motion to amend had been adopted.
Treasurer Linda O. Norman read the campaign’s policy on unrestricted donations.
The chair called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.11.28 **To request that the churchwide organization prepare a plan for the process by which “where needed most” dollars in *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* will be allocated and that the plan be reported to the Budget and Finance Committee at the April 2018 Church Council meeting for approval.**

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted. He stated that the second item of new business would be introduced during the next plenary session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda VI.F.)

The Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson asked specific individuals for ways in which others may pray for them.
Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman led the gathering in prayer
The Rev. Lorie B. Tatum said a table grace.

RECESS

The November 2017 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 12:14 p.m.

Sunday, November 12, 2017
Plenary Session VII

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the seventh plenary session to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center.

NEW BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

(Agenda VI.E.)

The Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson brought an item of new business.

Moved;

Seconded: To request that the Church Council undertake consideration of changing the makeup of the Church Council to include:

- liaison bishops
- representatives of the ethnic associations

as voting members of the Church Council.

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger made a motion to refer.

Moved;

Seconded: To refer this motion to the Office of the Secretary for consideration as one of the potential amendments that will be shared at the April 2018 meeting of the Church Council and for final presentation at the November 2018 meeting.

The secretary stated that proposals to amend the constitutions of this church may be submitted to the Office of the Secretary for possible wording and presentation to the Church Council.

Council members discussed ideas that had surfaced during the earlier open discussion on sustainability and church structures, greater representation by synod vice presidents in the governance of the ELCA and possibly confusing the governance roles of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops.

Ms. Maren Hulden made a motion to amend the motion to refer.

Moved;

Seconded: To refer this motion to the ~~Office of the Secretary~~ Executive Committee for consideration as ~~one of the potential amendments~~ part of a broad strategy to consider changes to the Church Council's governance in order to strengthen and clarify its role and relationships with the Conference of Bishops, this church's officers and the Administrative Team that will be shared at the April 2018 meeting of the Church Council and for final presentation at the November 2018 meeting.

Discussion began on whether to refer to the Executive Committee instead of to the Office of the Secretary.

Secretary Boerger said the Office of the Secretary could work with the Executive Committee in consideration of the motion, however the motion to amend the referral motion created a motion with a different intention.

Vice President William B. Horne II called for a vote on the motion to amend.

Moved;
Seconded;
Defeated:

To refer this motion to the ~~Office of the Secretary~~ Executive Committee for consideration as ~~one of the potential amendments part of a broad strategy to consider changes to the Church Council's governance in order to strengthen and clarify its role and relationships with the Conference of Bishops, this church's officers and the Administrative Team that will be shared at the April 2018 meeting of the Church Council, and for final presentation at the November 2018 meeting.~~

The chair declared that the motion to amend was defeated, and he called for consideration of the motion to refer. There being no further discussion, Vice President Horne called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC17.11.29 **To refer this motion to the Office of the Secretary for consideration as one of the potential amendments that will be shared at the April 2018 meeting of the Church Council and for final presentation at the November 2018 meeting.**

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

REPORT OF THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Agenda VII.A.)

Mr. James M. Hushagen, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, presented the committee's report. He reviewed the recommendations of the committee which were included in the *En Bloc* Items document:

- Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary
- Approval of the ELCA Deaconess Community bylaws
- Synod constitution amendments
- Additional voting members for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly

He note that the committee had devoted much of its time to considering the ELCA Foundation Task Force on Structure and Governance proposal, especially the proposed amendments to continuing resolutions and the amended bylaws of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA. The committee also received a report on potential amendments to the ELCA constitution.

REPORT OF THE BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

(Agenda VII.B.; *Reference*: Board Development Charter 2017 *and* Board Development Presentation)

The Rev. James H. Utt, chair of the Board Development Committee, presented the committee's report. He said the committee had revised its charter to include items suggested by Church Council members during the Spring 2017 retreat, such as helping the council clarify and understand its governance role. The committee planned to have a governance policy manual ready for the council's April 2018 meeting.

Pastor Utt made a motion on behalf of the Board Development Committee to amend a continuing resolution.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.30 **To adopt the following amendments to a continuing resolution in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*:**

TWO-THIRDS VOTE

14.41.F137. Board Development Committee

A Board Development Committee—composed of six to eight members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Executive Committee, and of which at least two shall be from each elected class of the Church Council—shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council for two three-year, renewable terms to assist the presiding bishop and the Church Council in developing and implementing efforts to help members of the Church Council to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the council's role and fiduciary responsibility as the board of directors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The executive for administration shall relate to this committee, with staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop. Members appointed to the Board Development Committee shall be eligible for service on other committees of the Church Council.

The chair declared that the motion had been adopted.

Pastor Utt made a motion on behalf of the Board Development Committee to approve its revised charter.

Church Council members discussed the charter's revisions.

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

VOTED:

CC17.11.31 To approve the revised Board Development Committee charter.

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

SHARING OF CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY LESSONS

(Agenda VII.C.; *Reference: Congregational Vitality Lesson and Rooted in Christ brochure 2017*)

Ms. Leslie J. Swenson said the Alaska Synod, where she is a member, was one of 12 synods involved in the Congregational Vitality Project. She presented a brochure prepared for congregations considering engagement in the 18-month project. She shared several lessons learned from the synod's participation in the project, including a chart of the life cycle of the typical congregation.

CONSIDERATION OF ITEM REMOVED FROM EN BLOC

(Agenda VII.D.)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger indicated that one item had been removed from the Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions document for separate consideration.

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 Research and Evaluation 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 [CC16.11.46z]

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

Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2017)

Motion E asks the Church Council to study the removal of bylaw 13.32.02., relating to the prohibition of compensation for the vice president. In looking at the required duties of the vice president, there does not appear to be the work load that would call for compensation. The bylaw does permit reimbursement for expenses incurred by the vice president in doing this work.

Church Council action:

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger presented the recommended action from the Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions document.

Moved;

Seconded: To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary regarding “Compensation for the Vice President.”

Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson had removed the item for separate consideration, citing the report of the vice president and the many things the vice president does for this church.

Secretary Boerger noted that the vice president donated a significant amount of time to this church that is not constitutionally required. The vice president’s expenses were reimbursed.

Church Council members discussed the possible benefits of compensating the vice president, the intentions of those who drafted the ELCA’s constitution regarding the role of the vice president, the time donated by vice presidents and the need for further study of compensating the vice president.

Secretary Boerger made a motion to amend the recommended action.

Moved;

Seconded: To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary regarding “Compensation for the Vice President.”; and
To refer the motion to the Office of the Secretary for further review and study and to request a response be submitted to the April 2018 and November 2018 Church Council meeting for further consideration.

Council members discussed the differences between constitutional requirements and a job description, how the constitution might be amended and possibly considering donated time as an expense to be reimbursed.

There being no further discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for a vote on the motion to amend.

Moved;

Seconded;

Carried: To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary regarding “Compensation for the Vice President.”; and

To refer the motion to the Office of the Secretary for further review and study and to request a response be submitted to the April 2018 and November 2018 Church Council meeting for further consideration.

The chair declared that the motion to amend had been adopted.
There being no further discussion, Vice President Horne called for the vote.

VOTED:

**CC17.11.32 To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary regarding “Compensation for the Vice President”; and
To refer the motion to the Office of the Secretary for further review and study and to request a response be submitted to the April 2018 and November 2018 Church Council meeting for further consideration.**

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

EN BLOC APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ITEMS

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

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 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:

CC17.11.33 To take *en bloc* action on the following items listed in *En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions and Responses to Synodical Resolutions.

A. Audit Committee membership

Background:

ELCA continuing resolution 14.41.E15. states:

An Audit Committee—composed of five to seven members appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and approved by the Church Council for two-year, renewable terms—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. A minimum of two members of the Audit Committee shall be members of the Budget and Finance Committee. The

chair of the Audit Committee shall be a member of the Budget and Finance Committee and shall be appointed by the chair of the Budget and Finance Committee. In consultation with the executive for administration, the Audit Committee approves the appointment and dismissal of the director for internal auditing.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.11.33a **To approve the reappointment of the following to the ELCA Audit Committee for a two-year term expiring in 2019: Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford, Mr. Clarence M. Smith and Ms. Meri Jo Petrivelli.**

B. 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."

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.11.33b **To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing its review of the audited financial statements, management letter, and response of management for the churchwide organization's fiscal year ended January 31, 2017.**

C. 2018 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*
CC17.11.33c1 **As a grateful church that affirms the partnership of congregation, synod and churchwide expressions, we affirm the percentage of sharing or dollar amount of sharing of 2018 Mission Support by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries:**

Northwestern Ohio, Southern Ohio, Slovak Zion, Allegheny;

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.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.11.33c2 To acknowledge with appreciation the action of the following synods to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2018 Mission Support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries but estimating an adjustment in the projected amount to be shared:
Pacifica, Northwestern Minnesota, Northern Illinois, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin; 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*
CC17.11.33c3 As a grateful church that affirms the partnership of congregation, synod and churchwide expressions, we affirm the percentage of sharing of 2018 Mission Support by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries:
Montana, Metropolitan Chicago, New England, Upper Susquehanna;
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.

D. ELCA Special Needs Retirement Fund

Background:

The churchwide organization has been contributing the equivalent of \$2.5 million annually to Portico Benefit Services for the Post-Retirement Medical Benefits Trust. To meet this obligation, the churchwide organization uses a combination of current operating funds, funds from the termination of the ELCA Supplemental Retirement Benefits Trust and funds from the closure of the Special Needs Retirement Fund Functioning as Endowment.

There are two Special Needs Retirement Funds — one board-designated Fund Functioning as Endowment and one donor-restricted Endowment Fund. Market values as of Sept. 30, 2017, were \$612 thousand and \$8.3 million, respectively.

The donor-restricted endowment fund was expected to be sufficient to continue meeting current and future special needs retirement grants. In closing the board-designated Special Needs Retirement Fund, it was recommended using the funds to report retirees through the benefits contribution trust held by Portico Benefit Services.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.11.33d To approve closing the Special Needs Retirement Fund Functioning as Endowment and repurpose its current balance to meet the 2017 churchwide contribution to the ELCA Post-Retirement Medical Benefits Contribution Trust.

E. Establishment of a new fund functioning as endowment revised Nov. 8, 2017

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33e

To establish a Church Council designated fund functioning as endowment entitled LAMPa (Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania) Fund; to be funded by current assets of LAMPa; established withdrawals will be allocated from the fund functioning as endowment by LAMPa; and distributions from the fund are available to support operations of LAMPa.

F. Establish change of authorization on churchwide endowments

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33f

To revise all existing ELCA Endowment Authorizations for which the ELCA Church Council is the governing authority as follows:

Strike the words “Division for Outreach” and replace with the words “Domestic Mission unit”;

Strike the words “Division for Ministry” and replace with the words “Domestic Mission unit”;

Strike the words “CSM (Congregational and Synodical Mission)” and replace with the words “Domestic Mission unit”;

Strike the words “Editor for The Lutheran (Magazine)” and replace with the words “Executive Director for Mission Advancement unit”;

Strike the words “LLM (Lutheran Laity Movement) Executive Committee (or its successor)” and replace with the words “Written request of the Executive Director of the Domestic Mission unit”;

To revise the required authorization for the Mission Development Fund as follows:

Strike the words “Office of the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the ELCA Treasurer, ELCA Foundation President and in consultation with the ELCA Cabinet of Executives” and replace with the words “Office of the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the ELCA Treasurer and the Churchwide Administrative Team”;
and

To revise the required authorization for LLM Stewardship/Life Inc as follows:

Strike the words “Director of Stewardship and Finance” and replace with the words “Domestic Mission unit.”

G. Additional voting members for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly

Background:

ELCA bylaw 12.41.11. presents the formula by which the number of voting members from each synod to a churchwide assembly is determined. The bylaw provides, “The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members.”

In his report to the November 2017 meeting of the Church Council, Secretary Wm Chris Boerger asked “that the council allocate nine additional voting members so that each synod will have at least six voting members.”

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33g To allocate for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly one additional voting member to the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H), making a total of six voting members; and

To allocate for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly two additional voting members to the Alaska Synod (1A), Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C), Slovak Zion Synod (7G), and Caribbean Synod (9F), making a total of six voting members per synod.

H. Approval of the ELCA Deaconess Community bylaws

(Reference: Deaconess bylaw amendments)

Background:

At its 2017 Deaconess Assembly, the Deaconess Community of the ELCA voted to amend its bylaws, updating its relationship with the ELCA, clarifying its purpose, membership, functions and the role of its assembly, and revising its governance and staffing structures.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33h To approve the amended bylaws of the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

I. Synod constitution amendments

Background:

Provision †S18.13. of the *Constitution for Synods* describes the processes for synods to amend non-required provisions in their constitutions. It stipulates, “All such amendments shall become effective upon ratification by the Churchwide Assembly or by the Church Council.”

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33i1 To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Northwest Washington Synod:

S8.42. The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:

...

- e. Rendering at each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly a full, detailed, and duly audited report of receipts and disbursements in the several accounts of this synod for the preceding fiscal year, together with the tabulation, **for record and publication in the minutes to be made available on request**, of the contributions from the congregations.

...

~~S9.07. If the Treasurer is elected, the Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.~~

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33i2 To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Saint Paul Area Synod:

S7.13. Notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Synod Assembly shall be given by the ~~secretary of this synod~~ Office the Bishop.

~~S8.33. The secretary shall verify with the treasurer annually that a fidelity bond for persons handling synod funds is in place and secured, as required in S8.42.f).~~

S8.42. The treasurer shall provide and be accountable for:

...

- f) Obtaining a fidelity bond in the amount determined by the Synod Council for persons handling synod funds, which bond shall be ~~in the custody of the secretary secured against loss, theft, fire, and natural disaster~~. The premium for the bond shall be paid by this synod. Fidelity coverage provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be deemed a fulfillment of this requirement.

S8.52. The term of the bishop shall begin on the first day of the ~~second~~ third month following election. The terms of the other officers and members of committees elected by the Synod Assembly shall begin immediately following the adjournment of the assembly at which they were elected. The terms of officers shall, in special circumstances, begin at a time designated by the Synod Council.

~~S11.11.~~ [becomes a bylaw]

~~S11.10.01.~~ This synod shall in its bylaws or by continuing resolution establish a process to ensure that the members of its committees and other organizational units will be persons possessing the necessary knowledge and competence to be effective members of such units, and to meet the requirements of †S6.04. With the exception of ministers on the rosters of this synod who reside outside the territory of this synod, each member of a committee of this synod, or any other organizational unit created by this synod, shall be a voting member of a congregation of this synod.

~~S11.20.~~ Synod Council Committees

~~S11.20.30.~~ Task Forces

~~S11.21.31.~~ A task force is a temporary unit of the synod ~~which that~~ is assigned responsibility for an identified portion of the work of this synod. Such

assignment may be made ~~by the Synod Assembly or~~ by the Synod Council. Normally its term of existence is defined by the unit which establishes it. It, which shall define the charge, membership composition, term length, and appoint members. A task force is subject to annual review by the initiating unit. Membership is determined by the initiating unit Synod Council.

- S15.14.** Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes, a reserve amounting to no more than 16 percent of the sum of the amounts of 2.8 to 3.3 months' value of the average monthly amount scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synodical causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year ~~in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes.~~ The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.

- S18.40.** Technical Corrections to Constitution, Bylaws, or Continuing Resolutions Technical corrections to the constitution, bylaws, or continuing resolutions that do not alter the substance of the document may be proposed by the bishop and approved by the Synod Council.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33i3

To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Nebraska Synod:

- S7.22.** ~~Retired ordained ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the roster of this Synod, registered in attendance at the Synod Assembly, shall serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly consistent with the representation requirements of †S7.21.c. The synod may establish processes that permit ordained ministers, associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers who are on leave from call, or those designated as disabled, on the roster of the synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with †S7.21.c. above. If the synod does not establish processes to permit the rostered leaders specified above to serve as voting members, they shall have voice but not vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.~~

In addition to those individuals listed in †S7.21, the following individuals shall serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with the provisions of †S7.21.c. and provided they are registered in attendance at the Synod Assembly:

- a. Retired ministers of Word and Sacrament.
- b. Retired ministers of Word and Service.
- c. Ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service who are on leave from call or designated as disabled, provided that they are currently rostered in this synod.

- d. Parish ministry associates who have been authorized by the Bishop of the Nebraska Synod to serve a congregation in lieu of a rostered minister.
 - e. One youth or young adult from each mission cluster unit in this synod, consistent with the provisions of †S6.04.02.
- S8.52.** The terms of the officers shall begin on the first day of the third month September following election or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.
- S9.03.** There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of fourteen representatives of mission cluster units with consideration given to geographical representation and gender balance, alternating between clergy and lay persons. There shall be seven clergy and seven lay people from the mission cluster units. The members of the committee shall be elected by the Synod Council. Terms shall be for two years with one-half being elected annually. No person shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms. At least one of the pastors serving on the committee shall be female. There shall also be an officer from each synod organization for men, women and youth on the committee. The Synod Council shall appoint one of its members to serve on the committee.
- S9.08.** In all elections of officers, except for the bishop, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of legal votes after the second ballot, but not elected by a majority of the legal votes cast on either the first or the second ballot, shall be entered on the next ballot to the number of two for each vacancy unfilled. On any ballot when only two names appear, a majority of the legal votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- S9.09.** The result of each ballot in every election shall be announced in detail to the assembly.
- S9.11.** [becomes a bylaw]
- S9.11.01.** The Synod Council shall elect representatives to the coordinating council of its regional center for mission.
- S10.08.** No member of the Synod Council shall simultaneously be a member of a synod committee and administrative staff member be an employee and called staff member of a financial beneficiary institution or agency of this synod. This section shall not apply to temporary or seasonal employees.
- S14.15.** Each minister of Word and Sacrament on the roll of this synod shall submit a written report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod at least 90 days prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly by June 1 of each year. Such reports shall become a part of the permanent file for both the congregation and the minister.

- S14.34.** Each minister of Word and Service on the roll of this synod shall submit a written report of his or her ministry to the bishop of the synod by June 1 of each year. Such reports shall become a part of the permanent file for both the congregation and the minister.
- S15.13.** On the basis of estimated income, the Synod Council shall authorize expenditures within the budget for the fiscal year. Expenditure Budget and expenditure authorizations shall be subject to revision, in light of changing conditions, by the Synod Council.
- S15.14.** Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, a reserve amounting to no more than 16% of the sum of the amounts scheduled in the next year's budget for regular distribution to synodical causes shall be carried forward annually for disbursement in the following year in the interest of making possible a more even flow of income to such causes. The exact number of dollars to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Synod Council.
- Except when such procedure would jeopardize current operations, the Synod shall maintain a reserve in the unrestricted Operations Fund in an amount not to exceed 16 percent of the following year's operating expense budget, to maintain a consistent availability of resources to fund such expenses. The exact amount to be held in reserve shall be determined by the Treasurer of the Synod and shall be approved by the Synod Council.
- S19.02.** This synod accepts and sustains a supporting relationship to Dana College of Blair, Nebraska, and Midland Lutheran College University of Fremont, Nebraska, as a recognized colleges-college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with a threefold concern for their-its character as a Christian institutions institution of learning, their-its academic excellence, and their-its material welfare.
- ~~**S20.01.** The persons elected as officers and Synod Council members of this synod at the constituting convention shall serve in such positions for legal and organizational purposes beginning at the conclusion of the constituting convention and for the terms to which they are elected beginning January 1, 1988.~~

VOTED:

CC17.11.33i4

To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Western Iowa Synod:

EN BLOC

- ~~**S9.11.** The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.~~
- S10.06.** If a member of the Synod Council ceases to meet the requirements of the position to which she or he was elected, the office filled by such member shall at once

become vacant. If a Synod Council member misses three consecutive meetings without notice, the office will be considered vacant and a replacement may be appointed by the Synod Council immediately, or elected at the next Synod Assembly to finish the term.

S15.14. A reserve shall be established (of not less than two months nor more than four months) to cover operating expenses in case of catastrophic conditions.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33i5 To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Upstate New York Synod:

S8.52. The terms of the offices other than Bishop shall begin upon election and qualification. The term of the bishop shall begin on the first day of September following election, or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.

S13.26. The parish records (including membership, baptism, confirmation, marriage and funeral records) of a congregation that disbands, is declared defunct by the Synod Council, or leaves the ELCA by any of the provisions of the Chapter 6 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, become property of this synod and shall be placed in the synod archives as designated by the Synod Council for reference and safekeeping.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33i6 To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod:

S7.22. c. All ordained pastors from other denominations who are our full-communion partners and who have been appointed or authorized by the Bishop and/or Synod Council to serve congregations of this Synod shall have voice and vote in the meetings of the Synod Assembly.

J. Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary

(Reference: Capital-Trinity Asset Transfer Agreement and Capital University Draft Bylaws)

Background:

The Church Council received [CC17.03.08] draft documents related “to the proposed asset acquisition of Trinity Lutheran Seminary by Capital University” on March 31, 2017. The documents included draft bylaws for Capital University that would incorporate Trinity Lutheran Seminary as a school of the university, 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.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33j

**To approve the Asset Transfer Agreement for the Reunion of Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary; and
To approve the revised Bylaws of Capital University as they relate to Trinity Lutheran Seminary, in particular Articles VI, XXII and XXIX.**

K. Amendment to a Corporate Social Responsibility screen

Background:

Category B3: Toward a Responsible Energy Future

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [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:

- shareholder advocacy (filing and supporting resolutions on environmental issues, including 150 resolutions in 2015),
- focused investment screening, which has identified 113 companies screened for environmental reasons, and
- 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 during the years of 2014 and 2015 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.
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 a 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 [CC16.11.46q]

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.

Response from the Corporate Social Responsibility review team (November 2017)

Based on its review of investment screens related to fossil fuels, the Corporate Social Responsibility table revised the Environment Social Criteria Investment Screen.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33k To receive the response from the Corporate Social Responsibility table regarding "Toward a Responsible Energy Future";

To approve the amendments to the following corporate social responsibility economic social criteria investment screen: Environment Social Criteria Investment Screen; and

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

L. Assessing the need for and feasibility of initiating social message processes

Background:

In November 2016, the Church Council voted [CC16.11.461]:

To defer the questions of developing a social message on U.S. National Drug Policy or aging until the November 2017 Church Council meeting when a new assessment of each issue, staff capacity and finances will be made.

Due to workload and capacity, staff requested deferment of this question until 2018.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.331 To defer the question of developing social messages on aging or the U.S. National Drug Policy until 2018.

M. “Vision, Process, and Practice of ELCA Campus Ministry: Guidelines and Recommendations”

Background:

In response to a 2016 resolution from the Southeastern Iowa Synod regarding campus ministry, the Domestic Mission unit reported in November 2016:

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.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

**CC17.11.33m To adopt “Vision, Process, and Practice of ELCA Campus Ministry: Guidelines and Recommendations” to serve as the operation of and support for campus ministry in the ELCA; and
To request that “Policies and Procedures for Campus Ministry” be archived for historical and research purposes.**

N. Church Council nominations 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 governing 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.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

**CC17.11.33n1 To elect to the board of directors of the Board of Pensions of the ELCA — Portico Benefit Services — for a term ending in August 2019: Ms. Helen Doerpinghaus;
To elect to the board of directors of the Publishing House of the ELCA — 1517 Media — for a term ending in August 2019: The Rev. Mark G. Vitalis Hoffman and Ms. Lisa J. Peck;**

To re-elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a six-year term ending in December 2023: The Rev. Stephen J. Cornils and the Rev. Kathryn A. Kleinhans;

To elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc. for a three-year term ending in 2020: Ms. Megan M. Gustafson; and

To approve the 2017 designation of the following members of the board of directors of The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society as representatives to the ELCA: Mr. David J. Horazdovsky [president], Mr. H. Theodore Grindal [term ending in 2018], Dr. Gwen Wagstrom Halaas [term ending in 2019] and Mr. Dale M. Thompson [term ending in 2018].

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33n2 To reappoint the Rev. Linda Nou as the Church Council advisor to the Justice for Women Consulting Committee for a two-year term, expiring in 2019.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33n3 To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary as part of Capital University for a one-year term expiring in 2018: Ms. Barbara J. Burgie, Mr. Roderick G.W. Chu and Ms. Judy K. Leidy;

To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary as part of Capital University for a two-year term expiring in 2019: Mr. James A. McCoy and Mr. Aaron Schmalzle; and

To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary as part of Capital University for a three-year term expiring in 2020: Ms. Danette Miller.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33n4 To elect to the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for a six-year term expiring in November 2023: Ms. Kristy Albrecht and the Rev. Glenn D. Miller; and

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council, pursuant to 14.41.01.a. and 15.15.01 of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, to elect up to four trustees to fill vacancies on the board of trustees for the Endowment Fund of the ELCA between now and the next meeting of the Church Council, bringing the board up to its maximum complement of 12 trustees.

O. Dakota Access Pipeline protest

Western North Dakota Synod (3A) [2017]

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly acknowledge, with tears in our hearts, the suffering endured by all who were involved, and pray for the earth and all those who suffered during this time of distress, anger and fear; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly praises God and those who served, including the leaders of the State of North Dakota, local agency leaders, the Standing Rock Sioux and all who engaged in the act of upholding the law and protecting all people; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly highly approves of the wisdom of its bishop and also commends the actions of the Standing Rock Council who kept the peace; and be it further

RESOLVED, that any and all statements made in support for one side or another on behalf of the ELCA, publicly, would be done only after thorough and prayerful discussion of the issues with tribal, local, state, national and religious leaders, including those affected, while making diligent efforts to become fully informed, to learn and reflect, before a national proclamation is made; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America now take the opportunity to better understand the historical, environmental and other issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we now strive to learn more about the issues from the leaders — including tribal, local, state, national and religious — so that we can begin to heal the wounds resulting from the events and to work together for a better relationship among the citizens of North Dakota; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for referral and disposition to the appropriate unit or office of the churchwide organization in accordance with the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Executive Committee action [EC17.08.19c]

To receive the resolution from the Western North Dakota Synod on the Dakota Access Pipeline protests;

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

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2017)

In a face-to-face conversation, Western North Dakota Synod Bishop Mark E. Narum shared the intention of the "Dakota Access Pipeline protest" resolution with Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and the Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit. He said the intention of the resolution was to seek a wider conversation with others, including those affected, before a statement from the churchwide organization is released, and together they discussed what might be helpful as this church moves forward. It was noted that both the Western North Dakota Synod and the churchwide organization were both still processing the events of the Dakota Access Pipeline protest. In the midst of this work, there continue to be issues to wrestle with as we learn about people's experiences. The churchwide organization's intention is to continue talking with the American Indian and Alaska Native community about lessons learned from the various responses to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests. In addition, the churchwide organization will consider sending the ELCA Advocacy staff to listen and hear from ranchers, farmers, American Indians and energy conservationists as this church strives to become fully informed and to learn and reflect on issues, such as the upcoming work for the 2018 Farm Bill.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33o

To thank the Western North Dakota Synod for its resolution regarding "Dakota Access Pipeline Protest";

To receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit and to encourage the staff's continued efforts to better understand the historical, environmental and other issues;
and

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

P. The role of the church in combating antimicrobial resistance

Southeastern Synod (9D) [2017]

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Council request that the ELCA Church Council work to engage with its ecumenical partners, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, to identify areas of mutual interest and future collaboration on this issue [combating antimicrobial resistance]; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Council request that the ELCA Church Council include information regarding the fight against antimicrobial resistance in existing churchwide efforts to eliminate health disparities (e.g., clean water initiatives, malaria prevention, etc.); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Council request that the synod's Health Ministry Task Force work through the bishop's office to engage its partner synods, domestically and internationally, to promote awareness and share ideas concerning best practices to combat antimicrobial resistance.

Executive Committee action [EC17.08.19e]

To receive the resolution from the Southeastern Synod on Combating Antimicrobial Resistance;

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 action; and

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

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

The staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop consulted with colleagues in the Global Mission unit as that unit's staff has more expertise on antimicrobial resistance. The churchwide organization does not have specific programs addressing antimicrobial resistance. The program director for diakonia and the program director for health and sustainable development in Global Mission will look at other support that the churchwide organization provides more broadly for testing and capacity-building. Global Mission will take the lead on this response. Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop will offer consultation as needed with respect to engaging ecumenical partners on the issue. A further response to the Southeastern Synod resolution will be submitted by the April 2018 Church Council meeting.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33p

To thank the Southeastern Synod for its resolution regarding "The Role of the Church in Combating Antimicrobial Resistance";

To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and to request a further response from the Global Mission unit by the April 2018 Church Council meeting; and

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

Q. Mission support and benevolence

Southeastern Minnesota Synod (3I) [2017]

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, in assembly, encourage the use of "mission support" instead of "benevolence" in all congregational, synodical and churchwide communications; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, in assembly, request the ELCA Church Council to change the wording of the Model Constitution for Congregations in C12.05.e. to read: "The Congregational Council shall ascertain that the financial affairs of this congregation are being conducted efficiently, giving particular attention to the prompt payment of all obligations and to the regular forwarding of **benevolence mission support** monies to the synodical treasurer."

Executive Committee action [EC17.06.16]

To receive the resolution from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod encouraging the use of "mission support" instead of "benevolence";

To refer the resolution to 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 Office of the Secretary (November 2017)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger, at the June 2017 Executive Committee meeting, informed the committee that replacing “benevolence” with “mission support” will be among the constitutional amendments recommended to the Church Council for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33q To thank the Southeastern Minnesota Synod for its resolution regarding “Mission Support and Benevolence”;

To anticipate proposed constitutional amendments replacing “benevolence” with “mission support” that may be recommended to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; and

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

R. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C) [2017]

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod will encourage all congregations of the synod to support and engage in the ongoing work of welcoming refugees through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and various partner organizations and ministries of this synod; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod recommit to being an advocate and justice seeker for refugees, requests that the synod bishop communicates its concerns to its members of Congress and other federal, state and local elected officials, and encourages all congregations and their members to express their concern for refugees to their elected officials; and be it further

RESOLVED, that all congregations of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod be encouraged to pray for the displaced and refugees around the world, for aid and resettlement organizations, for just and humane government policies that reflect this nation’s core values of welcome and inclusivity, and for a world where no one need flee their home for fear of violence, oppression or economic hardship; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each congregation and synod leaders be encouraged to celebrate and give thanks for the rich and diverse gifts that refugees bring to our communities, our states and our nation by annually hosting a Refugee Sunday (www.lirs.org/refugeesunday); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Council request the Church Council to direct the presiding bishop to communicate this church’s resolute commitment to the resettlement of refugees in the United States and encourage steadfast support for this program to the President and members of Congress.

Executive Committee action [EC17.08.19d]

To receive the resolution from the Indiana-Kentucky Synod on the ongoing work of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee services and their commitment to aiding refugee;

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

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2017)

The Domestic Mission unit is invested in supporting and protecting immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. This year 56 percent of new start ministries are among immigrant communities and this church is creating a stronger network to connect its work with immigrants though the [Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities](#) (AMMPARO) strategy, which is in its first implementation year. In addition, Domestic Mission and Global Mission continue to strategize and work together with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

(LIRS) to communicate this church's resolute commitment to the resettlement of refugees and protection of migrants. In fact, the ELCA is the largest core supporter of LIRS.

In January, LIRS initiated and facilitated communication between Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and U.S. President Donald J. Trump's administration to express and detail this church's support for resettling refugees. Presiding Bishop Eaton made this communication [public in a letter issued on January 30, 2017](#), asking congregations also to engage publicly in support of refugees. In March 2017, Presiding Bishop Eaton, ELCA synod bishops and other Lutheran leaders, in cooperation with LIRS, participated in joint advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C., visiting members of Congress to express support for the U.S. refugee program and efforts to welcome refugees. In June, Presiding Bishop Eaton co-authored a letter with Ms. Linda Hartke, president and chief executive officer of LIRS, [to celebrate World Refugee Day](#) and encourage ELCA congregations to welcome refugees and observe Refugee Sunday. In July, Presiding Bishop Eaton, the Rev. Mark M. Beckwith, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, and Ms. Hartke, along with staff from both churches, visited the Elizabeth Detention Center for immigrants at the invitation of the Rev. Ramon A. Collazo, an ELCA pastor and chaplain at the center. Throughout the year, ELCA Advocacy has engaged its public communications and advocacy to send messages from LIRS in support of refugee resettlement. Presiding Bishop Eaton sent private communications to the Trump Administration as the President was considering the ceiling he would set on refugee admissions for 2018. Presiding Bishop Eaton has also released statements on immigration issues, [including one when the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\) program was rescinded](#) earlier this year. Her disappointment for the end of the program as well as a call for Congress to pass a bill that permanently protects young Americans without legal status was shared on social media and sent to all congressional offices. The ELCA continues to promote resources for congregational engagement available at www.LIRS.org, and expects to lend support to the Circle of Welcome initiative that provides an opportunity for congregations to engage directly in welcoming refugees.

It is expected that the ELCA and Presiding Bishop Eaton, in cooperation with LIRS, will choose the most strategic opportunity to formally communicate the church's support of refugee resettlement to the President and all members of Congress.

LIRS, Global Mission and Domestic Mission continue to intentionally plan together to protect Central American refugees through the AMMPARO strategy.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33r To thank the Indiana-Kentucky Synod for its resolution regarding "Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service" and to receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit;

To thank ELCA Advocacy and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service for their ongoing strategic work in support of refugees and protection of migrants;

To thank the presiding bishop for her continued communications to the U.S. President and members of Congress regarding this church's commitment and support for the resettlement of refugees;

To encourage the staff of the churchwide organization and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to continue to choose strategic opportunities to communicate to the U.S. President and members of Congress of this church's resolute commitment; and

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

S. Ministry support and protection for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers

Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2017]

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod give thanks for and affirm the importance of ministry to and among immigrants and refugees and endorse and support the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service,

Lutheran Services in America and its member organizations, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, the Faith Action Network, and other ELCA-related and affiliated programs and organizations in this work; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod — mindful of its identity as a public church for the sake of the world and committed in baptism to strive for justice and peace in all the earth — encourage its members, rostered ministers and bishop to prophetic speech that advocates compassionate immigration reform and refugee relief and resettlement, promotes family unity and further encourages bold actions that will offer safety, companionship and protection for people without regard to immigration status; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod request the ELCA Church Council, and memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, to request that the presiding bishop communicate this church's resolute commitment to the resettlement of refugees in the United States and encourage steadfast support for this program to the President and Members of Congress.

Executive Committee Action [EC17.08.19a]

To receive the resolution from the Northwest Washington Synod on Ministry Support and Protection for Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers;

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 2017)

See the response from the Domestic Mission unit that begins on page 57.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33s

To thank the Northwest Washington Synod for its resolution regarding “Ministry Support and Protection for Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers” and to receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit;

To thank ELCA Advocacy and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service for its ongoing strategic work in support of refugees and protection of migrants;

To thank the presiding bishop for her continued communications to the U.S. President and members of Congress regarding this church's commitment and support for the resettlement of refugees;

To encourage the staff of the churchwide organization and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to continue to choose strategic opportunities to communicate to the U.S. President and members of Congress of this church's resolute commitment; and

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

T. “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” (2009)

Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2017]

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod requests that the Church Council of the ELCA initiate a review and edit of “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” to reflect changes in laws and language, as well as the changing faith and secular perspectives on the wide variety of family structures included in this church and society, especially in relation to LGBTQ+ individuals and families; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod requests that the Church Council of the ELCA bring a reviewed and edited version of “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” to the floor of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for a vote; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod urges rostered and lay leaders throughout this church, including the bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod and the presiding bishop, to continue to publicly speak and act against legislation that discriminates against the LGBTQ+ community in this country, and practices that persecute the LGBTQ+ community globally.

Executive Committee action [EC17.08.19b]

To receive the resolution from the Northwest Washington Synod on the proposed updates to “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” (2009);

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 action; and

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

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

The resolution from the Northwest Washington Synod brings into focus the landmark shift in U.S. law regarding marriage rendered by the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States of June 26, 2015, (*Obergefell v. Hodges* 576 U.S.); that decision made marriage possible for same-sex couples in all 50 states. The synod resolution references the rapid and widespread growth in understanding and support for people of all gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations as well as other efforts against discriminatory legislation and violence. It claims that discrimination and persecution remain grounded in the language, practices and traditions of faith communities and that the ELCA has “found its way to a different perspective on the LGBTQ+ community that can serve as a faith-based antidote to other faith-based messages....”

For these reasons, the synod’s resolution requests three actions. The first requests that the Church Council of the ELCA *initiate* a review and edit of “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” (Human Sexuality; 2009) while the second requests that the Church Council *bring* a reviewed and edited version of Human Sexuality to the floor of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for a vote. The third resolve urges leaders of this church to continue to publicly speak and act against discriminatory legislation violent practice.

The first two resolves are directed as a request for Church Council action in relation to the Churchwide Assembly while the third resolve is a general appeal to ELCA leadership.

While the concerns prompting this request of the Church Council are clearly stated, the actions requested of the Church Council are not possible for it to consider. [Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns](#) (Policies and Procedures) maintain that only a “Churchwide Assembly, by a two-thirds vote, may call for the reconsideration of a social statement at the next assembly” (p. 17). It is possible, then, only for a churchwide assembly, by a two-thirds vote, to consider authorizing the review and edit of “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust.” If an assembly did authorize a review and edit, the effort to do so would be referred to the Office of the Presiding Bishop and, in accord with Policies and Procedures, would bring proposed changes and reasons for those changes to the next assembly for consideration.

It is important to explain that this protocol regarding social statements safeguards the status of ELCA social statements as the fundamental teaching authority expressed in documents prepared by this church. In other words, since only a churchwide assembly, as the highest legislative body, can establish a statement, only another churchwide assembly can initiate its editing, revision or removal. All actions, likewise, require two-thirds support.

The synod’s third resolve is a fresh expression of support for existing policy of this church (see, for instance, the 2013 social policy resolution on [Gender Identity Discrimination](#)), and the efforts by ELCA leaders to continue to publicly speak and act against legislation and practices that persecute the LGBTQ+ community globally. It does not specify any legislative action.

VOTED:

CC17.11.33t

To thank the Northwest Washington Synod for its resolution regarding “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust”; and

EN BLOC

To ask the secretary of this church to communicate to the synod that the actions it requests of the Church Council are not possible for it to consider according to the protocol of “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns.”

The reports of the Memorials Committees to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly and the 2016 Churchwide Assembly include the full texts of the synod memorials to those respective assemblies.

U. Increase suicide prevention research funding

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 for 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 [CC16.11.46r]

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2017)

On September 28, 2017, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton sent a letter to U.S. President Donald J. Trump and congressional leaders on the importance of suicide prevention work in church and society. It concludes, “It is the intent of the ELCA to contribute to our role in preventing the preventable by calling on our congregations, synods and churchwide ministries to a commitment on education, understanding and action. On behalf of the ELCA, I strongly urge you to consider doubling the funding for suicide prevention over the next five years to ensure that both public and private institutions can commit to preventing suicide in our communities.”

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33u To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit on “Increase Suicide Prevention Research Funding”; and

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

V. 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. We intend to provide a report on the activities by the end of 2017.

Church Council Action [CC16.11.46aa]

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

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

The executive for worship met with colleagues from Domestic Mission, Global Mission, Theological Discernment, Women of the ELCA, and Cherish all Children in November 2016. Following that meeting and conference calls that followed, a worship resource, Bible study, and Sunday bulletin insert were created for January 11, National Human Trafficking Day. These resources are available on the [worship page](#) and the [Justice for Women page](#) of ELCA.org. Ongoing, the worship team and theological discernment team will work together to make sure these resources are updated.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33v To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop on “Time of Prayer and Worship Resources on Human Trafficking”;

To commend the resources created for National Human Trafficking Day to congregations; and

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

W. Examining the implications of becoming a sanctuary denomination

(Reference: Sanctuary Background)

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 [CC16.11.46ee]

- 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.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit in consultation with the Office of the Secretary (November 2017)

Based on the research analysis in “Sanctuary Background,” the Domestic Mission unit in consultation with the Office of the Secretary does not recommend that the ELCA go through the process of becoming a sanctuary denomination. Staff recommend that the ELCA have a clear position supporting the protection of migrants through sanctuary under the umbrella of the AMMPARO Strategy. The churchwide organization is committed to giving synods and congregations guidance regarding the new sanctuary movement.

The ELCA already has several pathways for churches and congregants to provide services, advocate and welcome migrants through synod immigration task forces, AMMPARO and LIRS. Synod task forces, LIRS, AMMPARO and formal churchwide actions already call on churches to walk alongside migrants and become part of a Lutheran network working with migrant communities in different capacities. To compliment these networks, the ELCA should verbalize its support for the spirit of the sanctuary movement while calling churches to be involved in activities to protect migrants through our existing networks.

Language addressing the sanctuary movement should:

1. Verbalize support for the sanctuary movement, which is often manifest as an ecumenical or interfaith effort;
2. Provide educational and practical resources and information for congregations as they consider their part in providing sanctuary, including ways for congregations to understand possible legal risks;
3. Encourage synod immigration task forces to be engaged with the sanctuary movement in their area; and
4. Call on all congregations, including current sanctuary congregations, to support the spirit of the new sanctuary movement by serving the migrant communities around them, becoming [Welcoming Congregations](#) and/or joining the [AMMPARO movement](#).

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33w

To thank the Office of the Secretary and the Domestic Mission unit for its responses to “Examining the Implications of Becoming a Sanctuary Denomination”;
To decline the request for the ELCA to declare itself a sanctuary denomination;
To support the spirit of the sanctuary movement by encouraging congregations to serve and support the protection of migrants in their communities;
To request the churchwide organization to provide guidance and information regarding the new sanctuary movement under the umbrella of the AMMPARO Strategy; and

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

X. Report on “The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries” (2013)

Churchwide Assembly action [CA13.05.19]

To adopt the following implementing resolutions as amended:

1. To call upon members of this church through steadfast prayer, discernment, Christian education, ministry efforts, and public action to share the gospel of God’s love in Jesus Christ as they hear the cries, offer hospitality, accompany, and advocate on behalf of those whose lives are caught up in or committed in service to the criminal justice system;
2. To call upon 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;
3. To encourage ELCA congregations to work with victims, victim advocates, and victim support organizations, to grow in sensitivity and response to the harm caused by crime, and to grow in awareness of restorative justice practices;
4. To encourage ELCA congregations to become intentional sites of ministry and action for the incarcerated and their families, possibly in ecumenical collaboration, and with special attention to re-entry ministries and to preferential hiring for ex-offenders, as appropriate;
5. To hold in prayer the ministry of ELCA chaplains and pastors serving in all correctional facilities, or serving with law enforcement agencies around the country, and to encourage all expressions of the ELCA and its affiliated institutions to provide greater support to prison ministry;
6. To request the ELCA’s Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to enlist the aid of leaders in conferences, synods, seminaries, social ministry organizations, or other appropriate groups in creating and maintaining a resource database to which members, pastors, seminarians, or other professionals can turn for information about activities, models, and training modules that support ministry to people and action toward reform of the criminal justice system;
7. To call upon the ELCA’s Worship and Liturgical Resources Team to develop additional liturgical resources for those involved in the criminal justice system, such as services and prayers for victims and their families, for those incarcerated, for those employed in the system, or rites of blessing for those engaging in visitation ministries;
8. To direct the staff of the ELCA’s advocacy ministries to coordinate efforts to develop, on behalf of this church, a social investment screen on private prison operations, along with developing education materials to use within the ELCA for understanding these actions.
9. To direct the ELCA’s Theological Discernment Team in the fall of 2015 to bring to the Church Council an assessment of the feasibility of developing a social message on U.S. national drug policy, in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (Chicago: ELCA, 1997, revised 2006, 2011);
10. To encourage the three expressions of this church to utilize the recommendations of the Addressing Social Concerns Review Task Force in the process of disseminating and implementing this social statement; and
11. To call upon appropriate staff in the ELCA’s Congregational and Synodical Mission unit and the Office of the Presiding Bishop to establish and oversee a process of implementation and accountability for this social statement that provides a report on implementation to the Church Council in the fall of 2017.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2017)

In recent social statements, an implementing resolution has been included that directed or called upon units of the churchwide organization to provide for accountability and report on implementation. Resolution 11 of “The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries” (2013) called for such a report to the Church Council in the fall of 2017.

Christian education

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton called this church into deeper conversations about race and racism in “[Confronting Racism: A Holy Yearning](#)” — a live webcast aired on January 14, 2016. This was Presiding Bishop Eaton’s second live webcast on the topic of racism. The January webcast raised the question of the racial disparity in the U.S. criminal justice system, emphasizing the ELCA’s commitment to pray for the incarcerated, their families and communities, and those wrongly convicted, as well as to pray for law enforcers and those who work in the system. The webcast underscored the [denomination’s declaration](#) to name racism as a sin and highlight the ELCA’s ongoing work to eliminate racial, ethnic discrimination in the church and society.

Mr. William B. Horne II, a member of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Clearwater, Fla., and vice president of the ELCA, served as webcast host. ELCA members Judge Yolanda Tanner, an associate judge for the Baltimore City Circuit Court addressed racial disparities within the justice system; seminarian Leonard Duncan shared his experience of incarceration, poverty and homelessness; and seminarian Charlene Guiliani, a former police sergeant joined Presiding Bishop Eaton and Vice President Horne. Links to the ELCA social statement “[The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries](#)” along with the congregational study guide “[Called to Hear](#)” were made available during the webcast.

Congregational engagement

ELCA congregations are actively and creatively developing resources to connect with formerly incarcerated individuals. For example, Redeemer Lutheran in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod supports Under the Door (prison ministry) and Inside-Out Connections (ex-offender ministry). They are a visible, viable, valuable alternative to the current way of doing prison and ex-offender ministry. They have also produced a resource, **Spiritual Survival Guide for Prison** and a **Re-Entry Directory (RED)** for the Chicago area. [RED Chicago](#) aids in finding housing, clothing, food, legal, mental, physical, educational, employment, financial, transportation and spiritual support services.

In June 2015, Grace Lutheran in the New England Synod launched Fresh Start Pallet Products. Used pallets are turned into chairs, tables, planters, stools, window boxes and knickknack shelves. The endeavor provides homeless men, many whom are formerly incarcerated, with work skills to build furniture and resources to rebuild their lives.

Leadership development

In 2015, the Domestic Mission unit entered into a formal agreement with [Prison Congregations of America, Inc.](#) (PCA) a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to collaborate with Christian denominations and prison officials to establish prison congregations in state prisons and correctional facilities across the United States. The PCA model is built on establishing relationships between churches on the outside and the congregations on the inside of prisons. PCA is a primary resource to ELCA synods in establishing prison congregations. PCA is a consultant for new start congregations to assist them with launching new ministries, to provide training for pastors of this unique ministry style, and to provide ongoing mentoring for pastors and prison congregation boards.

In 2016, Domestic Mission developed a Mission Developer Training Curriculum in partnership with PCA. In February 2017, the ELCA offered a PCA Congregations Mission Developer Training Track. The partnership with ELCA Domestic Mission New Congregations, PCA and many key ELCA leaders is bearing fruit. In August 2017, the ELCA offered another 350 people Mission Developer Training and Congregational Development Training with an expanded Prison Congregations Mission Developer Track, which now includes Recovery Congregations as well. These recovery congregations expand on the life-changing ability of prison congregations to gather people for worship outside of prisons for setting hundreds and hopefully more people free with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In 2015, two new ELCA Prison Congregation New Starts were approved and one ELCA Recovery Congregation New Start was approved. In 2016, seven new ELCA Prison Congregation New Starts were approved and one ELCA Recovery Congregation New Start was approved. In 2017, four new ELCA Prison Congregation New Starts were approved and one ELCA Recovery Congregation New Start was approved. Currently there are 31 prison congregations and worshiping communities in 14 states and 15 ELCA synods, representing nine denominations. Many PCA congregations are of our ELCA full communion partner denominations. About one-third of PCA congregations are ELCA.

Worship

The worship team of the Office of the Presiding Bishop has developed many liturgical resources and worship services in response to the many forms of racial injustice in our country and the ongoing violence that ensues. In March 2017, the executive for worship, publisher for 1517 Media, director for federal chaplains and the director for the Federal Bureau of Prisons ministry met with an eclectic group from around the country. The consultation addressed the areas of ministry resources named in this social statement. The recommendation from the consultation was to look at the possibility of publishing a Prayer Book/Worship Resource(s) for Prison Ministry. The cost, staffing and accessibility with the legality of the Federal Prison System are still under consideration for resource development. Further planning and conversation will take place with 1517 Media and the ELCA program director for worship resource development in December 2017. Future development of materials would occur in Fall 2018.

Advocacy

Sentencing reform is a judicial imperative at the federal and state public policy level for ELCA advocacy. Supported by the social statement “The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries,” this work happens in coalition with interfaith and full communion partners in Washington, D.C., and in cooperation with our State Public Policy Offices. ELCA Advocacy has demonstrated leadership by engaging House and Senate leaders and encouraging the development of legislation that:

- Restores judges’ discretion in the sentencing decisions of those convicted of non-violent drug crimes — which disproportionately affect people of color;
- Lowers mandatory minimum sentences in certain offenses and retroactively in some cases; and
- Encourages rehabilitation programs for the incarcerated in preparation for re-entry into society.

ELCA Advocacy’s efforts have been successful in both the 114th and 115th Congress beginning January 2015 and 2017 respectively with the introduction of bi-partisan legislation addressing sentencing reform in both chambers of Congress. Efforts included direct engagement with lawmakers, grassroots advocacy and the engagement of an ELCA bishop co-writing an op-ed piece in the strategically important state of Iowa that was printed, which prompted a response from the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee as well as a pro-reform editorial in the chairman’s home state. This work continues and will remain a priority in 2017 and 2018.

In 2015, hundreds of Christian advocates gathered April 17-20 in Washington, D.C., for the 13th National Gathering of Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice. The theme, “Breaking the Chains: Mass Incarceration and Systems of Exploitation,” focused on the difficult issues and injustices in domestic U.S. and international criminal justice and immigrant detention system. The gathering provided participants with tools to be effective Christian witnesses to justice and peace. ELCA members participated in a series of interactive plenary sessions, workshops addressing aspects of the criminal justice system, skills training and denomination networking time. ELCA members lobbied with their members of Congress to support federal criminal justice reform legislation.

Ministry of presence

Cases of police brutality and extrajudicial killings of unarmed black and brown people by majority white law enforcement has sparked mass demonstrations in support of #BlackLivesMatter across this country. The slaying of police officers has fueled further divisions along racial lines. This church, in all three expressions, sent for the sake of the world, is committed to showing up. In response to racial tensions, the ministry of presence was initiated to accompany communities from chaos to building right relationships. Congregations, synods and churchwide staff have been present in walking with the community. This ministry encourages this church to work together in all three expressions by listening to voices and stories from those most affected, praying with and for the community and discerning where and how God is calling us to respond. Thus far, this church has participated in prayer vigils for slain victims, hosted ecumenical dialogues on race, walked neighborhoods, worshiped ecumenically, spoken out against injustices, joined with others in peaceful solidarity for equality, and prayed with and for law enforcement officers.

Currently, Domestic Mission’s stewardship and faith practices teams are in the early stages of beginning a ministry in ELCA congregations to promote enhanced community-police relations. This ministry would encourage congregations to build relations with local law enforcement within their community. Congregations will serve as central locations for law enforcement and the community to come together for conversations; congregations will extend hospitality to law

enforcement and rostered leaders will provide pastoral care. Thrivent Financial has expressed an interest in supporting this ministry.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.11.33x **To receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit in response to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly action related to the implementing resolutions for the social statement “The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries” (2013).**

Y. 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 is handled through our Peace Not Walls network. Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop has 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, we intend to monitor political developments closely in order to discern the most propitious time for such communications, but we will wait at least until after the election season is completed. We expect to provide a response to the Churchwide Assembly action by the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action [CC16.11.46u]

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

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

Three requests for communications to the President and Congress were included in the 2016 Churchwide Assembly action for “Peace with Justice in the Holy Land.” ELCA Advocacy has been closely monitoring the political developments in order to discern the most propitious time for the communications.

In addition, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton sent a letter to then-President Barack H. Obama in late November 2016 on full membership of Palestine in the United Nations. In June 2017, Presiding Bishop Eaton joined an ecumenical letter to President Donald J. Trump encouraging a negotiated resolution and a just peace for both peoples and an end to the occupation. She joined the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East in a letter sent to President Trump in July 2017. The letter asked for a meeting to discuss how the inter-religious group could help support efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The meeting request has yet to be granted. As an organization, the ELCA joined the Faith Forum on Middle East Policy on a briefing paper that was sent to U.S. Congress in February 2017.

Through the Peace Not Walls network, several advocacy action alerts were sent regarding Israel and Palestine. They were as follows:

- November 2016 — Call on the president to act now for a just peace in Palestine and Israel (specifically ask him to support Palestine at the United Nations and take firm action to stop Israeli settlements)
- January 2017 — Tell Congress: Support peace, don’t undermine it (opposed the “Safeguard Israel Act” that would stop U.S. contributions to the U.N. “until the President certifies to Congress that United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 has been repealed”)
- February 2017 — Urge Congress: Speak out against settlements, speak up for peace (asking Congress to speak out on these issues)
- March 2017 — Urge Congress: Support peace, justice and equality in Israel and Palestine (referencing a February briefing paper sent to Congress calling for U.S. policies that promote peace, justice and equality for Israelis and Palestinians)
- April 2017 — Tell Congress: Freedom of speech must remain guaranteed! (concerning the “Israel Anti-Boycott Act” and a similar piece of legislation)
- May 2017 — Urge members of Congress to attend a briefing on life for Palestinian children under Israeli military occupation
- June 2017 — Tell Congress: Support Palestinian refugees! (urging Congress to continue to fund UNRWA [the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East])
- July 2017 — Urge Congress: Support urgent humanitarian assistance to Gaza; end the blockade! (calling for immediate humanitarian relief assistance for Gaza, U.S. pressure on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to end the urgent electricity crisis and an end to the blockade on Gaza)
- August 2017 — Tell Congress: Freedom of speech must remain guaranteed! (similar to April alert)
- September 2017 — Call on Congress to put an end to Israel’s demolition of Palestinian homes and schools (ask U.S. Congress to urge the State Department to firmly appeal to the Israeli government to stop demolishing Palestinian property and ask Congress to insist that U.S. military aid be conditioned on Israel’s compliance with U.S. law and policy, including respect for human rights)

The timing has not been strategic for some of the memorial requests. The staff notes that sending a letter in a non-strategic time would be more symbolic than effective and could have the unintended consequence of causing conflict with our inter-religious partners as a result. Therefore, the staff intends to continue to look for strategic moments to send letters to the President and Congress regarding the memorial requests.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.11.33y **To receive the Office of the Presiding Bishop response on “Peace with Justice in the Holy Land”;**
 To encourage the staff to continue to find strategic moments to address the specific Israel and Palestine issues noted in the 2016 Churchwide Assembly action CA16.05.15 with the U.S. President and members of Congress; and
 To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.

Z. 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 [CC16.11.46x]

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

Response from the Office of the Secretary (November 2017)

Motion D and CA16.02.03q both dealt with the issue of gender identity and specifically call for a review of the “representational principles” in light of a study of the issue by the Church Council. The Office of the Secretary is in conversation with Theological Discernment staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop about how to provide materials or a presentation to the council on this topic. It is hoped that the April 2018 meeting of the council will have time set aside for work on this issue.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC17.11.33z **To receive the progress report from the Office of the Secretary regarding “Gender Identity”; and**
 To anticipate a further response by the April 2018 Church Council meeting.

AA. Resolution on the 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, we will establish a working group at the Spring 2017 meeting of the Conference of Bishops 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 [CC16.11.46ff]

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

Response from the Conference of Bishops (November 2017)

The Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops discussed Motion F further at its meeting in the fall of 2017. Rather than establish a working group to address this motion, the Conference of Bishops Executive Committee reports and recommends the following:

- Recommendation 1: The Conference of Bishops has regular conversations “regarding rostered minister vacancies throughout this church” as part of its work as a conference. Unless the Church Council desires to initiate a different conversation, we believe this aspect of the resolution is being addressed and will continue to be addressed in the course of Conference of Bishops meetings as well as other meetings of bishops with one another and with churchwide and synodical leadership.
- Recommendation 2: Again, the continuation of the conference’s “work of facilitating and always reforming the call process for congregations and institutions in our changing contexts” is an on-going conversation and task of the Conference of Bishops. We are also working on related concerns in our intentional partnership with seminary leaders. All conversations about call processes are rooted in an understanding that local context plays a significant role in evoking different forms of reform of call processes across the synods.
- Recommendation 3: Members of the Conference of Bishops regularly encourage the raising up of rostered leaders. The call to prayer issued last spring is one aspect of this encouragement. Most bishops and other synod leaders encourage the raising up of rostered leaders in many other ways in their local contexts. The remainder of this aspect of the resolution seems to be directed to Theological Education Advisory Committee.
- Recommendation 4: The Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops will welcome conversation, even guidance, from the Church Council about what communication with the Church Council and mutual review of the status of this work every year and a half for three years would look like or what form would be most helpful and fruitful.

VOTED:

CC17.11.33aa **To receive the report from the Conference of Bishops Executive Committee regarding “Resolution on Call Process”;**

To encourage the Conference of Bishops to continue to engage in conversation regarding rostered minister vacancies throughout this church as part of its work as a conference;

EN BLOC

To encourage the Conference of Bishops to continue to engage in conversation regarding the work of facilitating and always reforming the call process for congregations and institutions in changing contexts;

To commend the Conference of Bishops for its call to prayer and ongoing work in raising up leaders for this church; and

To ask the Executive Committee of the Church Council and the Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops to discuss how and in what form a mutual review of the status of this work every year and a half for three years would be most helpful and fruitful.

BB. 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 the 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: review of governing documents, creation of a 'Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community,' and an increase in the number of African Descent leaders, congregations and communities served....

Regarding a "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 regarding the work to create a "Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community." (The resolution originated at the 2015 biennial assembly for the African Descent Lutheran Association.) A progress report on the development of the declaration will be presented to the Church Council at its 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 their 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 its 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 [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 of 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 (November 2017)

Regarding a "Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community"

The African Descent Lutheran Association held its biennial association gathering in August 2016. The assembly, through resolution, requested further engagement with the Church Council, the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Domestic Mission unit regarding a process for relationship building and systemic analysis in response to a public apology. Recommendations include:

- In preparation for creating a substantive declaration, engage in a series of cleansing consultative conversations aimed at awakening moral conscience to how and where in both polity and practice the ELCA has been, and is complicit in, perpetuating systemic racism.
- The Office of the Presiding Bishop, Church Council, the Office of the Secretary and the Office of the Treasurer engage in these conversations convened by the Domestic Mission unit executive.

- Representatives from the African Descent Lutheran Association, the Ethnic Specific Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice team participate in these conversations.

A letter with recommendations for this process to be sent to the Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit.

Regarding a review and report on current governing documents

The director for ethnic specific multicultural ministries and the staff of the Office of the Secretary have met on multiple occasions to discuss a process to review the current governing documents.

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

In consultation with the program director for seminaries, the seminary presidents designated Dr. David C. Ratke and Dr. Theresa F. Latini to represent the seminaries in facilitating action called for by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. Dr. Quentin L. Robertson (United Lutheran Seminary) and Dr. James R. Thomas (Lenoir-Rhyne University) have been identified as seminary staff for work with Domestic Mission staff in response to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly action.

The seminary network provided support and was represented by staff at the African descent young adult discernment/leadership development event in October (Elisha's Call 2017). The African descent ministries desk and strategy team will collaborate with seminary representation to design and convene in 2018 a series of two-to-three similar relationship building events aimed at increasing the number of African descent leaders and communities served by 1) deepening relationships between seminaries and African descent community in the ELCA, 2) identifying barriers to African descent candidates entering and successfully navigating seminary process, and 3) equipping African descent young adult leaders for engaging their own circles of influence to identify, encourage and engage candidates for seminary and rostered leadership.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC17.11.33bb To receive the progress report from the Domestic Mission unit regarding African descent Lutherans;

To affirm the recommendations adopted at the African Descent Lutheran Association biennial gathering related to a process for relationship building and systematic analysis in response to a public apology;

To urge the Office of the Secretary and the Domestic Mission unit to continue its work in reviewing current governing documents to address contributions to racial harassment and discrimination against people of African descent;

To request a further response be brought to the April 2019 meeting of the Church Council; and

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

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

PERSONAL REFLECTION OF FAITH

(Agenda VII.F.)

The Rev. William E. Flippin Jr. shared a personal faith reflection. He related stories of preparing for Hurricane Irma and the sense of community in society and church.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

(Agenda VII.G.)

Church Council members communicated their joys and concerns.

The Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson asked specific individuals for ways in which others may pray for them, and he led the gathering in prayer.

PROCESS OBSERVATION

(Agenda VII.H.)

Mr. James J.F. Jennings provided observations of the processes and participation during the meeting, particularly from forms provided Church Council members. He asked that the term “white paper” be replaced with “concept paper.” Another point was to ensure that the right topics were being discussed and the right amount of time was devoted to each.

EVALUATION AND DEBRIEFING

(Agenda VII.I.)

Vice President William B. Horne II thanked the ecumenical guests for their presence and participation.

Church Council members discussed the governance role and responsibilities of the council, scheduling generative conversations at the end of the meeting and legislative decisions when most members were present, not having enough breaks at key times during plenary sessions, generative conversations from brainstorming to action steps, participation by listening, synod visit reports, geographic diversity on the council, asking people to complete the Nominating Committee’s biographical form, involving more introverted members of the Church Council and gratitude for hyperlinks embedded in the agenda to the related documents.

Vice President Horne outlined several matters that would be on the agenda for the April 2018 meeting. He drew the attention of the Church Council members to evaluation forms for the meeting and committee meetings.

HYMN AND PRAYER

(Agenda VII.J.)

The Rev. Joyce M. Graue led the gathering in a closing prayer.

The Rev. Peder J. Johanson, the Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson and Mr. Clarence M. Smith provided musical accompaniment for the singing of a hymn.

ADJOURNMENT

(Agenda VII.K.)

The ninetieth meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adjourned Sunday, Nov. 12, 2017, at 2:34 p.m.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

A social message on...

Human Rights

As adopted unanimously by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on November 12, 2017.

I. WHY IS A SOCIAL MESSAGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS NECESSARY?

The movement for human rights has made significant progress over the last century. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹ and the means to monitor those rights did not exist prior to 1948. Genocides have been named and condemned for what they are. Slave labor has been outlawed in much of the world. Women in many societies have achieved greater degrees of autonomy, education and public influence than anyone could have imagined even 100 years ago.

Yet staggering numbers of God's children have not experienced this advancement. Governmental oppression, war and famine send historic numbers of people streaming via dangerous routes into nearby countries that are overwhelmed and often reluctant to accept them.² People are treated as "suspicious" or are brutalized simply because of their gender, race, ethnicity or religious beliefs. Impoverished citizens have no access to clean water and live in environmental degradation. Many multinational corporations invest heavily in and benefit from the conditions in countries with egregious human rights violations.

1 Accepted by the U.N. General Assembly on Dec. 10, 1948

2 The U.N. has announced that there were more displaced people in 2016 than in any other year of recordkeeping. See [nytimes.com/2017/06/19/world/middleeast/displaced-people-united-nations-global-trends.html?_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/19/world/middleeast/displaced-people-united-nations-global-trends.html?_r=0).

Bad news from around the globe brings deep discouragement about prospects for human society.³ Our church, however, lives in abiding hope because of God's promises and has resources for bold witness. This message draws together commitments from the Lutheran tradition and the Scriptures and a strong foundation of social teaching developed by the ELCA and its predecessor church bodies.⁴ This message summons God's people to courage, confession and engagement to promote and protect human rights.

Called by God

Concern for the well-being of others lies at the very heart of Christian faith (Matthew 22:36-40).⁵ Christians have a variety of social identifications through their nation of origin, race, ethnicity or political affiliation, but all Christians have a common identity as children of a loving creator who became vulnerable as Emmanuel, God with us. The One in whom there is no Jew or Greek (Galatians 3:28) teaches that we should treat all people in need as we would treat Christ among us (Matthew 25).

In the name of the God who creates every human being out of love, this church teaches human dignity is God's gift to every person and that the commitment to universal rights protects that dignity. In adopting this social message, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Church Council gives renewed

3 The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, speaking at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., in February 2017, expressed his alarm: "To many of us it appears the international system could become dangerously unstable ... [raging conflicts] are accompanied by an intensifying breakdown in the basic consensus, embedded in key international and regional institutions, a consensus which has for decades maintained, supported and regulated the relations between states and their behavior."

4 This message does not initiate new teaching but articulates in one place themes and commitments from the disparate sources in which the ELCA has affirmed or mentioned human rights; it makes explicit what is implicit and addresses contemporary questions.

5 The "double love commandment" found in Matthew 22:36f represents this core commitment. It orients how all Christians are to live: We express our thanks and trust in God in loving our neighbor.

attention to addressing human rights as a church.⁶ It also believes the time is right for more Christians to enter public conversation and take action to safeguard the dignity due to all children of God. ELCA social teaching is clear: “The God who justifies expects all people to do justice.”⁷

II. WHAT ARE THE ELCA'S BASIC CONVICTIONS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS?

God's creative action as the basis for dignity

In the Scriptures, God surveys creation and deems it good.⁸ This good creation is a rich, varied and bountiful one in which all of God's creatures have integrity and value.⁹ The ELCA teaches that this gracious God grants humankind the gifts of agency, reason and spirit, directing it to help order and shape creation so that all may continue to flourish.¹⁰ The God-given purpose for humankind (the *imago Dei*) imbues each human being with a shared dignity.¹¹

In addition to establishing this dignity, the biblical teaching about *imago Dei* illustrates that relationship is an essential aspect of personhood. Just as the Scriptures reveal that the Holy Trinity is a God always in relationship, so are humans always meant to be in life-giving relationship – with God and with each other.

6 The need for renewed attention is clear. ELCA leadership continually receives requests for advocacy that will benefit from judicious criteria. As an example, the 2016 Churchwide Assembly adopted a social policy resolution calling for an investment screen related to human rights, whose writing this message will support and inform.

7 ELCA “Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective,” p. 3. All official ELCA teaching and policy documents referenced in these footnotes can be found at ELCA.org/socialstatements.

8 Genesis, Chapter 1.

9 See ELCA “Genetics, Faith and Responsibility,” p. 9: “God’s creative action brings forth a dynamic, varied, evolving, interdependent community of abundance and life. In this creation, each participant has a relationship to God and has a God-given integrity and value.”

10 “Genetics,” p. 2.

11 ELCA “Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All,” p. 9: “Human beings are created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27) as social beings whose dignity, worth, and value are conferred by God.”

As Christ on the cross did not lose his dignity, but in fact revealed himself fully in vulnerability, every human who is being mistreated retains the image of God that confers dignity. A society should not deny a person's dignity for any reason. This is true even if that person has acted maliciously and treated others inhumanely.¹² God's gift of dignity is immutable, indivisible and inseparable from our being.

Through Jesus, our relational God took on the vulnerable and finite human form of a Jewish man, a group oppressed by the Roman Empire. The Word's embodiment in concrete, finite form teaches that recognizing the multidimensional needs of human bodies is one means of honoring God's creation. Working to uphold rights is a concrete way to respond to the neighbor's need.

Sin breaks in

While God's continuing intention for creation is that it should flourish, individual and systemic sin breaks in. This is evident to Christians from the Scriptures and from human experience itself. The very cry for rights and justice signals that sin abounds because dignity and value are not being honored.

God orders society through justice

In the presence of sin, God preserves creation, orders society and promotes justice through the law.¹³ When the laws of a society do not order society for the good of all or promote justice, the members of this church are compelled in their faith to address those shortcomings. Conversely, God's people participate in God's will for society when they seek just laws that safeguard human dignity and promote the common good.

This church teaches: "Along with all citizens, Christians have the responsibility to defend human rights and to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well-being, and good order in public life."¹⁴ All people of good will, not just Christians, contribute to the

12 ELCA "The Death Penalty," footnote 9: An important strand of ethical thought insists that each human being should be treated as an "end," not a "means," because of human dignity. Punishing an offender solely as a means to greater social safety (e.g., "making an example" of someone) can violate this principle.

13 "Church in Society," p. 3.

14 Ibid., p. 5.

common good in seeking to promote and protect human rights.

Key convictions about rights

Human beings are a dynamic oneness of body, mind and spirit.¹⁵ Human rights, therefore, address more than just physical or biological needs. “Human rights are there to identify, address and change conditions under which God’s will for humans is violated.”¹⁶ No person inherently has more rights or fewer rights than another.

As Lutherans, we do not believe that God’s intention for abundance and flourishing is fully described by human rights. The biblical picture of God’s intention is much richer, relational, inclusive and communal. The recognition of fundamental human rights, however, serves as a safety net of critical, baseline commitments. The ELCA affirms the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as “a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.”¹⁷

A right is what justice requires in response to a particular human need.¹⁸ Adapted from this church’s historical body of social teaching, the ELCA affirms the following broad categories of human rights:¹⁹

1. Humans have been created for divine relationship and have the right to engage in that relationship through such means as worship and devotional practices.

15 ELCA, “Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor,” p. 3.

16 *Faith and Human Rights, Voices from the Lutheran Communion*, Copyright 2006 Lutheran University Press and The Lutheran World Federation, Geneva. p. 79. (lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Documentation%2051-EN.pdf)

17 See “For Peace in God’s World,” p. 14 for the primary discussion. Other social documents mention human rights or presume them.

18 From “Human Rights: Doing Justice in God’s World,” Lutheran Church in America (1978), p. 3.

19 While adapted significantly, similar categories are found in statements by ELCA predecessor churches, the Lutheran Church in America’s “Human Rights: Doing Justice in God’s World” and the American Lutheran Church’s “Peace, Justice and Human Rights.” Many of these categories, likewise, are addressed through ELCA social statements.

2. Humans are creatures and creators of symbol and meaning and have the right to think and communicate freely and to be educated.
3. Humans are communal beings and have the right to the protection of foundational relationships, such as marriage and family. No one has the right to sunder or violate fundamental communal relationships or turn them into a commodity.
4. Humans are political and civic beings and have the right to equal access and participation in legal, civic and political decisions affecting them.
5. Humans are economic²⁰ beings and have the right to participate fully in an economy where resources are justly allocated with a view to sustainability. Humans may not be treated as commodities.
6. Humans are physical beings and have the right to sufficient and sustainable levels of physical goods such as water, food, shelter and health care. This includes treating creation sustainably so the next generation has sufficient physical goods.

III. GIVEN THESE CONVICTIONS, WHAT DO WE DO?

The ELCA social statement “Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective” calls upon our church to enter into the world because God is already there at work.²¹ Individually, Christians bear the responsibility of working for human rights, justice and peace, and corporately the church is called to do the same.

20 “Economic” in this case is used in the sense of the Greek word “oikos,” which encompasses the concerns of everyone in a household.

21 “Church in Society,” p. 2: “The Gospel does not take the Church out of the world but instead calls it to affirm and to enter more deeply into the world. Although in bondage to sin and death, the world is God’s good creation, where, because of love, God in Jesus Christ became flesh. The Church and the world have a common destiny in the reign of God. The Church acts for the sake of the world in hope and prayer: ‘Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.’”

Confession

This church acknowledges that God's people, too often, have failed to join God's work in society to protect rights and to work for the good of all. Most mainline churches in the United States were slow to support the civil rights movement and have been slow to address the ongoing rights violations experienced by people of color. It was not until 2016 that the ELCA repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery, which has been used for centuries to justify the murder, enslavement, and colonization of indigenous native peoples.²² Christian churches have rarely been in the forefront to gain civil rights for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or queer. As a public institution, the Church possesses a moral status and economic means in public sectors that often it has been reluctant to use in support of human rights.

Even now Christian people are slow to shoulder responsibility to address human rights abuses at home and abroad. Citizens of any country with a representative political system (such as the United States) bear some responsibility for consistent rights violations committed by their government. Many in the ELCA must confess we have benefited from what has been done in the name of the United States and its allies. This includes torture, mistreatment of civilians and combatants, repression of political rights, and support of unscrupulous regimes. We also are consumers who buy everyday items from computers to underwear that are produced in dangerous and inhumane conditions.

Given the availability of information today, most people know far more about human rights abuses than in the past. We cannot claim ignorance; we can only admit we chose not to see or saw and chose not to act when God's will for dignity was thwarted.

Living in one of the world's wealthiest and most powerful nations, we must acknowledge that the United States bears a special responsibility for world events. This church recognizes that, along

²² A description of the effects of the Doctrine of Discovery may be found here: oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/2012-02/statement-on-the-doctrine-of-discovery-and-its-enduring-impact-on-indigenous-peoples. The ELCA action of repudiation is found at ELCA.org/en/Resources/Faith-and-Society in the social policy resolution titled "Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery."

with important contributions to the movement for human rights, the United States has kept company with repressive governments by its failure to ratify rights instruments²³ of the international community.

We also are accountable for how our neighbors from other faiths are treated by wider society. People of faith should be allowed to practice their faith openly and without fear, and yet residents of the United States are accosted and abused simply for practicing distinctive expressions of faith.

In acknowledging these failures and the people harmed, this church repents to a gracious God and prays for courage and power to rise up anew.

Individual Christians engage in human rights work

Perhaps the most important aspect of this social message is a call to engagement. Too often, we, as members of this society, are buried under the concerns of everyday life. The human rights abuses of people we don't know or understand are too remote to stir us to action.

Christians, having been freed from the anxiety that their salvation depends on obeying every law perfectly, find power to fulfill their responsibilities in the world through seeking justice for the neighbor.²⁴ The ELCA social statement "For Peace in God's World" illustrates some of the responsibilities of the Christian citizen when it comes to the international order. These include prayer for governments and efforts to hold them accountable, as well as supporting international cooperation and paying careful attention to the actions of the U.S. government.²⁵

23 Rights "instruments" indicate documents relating to human rights that have authority in human rights law.

24 For example, the Large Catechism teaches in the Eighth Commandment that: "The first application of this commandment, [You should not bear false witness] then, is that all people should help their neighbors maintain their legal rights. One must not allow these rights to be thwarted or distorted but should promote and resolutely guard them, whether this person is judge or witness, no matter what the consequences may be." LC I.260; Kolb/Wengert, p. 421.

25 ELCA, "For Peace in God's World," pp. 9-10.

Every member of this church can find ways to pray for and stand in solidarity with the oppressed. Individuals can read the news, connect with organizations concerned with fostering awareness of human rights abuses and contact their elected officials to exert pressure. Following the principles of deliberation outlined later in this message, individuals also are encouraged to make space for all voices to be heard. Individuals are encouraged to examine their personal investments and spending habits in light of supporting human rights.

Christians cannot be satisfied simply with responding to injustice that has already occurred. We also are called to take actions that prevent rights abuses from happening in the first place, whether by personal intervention in injustice or publicly addressing rights abuses. Support for legal protections and means of enforcement is also our responsibility.

The ELCA's domestic corporate witness

This church participates in society and teaches that social structures such as government, family and the economy are ways in which God's good intentions for the world can be realized. This church participates in social structures hopefully but critically as a public institution, as an advocate for the poor and vulnerable, and as a financial institution. As an institution, this church has a public voice at the state, federal and international level.

That advocacy holds the U.S. government accountable for rights violations at home and abroad. In particular, it is important to defend and promote the human rights and dignity of those most vulnerable to their curtailment or denial. This church also has a responsibility to exercise its financial power as an investor prudently and for the sake of our neighbor and all of creation. This power can be used to focus attention on egregious violations of human rights and to press corporate responsibility to respect human rights, whether through dialogue, advocacy or investment screens.

The ELCA's global corporate witness

This church affirms the work of the international community in protecting and promoting human rights. This includes support

for international human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations, and for those engaged in defending human rights.

The United States occupies a pre-eminent position on the world stage, and its failure to accept instruments of international human rights law isolates the United States and undermines the work of the international community. The failure of the U.S. government to ratify many treaties and agreements of the United Nations calls for action on the part of U.S. citizens.²⁶

In its pre-eminent role, the United States has the opportunity to provide economic and diplomatic leadership in the human rights work of the United Nations. All international agreements to which the U.S. becomes a party should be held accountable to internationally recognized human rights standards.

Without illusions about the shortcomings and failures of the work of the United Nations, this message expresses the ELCA's continued support for that body's mission. It also expresses the support of this church for ratification of important international human rights conventions and encourages peacemaking and peacekeeping. It urges members to lift their voices and prayers for effective monitoring and compliance.

The ELCA as a church also supports human rights around the globe in its work with global partners. In response to God's call to comfort God's people (Isaiah 40) and through the strategy of accompaniment, our church seeks to accompany those among our global partners who suffer human rights violations.²⁷ Along the way, we share their pain and fear and hear their cry for rights.

26 The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on Dec. 16, 1966. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is a treaty adopted by the United Nations on July 17, 1998. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on Dec. 18, 1979. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on Nov. 20, 1989. The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance was adopted on Dec. 18, 1992, by the U.N. General Assembly. All documents can be found at ohchr.org.

27 The ELCA identifies five principles as guides to the strategy of accompaniment: mutual, inclusive, vulnerable, empowering and sustainable.

The need for deliberation and discernment

As the concepts and vocabulary of human rights have evolved, citizens continually re-evaluate how human dignity is challenged or affirmed by a given political, cultural or economic system. History teaches that as societies change, understanding of the nature of rights belonging to groups and people can also change. Christians are called to participate in God's work in society, and we should expect to participate in history as rights are discerned, defined and defended.

Reason and human experience impart the capacity to appraise a situation, even if it is complex. Human rights are protected and promoted in the context of physical realities, such as availability of resources, and in the context of sociopolitical systems. A person's social position (i.e., male, female, White/Black male, Black/White female, heterosexual, gay, bisexual, transgender, living in wealth or in poverty) influences the resources available within a social and political structure.

There are many times when different groups of people make conflicting claims about rights. For example, one group's environmental rights may impinge on another group's chosen livelihood. One group may find its right to privacy sacrificed to a larger group's right to safety. The resolution of such claims requires the interaction of the principles below, with careful attention to the complexity of each group's position in the social and political structure. In such deliberation, this church's teaching holds that the needs of the vulnerable and marginalized must be represented and given particular and vigorous attention.²⁸

Faith-based principles of evaluation can aid in discernment in a complex situation. The ELCA has consistently articulated the principles of sufficiency, sustainability, participation and solidarity as means to discerning the path of justice.²⁹ To summarize:

- The principle of *sufficiency* means meeting the basic needs of all humanity and all creation.

²⁸ This concern is evident in various social teaching documents of the ELCA, but see, for example, page 6 of "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All."

²⁹ See, for example, "Caring for Creation," "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All" and "Genetics, Faith and Responsibility," pp. 6-7, 10-17, and 20-26 respectively.

- The principle of *sustainability* means providing an acceptable quality of life for present generations without compromising that of future generations.
- The principle of *participation* means all are entitled to be heard and to have their interests considered when decisions are made.
- The principle of *solidarity* means that we stand together with all of God's creation.

In a world that is marred by sin, not all rights are available to all people at all times. However, the expectation is that the most basic rights³⁰ will never be denied and the highest level of rights will be available to the greatest number of people, such as elaborated in the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

IV. CONCRETE COMMITMENTS OF THIS CHURCH

On the basis of ELCA teaching and in light of contemporary needs, the ELCA will:

- advocate for the U.S. government to protect and promote the equal rights of all people, as enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights;
- uphold and foster human rights as described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- support international organizations such the United Nations, including its Security Council and Human Rights Council, and the International Labor Organization in working to develop and safeguard human rights;
- encourage the United States to fund the United Nations in proportion to its economic strength;

³⁰ By basic rights, this message means non-derogable rights. Non-derogable rights are those that cannot be revoked by a state. A listing of them may be found at nhri.ohchr.org/EN/IHRS/TreatyBodies/Page%20Documents/Core%20Human%20Rights.pdf.

- support the Responsibility to Protect³¹ movement when it anticipates and protects against serious rights violations;
- support the aims of the Right to Development³² as expressed in the U.N. General Assembly Resolution of December 1986;
- encourage governments and corporations to uphold the United Nation’s Protect, Respect and Remedy framework and guiding principles;
- advocate for the United States to ratify international treaties and agreements that protect human rights;
- be sensitive to the needs of indigenous peoples,³³ whose understandings of ownership, culture and community may be at odds with corporate notions of ownership – corporations and governments do not possess the absolute right to ignore those perspectives;
- practice accompaniment in its advocacy on human rights; and
- provide members, congregations and other ELCA entities the resources needed to deepen their understanding of and commitment to promoting human rights.

V. CONCLUSION

Christians are realistic about rampant abuses of human rights, which are evidence of the reality of sin. Yet they remain convinced that God’s creative activity both bestows human dignity on every

31 Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a global political commitment to end genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. It is described in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 United Nations World Summit outcome. For more information visit un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.html.

32 The right to development declares development to be an inalienable human right and places humans at the center of development. The text of the resolution is available at un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r128.htm.

33 The United States voted against the adoption of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007.

person and urges courage and action in times such as these.

Empowered by hope in the God who raised the crucified Jesus from the dead as a sign of God's ultimate victory, this church is freed to acknowledge failures and take up responsibility as individuals and in corporate witness. By means of this message, the ELCA recommits itself to the cause of human rights. The ELCA will support domestic and international human rights institutions, foster deliberation, and engage in sustained action that seek rights for any neighbors – especially the vulnerable – who are not being treated with the dignity that is God's gift.

A social message on...

Human Rights

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



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