

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN AMERICA**

Church Council

MINUTES

April 5-8, 2018

**Prepared by the
Office of the Secretary**

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**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
April 5-8, 2018
Chicago, Illinois**

The ninety-first 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, April 5, 2018, followed at 1:30 p.m. by worship with Holy Communion in the Chapel of the Lutheran Center. The Rev. John S. Macholz, bishop of the Upstate New York Synod, presided; the Rev. Joan A. Conroy, president of the American Indian Alaskan Native Lutheran Association, preached. Mr. William B. Horne II, vice president of the ELCA, served as assisting minister, and Ms. Andrea Micovsky was lector. Deacon John E. Weit, program director for music, and Mr. Gary A. Pederson served as musicians.

Worship included the installation of Ms. Lori S. Fedyk as treasurer of the ELCA.

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
Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer

Chair of the Conference of Bishops:

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

Church Council:

Mr. Hans E. Becklin	Pr. Linda Nou
Mr. Allan J. Bieber	Mr. Gary A. Pederson
Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman	Ms. Meri Jo Petrivelli
Mr. Reid A. Christopherson	Mr. Clarence M. Smith
Pr. William E. Flippin Jr.	Mr. Ervin F. Sparapani
Pr. Dena M. Gable	Pr. Jonathan Splichal Larson
Pr. Joyce M. Graue (<i>excused</i>)	Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford
Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson	Ms. Leslie J. Swenson
Pr. Chad M. Huebner	Pr. Lorie B. Tatum
Ms. Maren Hulden	Pr. James H. Utt
Mr. James M. Hushagen	Mr. Vernon K. Veal
Mr. James J.F. Jennings	Pr. William O. Voss
Pr. Peder J. Johanson	Ms. Emma K. Wagner
Ms. Emilee M. Le Blanc (<i>excused</i>)	Pr. Michael R. Ward
Mr. John W. Lohrmann	Ms. Sonja Wolfe
Ms. Andrea Micovsky	Ms. Man-Hei Yip (<i>excused</i>)
Mr. Joseph T. Nolte	Mr. Seth M. Zimmann

Representatives of the Conference of Bishops

Bp. H. Jeffrey A. Clements, Region 5 (<i>excused</i>)	Bp. Brian D. Maas, Region 4
Bp. Steven H. Delzer, Region 3	Bp. John S. Macholz, Region 7
Bp. Suzanne D. Dillahunt, Region 6	Bp. B. Kirby Unti, Region 1
Bp. R. Guy Erwin, Region 2	Bp. Herman R. Yoos III, Region 9 (<i>excused</i>)
Bp. Richard H. Graham, Region 8	

Resource people

Office of the Presiding Bishop:

Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration
Mr. John J. Hessian, research analyst
Ms. Kathryn L. Johnson, director for ecumenical and interreligious relations
Ms. Rhondean Johnson, executive for human resources
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop for ecumenical and interreligious relations
and assistant to the presiding bishop for theological discernment
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
Pr. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics

Office of the Secretary:

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

Unit staff:

Pr. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit
Ms. Victoria E. Flood, director for mission support
Ms. Jocelyn Fuller, director for strategic communications
Pr. Ronald T. Glusenkamp, director for *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*
Pr. F. Javier Goitía Padilla, program director for theological formation
Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton, executive director of the Mission Advancement unit
Pr. Rafael Malpica Padilla, executive director of the Global Mission unit
Ms. Judith Roberts, program director for racial justice ministries
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
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
Deacon Douglas H. Haugen, executive director, Lutheran Men in Mission
Ms. Beth A. Lewis, president, 1517 Media
Pr. Martin A. Seltz, vice president for publishing and executive director for ELCA relations, 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:

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. Moses P.P. Penumaka, representative, Asian and Pacific Islander Association
Pr. Lamont Anthony Wells, president, African Descent Lutheran Association

Ecumenical Guests:

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

Guests:

Ms. Christine M. Smith, principal, Baker Tilly

**Thursday, April 5, 2018
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 3:05 p.m. and welcomed all participants. He introduced Ms. Sonja Wolfe, who was nominated for election to the Church Council, as well as all visitors and guests. The vice president drew attention to the meeting resource materials and the deadlines for proposing new business and for removing items from *en bloc* consideration. He reviewed various elements of the proposed agenda.

Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, described the process for council members to submit expense reports for reimbursement.

A motion was made to adopt the agenda.

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

VOTED:

CC18.04.01 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

Vice President Horne declared the agenda was adopted. He indicated that an executive session not previously on the agenda would begin at 8:00 a.m. the following day.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

(Agenda I.B.)

Background:

The minutes of the Nov. 9-12, 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 Nov. 9 and Dec. 6, both in 2017, and Jan. 30, Feb. 21 and March 23, all in 2018, 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:

**CC18.04.02 To approve the minutes of the November 9-12, 2017, meeting of the Church Council; and
To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the November 9, 2017, December 6, 2017, January 30, 2018, February 21, 2018, and March 23, 2018, meetings.**

REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

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

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton began with an update on United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia and Gettysburg, Pa., reporting that the president and several trustees had resigned. The Rev. James S. Dunlop, bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, was serving as acting president until an interim president could be named. The Church Council will be electing trustees to the board of United Lutheran Seminary.

The presiding bishop highlighted discussions to be held during this meeting about governance and Future Directions 2025, as well as about a draft interfaith policy statement. There will be an update on *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. The Conference of Bishops had challenged the Church Council to exceed the conference's contribution of \$2,685 toward the campaign's Youth and Young Adult Ministries category.

Presiding Bishop Eaton stated that the bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod had resigned, and the Rev. Donald J. McCoid was appointed interim bishop.

The presiding bishop said that the March 2018 meeting of the Conference of Bishops emphasized for her the balance between being church together and being church in specific contexts — adhering to churchwide policies that ensure that sacraments are administered in community settings, and responding to local controversies about a speaker for the Youth Gathering.

Presiding Bishop Eaton pointed out how the ELCA, including meetings of the Church Council, was organizing around the goals and priorities identified through the Called Forward Together in Christ process and set out in Future Directions 2025. She suggested that focusing on congregational vitality and leadership would help achieve those goals and actualize the four emphases — we are church; we are Lutheran; we are church together; and we are church for the sake of the world. As an example, she discussed her participation and that of other ELCA members in the rally Act Now! Unite to End Racism the previous day in Washington, D.C.

The presiding bishop concluded that, for this church to be vital and authentic, it must return to the basics of claiming Jesus as Lord and recognizing that grace is real and for everyone.

In response to questions, Presiding Bishop Eaton provided more detail about circumstances at United Lutheran Seminary.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

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

Vice President William B. Horne II began his report with prayer and reflections on Psalm 133:1-3 and Acts 2:42-47. He related his experiences while attending meetings of the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America and the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities in January 2018 in Florida. He commented on his participation in a task force that developed "A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment: A draft policy statement of the ELCA." The vice president reflected on the collaboration he had seen across the ELCA, especially among its leaders focusing their work on congregational vitality and leadership. He mentioned that, at its March 2018 meeting, the Conference of Bishops worked on a definition of "congregational vitality" and reviewed recommendations on the entrance rite for ministers of Word and Service. The vice president talked about his plans to attend three synod assemblies and the Youth Gathering. He noted that *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* was in its final year, and he thanked the Church Council for its support of the campaign.

In response to questions, Vice President Horne discussed his perspective of the ELCA as the member of a Florida congregation and city manager of Clearwater. He also provided more detail about what he learned from members of the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America and the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.E.)

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

CHURCH COUNCIL ELECTION

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

Background:

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly elected Ms. Carolyn D. Jewett, Milwaukee, Wis., to a six-year term on the Church Council in a lay female position nominated by the Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J). Ms. Jewett 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 and invited the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council to nominate a lay female for possible election. The Synod Council nominated Ms. Sonja Wolfe, Kenosha, Wis., to serve the balance of Ms. Jewett's term, which ends in 2022.

Church Council action:

A motion was made on behalf of the Executive Committee to elect Ms. Sonja Wolfe to the Church Council.

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

VOTED:

CC18.04.03 To elect Ms. Sonja Wolfe, Kenosha, Wis. (5J), to the Church Council for a term ending in 2022.

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

The assembly welcomed Ms. Wolfe with applause, and she introduced herself.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DRAFT INTERRELIGIOUS POLICY STATEMENT

(Agenda I.E.2.; *Reference*: Draft interreligious policy statement *and* Draft interreligious statement Presentation)

Background:

The 1989 Churchwide Assembly adopted [CA89.3.15] "Ecumenism: The Vision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" as a working document. The 1991 Churchwide Assembly adopted [CA91.3.7] its second part, "A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment: A Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," as the policy of this church. The declaration stated:

Ecumenism ... should not be confused with the important but distinct responsibility for the church to enter into conversations and reach greater understanding with people of other faiths. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America does engage, in a variety of ways, in this inter-faith work and needs in the future a separate, official statement to describe its commitments and aspirations in this area. When that statement is prepared, special attention must be given to the distinctiveness of Judaism.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton appointed an ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force in 2016 for the purpose of developing an official statement to describe this church's commitments and aspirations in its interfaith work. The task force produced a draft policy statement and was conducting a review and comment period during the first six months of 2018. The council's Executive Committee participated in a hearing on the draft at its April 2018 meeting. The draft

was also reviewed by various full communion, ecumenical and interreligious partners, as well as by the Conference of Bishops and the board of the Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network.

Church Council discussion:

Vice President William B. Horne II, a member of the ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force, introduced the Rev. Patricia J. Lull, bishop of the Saint Paul Area Synod and chair of the task force, and Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop for ecumenical and interreligious relations. They led the Church Council in a formal hearing on “A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment: A draft policy statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

Ms. Lohre talked about the members of the task force, the origins of the task in this church’s statement on ecumenism, the ELCA’s experience with interfaith relations, the timeline for “A Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment” and the draft policy statement, and the process to submit comments for consideration by the task force. A final version of the policy statement will be prepared for the Church Council to consider in November 2018 for possible transmission to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Bishop Lull described several ways council members could submit their thoughts about the draft policy document to the task force. She spoke of some of the remarks made about the draft during the March 2018 meeting of the Conference of Bishops. She explained the outline of the draft — part one offering “a concise statement regarding our context, our vision, our calling and our commitments with regard to our neighbors,” and part two addressing such questions as “How do we relate to these neighbors?” and “What do the Scriptures say about those of another religion?”

Participants said the draft spoke well to their personal experiences, asked the task force to introduce the “shalom” concept as soon as possible in the document, affirmed the imperative to move beyond tolerance to engagement, noted that pastoral concerns were raised in the document but not necessarily concerns of the laity, requested clarity in the draft about evangelism and the Lutheran confessions, questioned the application of certain Bible passages to specific points made in the document, pointed out possibly repetitive parts of the draft, spoke about the LWF Council’s work to address Luther’s statements regarding Muslims, suggested saying less about regrets for the past and more about hopes for the future, recommended not trying to speak for all Lutherans, and praised certain sections of the draft, the 12 commitments and the brevity of the document.

BREAK

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 4:50 p.m. and reconvened at 5:00 p.m.

REPORT OF THE BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.F.; *Reference:* Board Development Committee Report)

The Rev. James H. Utt, chair of the Board Development Committee, presented the committee’s report.

CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP AN ELCA GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL

(Agenda I.F.1.; *Reference:* Governance policy proposal)

Background:

As an outcome of the Church Council’s retreat in April 2017, the council’s Board Development Committee asked a sub-committee to propose a process for developing a governance policy manual for the council. The proposal was to take a two-part approach to consider the role of the Church Council and its governance, using an *ad hoc* committee to assist the council in this process.

April 2018 meeting of the Church Council

- Approve the process to develop a governance policy manual
- Discuss the council’s role (What should be the role of the ELCA Church Council?)
- Appoint an *ad hoc* committee

November 2018 meeting of the Church Council

- Discuss and approve a document on the council's role
- Discuss the council's governance (How does the ELCA Church Council do business and govern itself?)
- Consider possible constitutional amendments

April 2019 meeting of the Church Council

- Discuss and approve a document on the council's governance
- Consider possible amendments to ELCA bylaws or continuing resolutions

Church Council action:

Ms. Maren Hulden drew the attention of the Church Council to the written proposal for a process to develop a governance policy manual.

Mr. Joseph T. Nolte mentioned that the idea for a governance policy manual grew from the council's April 2017 retreat and the fifth goal in Future Directions 2025: A well-governed, connected and sustainable church.

Mr. Clarence M. Smith introduced the proposed process for developing the manual. He noted that members of the Church Council had participated in a survey about the role of the council in the governance of the ELCA. Should the process be adopted, the results of the survey will serve as the basis of a discussion on the role of the council. He requested the participation of liaison synod bishops and the Administrative Team in the discussions.

Ms. Hulden outlined the resources that would be available for the proposed discussion about the council's role. A goal for the discussion was to reach consensus on what the governance role of the Church Council should be.

Church Council members discussed whether to consider the council's relationships with other entities before considering the governance role of the Church Council, whether council members should make decisions about who serves on the Church Council, and principles of governance identified at the council's April 2017 retreat.

A motion was made on behalf of the Executive Committee to approve the process for developing a governance policy manual.

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

VOTED:

CC18.04.04 To approve the proposal for a process to develop an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America governance policy manual.

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

DISCUSSION ON GENDER IDENTITY

(Agenda I.G.; *Reference:* Gender Identity Presentation *and* Gender identity report)

Background:

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly referred [CA16.02.03q] a memorial from the Sierra Pacific Synod to the Church Council for a review of ELCA policy regarding gender identity. The assembly also referred [CA16.05.27] "Motion D: Resolution on Gender Identity" to the Church Council.

In advance of the meeting, council members completed a questionnaire about their familiarity with matters regarding gender identity.

Church Council discussion:

Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for justice for women, reviewed the background information. She suggested that the purpose of this discussion would be to answer any questions about what was being asked of the Church Council and to identify the resources the council may need to make informed policy decisions at their November 2018 meeting. She

presented the results of a survey conducted among council members about their familiarity with matters regarding gender identity.

Church Council members discussed current policies of this church regarding gender identity, how to be inclusive and not just tolerant of various gender identities and of diverse attitudes toward various gender identities, not needing to make everyone happy but to be true to the gospel and Lutheran confessions, whether the question is about church policy or about how individuals identify themselves, and how social understandings of gender identity change.

The Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics, presented the objectives of a webinar planned for Church Council members to help them make informed policy decisions at their November 2018 meeting. The webinar will clarify the definitions of terms being used, provide an overview of the issues and allow for biblical and theological reflection.

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger noted that some of the more immediate issues to be addressed deal with questions about gender that are asked during registration for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and during the nominations process for the assembly's elections. The Church Council may also want to recommend that the Churchwide Assembly amend ELCA provision 5.01. regarding gender representation on the council and on boards and committee.

Pastor Willer asked Church Council members to submit in writing any additional issues to be addressed or resources to be provided with the webinar or with webinars.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

(Agenda I.H.)

Ms. Pat Lovell brought a greeting from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). She commented on several of the ELCIC's activities during the previous year.

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY LESSON

(Agenda I.I.)

Ms. Meri Jo Petrivelli shared a story about St. Andrew Lutheran Church, San Diego, Calif., that she identified as a characteristic of a vital congregation. The congregation was building a relationship with a homeless man.

HYMN AND PRAYER

(Agenda I.J.)

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

Mr. Gary A. Pederson sang a prayer and provided musical accompaniment while leading the gathering in the singing of a hymn.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger reminded members of the Church Council, liaison synod bishops and certain staff of the churchwide organization that an executive session would begin at 8:00 a.m. the following day and that committees of the council would meet beginning at 9:00 a.m.

RECESS

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed for Thursday, April 5, 2018, at 6:19 p.m.

**Friday, April 6, 2018
Plenary Session II**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council went into executive session at 8:04 a.m. 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 executive session recessed at 9:01 a.m.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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 9:10 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 Mr. Clarence M. Smith.

Committee meetings resumed at approximately 1:30 p.m. and adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the second plenary session to order at 3:30 p.m. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Agenda II.A.)

The April 2018 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 3:35 p.m.

HEARING ON THE DRAFT SOCIAL STATEMENT ON WOMEN AND JUSTICE

(Agenda II.B.; *Reference*: Draft social statement on women and justice)

Background:

The 2009 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA09.06.31] to request that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America develop a social statement on the topic of justice for women in church and society.

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 the social statement 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.

In November 2017, the task force issued a draft social statement for study by and response from ELCA members until Sept. 30, 2018. Ms. Swenson and Pastor Utt had asked the council members to hold a hearing and to serve as ambassadors for the draft statement in their congregations and synods.

Church Council discussion:

Ms. Leslie J. Swenson convened a hearing on "Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice." The Rev. James H. Utt represented the task force. Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for justice for women, and the Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics, served as recorders.

Ms. Swenson described the protocols for a hearing on a social statement and how the testimony is reported to the task force for its consideration while preparing a proposed draft of the social statement.

Pastor Utt led the participants in devotions.

Ms. Swenson invited those present to view a video that was shown to begin each hearing on the draft social statement. She led Church Council members in a review of the draft. The participants' comments were recorded and provided to the task force.

Ms. Swenson reminded Church Council members of the resources available to them to prepare for the remainder of the process toward a proposed social statement.

BREAK

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 4:51 p.m. and reconvened at 5:01 p.m.

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

(Agenda II.C.; *Reference*: Campaign for the ELCA Presentation *and* Campaign for the ELCA update)

Background:

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA is a five-year campaign that began Feb. 1, 2014, with the goal of raising \$198 million “to grow the resources of this church to support congregations, leadership, relief and development, and global mission.”

Church Council discussion:

The Rev. Ronald T. Glusenkamp, director for *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, reported that, as of Feb. 28, 2018, the campaign received \$175.5 million — \$145 million in gifts and commitments, and \$30.5 million in planned gifts. In addition to those gifts, Lutheran Disaster Response received almost \$23 million during 2017. He said that ELCA World Hunger experienced sustained growth during the campaign and received more than \$21.5 million in 2017. A donor base was created for the International Women Leaders program. The Fund for Leaders endowment reached \$57.3 million, exceeding its goal. The Young Adults in Global Mission program was sending 47 young adults around the world when the campaign began; this year the program will send 94 young adults. The campaign got this church's major gifts program off the ground, and it engaged the volunteer boards and committees of the ELCA. Pastor Glusenkamp shared several lessons learned from the campaign. During 2018, the campaign will focus on major donor prospects, a matching gift of \$100,000 for the International Women Leaders program, a matching gift of \$515,000 for the ELCA World Hunger's Global Farm Challenge during the Youth Gathering, and undesignated gifts for “where needed most.” The campaign's theme for 2018 is leadership, and a Rostered Ministers Appreciation event was being planned. Campaign staff members were also working with synods that implemented related campaigns.

Mr. Joseph T. Nolte, the Church Council's representative on the campaign steering committee, added that current council members had donated \$83,453 and prior members of the Church Council had given \$65,272 for a total of \$148,725 in gifts since 2013. Council members had also made a total \$42,445 in commitments since 2013 for a combined total of \$191,170. He challenged Church Council members to reach a goal of \$250,000 by the end of the campaign.

Mr. James J.F. Jennings related his experience with the campaign, as well as the involvement of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Bangor, Pa.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

(Agenda II.D.)

The Rev. Elizabeth D. “Betsy” Miller brought a greeting from the Moravian Church in America. She announced that she was completing her term as ecumenical liaison to the ELCA. She talked about a number of issues that both church bodies have confronted.

PROCESS OBSERVATIONS

(Agenda II.E.)

Mr. James J.F. Jennings asked members of the Church Council to complete their process observation forms and return them by the end of the next day. Notes from the forms will be compiled for a report on Sunday.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda II.F.)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger announced that the Church Council will meet in executive session at 8:00 a.m. the following day in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center. The third plenary session will begin after the executive session with Bible study in the Augsburg Conference Room. The deadline for new business and to remove any item from *en bloc* for separate consideration was at noon the following day.

HYMN AND PRAYER

(Agenda II.G.)

The Rev. Linda Nou led the assembly in singing a hymn and in prayer.

Mr. Clarence M. Smith provided musical accompaniment.

RECESS

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 5:39 p.m. for Friday, April 6, 2018.

**Saturday, April 7, 2018
Plenary Session III**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council went into executive session at 8:00 a.m. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center 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 executive session recessed at 8:57 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the third plenary session to order at 9:09 a.m. in the Augsburg Conference Room of the Lutheran Center.

BIBLE STUDY

(Agenda III.A.)

The Rev. Richard H. Graham, bishop of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, led participants in a study of Numbers 21:4-9 and 2 Kings 18:1-5 with a focus on biblical examples of governance. He closed the session with prayer.

BREAK

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 9:27 a.m. and reconvened at 9:33 a.m.

DISCUSSION ON GOVERNANCE POLICIES

(Agenda III.B.; *Reference*: ELCA Strategic Directions for November 2016 Revised *and* Governance Part 1 Presentation)

Background:

In November 2016, the Church Council adopted [CC16.11.42] Future Directions 2025, setting out the goals and priorities identified through the Called Forward Together in Christ process of facilitated conversation across the ELCA.

The council approved [CC18.04.04] a process to develop a governance policy manual that included a discussion of "Part 1: Council Role – What should be the role of the ELCA Church Council?" At its November 2018 meeting, the council will consider adopting a governance document based on the discussion and drafted by an *ad hoc* committee.

Church Council discussion:

Mr. Clarence M. Smith recalled that the topic of governance came up during the Church Council's retreat in April 2017. In preparation for this meeting, council members participated in a survey about their views of the governance role of the Church Council. He said there were two goals for this discussion:

- To reach a consensus about what the Church Council's governance role should be to best serve the governance needs of the ELCA; and
- To provide sufficient guidance for an *ad hoc* committee to prepare a draft policy document outlining this shared understanding.

Ms. Maren Hulden drew attention to the results of answers to the third question in the survey that asked the respondent to use a scale from strongly disagree (0) to strongly agree (5).

Please rate how closely you believe each of the following matches your understanding of what the Church Council's governance role should be.

- The ELCA Church Council is the board of directors and shall serve as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly. (Average response 4.5)
- The ELCA Church Council is a proactive, forward-looking body that identifies strategic directions, assesses outcomes, and identifies risks and opportunities. (Average response 3.9)
- The ELCA Church Council is an elected group with the collective authority to control and foster an institution that is administered by a qualified executive and staff. (Average response 3.6)

She noted that most agreement was with the first model, which is how the ELCA constitution described the twofold role of the Church Council — board of directors and interim legislative authority. She said there was less consensus among the responses about what was meant by each role. Narrative responses to the survey provided several themes regarding the council's role, such as planning, setting strategic directions and visioning, addressing major issues of management, guiding and directing management, having legal and fiduciary responsibilities, setting policy goals and evaluating achievements, and taking official actions of this church.

Ms. Hulden listed 11 values that the Church Council identified during its retreat to guide the council's governance.

- Mission focus
- Faithful discernment
- Stewardship
- A strategic orientation
- Honest and robust discussion
- Informed and transparent decision making
- Relational and collaborative leadership
- Trust, openness and honesty
- The right skills and experience
- Effective meeting processes
- Evaluation and board development

The survey asked, "In the past year, do you agree that the council has lived up to these values?" Using a scale from strongly disagree (0) to strongly agree (5) for their responses, Church Council members ranked most values with averages between neutral (3.5) and agree (4). Ms. Hulden noted that the twofold role of the council, which found average agreement of 4.5, attained greater consensus around broader definitions of the Church Council's role than around the practical applications.

During its retreat, the Church Council also identified several things it should and should not do.

The council should:

- Decide strategic goals and priorities for the ELCA and the churchwide organization
- Identify outcomes and metrics to monitor progress toward goals
- Review and monitor progress toward goals
- Align the budget and resources in light of goals and priorities
- Fulfill the council's fiduciary responsibilities (financial and legal)
- Review decisions and the use of resources for their fit with the strategic goals and priorities

The council should not:

- Decide things that go too far into administration
- Possibly:
 - Approving mission support
 - Approving seminary bylaws
 - Programmatic things (the constitution says the council must approve all things that are not "day to day")

Ms. Hulden indicated that this discussion will focus on the Church Council's role as board of directors for the churchwide organization, considering hypothetical situations to determine what the council should and should not do in each case. She said the ELCA constitution gave more definition to the Church Council's role as interim legislative authority between churchwide assemblies. Notes from the discussion will be turned over to the *ad hoc* committee.

Mr. Joseph T. Nolte asked participants to vote by show of hands whether or not the Church Council should take action in several hypothetical situations.

- Should the council approve the creation of a congregational vitality team within the Domestic Mission unit? Most participants selected "No." In response to comments from the participants, Mr. Nolte concluded that there was agreement that the Church Council should set policies and expectations but to leave the means to meet those expectations up to the staff of the churchwide organization.
- Should the council approve future financial policies for ensuring adequate internal controls and financial reviews for the churchwide organization?

Most participants selected “Yes.” The discussion was about whether the Church Council should vote on policies or assign that responsibility to its Budget and Finance Committee. The council or its committee may receive reports about the policies’ implementation. Mr. Nolte drew consensus around the Church Council approving policies that the staff implemented.

- Should the council discuss the supply of rostered ministers for ELCA congregations and take any action regarding this issue?

Participants chose both “Yes” and “No.” Those voting in the affirmative said this was a critical issue for the organization that should be discussed by the Church Council; fiduciary or policy decisions may need to be made. Those who selected “No” indicated that the Conference of Bishops was a more appropriate place for the discussion, that the decisions should not be made by the council, and that the Theological Education Advisory Committee was already having such discussions and advising the Church Council.

Mr. Nolte invited the participants in small groups to complete a form that questioned whether the Church Council should or should not take action in certain scenarios. The forms will be shared with the *ad hoc* committee.

In plenary session, Mr. Smith asked participants to vote by show of hands whether or not the Church Council should take action in each situation listed on the form, noting when there was consensus on an answer. He requested and received consensus that the council has a twofold role as the interim legislative authority between churchwide assemblies and as the board of directors.

In response to a question, Secretary Wm Chris Boerger clarified that, according to the ELCA constitution, the Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization. The Church Council is the interim legislative authority of the churchwide organization and not of all three expressions of this church.

Participants completed the sentence “The role of the Church Council is to...,” named roles the council should not assume and identified issues to be discussed in the next part of the process regarding governance.

BREAK

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 10:33 a.m. and reconvened at 10:44 a.m.

CAFÉ CONVERSATION WITH ETHNIC-SPECIFIC AND MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY ASSOCIATIONS

(Agenda III.C.; *Reference:* Asian and Pacific Islander Association *and* Ethnic Association time with Council)

The Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells, president of the African Descent Lutheran Association, stated that this session would consider how decisions of the Church Council affect people of color. He led the gathering in prayer.

The Rev. Russell L. Meyer, president of the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice, described many of the ways the ethnic associations collaborate, especially regarding actions of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. The association presidents made a collective request for a report on the staffing of a Middle Eastern desk in the Domestic Mission unit. They had been discussing the possibility of hosting a Multicultural Gathering for the ELCA.

The president or representative of each association reported on association activities.

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

Pastor Conroy invited participants to sit in six circles, each circle with a representative of an ethnic association, and asked each participant to answer this question: How can the voices of the ethnic associations be more representative during Church Council meetings?

In plenary session, a recorder from each circle reported one recommendation from the circle. The recommendations included asking association representatives what they would like to see the Church Council do, involving the ethnic association representatives in conversations about congregational vitality and authentic diversity, inviting feedback from

the representatives on the meetings' agenda and seating arrangements, finding ways for association representatives to voice their concerns, considering ways for council members to participate in association activities, and comparing the priorities of the council with those of the associations.

Pastor Penumaka closed the session with a meditation.

REPORT OF THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(Agenda III.D.; *Reference*: Theological Education Advisory Committee report *and* Theological Education Metrics Report)

Background:

In November 2017, the Church Council 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.

Church Council discussion:

Mr. John W. Lohrmann, chair of the Theological Education Advisory Committee, presented the committee's report. He introduced Ms. Christine M. Smith, principal with Baker Tilly, and the Rev. F. Javier Goitía Padilla, program director for theological formation. He said that Ms. Smith and Pastor Goitía will report on metrics being used to assess the seminaries for their progress toward long-term sustainability.

Mr. Lohrmann told the Church Council that Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Ill., and Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, had recommended to the committee that the three seminaries form a collaborative alliance (with invitations for other ELCA seminaries to join). Leaders of the seminaries will meet with the committee again in June 2018.

Mr. Lohrmann noted that the Church Council had asked the committee to define a single-seminary governance structure. He referred to a report that Baker Tilly prepared in advance of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly presenting five options or governance models the seminaries could adopt — central system, limited central system, regional system, joint ventures and informal (current state).

The central system model was the model most similar to a single-seminary governance structure. The committee determined that it was not the appropriate place to start, because each of the seven seminaries had its own traditions, alumni and establishment.

The limited central system was a more networked approach with many organizational hurdles. Mr. Lohrmann described the proposed collaborative alliance as an evolution of the limited central system model. The collaborative alliance would address the most challenging leadership issues without needing to create an organizational hierarchy.

Mr. Lohrmann said the seminaries already had a constitutional relationship with the churchwide organization that provided a mechanism for the Church Council to set governance policies related to the seminaries.

The Theological Education Advisory Committee will continue to monitor and evaluate the collaborative alliance project. The seminaries will focus on recruiting new students, developing faith communities, enhancing seminary staff and faculty, and supporting a credible witness. No additional funding was requested of the churchwide organization for the alliance. A seminary policy manual was needed to address shared faculty, capital ownership and academic accreditation. A final report on the project was planned to be issued by the end of 2019.

Mr. Lohrmann compared the collaborative alliance model to the current seminary clusters. The committee will continue to consider the use of available resources, any changes to the funding models for theological education and any policy changes needed to support the collaborative alliance.

Ms. Smith presented four metrics being used to evaluate the seminaries for being fiscally sound.

Primary reserve ratio — the ability to survive with assets on hand. The industry standard of expendable net assets was at least 40 percent of total expenses. The system of ELCA seminaries averaged 72 percent for fiscal 2017. Four of

the seven seminaries exceeded the 40 percent benchmark. Ms. Smith cautioned that these ratios may vary with stock market changes.

Positive operating budget results — the ability to operate with a balanced budget. The system of ELCA seminaries annually averaged a deficit of between \$4 million and \$10 million, depending on whether depreciation and accretion were taken into account. Ms. Smith indicated that the seminaries experienced a decrease of \$10 million in unrestricted and temporarily restricted assets over the past three years, limiting the seminaries' spending options. In fiscal 2017, one seminary operated with a surplus when depreciation and accretion were included, and four seminaries had a surplus when depreciation and accretion were excluded.

Total educational and general cost per full-time student — what it costs a school to educate a student. Ms. Smith said this metric can illustrate the amount of student debt to be expected or the amount of scholarships the seminary needed to raise. The average cost per student was \$53,454 for ELCA seminaries in 2017, about \$14,000 more than in 2013. In 2017, the "rolling three-year average" per student was \$50,038, which was in line with or slightly higher than for all denominational seminaries. Ms. Smith attributed part of the rise in cost to a decrease in full-time students, from about 1,400 in 2013 to less than 1,000 in 2017 for all ELCA seminaries. In 2017, one seminary had an increase in full-time students. The lowest cost per full-time student was \$37,000 at an ELCA seminary, and the highest was \$100,000 per full-time student at another seminary.

Cash flow per operation — the ability to pay current bills. Ms. Smith noted that the seminaries that were graduate schools at ELCA universities reflected the universities' cash flow statements. She concluded that it was clear that most ELCA seminaries did not have enough cash on hand to pay their bills in a timely manner.

Pastor Goitia presented metrics to assess whether ample leaders were being developed and deployed. Candidacy applications declined between 2010 and 2013, after which the number of applications began to plateau. Two seminaries reported that they will meet their goals for new students this year. Almost 85 percent of applicants are White or Caucasian, which compares to about 80 percent for all denominational seminaries. The synods producing the most applicants per worship attendees were typically synods in non-Lutheran territories. About 80 percent of the candidates come from congregations with 150 or fewer worship attendees. While total enrollment among ELCA seminaries has decreased 25 percent in the past three years, the number of students of color increased by 2.7 percent.

Pastor Goitia said there were no statistics for the final set of metrics tracking the responsible stewardship of ELCA resources. The boards of the three seminaries promoting the collaborative alliance have embraced the proposal. They are discussing shared faculty for January terms, summers and sabbaticals as the alliance evolves. The leaders of the three seminaries embedded in ELCA universities have expressed willingness for their schools to join the alliance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda III.E.)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger announced that it was the deadline for new business and to remove any item from *en bloc* for separate consideration.

TABLE GRACE

Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman led the assembly in prayer and table grace.

RECESS

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 12:11 p.m.

**Saturday, April 7, 2018
Plenary Session IV**

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the fourth plenary session to order at 1:32 p.m. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center.

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger led the gathering in prayer.

ECUMENICAL GREETINGS

(Agenda IV.A.)

The Rev. Kyle R. Tau brought a greeting from The United Methodist Church. He shared that the Methodist Church was planning to establish full communion relationships with the Moravian and Episcopal churches. He talked about many other issues the Methodist Church was facing.

Ms. Elona Street-Stewart presented a greeting from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She presented several matters to be addressed by the church's General Assembly in June 2018.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

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

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger reported on preparations in the Office of the Secretary for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee, Wis. The Church Council will be considering *en bloc* a proposal to have an identification process before the election of the secretary similar to the process for vice president before the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. He asked council members to review any memorials being considered by synod assemblies for their appropriateness and financial obligation. He suggested that the Budget and Finance Committee assess memorials as it assesses resolutions for their financial implications. The secretary noted that any constitutional changes must be recommended at this time so that wording could be drafted for the Church Council's consideration in November 2018. He also talked about the development of the ELCA Directory and how it will present information formerly included in the ELCA Yearbook.

Secretary Boerger responded to several questions about the ELCA Directory.

The secretary spoke about the authority of the Churchwide Assembly and the Church Council and about the interdependent relationship of the three expressions. The council may make suggestions to synods and congregations, but the entity most directly affected by a decision should make the decision. The Church Council may adopt social messages, but it may not direct synods and congregations to act accordingly.

In response to questions, Secretary Boerger led council members in a discussion of prioritizing actions of the Churchwide Assembly for the attention of staff of the churchwide organization.

REPORT OF THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Agenda IV.C.)

Mr. James M. Hushagen, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, presented the committee's report. He noted that the committee's report in November 2018 will be more complicated, because constitutional amendment proposals will be considered in advance of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. The committee's recommendations for Church Council action will be considered *en bloc*, such as the designation of churchwide representatives at synod assemblies, seminary bylaw changes and amendments to certain continuing resolutions.

In response to questions, Mr. Hushagen stated that the committee may meet by conference call before its November 2018 meeting to begin work on proposals for constitutional amendments. He talked about some amendments being considered that may remove the need for the Church Council to approve certain policy changes.

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

(Agenda IV.D.; *Reference*: Administrative Team Presentation *and* Report of the Executive for Administration)

The Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for administration, invited Church Council members to view a video presentation of the churchwide organization's annual report. She said a revised version of the video will be available for synod assemblies.

The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, executive director of the Domestic Mission unit, presented an overview of the unit's work on congregational vitality. The Conference of Bishops had affirmed the description of vital congregations as "communities of Jesus that nurture life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world." Vital congregations strengthen their relationship with God, nurture relationships within themselves and have a strong presence in their communities. Pastor Bouman reported on the pilot project of six synods to address and assess congregational vitality. The Domestic Mission unit renovated its grants process, encouraged experimentation and reorganized to emphasize congregational vitality.

Pastor Bullock asked Church Council members to complete a survey about the congregational vitality of their congregations. Then council members compared their responses to those submitted by their congregations. She led Church Council members in a discussion of three questions about congregational vitality.

- What questions do you have about this initiative?
- How do you envision your governance role as we move forward?
- What expectations do you have of the churchwide organization related to this focus?

Council members talked about evaluating the vitality of congregations by the description of congregational vitality, the accuracy of the survey, a more objective way of assessing congregational vitality and how the survey information is reported back to the congregations.

REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

(Agenda IV.E.)

Mr. Reid A. Christopherson, chair of the Planning and Evaluation Committee, presented the committee's report. Ms. Judith Roberts, program director for racial justice ministries, had updated the committee on the work of the Strategic Task Force Toward Authentic Diversity. The committee recommended appointments to the task force to be considered *en bloc*. There was also an update on the transition of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA and the ELCA Foundation.

CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION 2018-2019 OPERATIONAL PLAN

(Agenda IV.E.1.; *Reference*: Operational Plan final version)

Background:

In November 2017, the Church Council received a draft of the 2018-2019 Operational Plan for the churchwide organization. The council's Planning and Evaluation Committee reviewed the final version. The plan frames the work of the churchwide organization during the two years around the goals and priorities identified through the Called Forward Together in Christ process and set out in Future Directions 2025.

Church Council action:

Mr. Reid A. Christopherson made a motion on behalf of the Planning and Evaluation Committee to affirm the 2018-2019 Operational Plan of the churchwide organization.

Participants discussed the role of the Church Council in achieving goals outlined in the operational plan, efforts to enhance this church's youth ministries, the improved format of the plan, whether desired results were measurable, whether there were too many goals, and possible ways to report progress on the plan with council members.

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

VOTED:

CC18.04.05

To affirm the 2018-2019 Operational Plan of the churchwide organization.

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Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

RECESS

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 3:16 p.m.

**Saturday, April 7, 2018
Plenary Session V**

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President William B. Horne II called the fifth plenary session to order at 3:34 p.m. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center.

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON FAITH

(Agenda V.A.)

The Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson shared a personal reflection on faith. He recalled his pastor grandfather's influence on his life and ministry.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

(Agenda V.B.; *Reference*: Report of the Treasurer *and* Treasurer Presentation)

Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, stated that the 2017 fiscal year for the churchwide organization ended on Jan. 31, 2018, and results for the year were preliminary and unaudited. Revenue exceeded expenses for a net operating surplus of \$2.75 million. Mission support of \$44.4 million was \$0.3 million more than budgeted. Other income was \$3.7 million more than budgeted. Expenses of \$66.2 million were 98.5 percent of the spending authorization. She reviewed the sources of income and their results for fiscal year 2017. Mission support was 64.4 percent of the total revenue and support. She presented the expenses for the year by unit or office. ELCA World Hunger received \$21.4 million or \$2.6 million less than budgeted, which she attributed in part to a strong response to Lutheran Disaster Response. ELCA World Hunger began the year with a balance of \$5.3 million and distributed \$23.4 million for an ending balance of \$3.2 million. Lutheran Disaster Response received \$22.9 million largely in response to hurricanes. Funds will be distributed across the recovery phase of the response. The treasurer reported on the progress of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* by each category of the campaign. She reviewed the cash management policy and compared it to actual spending for the fiscal year. Since 2000, the number of units in the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust grew from 155,000 to 555,678, and the unit price of \$1,204 grew to \$1,324 — assets transferred to the ELCA Foundation. The treasurer explained how revenue and spending for fiscal year 2018 aligned with Future Directions 2025 and resulted in a balanced budget.

In response to a question, Treasurer Fedyk said that the budget was conservative because it relied somewhat on investment income, which was difficult to project.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Agenda V.C.)

Vice President William B. Horne II stated that the Church Council would enter into executive session to receive a confidential report from the Budget and Finance Committee.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Agenda V.C.1.)

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council went into executive session at 4:09 p.m. 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 4:52 p.m.

Vice President William B. Horne II announced that the Church Council had approved [CC18.04.06] the recommendations presented by the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Post-Retirement Benefits in executive session.

VOTED:

- CC18.04.06** **To receive with gratitude the report of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group and thank them for their work;**
- To approve the change from self-insured medical and pharmacy plans for the retirees to fully insured medical and pharmacy plans;**
- To approve the conversion of the retiree medical subsidy calculation from a fixed percentage of the monthly premium to a fixed dollar discount amount equal to the 2018 subsidy for the Medicare Standard Option plan, increasing by 3 percent per year starting in 2020;**
- To approve the use of excess discounts (subsidies exceeding the monthly premium) to provide notional accounts to fund future discounts for the retirees in the event that future premiums exceed future subsidies;**
- To approve the resolution of additional issues as set forth in Appendix A;**
- To request Portico Benefit Services to draft revised plan language to accomplish these plan changes;**
- To authorize the Executive Committee to receive, review, and approve revised plan language drafted by Portico;**
- To acknowledge Portico's collection of the 0.7 percent surcharge from participating employers through 2019 to help fund the Trust;**
- To acknowledge Portico's collection of \$7,000,000 in surcharges from participating employers from 2020-2022 to help fund the Trust, with Portico to determine the rate and duration best suited to collect those surcharges;**
- To authorize the ELCA to expend \$11,000,000 between now and 2022 to fund the Trust, with the expectation that these amounts, together with amounts contributed from participating employers via Portico, will fully fund the Trust, but recognizing that this is a funding estimate; and**
- To terminate the *Aide-memoire* and replace it with the understanding set forth herein.**

PLAN FOR "WHERE NEEDED MOST" FUNDS OF *ALWAYS BEING MADE NEW: THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ELCA*
(Agenda V.C.2.; *Reference:* Allocation of Where Needed Most funds *and* Budget and Finance Committee Report)

Background:

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA had a five-year goal to raise \$198 million for several specific ministries of this church. In addition to designated gifts, funds could be earmarked for "where needed most."

At its November 2017 meeting, the Church Council asked [CC17.11.28] that the churchwide organization prepare a plan for the process by which "where needed most" dollars in the campaign will be allocated.

Church Council action:

Mr. Clarence M. Smith, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, presented the committee's report. All but one of the committee's recommendations were included for the Church Council's *en bloc* consideration.

Mr. Smith noted that the council had asked the churchwide organization to present the committee with a plan for the allocation of "where needed most" dollars of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. The committee endorsed the policy and procedures crafted by churchwide staff. A staff oversight committee will review proposals and make decisions based on a policy that the money will only be used to fund the established, approved priorities of the campaign. The committee will use the following guidelines to allocate the funds.

- To provide seed money for campaign programs where an initial investment was required to launch the ministry. Funds advanced from “where needed most” will be replenished as gifts are raised. Any unfunded balance at the end of the campaign will be charged to the “where needed most” fund.
- To complete critical projects where fundraising had fallen short of goal and more funds were needed to complete the investment already made.
- To fund ELCA global personnel (Young Adults in Global Mission and ELCA missionaries).
- To fund programs with multi-year commitments (such as four-year scholarship commitments for International Women Leaders studying at ELCA colleges).
- To further advance a campaign priority where specific funds raised were currently and expected to remain below 50 percent of goal.

Mr. Smith made a motion on behalf of the Budget and Finance Committee to approve the policy and procedure for the allocation of the campaign’s “where needed most” dollars.

Participants discussed which campaign priorities were currently below 50 percent of goal and the possibility of meeting priority goals after the campaign ends, especially through the “where needed most” category.

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

VOTED:

CC18.04.07 To approve the policy and procedure for the allocation of “where needed most” dollars in *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*; and To report results to the Budget and Finance Committee as part of the regular campaign reporting.

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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

Mr. Hans E. Becklin led the assembly in prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda V.D.)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger announced that the offering taken during worship the following morning was designated for the Youth and Young Adult Ministries category of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. He responded to questions about making donations electronically.

HYMN AND PRAYER

(Agenda V.E.)

The Rev. Chad M. Huebner led the assembly in singing a hymn and in prayer.

Mr. Clarence M. Smith provided musical accompaniment.

RECESS

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 5:20 p.m. for Saturday, April 7, 2018.

Sunday, April 8, 2018
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. Dena M. Gable presided; the Rev. Lorie B. Tatum preached; and Ms. Elona Street-Stewart served as assisting minister. Mr. Ervin F. Sparapani was lector. Certain participants of the meeting sang as a choir; and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, Mr. James M. Hushagen, Mr. Gary A. Pederson, the Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson and Deacon John E. Weit, program director for music, served as musicians. An offering of \$3,949 was received for the Youth and Young Adult Ministries 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 10:15 a.m. in the Council Room of the Lutheran Center.

Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson led the gathering in prayer.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

(Agenda VI.A.)

The Rev. Daniel Meeter brought a greeting from The Reformed Church in America. He shared a number of elements planned for the General Synod in June 2018, including the nomination of the Rev. Eddy Alemán to be general secretary.

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Agenda VI.B.; *Reference*: Program and Services Committee Report)

Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson, chair of the Program and Services Committee, presented the committee report. She mentioned that the committee received updates on the women and justice social statement and the policies and procedures for addressing social concerns. The committee was recommending approval of a human rights social criteria investment screen and revisions to the social message on Immigration for the Church Council to take action *en bloc*.

UPDATE ON THE ENTRANCE RITE FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

(Agenda VI.B.1.; *Reference*: Entrance Rite Discernment Group update)

Background:

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA16.05.11] to create a roster of Ministers of Word and Service and to endorse the recommendations of the Word and Service Task Force. The task force recommended that the question of an entrance rite for this new roster be considered by a different group. The Entrance Rite Discernment Group drafted recommendations that ordination be the rite for entrance to the roster, that a stole and lapel cross be the symbols for this roster and that members of this roster not be considered among the laity of this church for representational purposes. Final recommendations were to be presented to the Conference of Bishops and Church Council for possible transmission to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council action:

Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson presented the report and recommendations of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group — that ordination be the rite for entrance to the roster, that a stole and lapel cross be the symbols for this roster and that members of this roster not be considered among the laity of this church for representational purposes. The Church Council was being asked to refer the recommendations to the Office of the Secretary for consideration of any necessary constitutional changes and to request a final report from the discernment group in November 2018.

In response to questions, Secretary Wm Chris Boerger said that the Churchwide Assembly would vote on the recommendations by voting on the proposed constitutional amendments related to them. Lay members may need to be added to a board or committee, if the representation of the laity drops below 60 percent.

The Rev. William O. Gafkjen, bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, answered a question about the conference's reception of the recommendations. He emphasized the importance of the recommendations prompting conversation around the report. Members of the Conference of Bishops suggested some changes in language but were largely supportive of the recommendations.

Church Council members discussed whether ordaining both pastors and deacons will confuse their roles in this church, the differences between being called and being authorized to serve a sacramental function, ordination not meaning the person may administer sacraments, and a twofold office of ministry.

A motion was made on behalf of the Program and Services Committee to advance the work of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group toward developing recommendations for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

There being no further discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II invited Mr. Hans E. Becklin to lead the gathering in prayer.

The chair called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC18.04.08 To receive with gratitude the report and proposed recommendations from the Entrance Rite Discernment Group [Appendix];

To refer the proposed recommendations to the Office of the Secretary for preliminary work on possible amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*;

To encourage the Entrance Rite Discernment Group to share the proposed recommendations throughout the church and with full communion partners for further conversation; and

To request the Entrance Rite Discernment Group present final recommendations to the November 2018 Church Council meeting.

Vice President Horne declared that the motion was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

(Agenda VI.C.)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger announced that there was one item of new business.

TASK FORCE TO CONSIDER A FUTURE CAMPAIGN AND GENERATING REVENUE

Background:

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA was a five-year campaign that began in 2014 with the goal of raising \$198 million "to grow the resources of this church to support congregations, leadership, relief and development, and global mission."

Church Council action:

Mr. Joseph T. Nolte made the following motion.

Moved;

Seconded: To create a task force composed of Church Council members, churchwide organization staff and liaison bishops to consider a future ELCA campaign and a strategic focus on generating additional revenue for this church; and
To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint members to the task force.

Mr. Nolte referred to the Church Council's conversations over the previous years about the operating revenue of the churchwide organization and the conclusion of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* in 2019. He suggested that there be more talk about the possibility of another campaign.

Participants discussed supporting the current campaign while talking about the next one, possibly finding revenue from outside this church, whether advance planning may allow for a silent phase for the next campaign, the meaning of "generating additional revenue for this church," and a possible timeline for the proposed task force.

Mr. Ervin F. Sparapani made a motion to amend.

Moved;

Seconded: To create a task force composed of Church Council members, churchwide organization staff and liaison bishops to consider a future ELCA campaign and a strategic focus on generating additional revenue for this church; **and**
To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint members to the task force; **and**
To request that the task force present a timeline at the November 2018 meeting and report at the April 2019 meeting of the Church Council.

Mr. Sparapani suggested that the motion needed a mechanism for reporting back to the council.

Participants discussed the feasibility and merits of having a timeline by November 2018 and a report by April 2019. There being no further discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for a vote on the motion to amend.

Moved;

Seconded;

Carried:

To create a task force composed of Church Council members, churchwide organization staff and liaison bishops to consider a future ELCA campaign and a strategic focus on generating additional revenue for this church; **and**
To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint members to the task force; **and**
To request that the task force present a timeline at the November 2018 meeting and report at the April 2019 meeting of the Church Council.

The chair declared that the motion was adopted and that the amended main motion was on the floor.

In response to a question, Secretary Wm Chris Boerger stated that the Church Council may authorize a churchwide appeal but would likely want the Churchwide Assembly to confirm this church's commitment to such an appeal.

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

VOTED:

CC18.04.09

To create a task force composed of Church Council members, churchwide organization staff and liaison bishops to consider a future ELCA campaign and a strategic focus on generating additional revenue for this church; and
To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint members to the task force; and

To request that the task force present a timeline at the November 2018 meeting and report at the April 2019 meeting of the Church Council.

The chair declared the motion was adopted as amended.

REPORT OF THE BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

(Agenda VI.D.; *Reference*: Board Development Committee Report)

The Rev. James H. Utt, chair of the Board Development Committee, presented the committee's report. The committee reviewed the process for developing a governance policy manual, the results of the webinar primer on mission support, and the possibility of using webinars as Church Council primers in the future. The committee is planning café entertainment for the opening dinner of the council's November 2018 meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(Agenda VI.D.2.)

The Rev. James H. Utt made a motion on behalf of the Board Development Committee to appoint members to an *ad hoc* governance policy committee. He introduced those being nominated for the *ad hoc* committee.

Church Council members discussed having staff involved in a committee dealing with the council's governance role. There being no further discussion, Vice President William B. Horne II called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC18.04.10

To appoint Ms. Maren Hulden, Mr. Joseph T. Nolte, Mr. Clarence M. Smith, Mr. Gary A. Pederson, Mr. James J.F. Jennings, the Rev. Wm Chris Boerger, the Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock, Ms. Christina Jackson-Skelton and Bishop R. Guy Erwin to an *ad hoc* governance policy committee; and

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to make additional appointments as necessary.

The chair declared the motion was adopted.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

(Agenda VI.E.; *Reference*: Congregation Vitality Presentation *and* Report of the Conference of Bishops)

The Rev. William O. Gafkjen, bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, read a portion of his message to the synod, reflecting on Easter and a resurrection of the imagination.

The Conference of Bishops reviewed the work of the Congregational Vitality Project to consider drafting a definition of "congregational vitality" based on the project's definition. The conference reframed the definition as a description of congregational vitality at this time and added footnotes.

"Communities¹ of Jesus² that nurture life changing relationships³ with God, one another and the world."

1. The phrase "Communities of Jesus" is meant to evoke an expansive understanding of how, in this age, people are gathering to engage God's Word. We envision campus ministries, Bible camps, pub theology gatherings and more as places where the Triune God is at work creating faith.
2. While we use the word "Jesus," we understand that it is God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who through the power of the Holy Spirit calls, gathers and makes holy.

3. Regarding the phrase “nurture life changing relationships,” in relationship with the Triune God and others we are most certainly nurtured, but we are also changed, in other words the Word has the power to transform.

In response to a question, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and Bishop Gafkjen talked about conversations the Conference of Bishops had with the seminary leaders.

Presiding Bishop Eaton said it had become clearer how the seminaries were working together to provide theological education, but theological education beyond the seminaries remained a topic of discussion.

Bishop Gafkjen gave examples of theological education for lay members of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. That work was beyond the scope of the Theological Education Advisory Committee.

They both spoke of ecumenical approaches to provide theological education to ELCA members and to the members of other Christian denominations.

In response to another question, Bishop Gafkjen referred to the survey the Congregational Vitality Project had developed to assess the vitality of a congregation.

Participants discussed specific words and phrases of the conference’s definition of “congregational vitality,” the statement of faith required of congregations, congregations as places where the Word is preached and the sacraments administered, the definition resting on the confessions not replacing them, the purpose of the definition to address the context of North America at this time, worshiping in communities beyond membership in congregations, and the process of defining “congregational vitality” as a way for congregations to review their purposes and to see what God wants done.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Agenda VI.F.)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger explained procedures to submit expense reports for reimbursement. He added that those appointed to the *ad hoc* governance policy committee will meet at lunch.

Church Council members discussed the possibility of donating their expenses to the churchwide organization.

TABLE GRACE

Ms. Emma K. Wagner led the assembly in prayer and table grace.

RECESS

The April 2018 meeting of the Church Council recessed at 12:02 p.m.

Sunday, April 8, 2018
Plenary Session VII

CALL TO ORDER

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

The Rev. William O. Gafkjen, bishop of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, led the gathering in prayer.

ECUMENICAL GREETING

(Agenda VII.A.)

Mr. Steven Nishibayashi brought a greeting from The Episcopal Church. He spoke of the similarities of his church with the ELCA and how their full communion relationship had advanced the gospel. He outlined several of the issues to be addressed by the General Convention in July in Austin, Texas.

DISCUSSION ON FUTURE DIRECTIONS 2025

(Agenda VII.B.; *Reference*: Discussion on Sustainability and Church Structures *and* Paper on sustainability FD2025)

Background:

In November 2016, the Church Council adopted [CC16.11.42] Future Directions 2025, setting out the goals and priorities identified through the Called Forward Together in Christ process of facilitated conversation across the ELCA. The Future Directions Table, which developed the document, continued to meet and assisted in its implementation.

Church Council discussion:

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton described the work of the Future Directions Table on defining “sustainability,” especially as it related to the fifth goal listed in Future Directions 2025: A well-governed, connected and sustainable church. The table considered the negative and positive connotations of “sustainable” while imagining ways to develop a strategy to become a sustainable church.

The presiding bishop drew the attention of the Church Council to a paper the Future Directions Table had prepared on sustainability. The paper cited conclusions of a meeting of “senior leaders” of the churchwide organization.

A sustainable churchwide organization is theologically grounded in an understanding that we exist because God created the church for God’s mission for the world. God is our source of life. A sustainable churchwide organization will be empowered to share a bold message of God’s grace to the world today and tomorrow, so that all might experience the love of Christ. Markers of a sustainable churchwide organization include:

- clear identity and sense of mission
- relevancy in lives of ELCA members and our neighbors
- broad and growing revenue streams
- diverse, gifted participation and leadership
- positive reputation and impact
- efficient systems and processes
- adaptability
- good governance
- shared ecclesiology

Presiding Bishop Eaton said The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) had gone through a similar process to define “sustainability” as a theological and spiritual matter not about maintaining the status quo. The church is to be sustainable so that more people will hear the gospel.

The presiding bishop presented a recommendation from the Future Directions Table for the development of a paper on sustainability for the three leadership tables — Executive Committee of the Church Council, Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops and the Administrative Team of the churchwide organization — that will be available for consideration by the Conference of Bishops and Church Council in Fall 2018. Once the council endorses a sustainability framework, a task force will create a communications strategy to explain it to ELCA members and the three leadership tables will commit to a five-year strategy to align this church’s structures and resources to the sustainable model.

Mr. Allan J. Bieber, a member of the Future Directions Table, said the table concluded that this church cannot wait until it defines “sustainability.” It must discuss this complex topic until it understands it well enough to take action.

Church Council members discussed this church’s previous and current efforts to communicate positive narratives, and how a communications task force will lay the groundwork for the five-year progressive strategy.

Ms. Jocelyn Fuller, director for strategic communications, described working with synod communicators to engage people, not just to contact them, through social media and through whichever channels work best for specific audiences.

Council members talked about involving the voting members of synod and churchwide assemblies, and about employing synod communication strategies.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY VIDEO

Vice President William B. Horne II invited those present to watch a video about churchwide ministries that was in production for presentation at synod assemblies in 2018.

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY LESSON

(Agenda VII.C.)

Mr. Vernon K. Veal talked about the history of St. John Lutheran Church, Bloomington, Ill. He described the congregation’s lay “befrienders” ministry to supplement the pastors’ visitations.

CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM *EN BLOC*

(Agenda VII.D.)

Secretary Wm Chris Boerger announced that no items had been removed from *en bloc* for separate consideration.

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

(Agenda VII.E.; *Reference: En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions *and* Responses to Synod 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 recommended amendments to two continuing resolutions, which required a two-thirds vote of the Church Council. ELCA continuing resolution 15.15.A17. was being amended to

reference the ELCA Foundation name. Continuing resolution 19.01.A15. was being amended to allow for an identification process before the election of the secretary.

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

VOTED:

TWO-THIRDS VOTE

CC18.04.11

To approve the following amendments to the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

15.15.A1718. *Responsibilities of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA*
The Endowment Fund of the ELCA—also known as the ELCA Foundation—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;*
- I. *coordinate programs and ministries with the priorities of the ELCA and other stewardship and financial-resource development activities of this church; and*
- j. *act in accordance with constitutional provision 16.12. and bylaws 11.34.01., 14.21.02., 14.21.03., 14.21.06., and 14.21.07.*

19.01.A1518. *In a year when the vice president or secretary shall be elected, the voting members of elected to serve at the Churchwide Assembly shall be invited to identify the names of up to three persons who might be considered for election as vice president or secretary. Names shall be submitted to the Office of the Secretary at least four months prior to the assembly. The Office of the Secretary shall contact those persons identified and request biographical information. At least 60 days prior to the Churchwide Assembly, the biographical information received from those persons open to consideration shall be distributed to the voting members.*

The chair declared that the motion was adopted.

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

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

VOTED:

CC18.04.12 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 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:

CC18.04.12a 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 Endowment Fund Pooled Trust's year ending December 31, 2017. *EN BLOC*

B. 2018 and 2019 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:

CC18.04.12b1 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 synod and churchwide ministries:

Eastern Washington-Idaho, Rocky Mountain and Western Iowa synods;

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

We 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*

CC18.04.12b2 To acknowledge with appreciation the action of the following synods to maintain the percentage of sharing of 2018 Mission Support contributions by congregations for synod and churchwide ministries but estimating an adjustment in the projected amount to be shared:

Eastern North Dakota, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Northern Great Lakes and Pacifica synods;

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*

CC18.04.12b3 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 2019 Mission Support by congregations for synod and churchwide ministries:

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

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

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

C. Synod-specific goals for mission support

Background:

ELCA constitutional provision 8.15. states, “Since congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization are partners that share in God’s mission, all share in the responsibility to develop, implement, and strengthen the financial support program of this church.”

At its April 2015 meeting, the Church Council voted [CC15.04.11]: ...

To acknowledge that uniform percentage guidelines (i.e., 55/45) for mission support are no longer appropriate across all synods;

To approve the development, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, of a contextually sensitive, substantive and collaborative process which will result in synod-specific percentage goals for each of the 65 synods by no later than the April 2018 meeting of the Church Council;

To request that the Budget and Finance Committee monitor the consultation process with a goal of recommending benchmarks and guidelines to be used in establishing the synod-specific goals no later than the April 2018 meeting of the Church Council;

To recommend the hiring of the equivalent of a full-time director for mission support to construct and oversee this process in collaboration with the Conference of Bishops, the Mission Advancement unit and the Office of the Presiding Bishop ...

Ms. Victoria E. Flood, director for mission support, reported to the Conference of Bishops and the council’s Budget and Finance Committee on a proposed process for determining synod-specific mission support goals.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC18.04.12c

**To affirm that the process for determining synod-specific mission support goals is consistent with the actions taken by the Church Council at its April 2015 meeting;
To thank all bishops and churchwide staff who participated in the formulation of this process in a contextually sensitive, substantive and collaborative spirit; and
To request that the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council continue to receive the results of synod consultations and synod-specific mission support goals.**

D. Change of authorization on churchwide endowments

Background:

The Church Council establishes or authorizes changes to churchwide endowment funds, usually reflecting new organizational structures or nomenclature due to restructuring or changes in position titles. A realignment of existing endowment agreements with the current churchwide operations and structure for The Native American Community Mission Endowment Fund was requested.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC18.04.12d

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

Strike the words, ‘executive director of the Commission on Multicultural Ministries’, and replace with the words ‘director for American Indian Alaska Native ministry’;

Strike the words, ‘or appropriate designee’, and replace with the words ‘the director for Ethnic Specific Multicultural Ministries’;

Strike the words, ‘executive director’ of the ELCA Foundation, and replace with the word ‘president’ of the ELCA Foundation.

E. Revisions to the resolution regarding authority to act in financial matters

Background:

In November 2016, the Church Council adopted [CC16.11.46c1] a resolution on the Appointment of Assistant Officers, which required revisions due to changes in staffing.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC18.04.12e To adopt the following amendments.

Appointment of Assistant Officers

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant vice presidents of this corporation: M. Wyvetta Bullock, Walter S. May, **Marcus R. Kunz, Kathryn M. Lohre,** and Jodi L. Slattery, to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the presiding bishop;

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant treasurers of this corporation: Cecilia Favela, Christina Jackson-Skelton, Christopher Carpenter, and Annette Roman, to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the treasurer;

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing or attesting, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant secretaries of this corporation: Thomas A. Cunniff, Sue E. Rothmeyer, **Phillip H. Harris** and **Aja M. Favors** to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the secretary.

RESOLVED, that prior resolutions adopted by this Council, including CC15.04.31b and the prior actions identified in CC15.04.31b, addressing the appointment of assistant officers are hereby rescinded and replaced by this action.

F. Establishment of a Church Council designated fund

Background:

The Office of the Treasurer reported that unaudited figures for fiscal 2017 indicate that the churchwide organization received \$71.72 million in revenue and support, and total expenses related to the current operating fund were \$68.97 million. Net revenue over expenses was \$2.75 million.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC18.04.12f **To approve a Church Council Designated Fund in the amount of \$2,750,000 representing the excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2017 to be released to fund the post-retirement medical benefit obligations of the churchwide organization.**

G. Designation of churchwide organization representatives at Synod assemblies

(Reference: 2018 Synod Assemblies by Synod)

Background:

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

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

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton provided the Church Council with a grid identifying potential representatives for each of the synod assemblies in 2018.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC18.04.12g **To designate the persons identified in the “2018 Synod Assemblies by Synod” grid with voice but not vote in the meetings of the assigned Synod Assembly.**

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

Background:

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago has proposed amendments to its constitution and bylaws.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC18.04.12h **To approve the revised constitution and bylaws of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Illinois.**

I. Approval of a human rights social criteria investment screen

(Reference: Human Rights Screen to Church Council April 2018)

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...

In November 2017, the Church Council adopted [CC17.11.26] a revised social message on “Human Rights” 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.

The council’s Program and Services Committee and the Conference of Bishops provided feedback on the proposed human rights social criteria investment screen.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC18.04.12i **To approve the “Political and Civil Human Rights: Equal Access and Participation” Social Criteria Investment Screen; and**

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

J. Revisions to the social message on Immigration

(Reference: Revisions to Social Message on Immigration)

Background:

ELCA social teaching documents are written in a particular context and time. As the years pass, some of their references and information, especially in ELCA social messages which are more practically oriented, become dated.

Often, readers simply recognize the datedness of information and adapt their reading accordingly as they seek the biblical themes, theological features, moral values and Christian commitments in ELCA teaching. On occasion, however, references and information can become dated to the point of significant inadequacy and misdirection for those seeking to be guided by these documents.

In the judgment of leaders with responsibility for immigration work within the ELCA, this has become the case for the social message on Immigration (1998) after the adoption of the ELCA's strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO) at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. While AMMPARO is grounded in the biblical and theological themes, values and overall commitments of the social message on Immigration, the information provided in 1997 that directed members to action has become incomplete. Since the social message is frequently used or sought out in support of ELCA immigration work, the problem was deemed acute.

The Church Council was presented necessary editorial updates to the Immigration social message that are reflected in AMMPARO. Editorial updates so adopted by the council will be reflected in the message on the ELCA website immediately and will be used when a second printing of the social message is called for.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC18.04.12j To adopt the identified changes to the social message on Immigration (1998) as an editorial update that will provide accurate information from the ELCA's strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO).

K. Church Council nominations and elections

(Reference: Biographies)

Background:

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

CC18.04.12k1 To elect to the board of directors of the Publishing House of the ELCA — 1517 Media — for a term ending in August 2019: Mr. Joel Peterson.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC18.04.12k2 To re-elect to the board of directors of The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Ms. Rebecca R. Pallmeyer.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC18.04.12k3 To nominate to the advisory council of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary as part of Lenoir-Rhyne University for a term coterminous with his service as chair: The Rev. Lowell G. Almen.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC18.04.12k4 To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University for a term coterminous with her service as chair: Ms. Judy K. Leidy; and
To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Ms. Barbara J. Burgie and Mr. Roderick G.W. Chu.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC18.04.12k5 To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Mr. Andrew N. Nuffer;
To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a four-year term expiring in 2022: Ms. Elizabeth Lucht Jones; and
To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a five-year term expiring in 2023: The Rev. Mary B. Froiland.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC18.04.12k6 To elect to the board of trustees of United Lutheran Seminary for a three-year term expiring in 2021: The Rev. R. Guy Erwin, Mr. David A. Russell and the Rev. Mark K. Tyler; and
To authorize the Executive Committee to elect trustees to fill, until the November 2018 meeting of the Church Council, vacancies in the board of trustees of United Lutheran Seminary.

L. Church Council appointments

Background:

At its November 2017 meeting, the Church Council appointed [CC17.11.27] members to the Strategic Task Force Toward Authentic Diversity. Additional appointments were needed for the task force.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC18.04.12l To appoint the Rev. Logan T. Vang and Ms. Kelly Sherman-Conroy to the Strategic Task Force Toward Authentic Diversity; and
To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to make additional appointments as necessary.

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

Addition background is provided in the minutes of the November 2017 meeting of the Church Council:

In November 2017, the Church Council 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 Kuttab 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.

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (April 2018)

The Rev. Abraham D. Allende, bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod, and the Rev. Albert Starr Jr., director for ethnic specific and multicultural ministries, co-convened the first gathering of the Strategic Task Force Toward Authentic Diversity on March 14-15, 2018, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill. The purpose of the meeting was to establish working relationships among task force members and to provide direction on the scope of work. The task force is comprised of a racial and ethnic diversity of persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English, with attention to gender balance, sexual orientation, regional and rostered/laity representation. It was noted that the current task force lacks participation from person(s) with disability. Task force members shared experiences of racial inequity and other barriers hindering this church in achieving racial parity — especially in places where resistance is high. Collectively, they expressed resilience and fruitful hope in moving forward. The Rev. Priscilla N. Paris-Austin, author of Motion B, presented the intent and background of the action. Her remarks named existing racial inequities within this church and the removal of the constitutional goal of achieving representation of 10 percent persons of color and/or whose primary language is other than English within the first ten years of the ELCA's formation.

The task force reviewed the scope of its assignment in increasing racial and ethnic diversity within the ELCA. The group acknowledged previous efforts toward multiculturalism and existing denominational resources that are underutilized. Ms. Judith Roberts, program director for racial justice, presented an overview of all the diversity and racial justice resolutions adopted at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly in addition to Motion B. Work currently underway through the Ethnic Specific, Multicultural Ministries and Racial Justice team was also shared. In addition, the task force received a report from the 2016 Multicultural Leadership Summit. The task force will incorporate recommendations from the Multicultural Leadership Summit in its future reporting to the Churchwide Assembly. The task force divided into three working groups: Group 1 focused on a working definition of "authentic diversity"; Group 2 developed a process and timeline for the work; and Group 3 worked with support for the implementation of 2016 Churchwide Assembly actions.

Each task force member will engage synod bishops and councils within her or his related region to introduce/raise awareness of the task force. Bishop Allende will inform the Conference of Bishops of the task force and its participants so that synod leaders will know to expect to be approached for conversation by task force members seeking to gain insight of the synod's past and present work around racial inclusivity, anti-racism and racial justice. A video conference with the task force is scheduled for April 19, 2018. The next in-person task force meeting is set for July 23-24, 2018. The group will adopt a working definition of "authentic diversity," suggest a method for assessing diversity initiatives, and develop a timeline for reporting to Church Council and pre-2019 Churchwide Assembly work.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC18.04.12m To receive the progress report from the Domestic Mission unit regarding the implementation of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA (Motion B); and

To request that the Domestic Mission unit provide periodic reports to the Church Council on the work of the Strategic Task Force Toward Authentic Diversity leading up to a final report to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

N. Gun violence prevention

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2016)

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

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

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

Church Council action [CC16.11.46t]

To receive the response from the Domestic Mission unit;

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

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

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (April 2018)

On Thursday, March 16, 2018, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton sent a letter to all members of Congress that called for action on the reauthorization of an assault weapons ban and strengthening background checks. On March 22,

2018, ELCA Advocacy sent a follow-up Action Alert with the same requests, timed to coincide with the March for Our Lives on March 24, 2018, a national event supported by ELCA Conference of Bishops in the Statement in Solidarity with Our Children and Youth.

ELCA State Public Policy offices worked on 2018 legislative priorities that focus on managing gun purchases, including:

- Faith Action Network in Washington State supports gun responsibility legislation that includes the Dangerous Access Prevention Act, Enhanced Assault Weapon Background Checks, and action to prohibit sale of bump stocks.
- Virginia Interfaith Center supports legislation that will require background checks for all firearm sales and prohibit straw sales, making it illegal to purchase a firearm on behalf of anyone not lawfully allowed to purchase it themselves. In addition, the Virginia Interfaith Center supports legislation to further limit access to firearms for individuals that are previously convicted of violent crimes.
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania is working on a 2018 priority for legislation that would make it more difficult for defendants in domestic abuse cases to gain access to firearms.
- Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry in New Jersey organized advocacy including phone calls to the governor's office that led to a ban on bump stocks signed by outgoing Gov. Chris Christie on January 15, 2018.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

**CC18.04.12n To receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit on “Gun Violence Prevention”; and
To request that the secretary of this church notify the synods of this action.**

O. Deepening relationships with Historic Black Churches

Additional background is provided in the minutes of the November 2016 meeting of the Church Council:

In November 2016, the Church Council voted [CC16.11.46p]:

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

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

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (April 2018)

The ELCA has continued to engage in a multi-faceted strategy for strengthening relations with the Historic Black Churches. This has included strengthening bilateral, coalition and conciliar work and witness, as well as partnerships among churchwide colleagues, synods and the African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA). A considerable amount has been accomplished within existing budget and capacity; a more expansive strategy will require further consideration of both.

Highlights for 2017 include:

- *Paving the way for renewed dialogue with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.*
Following up on 2016 meetings, Bishop Eaton received Bishop John F. White, president of the AME Church's Council of Bishops, as a special guest at the 2017 Bishops' Academy in Charleston, S.C. High-level meetings to discuss new possibilities for dialogue and collaboration, ecumenical worship and fellowship on the occasion of Epiphany, and a shared visit to Mother Emanuel for prayer took place. Senior Bishop McKinley Young has since expressed interest in continued dialogue.
- *Strengthening joint reception of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ)-ELCA 2010 Statement of Mission.*
At the national level, we have continued to cultivate our partnership with AMEZ bishops, including Senior Bishop George E. Battle Jr., as we live into our common commitments expressed in the 2010 Statement of

Mission. Bishop W. Darin Moore spoke powerfully at the ELCA's 500th anniversary of the Reformation event in Washington, D.C., on truth-telling and racial justice. Further work has continued in the Carolinas with the leadership of Bishop Herman R. Yoos III [South Carolina Synod], Bishop Timothy M. Smith [North Carolina Synod] and synod ecumenical committees in partnership with Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, Racial Justice Ministries and ADLA. Local relationship-building and partnerships are being renewed or established through events and initiatives. These models are being shared through the Conference of Bishops.

- *Continuing presence and participation in strategic coalitions and conferences.*

We have continued to participate in the ecumenical body Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), especially on the shared commitment to racial justice. At this table, we engage in common work with other Protestant and Historic Black Churches on questions related to the intersection between racism and the reconciliation of ministries. In 2017, the churches of CUIC publicly celebrated their mutual recognition of ministries and held a series of public events focused on racial justice in the greater Dallas area. In 2017, we also participated for the third year in the Conference of National Black Churches, as part of their cross-racial dialogue. This conference is the organization of the eight largest Historic Black Churches in the United States. The presiding bishop spoke, and Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations staff and Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries staff were present.

- *Exploring new possibilities for strengthening historic black church relations.*

In 2017, the Rev. Lamont A. Wells, ADLA president, provided leadership in organizing the first-ever joint African Descent Lutheran Association and Union of Black Episcopalians Summit in Cherry Hill, N.J., on the theme "Like A Mighty Stream, Let Justice Roll: Absalom, Jehu, and Beyond." The summit provided an opportunity for these organizations to meet separately and together, and to celebrate the vital history and continued calling of black leadership in the Lutheran and Episcopal churches in the United States. It was an exciting opportunity for deepening relationships with one of our full communion partners. The presiding bishop, several synod bishops and various churchwide ministries staff members were present.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC18.04.12o

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding "Deepening Relationships with Historic Black Churches";

To commend the work of building and strengthening relations given the existing budget and capacity and to encourage the continued multi-faceted strategy of engagement; and

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

P. "Find a Congregation" feature on the ELCA website

Addition background is provided in the minutes of the November 2016 meeting of the Church Council:

In November 2016, the Church Council voted [CC16.11.46oo]:

To receive the response from the Mission Advancement unit and to anticipate a report no later than the April 2018 Church Council meeting; and

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

Response from the Mission Advancement unit (April 2018)

The recent launch of <http://directory.elca.org> includes detailed information about ELCA congregations as well as parochial reports currently found on the "Find a Congregation" feature of ELCA.org.

We are actively working with Information Technology staff of the churchwide organization to remove the link to the parochial report (Form A) in the current "Find a Congregation" feature on ELCA.org. This update should satisfy the request made by the Lower Susquehanna Synod and is expected to be completed by the Church Council's April 2018 meeting.

An audit is being done by Mission Advancement to determine the information already being collected from congregations compared to the information being made available online. Once the audit is complete, we will create next steps to generate more information about congregations through “Find a Congregation” on ELCA.org.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC18.04.12p **To receive the response from the Mission Advancement unit regarding the “Find a Congregation” feature on the ELCA website;**
 To commend the Mission Advancement unit for its efforts to revise and update the information about congregations available through “Find a Congregation” on the ELCA website; and
 To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.

Q. 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.

Church Council action [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.

Response from the Global Mission unit (April 2018)

Global Mission staff strongly agree with the Southeastern Synod that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a threat facing the public health of many today, that it will increasingly be a concern into the future, and that it is the vulnerable populations around the world who are and will continue to be disproportionately affected. Through the methodology of accompaniment, AMR is a topic of conversation that already arises with our companions and partners who work in health care at all levels (i.e., from community to hospital); Global Mission can continue to explore possibilities to be more intentional in bringing this to the agenda where appropriate, encouraging companions and ecumenical partners to work with their own health systems, institutions, and patients and communities toward following the best practice recommendations by the World Health Organization. In work currently supported by Global Mission, community-based primary healthcare programs frequently include promotion of infection prevention measures including sanitation and food safety. Health education programs and continuing education programs for doctors and other care providers often include educational components on the importance of avoiding over-prescription, the need for testing prior to prescribing medication, finishing the full course of treatment, and not sharing among family members or selling prescriptions. Support for health systems strengthening in some areas includes reinforcing quality assurance and accountability mechanisms to ensure that procedures are in place at the health facility/institutional level. Many ELCA companions engage in advocacy at local and national governmental levels to gain appropriate access to the tools needed to help prevent antimicrobial resistance (even though it may not be articulated specifically in those terms). Finally, the topic of AMR is also embedded within many programs focused on malaria and on HIV and AIDS.

Within the activities of the ELCA churchwide organization, Global Mission staff will explore opportunities to include the topic of antibiotic resistance in future publications and/or conversations around the health care work of ELCA World Hunger-supported projects as part of the context around eliminating health disparities. During the World Antibiotic Awareness Week in November, Global Mission staff will consider possibilities for engaging via social media (ELCA World Hunger social media account and/or blog) around the reasons for concern about antibiotic resistance.

Global Mission staff will work with the ELCA Advocacy offices in Washington, D.C., and New York to identify advocacy possibilities around or connected to this topic. The Lutheran Office for World Community, at the Headquarters of the United Nations, provided information on a U.N. General Assembly resolution adopted in 2016 to share with the Southeastern Synod that may be useful for future work and/or conversations around this topic. The Lutheran Office for World Community also mentioned this resolution in one of its monthly advocacy reports through the Washington Office. Global Mission staff will also consider opportunities to pursue the topic of AMR within the context of care for creation and climate justice through broader ecumenical coalitions.

VOTED:

EN BLOC

CC18.04.12q

To receive the report from the Global Mission unit on “The role of the church in combating antimicrobial resistance”;

To commend the efforts of the Global Mission unit to engage ELCA companions and partners on the topic of antimicrobial resistance and to explore the best practices for combating it;

To encourage the churchwide organization to promote awareness around the reasons for concern about antibiotic resistance;

To encourage the Global Mission and the Domestic Mission units to identify advocacy possibilities connected to this topic; and

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

Vice President Horne declared the motion was adopted.

PERSONAL REFLECTION ON FAITH

(Agenda VII.F.)

Ms. Cynthia M. Gustavson shared a personal reflection on faith. She read a poem she had written of the Church Council meeting titled “Ruach,” the Hebrew word for “wind,” “breath” or “spirit” of God.

PROCESS OBSERVATIONS

(Agenda VII.G.; *Reference:* Process observation)

Mr. James J.F. Jennings summarized seven completed surveys to evaluate the processes used during the meeting. The survey posed several scenarios which the respondent could rank from never (1) to always (5). Mr. Jennings noted the range of answers to specific questions. He cited many of the additional comments from respondents. He added that someone mentioned to him that those who spoke more often began not to identify themselves.

Church Council members discussed having the survey forms available online for the next meeting and discussed methods used to give introverts a chance to speak.

EVALUATION AND DEBRIEFING

(Agenda VII.H.)

Vice President William B. Horne II led the Church Council in a discussion of ways for the council to hear from those who consider themselves introverts.

Church Council members talked about conversations moving on to other topics before some can formulate their thoughts, the use of committees to hear from introverts, beginning with those who had not spoken when returning to a subject, introducing a subject on one day and discussing it the next so people have a chance to “sleep on it,” allowing wait time for introverts means being comfortable with silence in meetings, engaging introverts in conversation outside of the plenary sessions, honoring the time scheduled for breaks during the meetings, the benefits of having topics and supporting materials in advance of the meeting, those who had spent more time on the council were more likely to speak in plenary sessions, and involving introverts in roles other than public speaking.

Council members discussed the fact that the terms of most members will end in August 2019, the needs the committees will have for certain expertise when those terms end, and the process for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to elect at least five at-large members of the Church Council.

Vice President Horne asked the participants for their ideas about how to improve future meetings. They expressed appreciation for the discussion time scheduled for this meeting, suggested having “mentors” for the ecumenical guests and the representatives of the ethnic associations, were thankful for the option to submit comments in writing (email) after certain sessions, disliked receiving a major report like the Baker Tilly metrics without time to discuss it, and questioned whether the process observation and evaluation forms were still effective. The council was reassured that the forms serve an important purpose and that the forms were constantly being revised.

HYMN AND PRAYER

(Agenda VII.I.)

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

The Rev. Linda Nou led the assembly in prayer.

Mr. Allan J. Bieber read Isaiah 41:9-10, and he led the gathering in prayer and in the singing of a hymn. The Rev. Peder J. Johanson, Mr. Clarence M. Smith and the Rev. Jonathan Splichal Larson provided musical accompaniment.

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ADJOURNMENT

(Agenda VII.J.)

The ninety-first meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adjourned Sunday, April 8, 2018, at 2:48 p.m.

Report and Recommendations of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group

Background

From 1993 through 2016, the ELCA maintained four public ministry rosters: the roster of ordained ministers and three official rosters of laypersons - associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers. Beginning in 2007, regional consultations, study, and dialogue examined the work and ministry of the three lay rosters, and these conversations eventually led the ELCA Church Council to appoint a Word and Service Task Force in 2012. [CC12.11.33].

The Word and Service Task Force recognized and affirmed the essential value of diaconal service to the mission of the people of God in the ELCA. Through its work, the task force came to an understanding that this calling would be strengthened by the convergence of the three former lay rosters of the ELCA into a single redefined roster. Based on the recommendation of the Word and Service Task Force, the 2016 Churchwide Assembly authorized the establishment of a roster of ministers of Word and Service, called deacons, effective January 1, 2017. [CA16.05.11]. The assembly also directed that the rite of consecration be used as the entrance rite for this new roster during an interim period of additional study, since two of the three rosters that combined to form the new roster of Ministers of Word and Service had used consecration as their entrance rite. [CA16.05.11]

Early in its work, the Word and Service Task Force recommended that the question of a permanent entrance rite for this new roster be considered separately. The Church Council appointed an Entrance Rite Discernment Group [CC13.11.65] to consider this question and to bring a recommendation to the Church Council for action by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Subsequently, the Church Council, responding to memorials offered at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, also requested that the Entrance Rite Discernment Group provide recommendations on appropriate diaconal symbols and whether or not the constitutional language on representational principles [5.01.f] should be altered.

Recommendation and Rationale for the Rite

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends the use of *ordination* as the rite of setting apart both ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service.

Theology and Practice

Baptism establishes our Christian identity. Through baptism, each Christian is called to a life of loving service in response to God's gift of grace.

Throughout the life of the church, some persons have been called to live out that loving service as a diaconal minister or deacon. While that diaconal ministry has taken many forms through the history of the church, it has always been marked by a call to service. As the *Occasional Services for the Assembly* companion volume to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* notes, "Those called to the diaconate speak God's word to God's world, and in turn they speak also for the needs of God's world to the church."¹

The church has historically set apart such persons through a public rite for this ministry. By doing so, it does not confer a higher status upon these persons than baptism does, but rather witnesses that some individuals are called and appointed to specific public ministry. All deacons on the roster of the ELCA, wherever they serve in the church and the world, are responsible to empower, equip and encourage the

¹ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2009), 200, cited in Gordon W. Lathrop, "Diaconal Ministry: The Entrance Rite Question Reflections from a Consideration of Symbolic Meaning and Ritual Practice," 1. Word and Service Roster, last modified March 2017.
http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Diaconal_Ministry_Entrance_Rite_Question.pdf?_ga=2.208097814.525212187.1518102037-561441743.1518102037

whole people of God for their own daily baptismal vocation of service to the neighbor and care of creation.²

Since 2014, the Entrance Rite Discernment Group has studied the history and theology of ordination and consecration, the history and theology of *diakonia*, liturgical materials, and the practices of our global and ecumenical partners.

The New Testament does not present a single theology of a rite called ordination. Instead, it describes a pattern of the church setting individuals apart for specific leadership roles through the laying on of hands with prayer and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.³

The central actions in the rites named ordination, consecration, and commissioning in this church are the laying on of hands with prayer and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, along with a charge to and promises by the candidate. While there are slight differences in the wording of the *current* rites, the intention is the same: to set persons apart for public ministry on behalf of the church.

North American Lutherans have typically limited the rite of ordination to ministers of Word and Sacrament and have especially associated ordination and inclusion on the ordained roster with the authorization to preside over the sacrament of Holy Communion. This narrow usage of the term, however, is not common among our ecumenical partners or among global Lutheran churches.

The final report of the 2005 Lutheran World Federation consultation on *The Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church* recommended ordination for diaconal ministers, in order to “reflect that the diaconal ministry is an integral part of the one ecclesial ministry. Through the act of ordination, the church recognizes the ministry of the deacon and prays to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit.”⁴ At the same time, the statement also affirms the “‘deaconhood of all believers’; that is, the calling of all the baptized to be involved in *diakonia*.” It also points to the importance of “seeing the diaconal and pastoral ministries as mutual and complementary, while having different emphases.”⁵

Many churches throughout the global Lutheran community ordain deacons, including the Lutheran churches in Germany, Sweden, Brazil, Estonia, Iceland, and Indonesia. In addition, many of our six full-communion, partners use the term ordination to set apart deacons for public leadership roles in the church. Both the United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church, the two partner churches with deacons whose roles roughly parallel those in the ELCA, ordain deacons. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Reformed Church in America ordain deacons who hold primary duties in ministries of service and compassion. In the United Church of Christ, congregations may choose to ordain deacons and other leaders for service in the local congregation only, while the Moravian Church in America ordains its deacons as one of the three traditional orders of ministry (deacon, presbyter, bishop).⁶

² "Report and Recommendations of the Word and Service Task Force." *ELCA 2016 Pre-Assembly Report*, ELCA, 2016,

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.guidebook.com/upload/p8aWh9vqY2iSfM4NcXE63BHJ5PwCQxn7/zOMeY5N2y0TCZV6p5L4tQYjlqzI6Z5xocYg.pdf>, 1.

³ Mark Oldenburg, "Initiatory Rituals for Public Ministry," 1-2, Word and Service Roster, last modified March 2017,

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Initiatory_Rituals_for_Public_Ministry.pdf?ga=2.220028701.525212187.1518102037-561441743.1518102037

⁴ "The Diaconal Ministry in the Lutheran Churches," in *The Diaconal Ministry in the Mission of the Church*, ed. Reinhard Boettcher, LWF Studies 2006 (Geneva, Switzerland: Lutheran World Federation, 2006), 85.

⁵ E. Louise Williams, "Ecumenical and Global Perspectives on the Diaconate," 4. Word and Service Roster,

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Ecumenical_and_Global_Perspectives.pdf

⁶ For further examples and discussion, see William Gafkjen, "Here a Deacon, There a Deacon, Everywhere a Deacon, Deacon," Word and Service Roster, last modified July 2014,

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Deacon_Descriptions.pdf?ga=2.209148822.525212187.1518102037-561441743.1518102037

Recognizing that ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service are both engaged in ministries that are essential to the life of the church and its work in the world, the Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends the consistent use of *ordination* as the rite of setting apart both ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service.

Roles and Responsibilities

The ELCA Constitution (7.20 and 7.50) specifies the distinctive roles and responsibilities of those on each roster. Ministers of Word and Sacrament hold primary responsibility for preaching the Word, administering the sacraments, conducting public worship and providing pastoral care. (7.31.02). Ministers of Word and Service live out a life of prophetic *diakonia* that gives particular attention to the suffering places in God's world, equip the baptized for ministry in God's world in ways that affirm the gifts of all people, and are grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation (7.61.02). Those called as ministers of Word and Service thus proclaim the word of God to the world and interpret the needs of the world to the church in ways that equip the baptized in their vocation of loving and serving the neighbor. Both rosters share in the responsibility to share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider work, identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the gospel, and to speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world (7.31.02 and 7.61.02).

Whether one serves as a minister of Word and Sacrament or a minister of Word and Service, ordination confirms the individual's internal sense of call, affirms the external call of the church, commits the individual to faithfully carry out their responsibilities, and affirms the commitment of the church to accompany and support these ministers as they live out their public ministry. In addition, the term ordination is easily recognizable by, and can strengthen our conversation and collaboration with, our global and ecumenical partners.

Those previously commissioned or consecrated already have been entranced into the ministry of Word and Service. Ordination, commissioning and consecration are all valid and appropriate "entrance rites" for those beginning public ministry in the church. Since those already on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service have already "entered" the roster, no further rite is necessary. In addition, all rostered deacons, both those already on the roster and those who will enter in the future, may rightly use the symbols recommended and deemed most appropriate.

Whatever their particular role or context – whether deeply engaged in proclamation and service in non-ecclesial contexts or serving in congregational or other "church" settings – every rostered deacon of the ELCA has a two-fold focus to serve the neighbor and to empower, equip and encourage the people of God for their daily baptismal vocation of service to the neighbor and care of creation. This ministry is understood to be "distinct from, alongside and in mutual complementarity with the ministries of pastors of the ELCA."⁷

The recommendation reflects a belief that a renewed diaconal ministry, designed to stand alongside the ministry of Word and Sacrament, will enhance this church's ability to better realize its mission today. "Such a diaconal ministry is biblically rooted, historically informed, ecumenically related and missionally driven."⁸

⁷ Gaffken, 2.

⁸ Duane Larson, "A Theology for One Lutheran Diaconate in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," 6. Word and Service Roster, http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Theology_One_Lutheran_Diaconate.pdf?_ga=2.215007123.525212187.1518102037-561441743.1518102037. Larson's essay contains a more expansive theological discussion of this topic.

Recommendation and Rationale regarding “Representation Principles”

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends that for all purposes related to the implementation of the “representational principles” of this church, neither ministers of Word and Sacrament nor Word and Service be included in the category of “laypersons.”

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group affirms the importance of allowing laypersons significant participation in the decision-making processes of this church, particularly as manifest by Constitution 5.01.g, which states that “at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be laypersons.” Because pastors and deacons are *rostered* ministers of this church, the Discernment Group recommends they be counted together. We encourage all entities within this church, including synods, to establish processes that will ensure that both ministers of Word and Service and ministers of Word and Sacrament are included in leadership positions appropriate to their contexts.

Recommendation and Rationale for Appropriate Symbols of the Roster

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends that the ordination rite for ministers of Word and Service include the presentation of a deacon’s stole and a cross.

Deacons in the ELCA serve in widely varying ways. They may serve in the ministries of a congregation, synod or churchwide agency in areas such as teaching, administration, music or service, or they may serve in social services agencies or other ministries in the world. Historically, however, whatever their specific ministry, the service of the deacon has been rooted in the worship of the church.

All Christians are fed through the Word and sacraments of the Christian assembly and are thus strengthened for their service in the world. For much of Christian history, deacons held important liturgical responsibilities in its worship life. The World Council of Church document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982) notes that in particular, “by struggling in Christ’s name with the myriad needs of societies and persons, deacons exemplify the interdependence of worship and service in the Church’s life”.⁹

Liturgical renewal in the 20th century brought a welcome re-emphasis on the participation of the laity in worship leadership, and laity now often assist in many congregations with the responsibilities formerly traditionally assigned to deacons. With the formation of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service, congregations may wish to consider inviting deacons to serve in some capacity alongside the laity in some form of worship leadership, providing yet another opportunity to highlight the intersections of church and world, while additionally lifting up and recognizing both ancient and contemporary practice. While deacons will live out their connection with the worshipping assembly in different ways, that relationship is essential to the understanding and witness of the deacon as public leader of the church.¹⁰

Because they are called to serve in two contexts, the Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends the use of two symbols.

Diaconal stoles are an ecumenically recognized symbol of the diaconate. The deacon’s stole, worn diagonally across an Alb, emphasizes the importance of connecting worship and service, and emphasizes that deacons are public ministers of the church.

Outside the assembly’s worship, the cross is an appropriate symbol and identifies the deacon as a presence of the servant Christ in the world. The Entrance Rite Discernment Group suggests that the appropriate ELCA staff facilitate a conversation among deacons about a unified cross design.

⁹ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1982), 27.

¹⁰ For a deeper consideration of the connection between the deacon and the worshipping community, see Lathrop.

Recommendations

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group recommends that the ELCA:

1. Establish the rite of ordination as the entrance rite for deacons entering the roster of Ministers of Word and Service;
2. Define the symbols of this ministry as a deacon's stole and a cross, both to be presented at the entrance rite;
3. Direct the worship staff of the ELCA to develop an appropriate rite and rubrics for the ordination of deacons;
4. Direct the worship staff of the ELCA to share information about the appropriate use of the deacon stole and to facilitate a conversation among deacons regarding a unified cross design;
5. Charge the Secretary to propose appropriate amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of this church that will ensure that at least 60 percent of the members of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards, and other organizational units shall be persons who are not on the rosters of Word and Service or Word and Sacrament;
6. Review the ELCA Candidacy process for appropriate modifications as necessary;
7. Charge the Secretary to consider and propose possible amendments to the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to accomplish its recommendations;
8. Call upon this church to increase opportunities for lifting up, recognizing, fostering and encouraging recognition of the ministers of Word and Service for the mission and witness of the church in the world;
9. Continue funding for transition events and ongoing leadership and formation events to ensure growth and understanding of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service;
10. Continue the preparation of appropriate and informative materials for the church's ongoing study; and
11. Refer the resulting amending/amended documents to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for approval as necessary.

Hopes and Dreams Going Forward

When introducing the proposal for a unified diaconal roster to the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, Bishop William Gafkjen noted that we were not commending to the church just a change in church governing documents, but

an "adaptive" change... rooted in what we believe and think about who we are and how we live and work together for the sake of God's mission in the world. It's about how we are equipped and called to live and serve together as God's cross-marked Spirit sealed believers, bearers and "embodiers" of good news, the best news, in a torn, tumultuous and terrified world.¹¹

The change in church rosters is a commitment to and hope for a renewed ministry of all the baptized, particularly as witnessed by diaconal lives. What then do we hope and dream will be the substantive changes to our faith communities?

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group envisions a future where ministers of Word and Service and ministers of Word and Sacrament come to be equally valued and important in the life of the church, sharing one ministry of the Gospel. As we mature into a church with a strengthened diaconal leadership and more ardent diaconal witness, we also hope for a realized collegiality among all serving for the sake of the gospel, rostered and not.

¹¹ William Gafkjen, "Presentation: Word and Service Roster Recommendation" (unpublished typescript, August 8, 2016), 2.

Consequently, this change... will touch and transform how we understand and live into the vocation of every baptized person to follow Jesus in the way of the cross to care for and serve the neighbor, every neighbor.¹²

We hope and dream for extended leadership, in new places and contexts, that is not only visible in communities of faith but also visible in the world.

[In 1993, the ELCA] adopted the document Together for Ministry. This fine document describes with clarity the missional movement of the church as church for the sake of the world. It lifts up the call of all the baptized to ministries of service in the world.... We made these decisions on the front edge of the unimaginable acceleration of the changes, cultural and otherwise, that have placed parts of the body of Christ like the ELCA in unfamiliar, even precarious, positions, wondering how God is calling us to be church in new and shifting landscapes.¹³

We thus hope for renewed congregational vitality that is understood to be rooted in an outward facing community.

We hope and dream that incorporating diaconal witness and leadership will deepen this church's understanding of diaconal commitment as an essential part of faith. Faith is a relationship that is not just confidence in God, often manifest by creeds and confessions, but also commitment to God's call expressed by a way of living.

This future will not just happen but will require this church to consciously grow into it. We pray this church will resolve to reflect on these matters and act on these dreams for the sake of the gospel witness of the church in the world.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

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