



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

November 15, 2018

TO: Bishops of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Vice presidents of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Secretaries of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Members of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Administrative Team of the churchwide organization
 Chief executive officers of separately incorporated ministries
 Seminary leaders

FROM: The Rev. Wm Chris Boerger,  secretary

SUBJECT: Report of Actions of the Church Council (November 8-11, 2018)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill., November 8-11, 2018. Here is a summary of particular actions along with background information.

1. ELECTIONS OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS	PAGE 1
2. "A DECLARATION OF INTER-RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT"	PAGE 2
3. RECOMMENDED ENTRANCE RITE AND SYMBOLS FOR DEACONS	PAGE 2
4. CHURCH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL	PAGE 3
5. WORKING GROUP TO DRAFT A DECLARATION TO PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT	PAGE 3
6. MISSION SUPPORT EXPERIMENT EXTENSION	PAGE 3
7. IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTAIN 2016 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS	PAGE 4
8. RECOMMENDED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS	PAGE 5
9. 2019 SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS APPROVED	PAGE 5
10. CHURCH COUNCIL DESIGNATED FUND APPROVED	PAGE 5
11. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT AND MEMBERSHIP	PAGE 6
12. MEMORIALS AND REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEES APPOINTED	PAGE 6
13. WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY BYLAWS REVISION	PAGE 7
14. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING SOCIAL CONCERNS REVISION	PAGE 7
15. ALCOHOL SOCIAL CRITERIA INVESTMENT SCREEN REVISION	PAGE 8
16. ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS AND VACANCIES	PAGE 8

1. ELECTIONS OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

In 2015, the Church Council re-elected the Rev. Stephen P. Bouman as executive director of what was then the Congregational and Synodical Mission (now Domestic Mission) unit and the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla as executive director of the Global Mission unit to a four-year renewable term that began Feb. 1, 2015.

Pastor Bouman had announced his intention to retire at the end of his current term. The Church Council paid tribute for his faithful service as the executive director of the Domestic Mission unit.

Church Council actions:

To elect the Rev. Philip C. Hirsch to a four-year renewable term as executive director of the Domestic Mission unit, beginning February 1, 2019.

To re-elect the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla to a four-year renewable term as executive director of the Global Mission unit, beginning February 1, 2019.

2. “A DECLARATION OF INTER-RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT”

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 conducted a review and comment period during the first six months of 2018.

The task force incorporated recommendations it received about the draft into a proposed policy statement.

Church Council action:

To recommend the following to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

To adopt the proposed policy statement, “A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment: A policy statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”

3. RECOMMENDED ENTRANCE RITE AND SYMBOLS FOR DEACONS

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 presented to the Conference of Bishops and Church Council for possible transmission to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude the report and recommendations of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group and thank the discernment group members for their faithful service;

To define the symbols of this ministry as a deacon’s stole and a cross, both to be presented at the entrance rite, and to request the Office of the Presiding Bishop worship staff to share information about the appropriate use of the deacon stole and to facilitate a conversation among deacons regarding a unified cross design;

To encourage synods, congregations and the churchwide organization to increase opportunities for lifting up, recognizing, fostering and encouraging recognition of deacons for the mission and witness of the church in the world;

To continue Domestic Mission unit funding for transition events and ongoing leadership and formation events to ensure growth and understanding of the roster of Ministers of Word and Service; and

To approve the implementation of the following actions, subject to the approval of the governing documents establishing the rite of ordination as the entrance rite for deacons entering the roster of Ministers of Word and Service:

- request the Office of the Presiding Bishop worship staff to develop an appropriate rite and rubrics for the ordination of deacons;**

- **request the Domestic Mission unit, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization offices and units, to review the ELCA candidacy process for appropriate modifications as necessary;**
- **continue, through the appropriate churchwide organization office or unit in consultation with ecumenical partners, the preparation of appropriate and informative materials for the ongoing study of how this church lives into its diaconal vocation.**

4. CHURCH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL

As an outcome of its retreat in April 2017, the Church Council appointed an *ad hoc* committee to assist the council in developing a governance policy manual for the council. The council discussed the role of the Church Council in the governance of this church, and a writing team drafted Part 1 of the manual, The Roles and Responsibilities of the Church Council, with preface and appendix. The council also discussed topics related to how the council can be best equipped to fulfill its roles and responsibilities. The writing team will prepare Part 2 of the manual to address those issues for the council's consideration in April 2019.

Church Council action:

**To approve the Preface and Part 1 of the ELCA Church Council Governance Policy Manual; and
To authorize the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, to make any necessary corrections for accuracy.**

5. WORKING GROUP TO DRAFT A DECLARATION TO PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA16.05.25] to refer Motion B to the Church Council. Motion B directed the Church Council to form a task force for the purpose of developing a comprehensive set of strategies to equip congregations and synods to work toward becoming a more authentically diverse church.

In addition to calling for a revision of the "Multicultural Mission Strategy" and "Recommitment to a Strategy for the Proclamation of the Gospel" (see item #7 below), Church Council members discussed the possibility of this church adopting a Declaration to People of African Descent.

Church Council action:

To form a working group composed of five members, of whom two shall be members of the Church Council, to draft a Declaration to People of African Descent;

To direct this working group to develop in this document a confession of this church's bondage to the sins of slavery, racism, discrimination, white supremacy, and quietism, and begin the work of repentance, which this church confesses to be "the chief topic of Christian teaching" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession XXIV.46);

To direct this working group to bring a draft of this declaration to the April 2019 meeting of the Church Council in preparation for its proposal to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly;

To direct the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint members to this working group at its January meeting; and

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide administrative and budgetary support for this work, including one in-person meeting if deemed necessary by the working group.

6. MISSION SUPPORT EXPERIMENT EXTENSION

At its April 2015 meeting, the Church Council adopted a number of resolutions recommended by the presiding bishop's think tank on mission funding. One of the resolutions affirmed [CC15.04.14] a three-year experiment, beginning in fiscal year 2016, and involved five synods "to form a 'learning community' to explore whether retaining the new and

renewing ELCA grants for ministries and the total compensation for the director for evangelical mission will produce an increase in mission support and more effective management and oversight for the sake of mission.” The five synods participating in the experiment are the Nebraska, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, New England, Lower Susquehanna and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., synods. The three-year experiment was scheduled to end on January 31, 2019.

At its Fall 2018 meeting, the Conference of Bishops received reports and recommendations regarding the experiment and encouraged [CB18.10.23] the Church Council to extend the five-synod experiment through January 31, 2021, and to request a common report from the synods and churchwide staff involved in conducting the experiment.

Church Council action:

To extend the mission support experiment with the five synods (Nebraska Synod, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, New England Synod, Lower Susquehanna Synod and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod) through January 31, 2021; and

To request the five synod leaders and appropriate churchwide staff bring a report to the Church Council by the November 2019 meeting that:

- **Clearly states the impact that the experiment(s) have had on mission support through the first three years of the experiment;**
- **Clearly states the impact that the experiment(s) have had on management and oversight of grants for congregation vitality and the position of director for evangelical mission;**
- **Clearly states how synodical cultures have been changed by greater nimbleness in overall decision making, articulating the various strategies implemented by the experiment synods in achieving this goal;**
- **Addresses the broader implications if the specifics of this experiment were to become permanent for these five synods; and**
- **Addresses the broader implications if the specifics of this experiment were to be adopted by other synods.**

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF CERTAIN 2016 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA16.05.25] to refer Motion B to the Church Council. Motion B directed the Church Council to form a task force for the purpose of developing a comprehensive set of strategies to equip congregations and synods to work toward becoming a more authentically diverse church.

In response to memorials from 19 synods, the 2016 Churchwide Assembly also voted [CA16.02.04] to repudiate explicitly and clearly the European-derived doctrine of discovery, offering “a statement of repentance and reconciliation to native nations in this country for damage done in the name of Christianity.” The action directed the churchwide organization to take several specific steps, including “an appropriate national ceremony of repentance and reconciliation with tribal leaders.”

Church Council actions:

To receive the progress report from the Domestic Mission unit on the implementation of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA (Motion B);

To affirm the creation of a small writing team within the task force for the purpose of revising “Multicultural Mission Strategy” and “Recommitment to a Strategy for the Proclamation of the Gospel”; and

To anticipate receiving these documents by the Spring 2019 meeting of the Church Council.

To receive the report from the Domestic Mission unit on the progress for implementing the repudiation of the doctrine of discovery;

To commend the ongoing work of the American Indian Alaska Native Ministries;

To encourage the presiding bishop to acknowledge the work needed to build relationships and honor commitments established in CA16.02.04; and

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

8. RECOMMENDED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS FOR 2019 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY CONSIDERATION

Provision 22.11. provides that the ELCA constitution may be amended by the following procedure:

- a. The Church Council may propose an amendment, with an official notice to be sent to the synods at least six months prior to the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly. The adoption of such an amendment shall require a two-thirds vote of the members of the next regular meeting of the Churchwide Assembly present and voting.

Although the processes for adopting bylaw amendments and continuing resolutions at a Churchwide Assembly do not require similar notice, the practice of the Office of the Secretary has been to seek to provide as complete a set as possible of proposed governing document amendments at the fall meeting of the Church Council in the year before the Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council action:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

To adopt, en bloc, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, the amendments to the Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make appropriate changes in the Constitution for Synods and the Model Constitution for Congregations congruent with the ELCA constitution as amended.

9. 2019 SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS APPROVED

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA16.03.08]:

- To approve a 2019 current fund income proposal of \$64,151,175; and
- To approve a 2019 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$25,000,000; and
- To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

Church Council action:

- To approve a 2019 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$67,164,676; and***
- To approve a 2019 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$21,500,000.***

10. CHURCH COUNCIL DESIGNATED FUND APPROVED

Based on income projections, the churchwide organization will experience a budget gap for fiscal year 2019 between estimated current fund income and expenses. The Budget and Finance Committee heard from staff of the churchwide organization about plans for navigating the implications of this gap, in alignment with strategic directions from Called Forward Together in Christ and with goals and priorities of Future Directions 2025.

Church Council action:

To approve a Church Council Designated Fund in the range of \$1,500,000 to \$2,500,000 representing both planned operating underspending and excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2018 for release in fiscal year 2019 for the budgeted operations of the ELCA churchwide organization.

11. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT AND MEMBERSHIP

ELCA continuing resolution 14.41.E15. states:

An Audit Committee—composed of five to seven members appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and approved by the Church Council for two-year, renewable terms—shall assist the Budget and Finance Committee and the Church Council in fulfilling oversight of the churchwide organization’s accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems, and audit functions, consistent with its responsibilities as specified in the charter recommended by the Audit Committee, reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee, and approved by the Church Council.

Church Council actions:

To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing its review of the audited financial statements, management letter, and response of management for the churchwide organization’s fiscal year ended January 31, 2018.

To approve the re-appointment of Mr. Richard D. Wehrheim III to the ELCA Audit Committee for a two-year term expiring in November 2020.

12. MEMBERS OF THE MEMORIALS AND REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEES APPOINTED

Bylaw 12.51.02. provides that a Memorials Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review memorials from synod assemblies and make appropriate recommendations for Churchwide Assembly action.

Bylaw 12.51.01. states, “A Reference and Counsel Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review all proposed changes or additions to the constitution and bylaws and other items submitted that are not germane to items contained in the stated agenda of the Churchwide Assembly.”

Church Council action:

To appoint the members of the Memorials Committee of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly:

- 1. Ms. Cheryl Chatman [3G] (*co-chair*)**
- 2. Pr. Dena Gable [8C]**
- 3. Mr. Reid Christopherson [3C] (*co-chair*)**
- 4. Mr. Joseph Nolte [5D]**
- 5. Bp. Tracie Bartholomew [7A]**
- 6. Bp. Abraham Allende [6E]**
- 7. Ms. Emily Brown [1B]**
- 8. Mr. Peter Metcalf [1F]**
- 9. Ms. Erin La Haye [2D]**
- 10. Mr. Thomas Askegaard [4C]**
- 11. Mr. Robert Rivera [4F]**
- 12. Mr. Clyde Walter [5A]**
- 13. Mr. Larry Johnson [6C]**
- 14. Ms. Elizabeth Burgess [7B]**
- 15. Ms. Diana Haywood [9B]; and**

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Memorials Committee of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly as needed.

To appoint the members of the Reference and Counsel Committee of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly:

- 1. Ms. Ingrid Stafford [5A]**
- 2. Ms. Emma Wagner [8F] (*co-chair*)**
- 3. Mr. Clarence Smith [3H]**

4. Mr. Jim Jennings [7E] (*co-chair*)
5. Bp. Jon Anderson [3F]
6. Bp. Suzanne Dillahunt [6F]
7. Pr. Julia Seymour [1A]
8. Ms. Cheyenne Boykin [2B]
9. Ms. Erin Power [2E]
10. Ms. Stephanie Varnum [4D]
11. Mr. Connor Ashley [6B]
12. Pr. Moacir Weirich [7A]
13. Ms. Vivian Dawson-Hamer [8A]
14. Mr. Andrew More [9C]
15. Mr. Imran Siddiqui [9D]; and

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Reference and Counsel Committee of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly as needed.

13. WARTBURG THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY BYLAWS REVISION

Bylaw 8.21.02. states, “Amendments to the governing documents of each separately incorporated seminary and each seminary cluster shall be submitted, upon recommendation of the appropriate unit of the churchwide organization, to the Church Council for approval. . . .”

Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, submitted proposed amendments to its bylaws and Articles of Incorporation through the Domestic Mission unit in consultation with the Office of the Secretary.

Church Council action:

To approve the revised Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation of Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.

14. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING SOCIAL CONCERNS REVISION

The 1997 Churchwide Assembly voted [CA97.5.21]:

To affirm the adoption by the Church Council of the document, “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns,” as a revision of the former document, “Social Statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—Principles and Procedures,” which was adopted by the first Churchwide Assembly on August 28, 1989; and

To authorize the Church Council to make appropriate adjustments in these policies and procedures as further experience would indicate.

“Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns” was last updated in 2006. The Addressing Social Concerns Review Committee urged the 2013 Churchwide Assembly that some of the committee’s key recommendations be worked into this church’s official protocol document. This 2018 revision was intended to help the ELCA better utilize its polity, to improve this church’s system in response to lived experience, and to anticipate changing needs and demands.

Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Policies and Procedures Revision Consulting Group the proposed revisions to “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns”;

To adopt the revised Policies and Procedures on behalf of the ELCA, per CA97.5.21; and

To authorize the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, to make necessary corrections whenever relevant changes occur to constitutional numbering and wording or churchwide office titles.

15. ALCOHOL SOCIAL CRITERIA INVESTMENT SCREEN REVISION

This church is assisted in its decision-making through social criteria investment screens that guide this church in evaluating the types of investments it wishes to hold.

Church Council action:

To approve the revised Alcohol Social Criteria Investment Screen.

16. ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS AND VACANCIES

The Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill terms on boards of separately incorporated ministries, seminaries and social ministry organizations. According to bylaw 20.21.13., the council elects members of the Committee of Hearing Officers. Pursuant to provision 14.15., the Church Council also fills vacancies on boards and committees of the churchwide organization.

Church Council actions:

To elect to the board of trustees of the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — Portico Benefit Services — for a term expiring in 2019: Ms. Angela M. Dejene;

To re-elect to the board of directors of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. for a second four-year term expiring in 2023: The Rev. Galen F. Hora;

To elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc., for a three-year term expiring in 2021: The Rev. Michael L. Cooper-White and Ms. Michelle Thompson;

To elect to the board of directors of Luther Seminary for a four-year term expiring in 2022: The Rev. Sean L. Forde, Mr. Robert Nesse and the Rev. Donald Samuels;

To nominate to the advisory board of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary as part of California Lutheran University for a six-year term expiring in 2024: The Rev. J. Mateo Chavez and the Rev. James E. Johnson;

To nominate to the advisory council of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University for a three-year term expiring in 2021: The Rev. Kimberly C. Hester;

To elect to the board of trustees of United Lutheran Seminary for a three-year term expiring in 2021: Ms. Karen E. Arnold, Bishop Tracie L. Bartholomew, the Rev. Peter D. Boehringer, the Rev. Theodore M. Cogar, the Rev. Sara E. Lilja, the Rev. Constance L. Mentzer and the Rev. Craig A. Miller;

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a two-year term expiring in 2020: Mr. Anthony W. Goodman;

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary for a six-year term expiring in 2024: The Rev. Michael D. Carlson, the Rev. Andrea F. DeGroot-Nesdahl and the Rev. Nelson C. Meyer; and

To elect to the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — ELCA Foundation — for a six-year term expiring in 2024: Mr. John Quello.

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to fill vacancies on the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America between now and the next meeting of the Church Council.

To elect as members of the Committee of Hearing Officers for one six-year term expiring in November 2024: Ms. Marjorie B. Ellis, Mr. George C. Watson and the Rev. Martin D. Wells.