



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

October 2018

Dear friends,

Grace and peace to you.

We have a very full agenda planned for our upcoming Church Council meeting. There are significant conversations scheduled for our time together.

Here are key items to note for the upcoming meeting:

- Consideration of Preface and Part 1 of a Governance Policy Manual
- Consideration of [Proposed Draft Inter-Religious Policy Statement](#)
- Consideration of [proposed amendments](#) to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* (please read Secretary Boerger's [rationale](#) for the amendments)
- Recommendation of the Program and Services Committee on the [entrance rite](#) for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service and related actions
- Engagement on the report of the Theological Education Advisory Committee
- Recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee on Synod Mission Support Experiments
- Update on 2019 and Beyond planning
- Continued conversation on Future Directions 2025, specifically around sustainability
- Discussion on Part 2: Governance Policy manual

On Friday evening, we will engage in a “Cleansing and Contemplative Conversation on Racial Justice.” This conversation will be led by Pr. Stephen Bouman and Ms. Judith Roberts and include the ethnic specific ministry association presidents.

If you have particular questions about any of the matters above, I encourage you to reach out to Jodi Slattery, [Jodi.Slattery@elca.org](mailto:Jodi.Slattery@elca.org). I'm certain she will be happy to help you. Joseph Schmidt is restructuring the MyELCA portal for Church Council so you can easily reference what is required reading, discussion-based reading and information sharing. We hope you enjoy the new arrangement.

Your servant leadership on Church Council is a blessing for this whole church. God calls each of us to greater, deeper and unapologetic participation in this church. I give thanks to God for your faithful witness to the gospel.

God's peace,

Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop

## **Report from the Vice President**

*If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. - John 15:7-10*

It is good to be with you all again. For my opening comments, I am using this passage from John because it centers me on what I should be concerned about as a Christian as I go about my private and public activities. The struggle I have at times is acknowledging the intersection of my daily activities and faith in Christ. I believe that I do my best work when I feel the spirit of Christ abiding in me as I discern difficult or controversial decisions that I make in my job or interact with people in other business or social environments. I ask for understanding and wisdom every day, and I believe what Jesus has said is true, that it will be done for me every time.

In October, I terminated two employees and reprimanded two employees. One of the terminated employees did not effectively monitor a subordinate supervisor who stole \$158,000 from our city. The other employee falsified the label that described the contents of a money bag to conceal the actual amount of money in the bag. This employee had been recently promoted to another position with increased responsibilities and was well-liked. I have faced decisions like this in the past, and they don't get any easier. Nevertheless, I rely on the spirit of Christ that abides in me through my faith in him to make the right decisions that affect the personal and work lives of the people under my authority. So how is abiding in God's love reflected in my actions that may have a negative impact on those under my employment control? I wrestle with this issue every day and with every decision that I make, and trust that the Holy Spirit guides me safely to a place that I continue to be claimed by his grace. Each Sunday during worship, I ask for God's forgiveness where I may have made past mistakes and experience a sense of renewal that propels me in to the next week of work, confident as ever.

In this report, I will provide updates regarding the ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force, the Joint Leadership Table (Executive Committees of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops, and Churchwide organization Administrative Team), synod assembly cycle, ELCA Youth Gathering, Conference of Bishops meeting, Synod Vice Presidents Gathering and random thoughts.

I have served on the ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force since it was created after the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. The purpose of the task force is to create an official policy statement following the 1991 Churchwide Assembly mandate from the ecumenical policy statement that would reflect the distinct responsibility for the church to enter in conversations and reach deeper understanding with people of other faiths. I served on the task force with highly qualified rostered ministers, academic professionals, non-profit professionals and subject matter experts. Bishop Patricia Lull served as chair and Ms. Kathryn Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment, provided professional staff direction and support. The policy statement that you will be asked to consider and recommend for 2019 Churchwide Assembly approval has been widely vetted and ready for your action. I believe that I shared a common voice among our task force members that the document should reflect a level of readability that will encourage its use church-wide. When you read it, I hope that you agree with me that it will help our church strengthen its presence in the inter-religious world we live in every day.

The Joint Leadership Table has been reviewing a draft paper, "Toward a Faithful and Multidimensional Sustainability." If you recall from our 2017 Church Council retreat, council members raised concerns about long-term ELCA sustainability in a variety of context and expressed a desire to further discuss this topic. Bishop Eaton tasked consultant Lyla Rogan to draft a paper with the assistance

of a small sounding board that included Bishop Eaton, Wyvetta Bullock, Christina Jackson-Skelton, Bishops Tracie Bartholomew and Bill Gafkjen, and myself. The Conference of Bishops discussed the most recent draft of the paper at their last meeting and provided input. The Church Council will discuss the draft during our November meeting. A document like this forces an organization like the ELCA to make sure that the expressions of this church share some common ideas about what sustainability means when we discuss it and make decisions that may affect the whole church.

Turning to the 2018 synod assembly cycle, this year was just as exciting as last year's visits and I did them all in May. They included the Rocky Mountain, Pacifica and Nebraska Synod Assemblies. I witnessed three synods that have different context driven by geography, culture and a host of other factors, but all shared the same faith identity as the ELCA as church together. I supervised two bishop elections and was pleased to see the assemblies show their support for their current bishops by re-electing them (Rocky Mountain and Nebraska) on the first ballot. With two synod assembly cycles under my belt, I have found the time I spend with the respective Synod Councils to be very meaningful and valuable. I did not meet with the Pacifica Synod Council because of my travel schedule and consider that a mistake. I will make sure that I meet with the synod councils before the synod assemblies. The fellowship and sharing during our conversations helped me to be a better and more representative ELCA Vice President. The synod assembly visits give me hope and joy about how our church is doing ministry across this country of ours in the midst of a very divisive period in our country's history. I applaud all the synods for the work they do on behalf of the ELCA.

I was blessed to attend my first ever ELCA Youth Gathering this year in Houston, Texas, and I was completely blown away by the more than 30,000 ELCA youth, bishops, volunteers, chaperones, staff and guests who attended. I also attend the pre-conference Multicultural Youth Leadership Event and tAble event. These two events specifically empower our multicultural youth of color and youth with disabilities to claim their story as part of God's story as they become transformational leaders in the church. These events are some of the most important and strategic things we do as church together.

I also attended the fall Conference of Bishops meeting along with Pastors William Flippin and Chad Huebner as Church Council guests. Six new bishops were welcomed and acknowledged as the ranks of female bishops grow with each election cycle. Most notable was the election of the first and second African American female bishops in ELCA history. Bishop Eaton conducted an innovative discussion activity that focused on several case studies that required discussion groups to identify a proposed solution to a problem and metrics to show its effectiveness. The Conference of Bishops discussed the proposed draft Inter-Religious Policy Statement and recommended it for council action. The conference discussed the Draft Church Council Governance Policy Manual, received an update from the Entrance Rite Discernment Group and a draft version of Vision and Expectations. The Vision and Expectations document requires more study and work before it is referred to the Church Council for review.

In mid-October, I attended the annual Synod Vice Presidents Gathering held at the Lutheran Center. 38 of our 65 synod vice presidents convened for a two-day period around an agenda that included a newcomer's orientation for 11 new vice presidents, 21 upcoming bishop elections, the Women and Justice Social Statement, AMMPARO and African Descent presentations, proposed constitutional amendments and the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Dwelling in the Word was an integral part of their time together. I find my time with these synod lay leaders to be very meaningful and unique in their perspective on what it means to be church together.

Finally, a few closing thoughts. I believe the Joint Leadership Table collaboration is the way forward to achieve the Future Directions 2025 goals. I believe this collaboration improves with good governance. A Church Council that fully understands its role and responsibilities and relationship to the other

expressions and separately incorporated ministries of this church makes a better partner to all. I also believe that the leadership tables must tackle the most difficult challenges and problems that we face in the church. Church Council decision making must meet the expectations of rostered ministers, lay leaders and congregation members. God is calling the ELCA to do his mission in the world. I believe that we are all committed to getting it done in Christ's name.

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## Report from the Secretary

### Churchwide Assembly

The Office of the Secretary is increasing its focus on the preparations for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. We will gather in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from August 5-10, 2019, under the theme “We are Church.” We are currently receiving reports from synods on those elected as voting members at their synod assemblies. Actual registration for voting members will begin next spring. We will have several communications with the voting members early in 2019.

After two “paperless” assemblies, we are now fully into electronic distribution of materials before and during the assembly. We will again be using the Guidebook app for this function. Several synod assemblies have also used Guidebook, so our comfort level with this application has increased.

We will also be including you, the members of the Church Council, in the early communications for assembly members. One of the proposed amendments to the constitution would make you voting members of the assembly if you were not elected as a voting member by a synod. The agenda is being planned so that this amendment would be acted upon early in the assembly. If it is adopted, you would serve as voting members of this assembly.

### Assembly Business

You will be acting on two important statements that would come before the assembly. The proposed Women and Justice Social Statement will be before you in April. Your action would place this statement before the assembly. The proposed draft of the Declaration of Our Inter-Religious Commitment policy statement will also be acted upon by this council in advance of potential adoption by the assembly. Both of these statements are significant actions by this church.

I try to remind synod bishops, vice presidents and secretaries of the importance of the synod assembly’s responsibilities when it comes to memorials to the Churchwide Assembly and resolutions to the Church Council. It is my hope that assemblies and councils will factor in the costs for these memorials and resolutions as they are considered. As we look at which expression of the church should do specific work on behalf of the whole church, it is important that the memorials to the Churchwide Assembly not be written with the assumption that the Churchwide Assembly can direct synods or congregations to do certain work. Synod resolutions committees or reference and counsel committees can perform a very helpful service in preparing synod assemblies by presenting memorials that are clear and appropriate for action by the Churchwide Assembly.

There will also be elections at this assembly. The election of the presiding bishop will use our pattern of the ecclesiastical ballot. There will be no process for identifying possible nominees in advance of the assembly. It was very clear in the surveying of synod bishops and vice presidents in 2014 that the process we have used in the past is the one we want to continue to use in the future. As we say in the election of synod bishops, remember that this is a call process and should be accompanied with prayer and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

The same survey did request that some form of identification process be used in the election of the secretary. At the April 2018 Church Council meeting, you amended **19.01.A18**. to read:

*In a year when the vice president or secretary shall be elected, the voting members 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 Office of the Secretary will communicate with the voting members of the assembly who have been entered into our system in January 2019. This communication will ask them to identify up to three persons they would like to see considered for the Office of Secretary. The Office of the Secretary will send biographical information forms to all of those identified. Those returned to us by May 1, 2019, will be distributed to the members of the assembly. Returning the form does not place a name on the ballot, and it does not commit the individual to keeping their name on the ballot should they receive votes on the first ballot. Only those persons who return the forms will be identified prior to the assembly. We will not release the names of all those identified in this process, only those who complete the form. Those who do not return the form may still receive votes at the assembly and will be asked to complete the forms at that time, if they are one of the final seven nominees. We will be discussing and clearly communicating when these names will be removed from Guidebook once the assembly begins. You will be making that decision as you act upon the proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure at the April 2019 Church Council meeting.

### **2017 Annual Reports**

We see the trends that have been reported in previous years continue again this year. Baptized membership of this church has been reported as 3,459,157. This represents a decline of 2.9 percent from the last report. That translates to 104,685 fewer baptized members of this church. This trend of a 2 percent to 3 percent decline has been relatively constant since the formation of this church. We also saw the net loss of 85 congregations last year. We now have 9,167 congregations. Of these congregations, 7,079 turned in an annual report. That represents a 78.3 percent return rate. That is a 1.4 percent increase over the previous year. I would still like to see the return rate at 80 percent but am pleased that we have turned the trend line upwards this year. Two synods had 100 percent of the congregations reporting. Northern Great Lakes is at 100 percent for the third year in a row. Alaska also reached the 100 percent mark this year. Thank you to Bishops Finegan and Wickstrom and their staffs for making this happen. Regions 4 and 5 both had average return rates over 80 percent.

The significant trends that we see show that congregations continue to pay down their debt. Congregations of this church had debt totaling \$1,228,165,017. That is down \$37.7 million from the previous year. 70.1 percent of the reporting congregations have no debt. Total regular giving by members, even with fewer members, was up \$3.6 million or .2 percent. Total regular giving was \$1,758,832,857. It is also interesting to note that earned income was up 14.4 percent to \$203,555,752. Grant income from any source was up 16.6 percent to \$31,139,872. Both earned income and grants would suggest that congregations are finding new sources of funding or additional sources of funding for their work.

Total benevolence still is close to 8.6 percent of congregation expenses. Mission support is 3.9 percent of congregation expenses. Other synod and churchwide benevolences (camps, seminaries, social service agencies, campus ministries, global missions and direct support) account for 4.7 percent of congregation expenses. Current operating expenses account for 74.3 percent of spending by congregations.

This confirms what we have seen in past years. While membership declines, faithful members are increasing their giving to the congregation. Congregations can continue to function as they have in the past even with the loss of members. As we talk about congregational vitality, we hear that the sense of urgency is not what we might expect in light of the membership trends. It may be that congregations are feeling some sense of security by lowering their debt and maintaining sufficient budget strength to continue as they have in the past.

With our commitment to reflecting the diversity of the communities in which we serve, we made little progress. 93.5 percent of our baptized members are reported as being white/Caucasian. This is a slight decrease from earlier reports. The fact is we lost members in all ethnic categories. We just lost more white/Caucasian members when compared to other ethnic groups. This change does not reflect that we are doing a better job in reaching out to the other ethnic communities. This may change in future reports

when we start including information from Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities (SAWC). I am asking that these communities be required to file annual reports starting next year. Some of these SAWCs are ethnic specific ministries. It will be interesting to see what their inclusion in this report will do to our totals. This also shows that we have a lot of work to do in reaching beyond our traditional ethnic communities. We need to work at reflecting the diversity of our neighborhood.

I am including the congregational vitality questions in comparison to last year's numbers. This is the third year these questions have appeared in the report.

1 (Weak), 5 (Strong)	2015	2016	2017
Worship Nurtures Faith	4.5	4.5	4.5
Clear Sense of Mission	3.8	3.8	3.8
Excitement about Future	3.8	3.8	3.8
Positive Force in Community	4.5	4.1	4.1
Ready to Try Something New	3.5	3.5	3.5
Works for Social Justice/Advocacy	3.2	3.3	3.2
Helps Deepen Relationship w/ God	4.1	4.1	4.1
Building Member Relationships	3.9	3.9	3.9
Incorporating Newcomers	3.6	3.7	3.7
Seeking/Using Member Gifts	3.6	3.6	3.7
Equipping Members to Share Faith	3.2	3.2	3.3
Addressing Social Concerns	4	4	4.1
Managing Disagreements	3.6	3.6	3.7
Interacting with Local Community	3.9	3.9	4.0
Live Out Faith in Daily Lives	3.8	3.9	4.0

The numbers are little changed over the years. It remains interesting that the high mark is worship that nourishes faith, and equipping members to share faith is one of the lowest numbers. The difference between working for social justice/advocacy verses addressing social concerns is also interesting.

### **Constitutional Amendments**

You have heard from me over the summer that the potential amendments to the constitution and the rationale for these amendments are posted on My.ELCA.org under the [Legal and Constitutional Review](#) Committee section. I hope that you have had opportunity to review these proposals. We still have some additional recommendations that will come from the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. As I said in the rationale, many of these amendments have come from a review of the existing documents that was done by our former general counsel, Phil Harris.

The Entrance Rite Discernment Group's recommendations are incorporated in these amendments. We will still need to craft a transition plan into the document. My recommendation is that we allow deacons, who have been elected to positions as laypersons, to complete their current term but that they would not be eligible to be re-elected as a layperson. I have received requests that deacons be eligible for election as synod vice presidents in the future. As I have shared this with the Conference of Bishops and those Synod Vice Presidents that were recently in Chicago, I am getting little support for this. That is currently not a proposed amendment.

As of the writing of this report, I am still working on language for what we have called the "Representational Principle" in **5.01.f.** and **5.01.g.** How we include people who do not identify as male or female into the workings of this church is an important question. We also are holding the reasons for the

adoption of the principle before us. This work of “word-smithing” will continue in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. If you have any thoughts or suggestions, please notify me or a member of the committee.

### **Conclusion**

This meeting of the Church Council is a bit bittersweet for the Office of the Secretary. Frank Imhoff will be in his usual chair for the last time taking minutes of this meeting. Frank will be retiring from over 30 years of service to the churchwide organization in mid-November. Frank’s attention to detail and his concern for accuracy is reflected in the minutes of this council, the Conference of Bishops and the Churchwide Assembly. We are pleased that Marit Johnson will be following Frank in this role. Marit began her work on November 1, 2018. Please introduce yourselves to her, as you also express your thanks to Frank for his good and faithful service to this church. Sue Rothmeyer is Frank’s immediate supervisor, so she is heavily involved in this transition. Her steady advice and counsel on issues related to the constitutions and the work of this office is vital to our work.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the leadership that the Management Team of the Office of the Secretary continues to provide the council and this church. Mary Beth Nowak’s events team is responsible for your travel, housing and meals during this meeting. While this team is gearing to provide the logistics for the assembly, they continue to support the council’s work. Tom Cunniff continues to guide the legal work of this church. As the bishops looked at what they expect from the churchwide organization, legal support was high on the list. These individuals reflect the quality of the staff of this office. I am grateful for their work and their counsel.

“We are Church” will be the theme of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. This is an important reminder in the midst of all of the work we will be doing in the coming days. The head of the church is Jesus. This is Christ’s church. We have the stewardship of this expression of Christ’s church for this time in history. I pray the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we make the decisions that need to be made in governing this church. Thanks be to God.



# ELCA Churchwide Organization Financial Overview

Church Council  
November 11, 2018

results through September 30, 2018  
*(preliminary and unaudited)*



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# Financial Highlights

## Revenue/Expense

- Current fund revenue: *ahead of budget and prior year*
- Current fund expenses: *spending at 93.3% of budget*
- ▼ Mission support: *slightly unfavorable to budget, but optimistic to meet goal, continued year-over-year decline*
- Campaign for the ELCA: *raised 83.2% of total campaign goal*
- ELCA World Hunger: *overall revenue slightly below budget but ahead of prior year, strong direct giving, benefit from Youth Gathering and match approximately \$1M*
- Investment returns: *positive absolute returns, mixed excess returns*

● Green = on target

▼ Yellow = monitor

◆ Red = requires action



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# Current Fund Results



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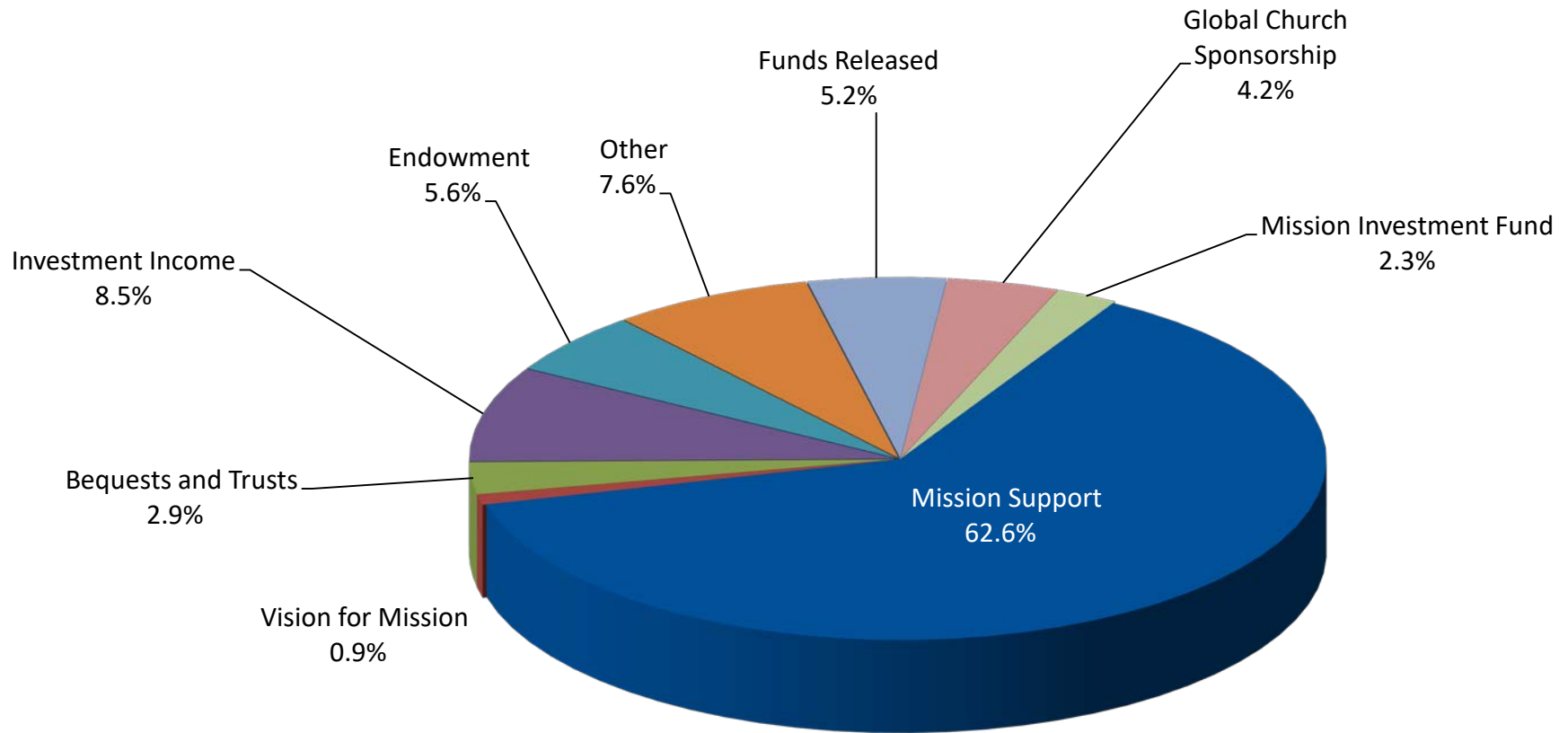
# 2018 Current Fund Summary

(In Thousands)

	Actuals	Variances From:	
		Budget	Prior Year
<b>Revenue</b>			
Mission Support	\$26,710	(\$168)	(\$930)
Other	13,700	1,667	2,464
Total Revenue	<u>\$40,410</u>	<u>\$1,500</u>	<u>\$1,534</u>
<b>Des/Res Funds Released</b>	\$2,232	(\$130)	(\$670)
<b>Expenses</b>	<u>\$42,867</u>	<u>\$3,093</u>	<u>(\$941)</u>
<b>Net Operating</b>	<u>(\$225)</u>	<u>\$4,462</u>	<u>(\$76)</u>



# 2018 Current Fund Revenue and Support \$42.6M



# 2018 Current Fund Expenses

UNITS/OFFICES	ACTUALS	VARIANCE	SPENDING RATE
Domestic Mission	\$15,786,968	\$1,787,848	89.83%
Global Mission	\$8,699,607	\$463,975	94.94%
Mission Advancement	\$3,189,223	\$51,770	98.40%
Office of the Presiding Bishop	\$3,864,582	\$151,097	96.24%
Office of the Treasurer	\$6,006,071	\$278,541	95.57%
Office of the Secretary	\$2,738,451	\$77,520	97.25%
General Treasury	\$2,582,410	\$281,800	90.16%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$42,867,312</b>	<b>\$3,092,550</b>	<b>93.27%</b>



# ELCA World Hunger



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# 2018 ELCA World Hunger Summary

(In Thousands)

	Actuals	Variances From:	
		Budget	Prior Year
<b>Beginning Balance</b>	<b>\$3,188</b>		
<b>Revenue</b>			
Direct Giving	\$8,772	(\$20)	\$430
Endowments & Donor Requested Pmts.	486	101	23
Bequests, Miscellaneous	1,369	(428)	345
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$10,627</b>	<b>(\$347)</b>	<b>\$798</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$12,207</b>	<b>\$348</b>	<b>(\$368)</b>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>(\$1,580)</b>	<b>\$1</b>	<b>\$430</b>
<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$1,608</b>		







# *Always Being Made New:* The Campaign for the ELCA



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# Campaign for the ELCA Financial Summary 2018 (In Thousands)

	Revenue	Revenue & Commitments	Campaign Goal	Percent of Goal
Where Needed Most	\$5,989	\$6,898	\$1,250	551.8%
Congregations	2,561	2,689	16,000	16.8%
Leadership	14,615	16,348	19,000	86.0%
Global Church	25,321	27,128	31,750	85.4%
Hunger and Poverty	110,618	111,655	130,000	85.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$159,104</b>	<b>\$164,718</b>	<b>\$198,000</b>	<b>83.2%</b>

*\* Total revenue and commitments excludes planned gifts*



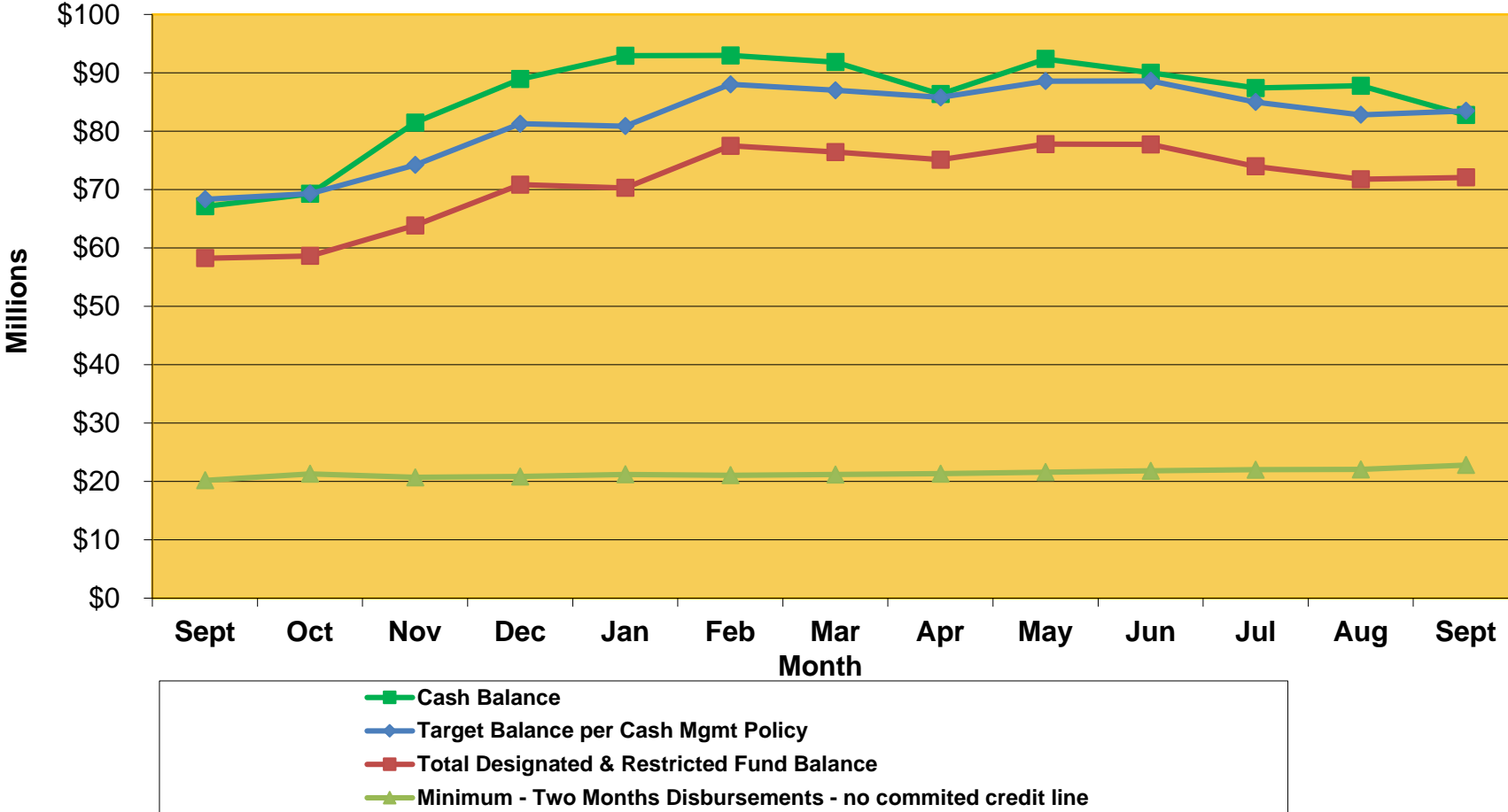
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# ELCA Asset Management



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# Cash Management Policy Comparison vs. Actual Sept 2017 through Sept 2018



# Questions/Comments



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**Report from the Treasurer**

The churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had total revenue and support of \$42.6 million for the eight-month period ending September 30, 2018. This was \$0.2 million less than expenses of \$42.9 million. Net operating results were also favorable to the year-to-date budget by \$4.5 million. Some of the favorability versus budget is related to the differences in the timing of budgeted revenue and expenses versus actual. We are currently forecasting a surplus of between \$1.5 - \$2.5 million for the fiscal year due to operational expense underspending and net revenue over expenses.

Operating revenue totaled \$40.4 million for the eight-month period compared with \$38.9 million for the same period last year. In addition, \$2.2 million in support was released from restriction or designation during the period, resulting in \$42.6 million in total revenue and support. Total expenses related to the current operating fund were \$42.9 million which is \$3.1 million below the authorized unit spending plans. The report which details the actual spending by unit versus the authorized spending by unit for the period is part of the Current Operating Results exhibit.

Income from congregations through synods in the form of Mission Support for the eight months was \$26.7 million. This represents a \$0.9 million decline from the prior year and is unfavorable to the budget by \$0.2 million on a year-to-date basis. The full year Mission Support budget for 2018 of \$43.5 million is \$1.0 million or 2.2 percent lower than the amount received in fiscal 2017. At this time, we are optimistic that we will meet the annual budget.

Other unrestricted and temporarily restricted revenue and support available for the budgeted operations of the churchwide organization amounted to \$13.7 million, compared with \$11.2 million in the previous year and \$12.0 million per the year-to-date budget. Key components of the change as compared to the current year budget are as follows:

	Actual Incr in \$000s	Budget	YTD Variance
Investment Income	\$3,641	\$1,084	\$2,557
Bequests & Trusts	\$1,223	\$2,034	\$(811)
Other (includes general gifts and service level agreements)	\$7,836	\$7,915	\$(79)

Consistent with the prior year, the Mission Investment Fund has provided grant support of \$1.0 million to the churchwide organization.

Total contributions to ELCA World Hunger for the eight months were \$10.6 million. This was a \$0.3 million shortfall to budget, but a \$0.8 million increase over the prior year. YTD direct giving to World Hunger continues to remain very strong at \$8.8 million. This includes giving and a significant donor match totaling \$1.1 million for the Global Farm Challenge at the ELCA Youth Gathering this past summer in Houston. ELCA members and partners have contributed \$3.3 million for Lutheran Disaster Response in the eight-month period ended September 30, 2018. Primary areas of support were \$0.8 million to support the ELCA's response to the various hurricanes and nearly \$2.2 million in undesignated gifts to assist where the need is greatest.

*Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* has raised \$165 million in revenue and commitments to date. This amount represents 83.2 percent of the total campaign goal of \$198 million. Campaign to date response continues to be strongest in the areas of Fund for Leaders, Global Church - International Leaders: Women and Missionaries/Young Adults in Global Mission and World Hunger. The end date of the campaign has been extended to June 30, 2019. In addition, the campaign has generated an additional \$40 million in planned gifts.

## Report from the Conference of Bishops

The fall 2018 meeting of the Conference of Bishops (COB) gathered under the theme, “While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near” (Luke 24:15). This report consists primarily of highlights of this meeting and recommendations from the Conference of Bishops to the Church Council.

We were glad to welcome and celebrate six new bishops among us, all women and three women of color. As a side note, there will be 21 synod bishop elections in 2019; at least 10 of these will result in new bishops due to retirements, term limits, etc.

The first two days of the meeting were radically different from past practice. We spent most of those two days working with senior churchwide staff to address the five goals from [Future Directions 2025](#). This type of focused work together, churchwide staff and bishops, is unprecedented. Folks, both members of the COB and churchwide staff, self-selected into groups to focus on one of the sub-goals of each larger goal. Each small group focused on what could be done in this area, which expression of the church is best positioned to be responsible for doing it, and how might we hold one another accountable along the way. This generative work resulted in a great deal of concrete initial planning that is now being collated and summarized for sharing and follow-up.

The following resolutions were adopted regarding the **proposed draft inter-religious policy statement**:

- “The ELCA Conference of Bishops encourages the ELCA Church Council to recommend the proposed draft inter-religious policy statement for adoption by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.”
- Recommendation to the task force regarding the text of the draft policy statement: “In line 486, change “seek repentance from God” to “offer repentance to God”.
- Recommendation to the task force regarding the text of the draft policy statement: Strike from lines 373 and 374: “No one is excluded from ‘our neighbor.’ Jesus makes this point in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).” (vote: 25-24, Bp Patricia Lull abstained)

The COB discussed both the sustainability paper and the draft governance policy manual that will be considered at this meeting of the Church Council. Both documents were well-received. I assume that the folks who led those discussions will report what they heard to the Church Council and the task groups that are working with the documents.

We also participated in a hearing for the draft social statement on Women and Justice and received updates on the recommendation from the Word and Service Entrance Rite Discernment Group. Judith Roberts, program director for racial justice ministries, led the Conference in continuing discussion of and accountability for synod implementation of Continuing Resolution 5.01.B16, adopted by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

Bishop Ann Svennungsen (Minneapolis Area Synod) was elected to a four-year term as a member of the **COB Executive Committee**, beginning January 1, 2019. We give thanks for the ministry of Bishop Shelley Wickstrom (Alaska Synod), who chose not to be available for another term in that role.

The following resolution, presented by the COB’s DM: Leadership Committee, was adopted regarding the proposed replacement document for **Vision and Expectations**, tentatively referred to as “Faithful and Trustworthy Servants”:

“As the ELCA Conference of Bishops, we propose:

1. That we postpone a recommendation to the Church Council regarding the document “Faithful and Trustworthy Servants” until the DM Leadership Committee reviews, revises and resubmits it to the Conference of Bishops;
2. That we acknowledge that this means continued reliance on *Vision and Expectations* and related documents until its replacement is drafted;
3. That we recognize that the Constitution requires development of a document that articulates the expectations of conduct for members of and candidates for the ministry rosters of the ELCA;

4. That we urge that this document express aspirations for exemplary behavior as well as definitions of unacceptable behavior;
5. That special attention be given to inclusive language and descriptions of life situations and relationships by inviting voices from diverse perspectives; and
6. That a timeline be adopted that reflects a sense of urgency.”

The following resolution was adopted regarding the **Mission Support Experiment**:

“The Conference of Bishops encourages the Church Council to:

1. Extend the five-synod experiment in mission and mission support for two more years, through January 31, 2021;
2. Not expand the experiment to include more synods through the end of the experiment;
3. Request that experiment synod leaders and appropriate churchwide staff work together to come to agreement about the experiment’s purposes, goals, definitions, language, and learnings and to publish a joint report.”

The following resolution, from the COB Middle East Ready Bench, regarding **Augusta Victoria Hospital** and five other hospitals in Jerusalem was adopted unanimously:

“To affirm the letter crafted by the Middle East Ready Bench as a statement from the COB regarding the situation of funding with Augusta Victoria Hospital and the six east Jerusalem hospitals and urge our Presiding Bishop and COB Chair to share this letter and work together with our Episcopal and Roman Catholic counterparts to address the situation.”

The statement adopted by the COB is attached to this report and was distributed via ELCA Communications and other means the afternoon of Tuesday, October 2, 2018. Within days, a number of bishops reported that they had contacted legislators and shared the statement with them. The cover letter for this statement signed by Bishop Eaton and I was delivered to our ecumenical counterparts by Thursday of that week.

Along the way, while we were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near.

Grateful for your partnership in the gospel.





**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

### **ELCA Conference of Bishops statement on East Jerusalem hospitals**

In early September, members of the Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) were saddened and dismayed to hear reports that the U.S. government was planning to discontinue financial assistance to Augusta Victoria Hospital and five other East Jerusalem hospitals.

We appreciate and strongly affirm ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's Sept. 6 letter to Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, calling for the "release of \$25 million of U.S. FY 2017 funding that will help to ensure that there is no interruption in the treatment of Palestinians at the East Jerusalem hospitals, especially the most vulnerable cancer and kidney patients referred to Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) from Gaza and the West Bank."

She noted that, as an institution owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), "Augusta Victoria Hospital is able to operate because of the support of LWF member churches, like the ELCA, and long-standing partnerships with countries like the United States. In the last decade the U.S. government, through USAID, has invested nearly \$10 million in AVH to bolster its capacity as a cancer center. In addition, the U.S. government has provided over many years tens of millions of dollars in aid to help cover the costs of the cancer patients and others referred to AVH and the other East Jerusalem hospitals."

Eaton stressed the urgency of U.S. government action, saying: "The delay in the disbursement of the 2017 funding for the East Jerusalem hospitals is contributing to an acute and severe cash-flow crisis for AVH and the other hospitals," and that immediate release of the funds is necessary "so that AVH can make payments to pharmaceutical suppliers of cancer medications, pay staff and avoid any interruption in the treatment of patients." In the past several weeks, neither the LWF nor the ELCA have received any official announcement about the status of this funding and, therefore, we appeal to President Donald Trump to instruct the U.S. Department of State to release this vital funding so these patients will receive the treatment and care they need.

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#### **About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:**

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with more than 3.5 million members in more than 9,300 worshipping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. Known as the church of "God's work. Our hands," the ELCA emphasizes the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, unity among Christians and service in the world. The ELCA's roots are in the writings of the German church reformer Martin Luther.

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## Report from the Executive for Administration

### Strategic Planning

#### FUTURE DIRECTIONS 2025

- Goal One: A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith of all people.  
Goal Two: A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.  
Goal Three: An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.  
Goal Four: A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.  
Goal Five: A well-governed, connected and sustainable church.

### 2018-2019 Churchwide Organization Operational Plan

The churchwide organization continues to pursue objectives to implement Future Directions 2025 goals. The Planning and Evaluation Committee of the Church Council will engage in a discussion about what to present on a dashboard (see appendix) for displaying progress toward the goals and what format the Church Council would like for the Spring Annual Report. A major portion of the Planning and Evaluation Committee agenda will consider progress and updates related to goal three and the work of the Authentic Diversity Task Force.

### 2019 and Beyond

For the past several months, the Administrative Team has consulted with the other members of the Joint Leadership Table (Executive Committees of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops), the Separately Incorporated Ministries, churchwide staff; and surveyed the full Church Council and Conference of Bishops; and engaged in a meeting of churchwide senior leaders and the Conference of Bishops to prepare a churchwide organizational design for 2020. The design is still in process and will be completed early 2019.

### Budget

The Administrative Team has worked with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Treasurer to prepare the 2019 revised budget and spending authorization for this Church Council meeting. Highlights include a change in the medical benefits plan from Gold+ to Silver+; a slight decrease in Mission Support from 2018; a proposal for a two percent pool for compensation increases; and movement of our ELCA Campaign staff into the current fund budget at the end of the campaign. Please see the [treasurer's report](#) for more details.

### Staff Demographics

The total number of churchwide organization employees as of November 1, 2018 were 363. The distribution of staff was 58 percent female, 42 percent male; 36 percent persons of color; 30 percent rostered ministers. Sixty-six percent of the staff is Chicago-based. There are 278 regular full-time positions, 12 regular part-time and 73 term contracts. In addition, there are 200 missionaries in 41 countries.

The Separately Incorporated Ministries under the umbrella of the Churchwide Organization personnel policies are: The ELCA Foundation, Mission Investment Fund, Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Men in Mission. Their staffing demographics as of November 1, 2018 were:

The ELCA Foundation: Total number of employees: 29. The distribution of staff was 62 percent female, 38 percent male; 28 percent persons of color. One percent rostered ministers, and 52 percent are Chicago-based.

Mission Investment Fund: The total number of employees was 54. The distribution of the staff was 65 percent female; 39 percent persons of color; 11 percent rostered ministers.

Women of the ELCA: The total number of employees was 11. The distribution of the staff was 100 percent female; 55 percent persons of color; eight percent rostered ministers.

Lutheran Men in Mission: The total number of employees was 2. The distribution of the staff was: 2 white males; 1 rostered minister; 1 Chicago-based, 1 deployed.

The Human Resources web site can be found at [www.elca.org/humanresources](http://www.elca.org/humanresources); information regarding positions in Global Mission can be found at [www.elca.org/globalserve](http://www.elca.org/globalserve).

## **Planning, Research and Evaluation**

### *Resourceful Servants:*

More than 400 rostered ministers are a part of the first cohort of the Resourceful Servants Savings matching programs (one for emergency savings and one for retirement), and free financial counseling with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota. By the end of 2018, participants will collectively have contributed \$180,000 to several hundred new savings accounts with the ELCA Federal Credit Union and will have increased their retirement contributions by more than \$125,000. The contributions made by rostered ministers are being matched by gifts from the Mission Investment Fund, the employees and trustees of Portico Benefit Services and the Lilly Endowment. Nearly 200 additional rostered ministers will participate in the second cohort of the Savings Matching programs in 2019.

At the invitation of Lilly Endowment, Inc, we have submitted a one million dollar grant proposal to scale up this program to reach more people. We should know the results of that proposal by the end of 2018.

### *Plans for 2019 include:*

- Hiring an administrator to manage grants distributed through Churchwide Organization (November 2018)
- Providing demographic and congregational data for the synods that will be electing bishops in 2019
- Assisting with elections at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly
- Helping churchwide staff utilize new project management system for tracking progress on the 2018-2019 Churchwide Organization Operational Plan
- Fostering collaborative relationships across units as we learn together new ways to live into the Future Directions 2025 goals and priority areas

## **Theological Education Advisory Committee**

You will receive a report from the Theological Education Advisory Committee presented by chair, John Lohrmann and council member, Emma Wagner. The report highlights an update on Theological Education Pilots and Asset Mapping efforts; enterprise metrics; seminary sustainability efforts; and current critical questions.

At the October 2018 Executive Committee of the Church Council meeting, the committee acted to appoint the following members of the Theological Education Advisory Committee:

- The Rev. James Nieman, renewable one-year term
- Emma Wagner, renewable one-year term
- Paul Pribbenow, renewable one-year term
- Bishop Jessica Crist, one-year term
- Randall Foster, two-year term
- The Rev. Kathryn Kleinhans, two-year term

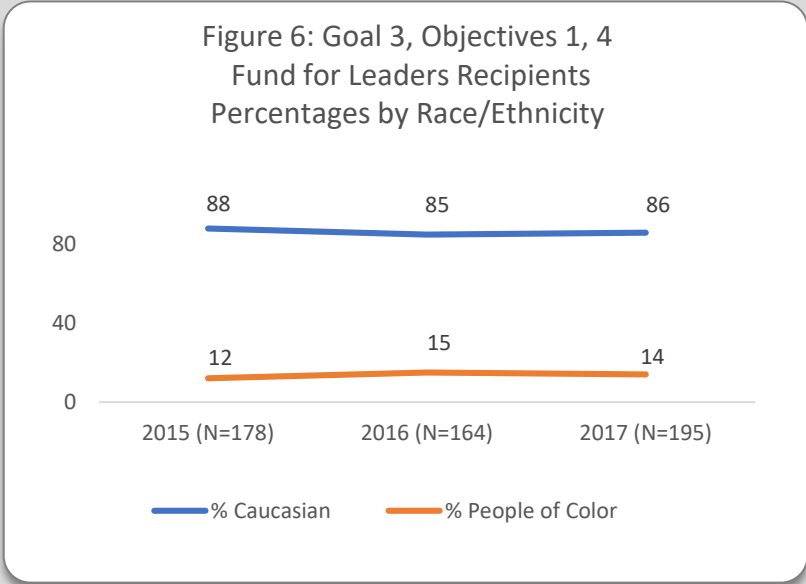
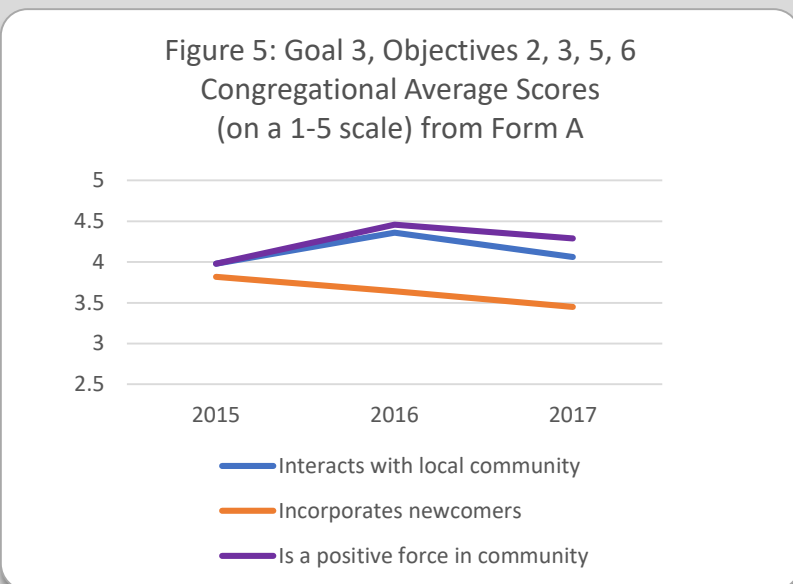
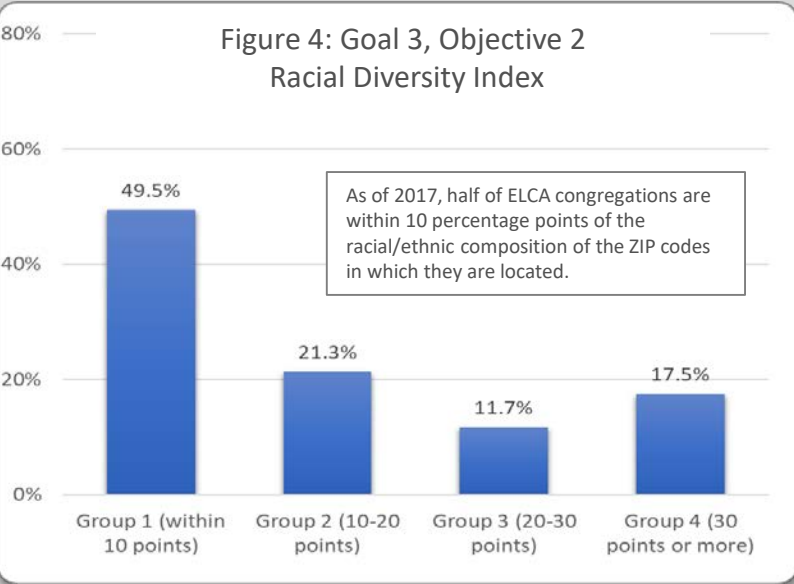
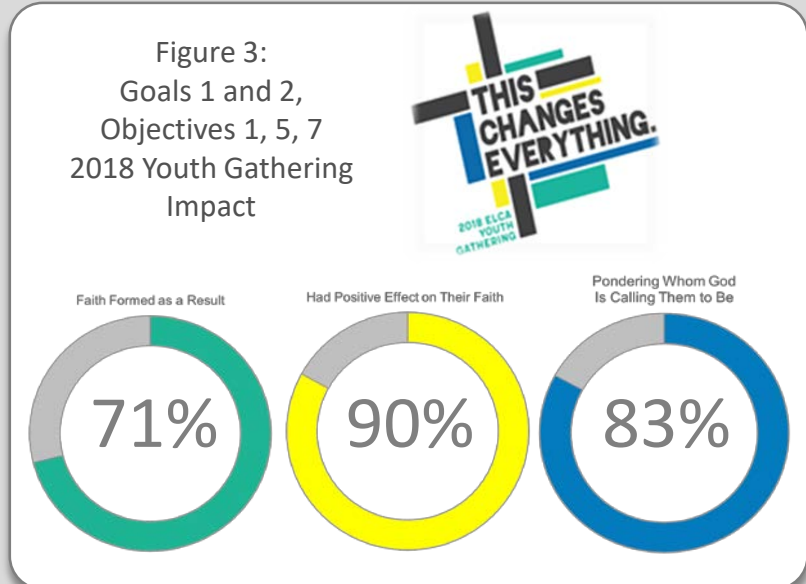
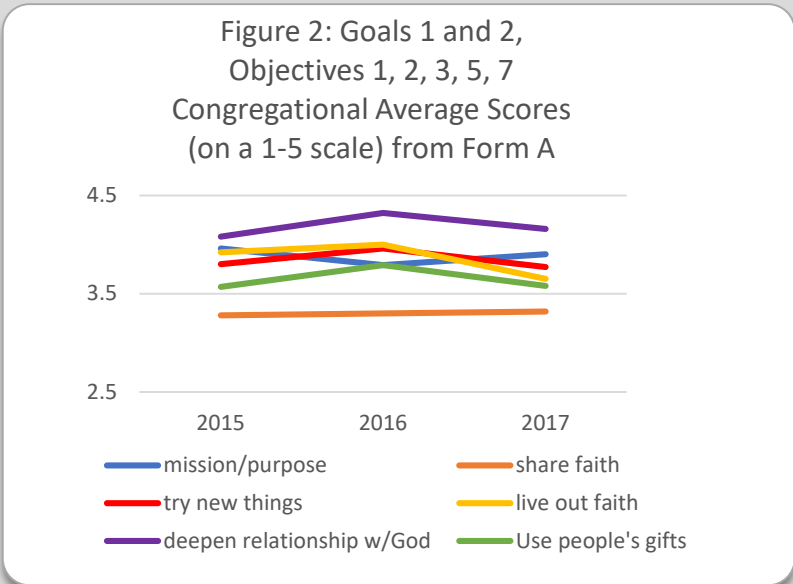




Figure 7: Goal 3, Objectives 1, 3, 4

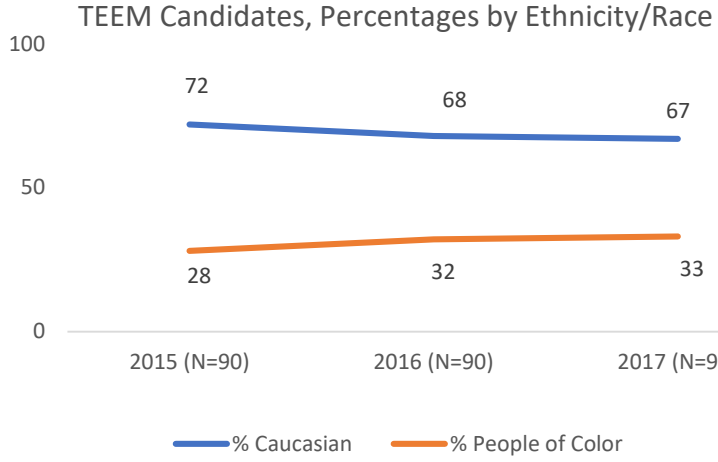


Figure 8: Goal 3, Objectives 1, 4

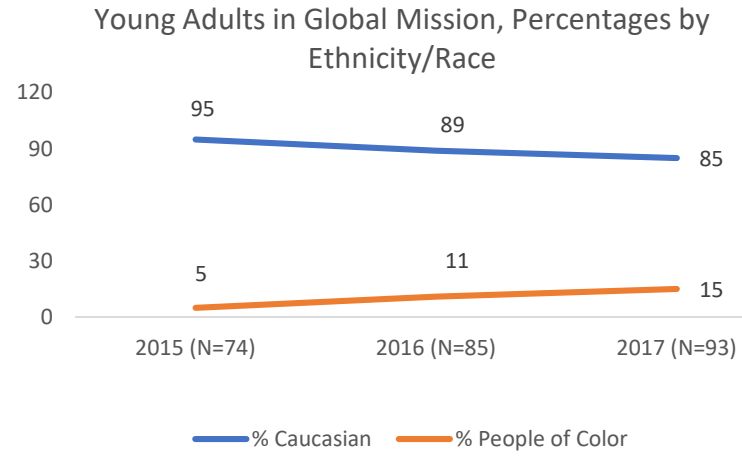


Figure 9: Goal 4, Objectives 2, 4, 5  
ELCA World Hunger

**4,000+** participated in a Virtual Reality experience in ELCA World Hunger's Global Farm Challenge at the 2018 Youth Gathering

**\$179,495** was collected on site at the Global Farm Challenge

Figure 10: Goal 4, Objectives 2, 4, 5

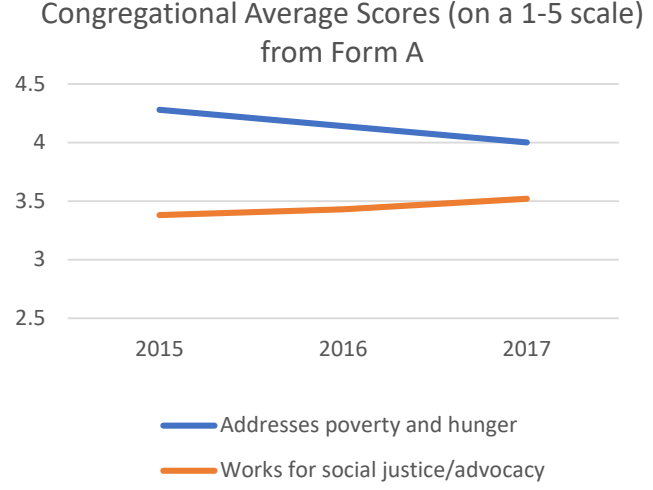


Figure 11: Goal 5, Objective 2

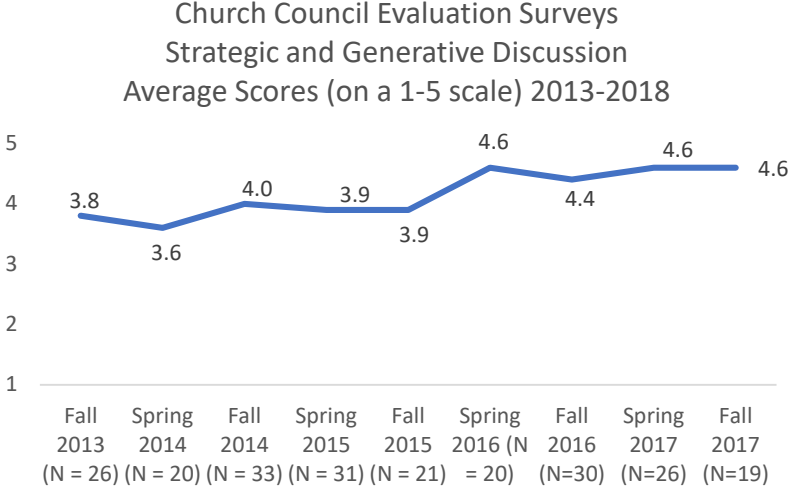
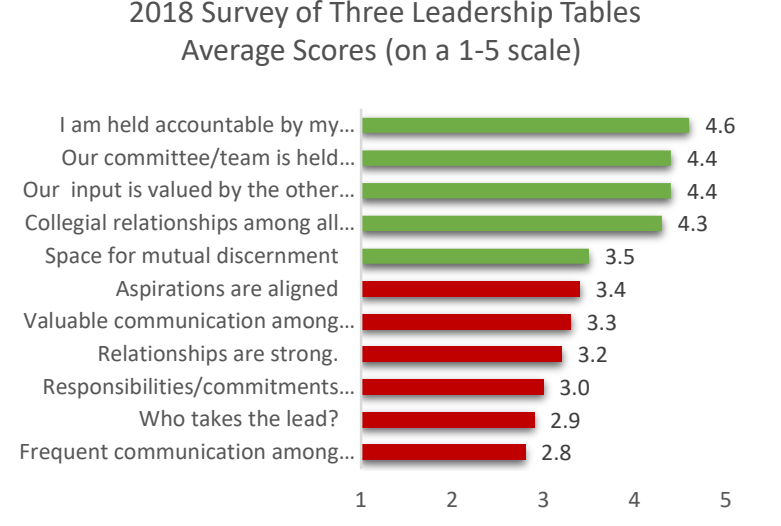


Figure 12: Goal 5, Objective 1



Page 1 Notes: This sampling of measures will serve as baselines against which future progress will be compared. Figure 1: compares 2008 survey of lay leaders in congregations with 2018 survey of congregational council members. Figure 2: average scores from congregations reporting over past 3 years; we hope to see those numbers increase. Figure 3: Youth Gathering evaluation survey respondents. Figure 4: shows progress on the goal of congregations being within 10 percentage points of the racial/ethnic composition of their surrounding communities. Figure 5: See Figure 2 note. Figure 6: recipients of Fund for Leaders scholarships by race/ethnicity. We hope to see an increase in People of Color over time, as an indicator of increasing diversity.

Page 2 Notes: Figures 7 and 8: we hope to see continued increase among People of Color in these programs. Figure 10: 3-year average scores across all reporting congregations. We hope to see these increase over time. Figure 11: averages on a question asked of Church Council members each year about whether they believe that strategic and generative issues are addressed in their meetings. We hope to see improvement over time. Figure 12: Members of CC EC, CoB EC, and CW Admin Team were asked in 2018 to agree or disagree (5 = strongly agree) on 11 statements about the relationships, accountability and communication among these three leadership tables. Average scores shown. Scores of 4 or above indicate that respondents generally agree with the statement. We would also hope to see improvement on these over time, if we are meeting the objective.

**Publishing House of the ELCA (1517 Media)**

*Submitted by Tim Blevins, President and CEO*

The [ELCA's Strategic Directions 2025](#) priorities continue to be refined and enriched, and we have chosen once again to use the goals identified there to frame recent work of [1517 Media](#) and our four publishing units, [Augsburg Fortress](#), [Beaming Books](#), [Fortress Press](#), and [Sparkhouse](#).

**Goal 1: A thriving church** — spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people.

*Priorities: Church identity; Renew and strengthen evangelism; Church leaders; Renewal and formation of congregations and worship communities; Ecumenical dialogues and relationships.*

We've intensified the development of resources aimed at the "formation, education, and continuing development of rostered ministers and lay leaders." This year, partnering with Luther Seminary and the editorial board of *Word & World*, we've launched [Word & World Books](#). Its goal is to invigorate leaders and communities in their mission to proclaim God's *Word* to the *World* God loves. Fall 2018 titles include Rollie Martinson's [Elders Rising: The Promise and Peril of Aging](#), joining the first book in this series, [Future Faith: Ten Challenges Reshaping Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#).

Church leaders deepening their caring ministries as well as individuals facing life's challenges can look for help to a just-launched series, [Living with Hope](#). Among the first titles are [Waiting for Good News: Living with Chronic and Serious Illness](#), [Dignity and Grace: Wisdom for Caregivers and Those Living with Dementia](#), and [Nurturing Hope: Christian Pastoral Care in the 21st Century](#).

Ministry to those approaching key life passages—preparing for marriage or planning a funeral—will be supported by two new compact guides in the Worship Matters series: [Love and Faithfulness: A Marriage Planning Handbook](#) and [Remembering God's Promises: A Funeral Planning Handbook](#). And musicians who surround life passages with song now have a rich new repository of possibilities in [Music Sourcebook for Life Passages: Healing, Funeral, Marriage](#), another extension of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship family.

Those called to preach and lead worship now have a concise new guide with wise encouragement from Gordon Lathrop, [Proclaiming the Living Word: A Handbook for Preachers](#), alongside the annually refreshed helps in [Sundays and Seasons Preaching](#) and the Preaching Module in [sundaysandseasons.com](#).

**Goal 2: An equipping church** — equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.  
*Priorities: Baptismal vocation, Faith formation and practice, Youth and young adults in mission.*

In 2018, we've been especially excited to expand our partnership with [Daniel Erlander](#), whose books about Lutheran identity and practice have been beloved for decades and are now available exclusively through Augsburg Fortress. In addition, new resources extending these works are emerging, beginning with his Holy Communion resource [A Place for You](#), which now includes an Interactive Edition, a Sourcebook, Animated Videos, and a Board Book.

Our comprehensive array of [faith formation resources](#) for all ages now includes [Frolic Preschool Sunday School](#). Together with Dawn Rundman's new book [Little Steps, Big Faith: How Early Childhood Development Can Help You Grow Your Child's Faith](#), parents and educators have a supportive and accessible suite of resources to understand and help our very youngest children as they experience God. [Spark All Kids](#) and [Whirl All Kids](#) are new models of these popular curricula for churches with multi-age or single room classrooms for kids 5-12.

In 2018, we also launched [T.B.D. \(Think. Believe. Do.\)](#), a series to help youth discover what they believe and why. The first three high-impact, four-week topical studies are focused on [Prayer – Sin – and Mission](#). Youth leaders will find fresh insights in [Liberating Youth from Adolescence](#) in the *Word & World* series.

**Goal 3: An inviting, welcoming church** — reflecting and embracing the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.

*Priorities: An outwardly focused church; Theological and cultural competence of leaders; Church leadership profile; Addressing discrimination and oppression.*

We recently reshaped the priorities of two of our imprints — [Beaming Books](#) and [Fortress Press](#) — to express our commitment to being an “outwardly focused” publishing ministry of the church. Beaming Books is reaching directly to parents and others who want their children to thrive emotionally, socially, and spiritually, with a mix of high-quality religious and values-based children’s books. The newest titles include [May God Bless You and Keep You](#); [Lift the Flap Bible Stories for Young Children](#); [Adriana’s Angels](#) (available in English and Spanish); and [Mine: A Counting Book about Sharing](#).

More and more, Fortress Press is reaching directly to inquisitive readers and leaders beyond the academic setting. Recent titles include [Fat and Faithful: Learning to Love Our Bodies, Our Neighbors, Our Selves](#); [Surviving the Bible](#); and [The Homebrewed Christianity Guide to the Old Testament](#).

The popular book fair program, now titled [Community Book Fairs](#), continues to give churches and schools a way to get these and other books into people’s hands, with free books to display and keep, discounts on purchases, and free shipping.

Beyond new product development, we’ve committed 1517 Media to this key initiative: “Design and implement intercultural competency learning experiences” for all employees in 2019 and beyond.

**Goal 4: A visible church** — visible and deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace, and reconciliation in communities and around the world.

*Priorities: Poverty and hunger; Response to disasters and humanitarian crises; ELCA-related social ministries; Advocacy and action on economic justice, racial justice, gender justice, climate justice.*

Here are a few examples of how our publishing efforts continue to expand in these areas. A new “Brief Introduction” series invites readers to encounter [Islam](#), [Judaism](#), and [Hinduism](#). [Revives My Soul Again: The Spirituality of Martin Luther King Jr.](#) explores the fruitful intersection of personal spirituality and public activism. Walter Brueggeman’s [Tenacious Solidarity: Biblical Provocations on Race, Religion, Climate, and the Economy](#) grounds in Scripture the voice of a visible church. Jacqueline Bussie’s [Love without Limits: Jesus’ Radical Vision for Love without Exceptions](#) offers practical solutions for those who yearn to love across division in troubled times.

Also in 2018, we’ve begun [Dialogues](#), a new adult small group series intended to spark healthy dialogue around difficult topics facing our society today. The first release addresses [The Refugee Crisis](#).

**Goal 5: A well-governed, connected, sustainable church**

*Priorities: Leadership in governance; Church structures; Resources for mission; Communication.*

We strive to work with partners in ministry all across the ELCA in this arena, seeking communication and collaboration in areas such as lay and professional education, resourcing congregations, and pursuing future directions for this church and its mission for the sake of the world.

Thank you for your interest in and continuing support of your ministry of publishing! If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact Tim Blevins at [blevinst@1517.media](mailto:blevinst@1517.media).

**DIGEST OF BOARD ACTIONS**

**Unit:** 1517 Media, Publishing House of the ELCA

**Submitted by:** Tim Blevins, President and CEO

**Date of Board Meeting:** April 17, 2018

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval.)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

Voted to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2017 Board of Trustees meeting in open session. (PH.18.04.01)

**Executive Session actions**

Voted to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2017 Board of Trustees meeting in executive session. (PH/ES.18.04.01)

Voted to receive the 2017 financial statements audit report as submitted.  
(PH/ES.18.04.02)

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None



**Unit:** 1517 Media, Publishing House of the ELCA

**Submitted by:** Tim Blevins, President and CEO

**Date of Board Meeting:** June 8-9, 2018

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval.)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

Voted that the Board of Trustees of 1517 Media, the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, expresses deep appreciation and extends warm thanks to Beth Lewis for her sixteen years of faithful service as the principal leader of this important ministry of the ELCA. (PH.18.06.02)

Voted to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2018 Board of Trustees meeting in open session. (PH.18.06.03)

Voted that the Board of Trustees of 1517 Media, the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, elect Joel Peterson to serve as a member of the Audit committee. (PH.18.06.04)

**Executive Session actions**

Voted that the 1517 Media operating budget be approved as presented. (PH/ES.18.06.03)

Voted to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2018 Board of Trustees meeting in executive session. (PH/ES.18.06.04)

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None

## **Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA**

*Submitted by: Eva M. Roby, President and CEO*

### **Financial Update**

2018 has been a year of modest growth for the Mission Investment Fund (MIF). This has also been an exciting year as we move ahead with forward-looking initiatives, including developing our new Strategic Plan for 2019-2021 and expanding our staff. Taking these steps positions us for continued growth and expanded capacity to deliver on our mission.

Loans outstanding increased to \$551.9 million at August 31, 2018 from \$539.1 million at December 31, 2017. The number of MIF loans rose to 903 from 888 at year-end 2017. Investment obligations increased to \$509.6 million at August 31, 2018 from \$506 million at year-end 2017.

Total assets rose to \$721 million at August 31, 2018 from \$715.7 million at December 31, 2017. Total net assets, or equity, increased to \$206.4 million from \$203.9 million at year-end. As a result, our capital ratio inched up slightly to 28.63 percent.

### **Key Initiatives and Partnerships**

As the ELCA gives thoughtful consideration to the concepts of vitality and sustainability for its own future, MIF is collaborating as a strategic partner on these issues.

Close cooperation continues with our sister ministry, the ELCA Federal Credit Union. We have formalized the credit union's role as MIF's retail front for customers transacting in-person business at our Chicago location, and we are moving closer to realizing our vision of aligning with the credit union to offer a full array of financial services to all expressions of the ELCA.

MIF is also deepening our relationships with the church extension funds of our full-communion partners. Our new operational arrangement with the Episcopal Church Building Fund is progressing well—offering increased financing capability to Episcopal congregations and helping to build MIF's loan portfolio. We are collaborating with our ecumenical partners on a variety of initiatives, including supporting one another on advisory services. In November, MIF will host a meeting of the CEOs of these key partner funds to continue our discussion on shared issues.

As MIF has grown in recent years, we have been framing an organizational structure that will support ongoing growth. We have filled key management positions this year, including Vice President of Administration as well as positions in Regulatory Compliance, Organizational Development and Enterprise Business Systems.

### **Looking Ahead**

We are about to unroll MIF's new Strategic Plan for 2019-2021—a plan that continues to focus on growth and financial strength and stability—as well as supporting church vitality and sustainability. We are optimistic about our continued growth in this strong economy as well as our ability to serve the church as a trusted financial partner.

**DIGEST OF BOARD ACTIONS**

**Unit:** Mission Investment Fund

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval.)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

None

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

None

## **Portico Benefit Services**

*Submitted by: The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, President and CEO*

This summary from Portico Benefit Services provides a brief overview of several topics, including: rate and plan changes for 2019, a proposed review of the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits, and a new whole-person well-being tool.

### **2019 Rate and Plan Changes**

In August, Portico announced adjustments to contribution rates and ELCA Health Plan changes for 2019. On average, these adjustments produced the lowest contribution rate increase in five years. Being good stewards of plan dollars means encouraging wellness (to improve plan member quality of life and prevent claims when possible), carefully managing claims related to chronic conditions (through innovative, cost-effective support and benefits like Omada and Livongo for Diabetes), and finding ways to share costs equitably (such as adjusting coverage tier ratios to better reflect the reality of claims).

### **Philosophy of Benefits Review**

Every two years Portico's board of trustees reviews the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits to ensure it continues to reflect the needs and aims of the church. After discussion at its February 2018 meeting, in August the board recommended forming an ad-hoc working group from across the community to revisit the Philosophy of Benefits in light of questions raised about affordability, sustainability, and the responsibility we bear for one another as church together. As this group comes together this fall, we hope for participation from the Conference of Bishops, Portico, ELCA Church Council, and the churchwide organization. One possible outcome of this review may be a recommendation that the ELCA Church Council reconsider its endorsement of the Gold+ health benefit option to give congregations/employers and members greater latitude to choose what works best for their situation.

### **2019 ELCA Medicare-Primary Update**

We have been working diligently to prepare for the 2019 transition to the Group Medicare Advantage Plan hospital and medical benefits insured by Humana, and subsidy adjustments for eligible retirees. Thus far, most member feedback has been positive. More than 600 members tuned in to a webinar describing the changes; if you missed it, the [video is available here](#). Letters detailing members' options, cost, and subsidy amount (if eligible) were mailed in late September/early October, followed by pre-enrollment packets from Humana in mid-October. Members will be enrolled in the ELCA Medicare-Primary option that is most similar to what they have in 2018; however, retired members who want a different option for 2019 can make that choice during Portico's Annual Enrollment Oct. 31 – Nov. 14.

### **Retirement Planning Tool Enhancement**

The third phase of Portico's Retirement Planning Tool, designed for sponsored members over age 50, will roll out this December. This version offers members starting to look more closely at retirement a comprehensive picture of their ability to save during their remaining working years, as well as develop a plan for using their savings to generate income in retirement.

### **New Total Well-Being Tool**

Later this year, Portico will announce a new online tool centered around Jesus' call that he came that we might have abundant life (John 10:10). It reflects the Wholeness Wheel philosophy that different dimensions of well-being are interdependent, and that God calls us to care for our whole self. It will also be the vehicle by which eligible members and spouses with ELCA-Primary health benefits will earn their 2019 wellness dollars.

### **Resourceful Servants Initiative**

Over the past year we have been pleased to partner with the ELCA to encourage leaders to establish a strong financial foundation. The ELCA's Resourceful Servants initiative is an excellent complement to Portico's financial education efforts. The \$100,000 Portico's employees and board of trustees have pledged to Resourceful Servants will be used to match an increase in pretax retirement contributions, up to \$50/month for the duration of the program. By the end of 2018, the 225 rostered ministers currently participating are expected to have increased their ELCA Retirement Plan contributions by at least \$135,000 over the amount contributed in 2017. Resourceful Servants will be able to provide matching funding for an additional 110 recipients in the program's second year.

### **Legal Update**

In the case of *Bacon v. Portico Benefit Services*: On July 10, 2018, a class certification order was issued by the court. Generally, this order denies class certification as to any investment performance claims and grants certification as to the excessive fee claims. Plaintiffs appealed the form of the class certification to the Court of Appeals of the State of Minnesota.

Background: On March 5, 2015, a lawsuit was filed against Portico in Minnesota State Court (Hennepin County) alleging and seeking remedies related to the fees for investment and administration of the plans and selection of ELCA Retirement Plan investment funds. Portico filed a motion to dismiss this lawsuit under the Federal and Minnesota State Constitutions, asserting that the court's evaluation of the claims would constitute government entanglement in the free exercise of religion. This motion was granted Oct. 13, 2015. On Dec. 14, 2015, plaintiffs Pastor David Bacon, Pastor Timothy Hepner, Ruth Dold, and Sharon Hvam appealed the case dismissal to the Court of Appeals of the State of Minnesota. The Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. The Minnesota Supreme Court and the United States Supreme Court declined to hear the case. Work on the substance of the case has begun and we are responding to plaintiffs' requests for discovery.

## DIGEST OF BOARD ACTIONS

**Unit:** Portico Benefit Services  
**Submitted by:** The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, President and CEO  
**Date:** November 5, 2018  
**Meeting Dates:** August 2-3, 2018 and November 1-2, 2018

**Category I: Policies with an impact beyond the unit which require Church Council approval.**

August Resolutions/Actions

**Approved** the nomination of Angela M. Dejene as a trustee, to be submitted to the ELCA Church Council at its November 2018 meeting.

**Approved** the resolution to the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Trust related to the subsidy and Medicare Advantage change to Humana and approved by ELCA Church Council.

**Category II: Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.**

August Resolutions/Actions

**Approved** the resolution approving the 2019 Contribution Rates for the Survivor, Disability and Medical and Dental Benefits Plans, and Retiree Support.

**Approved** the Human Rights social criteria investment screen adopted by the ELCA Church Council in April 2018.

**Received** amendments approved by the President and signed/dated March 14, 2018, to:

**ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan** – *Retroactively effective January 1, 2018*  
Section 1.02 and 3.03 (amendments are administrative corrections).

**ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan** – *Effective January 1, 2019*  
Sections 1.01, 2.16 and 2.19 (amendments are administrative corrections).

**ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan** – *Effective January 1, 2019*  
Section 11.07 (amendments are administrative corrections).

**ELCA Retirement Plan for the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society** – *Effective January 1, 2019*  
Section 11.07 (amendments are administrative corrections)

**ELCA Retirement Savings Plan** – *Effective January 1, 2019*  
Sections 2.07 and 2.17 (amendments are administrative corrections)

November Resolutions/Actions

**ELCA Disability Benefits Plan** – *Effective January 1, 2019*

Sections 5.03, 5.05, 5.07, 5.08, 5.09, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 6.01, 6.02, 7.01, 7.02, 7.03, 7.04, 8.16, 8.17, 9.02, 9.03, 9.04, 9.05, 10.13 (amendments are removing the reference to partial disability benefits).

**ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan** – *Effective January 1, 2019*

Sections 9.03, 9.04, 9.05 (amendments are removing the reference to partial disability benefits).  
Sections 3.06, 9.13 (amendments are administrative corrections).

**ELCA Retirement Savings Plan** – *Effective January 1, 2019*

Section 9.04 (amendment is due to changes in federal regulations).  
disability benefits).

**ELCA Retirement Plan** – *Effective January 1, 2019*

Section 5.12, Appendix No. 13 (amendments are due to changes in federal regulations).

**ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan** – *Effective January 1, 2019*

Section 2.12, 2.23, 2.24, 2.25, 2.26, 2.40, 2.41, 3.02, 4.03, 4.04, 4.09, 4.10, 5.04, 5.05, 5.06, 6.01, 7.03, 8.01, 8.02, 8.03, 8.05 (amendments add Roth and auto-contribution options).

Section 8.04 (amendment is due to changes in federal regulations).

Sections 11.05, 11.12, 11.14 (amendments modify the amendment approval process).

**ELCA Retirement Plan for the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society** – *Effective November 2, 2018*

Sections 11.05, 11.12, 11.13 (amendments modify the amendment approval process).

**ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan** – *Effective January 1, 2019*

Sections 5.01, 5.02, 5.03, 5.04, 5.05, 5.06, 6.01, 6.02, 6.03, 6.04, 6.05, 6.06, 6.07 (amendments are conforming benefits with Medicare's enrollment and eligibility requirements).

**Approved** resolution designating a portion of 2019 remuneration as rental/housing allowance for the following Portico Benefit Services employee:

The Rev. Jeffrey Thiemann  
The Rev. Catherine Schibler-Keegan  
The Rev. Shelley Cunningham

**Approved** resolution designating retirement and disability payments as rental/housing allowance for 2019.

**Adopted** the 2019 Budget and **approved** resolution that any favorable variance greater than \$774,000, between budgeted operating expense and actual operating expense, will be added to the 2019 contingency reserve.

**Approved** resolution establishing the annuity adjustment (4.4%), dividend (20.8%) and interest-crediting rate (7.6%) for 2019 for the ELCA Participating Annuity of the ELCA Retirement Plan

**Category III. Other procedures and board actions.**

August 2018 Resolutions/Actions

**Approved** the retention of RSM as an independent auditor for Portico Benefit Services for the year ending December 31, 2018.

**Approved** changes to the Charter and Calendar for the Executive Committee.

**Received** Portico's August 2018 Management Report and all Committee Reports, en bloc.

November 2018 Resolutions/Actions

**Approved** resolution relating to the Augustana Annuity Trust.

**Approved** Board of Trustees committee assignments for trustee-nominee, Angela M. Dejene, for 2019.

**Approved** changes to the Charters and Calendars for the Appeals, Board Development, Finance, and Investment/Corporate Social Responsibility Committees.

**Received** Porticos' November 2018 Management Report and all Committee Reports, en bloc.

**Approved** a partial slate for the seventeen trustees presented for election at the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.



## **ELCA Foundation**

*Submitted by: Christina Jackson-Skelton, President and CEO*

### **Serving Our Purpose**

Since the action of the ELCA Church Council in November 2017 (CC17.11.21) to expand the Endowment Fund of the ELCA to include all the work of the ELCA Foundation, the ELCA Foundation has been in the process of fully living into that new reality. This includes assuming responsibility for managing the deferred giving programs and related assets of the churchwide organization, including the Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) and the Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) programs, as well the management of the Foundation's planned giving work and financial and operational duties.

To accomplish this broader scope of responsibilities, the Board of Trustees of the ELCA Foundation has organized itself into four committees that are taking up critical decisions that will be foundational for the operation of the Foundation going forward. This new board structure is allowing the trustees to delve deeper into technical issues and provide significant advice and counsel to staff management.

### **Foundation Transition Implementation**

The Foundation has focused its efforts in this first year on establishing the operational processes and controls that will result in excellent and consistent support for our donors and investors. Important steps in the transition implementation include:

- We have worked with our charitable remainder trust administrator, State Street Global Advisors, to change the trustee from the ELCA to the ELCA Foundation/Endowment Fund Pooled Trust on the ELCA's Charitable Remainder Trust program. This process is now completed.
- Two of the three planned phases to transfer the Charitable Gift Annuity obligations from the churchwide organization to the ELCA Foundation have been completed. None of the annuitants opted to retain their agreement with the ELCA instead of allowing the transfer. Phase one was effective March 31, 2018 and included a transfer of \$16.8 million. Phase two was effective June 30, 2018 and included a transfer of \$13.2 million.
- As of June 30, there are 1,308 contracts with a market value of \$23.7 million remaining on the books of the ELCA churchwide organization. They will be moved as registrations are completed with each state.
- The CGA reserve, in the amount of \$2.15 million was transferred to the ELCA Foundation accounts on April 9, 2018.
- The Operating Fund of \$3.2 million, as determined by the Task Force to create initial capital for the ELCA Foundation, was transferred to the ELCA Foundation on March 6, 2018, and is recorded in the financial statements.
- The Service Level Agreement for services and functions between the ELCA Foundation and the Office of the Treasurer has been signed.
- The endowment and deferred gift accounting staff who had been part of the Office of the Treasurer and providing services in support of Foundation programs were moved to the ELCA Foundation, effective July 1.

Some transition items that are in process:

- We have started the search for a new financial system; a decision is expected by year-end with implementation to take place in the first half of 2019.
- We have received proposals for outsourcing of administrative work around the Charitable Gift Annuity Program and Endowment Fund A. We will look at how to best achieve exceptional

service and strengthen efficiency while also lowering the costs for the administration of these programs. Both internal options and external providers will be considered and compared, and a decision is expected by year-end.

- A small amount of funds is held in Pooled Income Funds (PIFs); these transfers will be completed in the fourth quarter this year.
- We will continue work to complete creation of distinct accounting, financial reporting and audit processes. Audit engagement proposals have been finalized and will be considered by ELCA Foundation Board of Trustees in the coming weeks.
- Future work will include a review and update of current agreements with investment managers, custodian, and investment consultant; and a comprehensive overview of our policy and procedure documents. The documentation process will be ongoing as processes are modified to drive new efficiencies in the short-term and because of the anticipated system implementation.
- It has been the intention of the churchwide organization and the ELCA Foundation that this corporation would do business as the ELCA Foundation since the current corporate name, Endowment Fund of the ELCA, is not descriptive of the broader purpose of the organization. The Foundation is looking into the most efficient and appropriate way to do business under the ELCA Foundation name.

### **Overview of Results for First and Second Quarter 2018**

After six months of operations, the ELCA Foundation had a positive bottom line operating result of \$4.6 million. As of June 30, 2018, Endowment Fund A had total assets of \$733.3 million and liabilities of \$443.2 million, resulting in net assets of \$290.1 million as compared to \$281.1 million a year prior. During this period, 34 new endowment accounts totaling \$3.6 million were opened with total contributions and additions of \$22.5 million.

During the first six months of 2018, the ELCA Foundation gift planners and partnerships completed \$22 million in planned gifts to ELCA ministries and the ELCA Foundation processed a total of \$9.3 million in realized gifts to support the mission of ELCA churchwide organization and ELCA related ministries. In addition, the ELCA Foundation processed stock gifts totaling \$0.6 million for ELCA programs, endowments, congregations, synods, colleges and universities, seminaries and social service agencies.

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## **Women of the ELCA (WELCA) Summary**

*Submitted by: Linda Post Bushkofsky, Executive Director*

The work of the churchwide staff of Women of the ELCA is to support the organization's participants as they live out the mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. Here are a few highlights since the last meeting of the Church Council.

### **Café**

*Boldcafe* held a "Cafe LIVE" event in Houston before the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in June. Thirty-five women ages 18 to 60 came to the evening event at Kindred, a worshipping community that holds Dinner Church every week. The event was led by Ms. Rozella Haydée White, who wrote the June issue of *Boldcafe*. She facilitated a conversation with a panel of dynamic women leaders on the topic of self-care.

*Boldcafe* will be part of the Women of the ELCA display at the ELCA Youth Ministry Network event in January 2019 in Jacksonville, Florida. In addition, *Boldcafe* articles will be featured under the "Campus" tab of the [welca.org](http://welca.org) website and shared with the director for ELCA Young Adult Ministry for an upcoming vocation event with young adults.

### **Gather**

Our magazine's current three-session Bible study tackles repentance and was written by the Rev. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni (doctoral candidate, Fort Collins, Colorado). The January-April 2019 study has been written by the Rev. Julie Kanarr (Christ Lutheran, Belfair, Washington); it is an exploration of the book of John. A summer intern created a much-needed index of articles and Bible studies.

### **International African Lutheran Conference**

The director for discipleship was invited to create and facilitate the women, youth and young adult plenary panel at the International African Lutheran Conference in Moshi, Tanzania, August 7-13, 2018. The WELCA delegation, whose participation was made possible by Katie's Fund, was diverse in age (three generations), leadership expressions (churchwide, synod and congregational unit), ethnicity (African American and African National) and regionally (2B, 4F, 6F and 8F).

Our delegation participated in the panel discussion and it was well received. Three major contacts were made with bishops and women's desks staff that will make Triennial Gathering International Guests invitations easier with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, Namibia and the new Lutheran Church of South Sudan.

### **ELCA Youth Gathering**

The objective of the Women of the ELCA exhibit was sharing awareness about human trafficking. In addition, our goal was to help youth learn about prevention as well as to empower them to lead in their own communities about ending human trafficking.

Our exhibit featured three areas in our 75' x 30' space. One area featured an interactive space for visitors to assemble hygiene bags for two local organizations. Another installation shared statistics and focused on prevention as well as ways youth can help support others in their communities to help end human trafficking. Staff from one of the organizations and recipients of the hygiene bags, United Against Human Trafficking in Houston, stopped by to offer information about the work that they do and answer questions. In one area, youth wrote words of encouragement for recipients of each hygiene bag. Youth wrote messages of support like, "You are loved," "You matter" and "I'm praying for you." In addition, there was an area for youth and adult leaders to talk with Women of the ELCA volunteers and staff about furthering their connection to Women of the ELCA. They also had an opportunity to learn more about what Women of the ELCA groups are doing currently around the issue of human trafficking. 2,005 hygiene bags were assembled, and an additional 1,500 items were gathered for The Landing, an organization that supports victims of human trafficking.

### **Infant formula**

Building on the history of Lutheran women promoting breastfeeding and advocating against deceptive marketing of infant formula, the executive director has worked with non-profit partners as new issues have arisen on this topic. On behalf of the organization, she has signed on to three different efforts asking for compliance with international standards for marketing and seeking explanations from the U.S. government for recent actions. Soon to be forthcoming is a WELCA-sponsored letter writing campaign directed at the six global manufacturers of baby formulas, urging them to comply with code provisions around marketing.

### **Staffing changes**

Audrey Riley has moved from full-time to a part-time status. She is now director for stewardship. We will be posting another part-time position, director for development, in the near future. Three staff had sabbaticals during the year.

Additional information about Women of the ELCA can be found at any of these locations:

womenoftheelca.org

[Facebook.com/womenoftheelca](https://www.facebook.com/womenoftheelca)

boldcafe.org

[Twitter.com/womenoftheelca](https://twitter.com/womenoftheelca)

gathermagazine.org

[Pinterest.com/womenoftheelca](https://www.pinterest.com/womenoftheelca)

## Digest of Board Actions

**Unit:** Women of the ELCA

**Submitted by:** Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director

**Meeting date:** April 20-21, 2018 (Des Plaines, Illinois)

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**Category 1:** *(policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval)*

None.

**Category 2:** *(policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit)*

Approved the use of funds to cover shortfalls caused by revenue from the 2017 Triennial Gathering falling short of expectations and annual operating expenses exceeding income (although within budget) in fiscal 2017

Set the voting member count for the Eleventh Triennial Convention (2020) at 311 (excluding at-large members)

Created an exploratory committee (with members to be appointed by the president in consultation with the executive director) whose purpose is to examine the business model used by Women of the ELCA and to consider alternate ways to achieve the mission and purpose of the organization

**Category 3:** *(other procedures and board actions)*

Offered support to the women of the Caribbean Synodical Women's Organization following the devastating hurricanes of 2017

Engaged in racial justice and stewardship education along with strategic planning

Received training for representing the president at synodical conventions

Referred to the executive director a request from the 2017 Conference of Presidents to more quickly address current and developing events that face the nation, one example being the fatal shooting of 17 school children in Parkland, Florida

Delayed action on a Conference of Presidents recommendation seeking a constitutional change to Article VII, Section 4, Item 1 "to state that in order to be a member of a synodical Women of the ELCA board, you must be a member of an ELCA congregation rather than a member of a Women of the ELCA unit."

Held and participated in a Women and Justice Social Statement hearing

### **Digest of Board Actions**

**Unit:** Women of the ELCA

**Submitted by:** Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director

**Meeting date:** October 18-20, 2018 (Scottsdale, Arizona)

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**Category 1:** *(policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval)*

None

**Category 2:** *(policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit)*

Adopted a budget for FY2019

Adopted a budget for the Eleventh Triennial Convention (2020)

Established a policy against electioneering, for use leading up to and during the Eleventh Triennial Convention (2020) and also established a policy for the appointment of at-large voting members

Adopted a budget for the 2020 Gathering

Received the annual review of the executive director, presented through the executive committee by the executive director evaluation committee

Accepted the audit review conducted for FY2017

**Category 3:** *(other procedures and board actions)*

Encouraged the executive director to move forward in the development of a letter writing campaign directed at the six global manufacturers of baby formulas

Reviewed board members' participation in the 2086 conventions of synodical women's organizations

Engaged in strategic planning, racial justice education and stewardship education



**Evangelical Church in America**  
**Church Council Governance Policy Manual**  
**Part 1**  
**(draft #8.2)**

**Preface**

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is both the board of directors of a Minnesota nonprofit corporation and the interim legislative authority of the churchwide organization, one of the three “expressions” of a Protestant denomination with deep roots in America. But these phrases and the dichotomy between corporation and church do not adequately explain the roles and responsibilities of the Church Council nor answer the profound Lutheran question: “What does this mean?” To understand the roles and responsibilities of the Church Council requires a more careful examination of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (hereafter “CBCR”), as well as a clearer understanding of governance principles in the context of a church.

From a church polity or organizational perspective, the ELCA is unique because it is neither congregational nor hierarchal. In terms of polity, CBCR provision 8.11 states: “This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent.” Further, each of the expressions, while fully the church, also “recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in a partnership relationship with the others.” In accordance with CBCR provision 5.01, the three parts or “expressions” constitute one church, which recognizes that all power and authority belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, its head. Although each of three parts has distinctive (but overlapping) responsibilities, as described in CBCR Chapters 5 and 8 and elsewhere in the governing documents, all share common statements of purpose regarding the foundational ministry. All share a common commitment to act in accordance with the Confession of Faith in Chapter 2 of the CBCR and with the Statement of Purpose set forth in Chapter 4. Thus, the common starting points for ministry and the foundational touchstones for identifying the roles and responsibilities of the Church Council are enumerated as follows in ELCA constitutional provision 4.02, which describes God’s mission for this entire church in all its expressions:

To participate in God’s mission, this church [the ELCA] shall:

- a. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
- b. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- c. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs.
- d. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

For more than 30 years, these purposes have defined the mission of this church as an instrument of God in the world and provided a unifying vision in all its expressions regarding our collective work.

From a governance perspective, the Church Council has two discrete roles in addressing these missional objectives, but there are many responsibilities that flow from them and from the CBCR. Addressing these numerous responsibilities requires applying governance principles and best practices. The two roles are identified in CBCR provision 14.11, which provides: "The Church Council shall be the board of directors and shall serve as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly." Thus, the Church Council is the board of directors of the Minnesota nonprofit corporation known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. It is *not* the board of directors of any synod or congregation or the denomination of the same name. As the interim legislative authority, it acts in lieu of the Churchwide Assembly, and it functions as the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization between the assembly's triennial meetings. As such, it has responsibilities assigned to the Churchwide Assembly under CBCR Chapter 12, as well as responsibilities assigned to the Church Council under Chapter 14. Significantly, in addition to legislative authority for the churchwide organization between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly, these responsibilities also include providing advice and encouragement to synods, congregations, and others regarding "all matters which are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church," in accordance with CBCR provisions 12.11 and 14.11. Moreover, many other provisions

in the CBCR allocate discrete responsibilities to the Church Council in one or both of its roles.

In order to understand the application of governance principles to the roles and responsibilities of the Church Council, it is important to begin with a common understanding of an underlying philosophy of governance. In fulfilling its dual constitutional roles, the Church Council exercises fiduciary, strategic, and generative responsibilities to govern the ELCA churchwide organization. From a fiduciary perspective, this means ensuring (1) that the organization operates consistent with its Articles of Incorporation, the CBCR, and policies adopted by the Churchwide Assembly and/or the Church Council; (2) that Church Council members individually and the Church Council acting collectively exercise due care in its work; and (3) that members of the Church Council act with loyalty in the best interests of the organization. With respect to strategic leadership, the Church Council must focus on developing and implementing a strategic plan and priorities, on evaluating their implementation, and on prioritizing and allocating resources for their accomplishment. In terms of generative leadership, the Church Council must devote time and reflection to issues emerging in both this church and in society that could impact the mission of this church. In addressing all of its governance responsibilities, the Church Council must focus prospectively and be forward-thinking about moving this church toward its preferred future.

Leadership of the Church Council also must align with this church's strategic plan and approved mission, vision, and values. Of course, these will change or evolve periodically. In 2016, such a strategic plan, along with attendant mission, vision, and values, were adopted by the Church Council. This process began in 2015, in anticipation of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, when the presiding bishop and the leadership of this church embarked on a strategic planning process at the request of the Church Council. This process resulted in *Future Directions 2025*, which addressed telling the story of the church we are becoming. It articulated our shared purpose — the purpose of the whole ELCA — as follows:

- Together in Jesus Christ we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully.

The church's vision was expressed this way:

- A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ makes for all people and creation.

With this background, the following goals were identified and approved for this church:

- Goal 1: A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people.
- Goal 2: A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and this church.
- Goal 3: An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.
- Goal 4: A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities around the world.
- Goal 5: A well-governed, connected and sustainable church.

In addition, dual priorities were identified that undergird each goal. These are congregational vitality and leadership.

These goals and priorities inform and frame the fiduciary, strategic, and generative responsibilities of the Church Council. They were developed and approved in collaboration with leaders throughout this church and reflect a thoughtful integration of the missional imperatives contained in the governing documents of congregations and synods as well as the churchwide organization. Striving for their collective implementation would reflect in action the concept of interdependence and strengthen all the ministry partners of this church. Indeed, *Future Directions 2025* calls upon congregations to strengthen their relationship with God, nurture relationships, and be a strong presence in the community.

*Future Directions 2025* also identifies underlying values. It states: “Our values are grounded in faith, in our biblical and Lutheran confessional sources and our love of God and neighbor. They speak to the way this church lives and practices our faith, and they will guide how we journey forward in Christ as church together.” The values identified are:

- Forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Dignity, compassion and justice.
- Inclusivity and diversity.
- Courage and openness to change.
- Faithful stewardship of God’s creation and gifts.

Taken together, the CBCR and *Future Directions 2025* articulate the mission, vision, and values of the ELCA and provide a framework for moving this whole church toward the future to which God is calling us. They provide lenses to address the work of the Church Council.

# Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council Governance Policy Manual Part 1

## The Roles and Responsibilities of the Church Council

### 1. Introduction

The Church Council exists both as an integral part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in the fullness of its denominational self as a community of faith in the Lutheran tradition as well as a governing body with responsibilities as a board of directors and interim legislative authority of the churchwide organization, one of three interdependent expressions of the ELCA. From the former perspective, it must always recognize that all power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head, and all actions of the ELCA are to be carried out under his rule and authority. From a governance perspective, the Church Council must comply with the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* (“CBCR”) and policies adopted by the Churchwide Assembly and/or the Church Council. It must recognize that it is an interdependent partner with synods and congregations in the mission of this church.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, it

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<sup>1</sup> In addressing the differences between a church board of directors and a corporate board, Dan Hotchkiss makes the provocative point that a church board does not have shareholders like a corporate board, but the church’s “owner” is its *mission*. Although his observation is made in the context of congregational governance, it is profoundly applicable to all of the expressions of this church. See Dan Hotchkiss, *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership* (2009).

must act consistent with its constitutional legislative authority, but it also must ensure that advice and encouragement are provided to other expressions of this church, as well as to ministry partners and others, in all matters that are necessary in pursuit of the purposes and functions of this church (CBCR 12.11.). In fulfilling these responsibilities, it also must organize itself and act consistent with best practices for nonprofit organizations and appropriately exercise fiduciary, strategic, and generative leadership to fulfill this church's mission. In all governance roles, the Church Council must be forward-looking and shepherd this church into the future. In an effort to better fulfill the mission of this church, to move forward in implementing its vision and values, to be a more effective partner with other interdependent expressions and ministry partners, and to clarify its governance responsibilities, this Governance Policy Manual describes the responsibilities of the Church Council.

## **2. Overarching responsibilities**

In order to integrate the multiple roles of the Church Council as the interim legislative authority and the board of directors of the churchwide organization and to provide a framework for considering discrete responsibilities, it is important to identify preliminarily overarching responsibilities, recognizing that leadership in governance encompasses fiduciary, strategic, and generative aspects.<sup>2</sup>

- In the exercise of fiduciary leadership, the Church Council shall ensure that the churchwide organization complies with applicable provisions of the CBCR, policies adopted by the Churchwide Assembly and/or the Church Council, applicable law, and provide oversight and accountability for the mission of this church. In doing so, the Church Council shall periodically evaluate which issues require Church Council action, which issues can be delegated, and/or what, if any, follow-up action(s) may be required in the exercise of its fiduciary responsibility.
- In the exercise of strategic leadership, the Church Council shall collaborate with the churchwide organization in strategic thinking, including periodically initiating a strategic planning process, and participating in the development of a strategic plan and strategic goals and priorities. As part of this process, it shall monitor progress in achieving the strategic plan and strategic goals and priorities, as well as provide oversight to the churchwide organization to ensure that

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<sup>2</sup> The three aspects or modes of governance — fiduciary, strategic, and generative — are based upon and described in *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards* by Richard P. Chait, William P. Ryan, and Barbara E. Taylor (2005).

resources are prioritized and allocated optimally and in a manner to facilitate their achievement. In addition, between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council also must provide leadership in identifying matters that are necessary to fulfill the purposes and functions of this whole church, and ensure that appropriate advice and encouragement are provided to synods, congregations, ministry partners, and others. In fulfilling its strategic leadership responsibilities, the Church Council shall continually inquire and assess what are the most urgent and important issues confronting this church at that time. In all its roles and activities, the Church Council shall look to the future and think strategically.

- In the exercise of generative leadership, the Church Council shall engage proactively in discussion and analysis, in collaboration with leaders in this church and others, of trends (both within the church and in society) in an effort to ensure that this church is equipped to accomplish the mission of God's church in the world. In doing so, it also shall devote adequate time to frame and discuss "big picture" issues that could impact the future of this church and to assess potential opportunities and risks to the churchwide organization and to this church.
- In the exercise of all of its roles and responsibilities, the Church Council shall demonstrate servant leadership, sensitive to interdependence and agreed upon values as foundational principles of this church. At the same time, it shall remain focused on shepherding this church into the future and on strengthening congregational vitality and leadership. In addressing all its roles and responsibilities, the Church Council must proactively seek to build and nurture cultures of trust in all that it does.<sup>3</sup>

In fulfilling these aspects of leadership in governance, the Church Council acknowledges the importance of distinguishing its oversight responsibilities from the management responsibilities of the presiding bishop and the churchwide staff, recognizes the importance of focusing on strategic leadership instead of administrative detail, and affirms the importance of engaging in generative discussions about moving this church into the future to which God is calling it.

### **3. Specific responsibilities of the Church Council**

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<sup>3</sup> Theologian Martin Marty has written about the importance of constructive engagement and the importance of building trust. See Martin E. Marty, *Building Cultures of Trust* (2010).

Informed by its overarching responsibilities and cognizant of its dual roles within the polity of the ELCA, the following are specific responsibilities of the Church Council.

**A. Oversight and coordination**

- Establish and ensure lines of communication exist and are effectively utilized with the Conference of Bishops, other leadership tables in this church, synods, congregations, ecumenical and other ministry partners, and others, as appropriate, for the purpose of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and collaborating in ministry.
- Review and assess periodically the work of the churchwide organization to ensure that it is addressing and complying with the purposes and principles specified in CBCR Chapters 4, 5, and 8.
- Ensure on an ongoing basis that the work of the churchwide organization is aligned with, prioritized, and effectively moving toward implementation of the strategic plan and its goals and priorities, as well the mission, vision, and values of this church. In so doing, periodically evaluate whether resources are allocated optimally for accomplishing the strategic plan and its goals and priorities, and reallocate resources, as appropriate.
- Work proactively to become an inclusive and diverse church, develop and implement policies and goals to meet diversity and inclusion objectives in governance, and monitor implementation (5.01.b., 5.01.f., 19.06.01.).
- Address on an ongoing basis the sustainability of ministries and structures of this church.
- Engage periodically in generative conversations — both within the Church Council and among other leadership tables — to identify and evaluate opportunities and risks and ways to enhance the ministry of this church in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and in serving our neighbors.

**B. Policy development and approval**

- Develop, adopt, and periodically review and update ministry standards, policies, criteria, and procedures in accordance with CBCR Chapter 7; take steps to ensure that the standards are uniformly applied throughout this church.
- Adopt policies and procedures that establish and implement relationships with other Lutheran organizations, institutions, or agencies



(8.41.); periodically review their effectiveness and how they can be strengthened.

- Adopt policies and procedures to implement church-to-church relationships of full communion established by action of the Churchwide Assembly, as well as support ecumenical relationships (8.18.; 8.62.; 9.81.); periodically review their effectiveness and how they can be strengthened.
- Approve criteria, policies, and procedures for acknowledging authorized worshiping communities and developing ministries, preaching points, or chapels (10.02.03.); periodically review their effectiveness and revise, as appropriate.
- Establish fiscal policies and authorize expenditures of the churchwide organization, within limits established by the Churchwide Assembly and the CBCR (11.40. and following bylaws); periodically review their effectiveness and how they can be strengthened.
- Engage periodically in generative conversations — both within the Church Council and among other leadership tables — to evaluate whether existing policies enhance the mission and ministry of this church and its strategic plan, goals, and priorities. In doing so, identify what revisions and/or new policies would be necessary or desirable to enhance the ministry of this church in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and in serving our neighbors.

### **C. Relationships**

- Develop policies in consultation with synods and congregations and provide oversight for implementing the extended mission of the Church in entering into relationships with governmental, ecumenical, and societal agencies in accordance with accepted resolutions or in response to agreed-upon areas of responsibility (8.14.).
- Between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly, provide leadership in identifying matters that are necessary to fulfill the purposes and functions of this whole church, and provide appropriate advice and encouragement to synods, congregations, ministry partners, and others regarding such matters (12.11., 14.11).
- Monitor and nurture relationships with The Lutheran World Federation; seminaries, colleges and universities; social ministry organizations; other Lutheran organizations; other churches with which relationships have been established; and other organizations and agencies identified in CBCR Chapter 8. Periodically assess how such relationships enhance

the mission and ministry of this church and how they align with and move toward implementation of the strategic plan and priorities.

- Engage periodically in generative conversations — both within the Church Council and among other leadership tables — to discuss how relationships with other organizations and entities identified in CBCR Chapter 8 impact the ministry of this church in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and in serving our neighbors and what could be done to enhance such relationships and their impact on ministry.

#### **D. Governance**

- Participate in the planning for and evaluation of Church Council meetings (including the preparation of the agenda, utilizing meeting evaluations, and making process observations) to ensure that they timely address fiduciary, strategic, and generative leadership responsibilities.
- Provide ongoing support for, periodically evaluate, and perform designated responsibilities regarding officers in accordance with CBCR Chapter 13.
- Oversee the scheduling of and providing notice for the Churchwide Assembly, appoint committees of the Churchwide Assembly, oversee the nomination and election processes, and review and recommend actions for consideration in accordance with CBCR Chapters 12, 14, and 19.
- Periodically review the CBCR, consider proposed amendments and make recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly, and oversee their implementation once adopted. As appropriate, revise and adopt continuing resolutions.
- Consider and ratify amendments to synod articles of incorporation and provisions to synod constitutions, other than those that conform to model provisions (10.11., 10.11.A13., 10.12.).
- Consider and act upon, as appropriate, petitions from congregations forwarded by synods (9.53.07.), requests from synods, and referrals from the Conference of Bishops (10.81.01.).
- Conduct elections and oversee election processes in accordance with the CBCR (14.15.,14.21.22.).
- Review and provide support for the work of separately incorporated ministries in accordance with CBCR Chapter 17.
- Approve *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* (20.20.); periodically review their effectiveness.

- Engage periodically in generative conversations — both within the Church Council and among other leadership tables — to discuss how governance processes could be enhanced to positively impact the ministry of this church in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and in serving our neighbors.

## **Appendix**

In evaluating the appropriate responsibilities of the Church Council, it is useful to inventory all the discrete allocations made in the CBCR. The following list identifies all such responsibilities as of the November 2016. In accordance with the CBCR, the Church Council shall:

- Establish and engage in an ongoing process to review the function of the churchwide organization to ensure that it is addressing its constitutional responsibilities and strategic objectives, and develop recommendations for change, as appropriate (5.01.e.).

- Develop, adopt, and periodically review and update ministry standards, policies, criteria, and procedures in accordance with CBCR Chapter 7.
- Develop policies in consultation with synods and congregations and provide oversight for implementing the extended mission of the Church in entering into relationship with governmental, ecumenical, and societal agencies in accordance with accepted resolutions or in response to agreed-upon areas of responsibility (8.14.).
- Develop, implement, and oversee policies related to seminaries, approve governing document amendments, elect people to seminary boards or advisory councils, and approve providing financial support in accordance with CBCR Chapter 8.
- Oversee this church's relationships with colleges and universities in accordance with CBCR Chapter 8.
- Adopt policies and procedures that establish and implement relationships with other Lutheran organizations, institutions, or agencies (8.41.).
- Adopt policies and procedures to implement church-to-church relationships of full communion established by action of the Churchwide Assembly (8.62.).
- Provide an ongoing process, in cooperation with synods, for review of congregational constitutions (9.52.A93.).
- Consider petitions from congregations forwarded by synods (9.53.07.).
- Review and approve model plans for agreement of federated and union congregations (9.81.01.a. and 9.81.02.a.).
- Approve criteria, policies, and procedures for acknowledging authorized worshiping communities and developing ministries, preaching points, or chapels (10.02.03.).
- Consider and ratify amendments to synod articles of incorporation and provisions to synod constitutions, other than those that conform to model provisions (10.11., 10.11.A13., 10.12.).
- Consider and provide indemnification, when appropriate, to this church or any synod, for claims against a predecessor church body (10.22.).
- Consider, approve, or request reopening of consultation regarding each synod's percentage or amount of Mission Support (10.71.02.).
- Consider, advise, and act upon recommendations and respond to concerns and proposals from the Conference of Bishops (10.81.01.).
- Establish fiscal policies and authorize expenditures of the churchwide organization, within limits established by the Churchwide Assembly and the CBCR (11.40. and following bylaws.).

- Approve a policy for the development of social statements and review and recommend for approval by the Churchwide Assembly social statements prepared in accordance with the policy (12.12.01.).
- Establish the time and place of meetings of the Churchwide Assembly, appoint and allocate to synods up to 10 additional voting members, and appoint committees in accordance with CBCR Chapter 12.
- Elect the treasurer (14.14.).
- Fulfill responsibilities for elections as provided in the CBCR, including electing individuals to serve the balance of unexpired terms when a vacancy has been declared by the secretary (14.15.).
- Exercise discretion, as necessary, to remove a voting member of the Church Council for cause (14.16.).
- Act on policies proposed by churchwide units, subject to review by the Churchwide Assembly (14.21.01.).
- Review procedures and programs of churchwide units to assure that churchwide purposes, policies, and objectives are being fulfilled; approve policies of churchwide units (14.21.02.).
- Review all recommendations from the churchwide organization for consideration at the Churchwide Assembly (14.21.03.).
- Report to the Churchwide Assembly (14.21.07.).
- Adopt policies for the churchwide organization in accordance with CBCR (14.21.04.). In addition to fiscal policies (11.41.), these include personnel policies (15.21.01., 16.12.B13.b.), salary structure for the staff, and ranges for salaries of the officers (14.21.06., 14.21.13.).
- Consult with and refer matters to the Conference of Bishops and receive reports from it (14.21.11.).
- Act on resolutions from Synod Councils (14.21.11.).
- Provide for the installation of churchwide officers (14.21.12.).
- Consider issues of corporate social responsibility and, as appropriate, direct the churchwide organization to file shareholder resolutions, cast proxy ballots and take other actions (14.21.14.).
- Determine, unless otherwise specified in the CBCR, the appropriate unit for the fulfillment of particular program or policy responsibilities identified in the bylaws (14.21.15.).
- Establish the criteria and policies for the relationship between the churchwide organization and independent, cooperative, and related Lutheran organizations, and determine which unit of the churchwide organization shall relate to each (14.21.16.).

- Elect unit executive directors and executive for administration upon nomination of the presiding bishop (14.21.21., 15.12.A10.).
- Arrange processes for all elections specified in the CBCR (14.21.22.).
- Establish Church Council committees, determine their responsibilities, nominate people to serve on them, and receive reports and recommendations from them (14.41.). Ensure that their oversight responsibilities include aligning the work of churchwide units with strategic priorities.
- Act upon recommendations, as appropriate, from the presiding bishop on proposed policies relating to worship and sacramental practices and adopt a policy providing for liturgical review (15.12.H16.).
- Establish financial policies, authorize the creation of funds, define limits, make recommendations, and hold elections related to activities of the Officer of the Treasurer (15.14.A10.).
- Elect the board of trustees and receive reports from and adopt policies related to the Endowment Fund (15.15.01., 15.15.03., 16.12.).
- Receive reports from units of the churchwide organization and review policies, procedures, and operations in order to ensure conformity with the CBCR and Churchwide Assembly actions (16.12.).
- Receive reports from separately incorporated ministries identified in Chapter 17, provide governance oversight to ensure that their ministries conform to the provisions of the CBCR, and review and approve or forward to the Churchwide Assembly for approval proposed changes to their governing documents.
- Oversee and implement nomination and election processes described in CBCR Chapter 19.
- Approve definitions and guidelines for discipline, rules of procedure for hearing officers and discipline hearing committees, make appointments, address petitions for recall, participate in consultation and adjudication processes, and address other matters as described in CBCR Chapter 20.
- Establish a process to determine when a person is entitled to indemnification in accordance with CBCR Chapter 21.
- Consider proposed amendments to the CBCR and make recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly in the case of constitutional provisions and bylaws; consider and act upon or refer to the Churchwide Assembly amendments to or new continuing resolutions in accordance with CBCR Chapter 22.

ELCA Church Council Governance Policy Manual  
Part 2 DRAFT Topic Outline

1. Values of the Church Council and Responsibilities of Individual Church Council Members.
2. Organization and Structures of the Church Council
  - committees, task forces, working groups, etc.
  - calendar and scheduling
  - leadership tables
  - delegation
  - limits of authority
  - periodic evaluation of organization, structure, and performance
3. Meetings and meeting protocols
  - types of meetings (regular, special — also open, closed, executive session, etc.)
  - agenda building, including providing input
  - minutes protocols
  - self review and evaluation of meetings
4. Relationships and communications
  - with churchwide organization and staff
  - with other leadership tables
  - with synods and congregations
  - with outside organizations/groups
5. Related policies
  - conflict of interest
  - whistleblower
  - other
6. Review and amendment
  - yearly review of Manual
  - amendment by majority vote of CC voting members present and voting

## **Background Notes to Church Council Governance Policy Manual—Part 1 Draft November 2018**

### **Background and process:**

- The Church Council discussed its governance role and future governance needs of this church at a retreat in April 2017. There was a desire to capture in a document what the governance role of the Church Council **should be**. This effort also supported Goal 5 of *Future Directions 2025*. (“A well-governed, connected, and sustainable church.”)
- Following the retreat, the Council in April 2018 approved a process for developing a governance document appointing an Ad Hoc Governance Policy Committee (AHGPC). The AHGPC includes five council members, three Churchwide Organization administrative team members, and one Conference of Bishops member.
- The AHGPC decided to separate the governance document into two parts: Part 1 addresses the roles and responsibilities of the Church Council and Part 2 addresses the organization, structure, and process needed to best fulfill the Church Council roles and responsibilities noted in Part 1.
- The AHGPC met once in person and several times electronically to develop the Part 1 draft. The draft has taken into consideration possible amendments to the constitution recommended by the Office of the Secretary that may impact Church Council governance roles and responsibilities.
- A draft of Part 1 was submitted for review and comment to the Conference of Bishops and Executive Committee. The final draft will be presented to the Church Council for consideration and possible approval at the November 2018 meeting. At this meeting, the Council will begin discussing Part 2 on Church Council organization, structure, and process.

### **Rationale/observations about the Church Council and governance:**

- The roles and responsibilities of the Church Council are sometimes confusing. For example, the Church Council is the Board of Directors of the ELCA churchwide organization (not the entire ELCA) and the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly.
- Other than the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA (CBCR)*, there has not been an effort to draft a Governance Policy Manual to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the Church Council. As the theory and practice of non-profit organization governance have evolved since the ELCA was formed 30 years ago, a best practice presently is to develop and approve a governance manual.
- Structures and processes have evolved over the last 30 years with changes in both the *CBCR* as well as the churchwide organization. For example, when advisory boards for churchwide organization units were eliminated, the Church Council still retained programmatic oversight which is more a management function than a governance function. There is an increasing need for close collaboration and good communications among the Church Council and other leadership groups, such as the Conference of Bishops and leadership tables established from time-to-time. Clarity of purpose and organization, both internally on the Church Council and externally in relations with other organizations and groups, would provide enhanced leadership and have a positive impact on mission and ministry.

### **Notes on Part 1:**

- The Preface describes how key governance aspects in the context of the ELCA can provide a framework for describing the Church Council roles and responsibilities. *Future Directions 2025* is used as the foundational strategic framework for Church Council work in the near term.
- The body of the Manual consists of the **Introduction, Overarching Responsibilities, Specific Responsibilities of the Church Council**, and the **Appendix. Overarching Responsibilities:** Organized as fiduciary, strategic, and generative leadership, as described in *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards*, by Richard P. Chait, et al. In addition, this



section addresses how the Church Council must act in addressing its fiduciary, strategic, and generative roles and responsibilities. **Specific Responsibilities of the Church Council:** Separated into Oversight and Coordination; Policy Development and Approval; Relationships; and Governance. Each section identifies Church Council roles and responsibilities in fiduciary, strategic, and generative leadership referencing the relevant provision(s) of the *CBCR*. **Appendix:** Identifies the *CBCR* references to Church Council roles and responsibilities. The Appendix as well as the relevant Specific Responsibilities will need to be revised following all *CBCR* changes that impact Church Council roles and responsibilities.

- Part 1 identifies what the Church Council's governance roles and responsibilities **should be** in order to best serve this Church. Part 2 will be developed to address how the Council can best be equipped to fulfill the roles and responsibilities outlined in Part 1.

## ELCA Church Council Governance Part 2 Survey Results November 2018

### 1. Identify your role

CC	28
Admin Team	4
COB	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

### 2. Please rank each of the following issues based on how important you believe it is that we address each issue in person in our consideration of Part 2.

	Total	Score
Individual and collective roles of Church Council and Council members	32	4.94
How the Council does business when it gathers in person (e.g. agenda development, structure, time allocation, meeting formats)	33	5.39
Frequency of meeting and opportunities for advice and consultation	32	3.25
How and what information the Council receives	32	3.97
Committee structure and process (e.g. frequency and timing of committee meetings, what work committees address versus whole Council, what committees the Council needs)	33	4.5
Council relationships with other groups (e.g. Conference of Bishops, Churchwide Organization administrative team, separately incorporated ministries)	33	4.5
Other (please describe in next question)	18	1.57

### 3. What other topics do you believe would be important to address?

- None
- None at this moment
- How do we address the two parallel structure of governance in this church, i.e. the Church Council Synod Councils
- Process for accountability; organizational and ministry risk
- Nothing at this time
- Accountability to one another, the Council and the Church as a whole. How do we help one another remain focused, informed and prayerfully discerning in the work of the Council and the work the Council shares with other expressions and entities?
- None. This is plenty. Thanks.
- n/a
- None
- Relationship to COB

- I think you have it covered
  - The idea of "best practice." What does it mean? What is it? How do we recognize it?
  - none
  - What does this process change for the ELCA, i.e. what is different?
  - Categories above provide good overall coverage of numerous sub-topics.
4. Please offer a brief explanation of why you believe the issues you ranked highly above are important to address. What are the current challenges for these issues? How would you like to see this piece work?

Topic	Percent Answered	Number of responses
<b>Individual and collective roles of Church Council and Council members</b>	<b>72.73%</b>	<b>24</b>

- This just needs review periodically, best done at a retreat.
- (least important) interesting conversation to have, but not necessarily a problem
- Church Council needs to work on items of concern to the entire church in between CWA. We tend to concentrate solely on reports and legal responsibilities rather than focus at least some time on items of importance to congregations and ELCA members.
- Without a strong understanding of our role(s), we will not be able to function, no matter what it is that we decide to do.
- Need to know what our job is/what is expected of us
- Better education of these roles when new members come in
- Clarity of roles is crucial both for CC functioning and in the CC's relationship and work with other ELCA leadership groups
- As we define governance and structure self understanding of the role of the council and members coupled with the relationship to the other leadership bodies is necessary so we are not repeating work or stepping on each other's toes.
- If we have clarity of role, we are best positioned to excel in implementation
- Be of assistance to new members of council
- As the highest governing authority between CWAs and the true Board of Directors of the Church, I believe members need thorough orientation to and ongoing engagement in deliberative conversation not only during but outside of Council meetings.
- This seems to have occupied a lot of our time over the past 5 years, so if it was more clearly laid out for Council we could have gotten onto other important work even earlier.
- The Council needs collectively to understand and operationalize its dual roles in this church - board of directors of the nonprofit corporation and interim legislative body for churchwide. Individually, each council member needs to understand his/her practical duties and fiduciary duties - care, loyalty, obedience - owed to the church. The church has largely ignored these Council issues since its formation.
- Need to fully understand what is expected as a council member
- The proposed draft of the Manual provides a clear picture of that.
- The first priorities will shape the roles
- With the limited time that we have together, I could use help in clarifying what role I have in communicating council action out to the synod. Since much of the more detailed work is done in committee, I am not always prepared to substantiate decisions that we have come to.
- Our role is not always clear
- I ranked this one low because it seems we have already discussed this one a couple of times.

- To clarify the Some focus on individual role: reporter, spokesperson, "eyes and ears," simply a voter
- How does our role as "Council" translate to the functioning of the whole church, and "individually" and "collectively" how does that display itself in real terms?
- Helping council move into governance from management
- Choosing the priorities that need to change
- There's been discussion of the need for more clarity in this area.

<b>How the Council does business when it gathers in person (e.g. agenda development, structure, time allocation, meeting formats)</b>	<b>84.85%</b>	<b>28</b>
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- Seems like we do very little actual decisionmaking, almost 100% affirming decisions CW staff, task forces, and others have made.
- I feel our meetings have been well organized and the time well used.
- We need Council meetings to have a dedicated period of time to discuss items of concern to the long-term viability of our church. Attendance and giving are symptoms. We need to discuss not only congregational vitality, but synod and churchwide vitality.
- Council currently has no apparent influence on the agenda or time allocation.
- Without sufficient time to address the strategic priorities of the ELCA, we will
- always should have growing understanding and willing to change or update things that do not work
- Discussion time is limited
- We need to ensure that we are spending our time together most effectively. I think there are currently items like policy statement documents that could be reviewed more efficiently. It seems like we spend a lot of time reporting similar information more than once and perhaps not enough time for reflection on strategic direction and issues.
- Time allocation and not going over it. Sometimes we like to listen to ourselves
- This is a secondary question that can't really be answered until other primary questions are answered and could be discussed digitally
- More engagement with CEO report and strategic issues and less time on programmatic information sharing
- Setting priorities means saying No to some things, and it is the Council that makes those determinations, not any other group. The Council (unlike CoB) has at least nominal control of its agenda through procedurally adopting the agenda. But realistically, the agenda is a fait accompli, and its priorities are not necessarily those of the Council.
- While the meeting evaluations may help with come specific topics and planning for the Churchwide Staff, I'm not sure they're a very affective tool to help the Council look at how effectively it uses our time together and how closely we stick to the work that is Council's to do (especially those things which can/should be done Council).
- This is a species of the item below. I would like to see more time for substantive discussion on major policy issues and less time on canned reports from staff and even less on greetings from guests. The church is spending a lot of money to bring us to Chicago, house and feed us. They should work us harder on substantial issues; e.g. the seminaries in free-fall; financial sustainability at all levels; crushing seminary debt; etc.
- Time that we spend together need to be as productive as possible
- Core to getting work done.
- This has been improving!

- This is about the Council owning their meeting
- The greatest challenge is time. When we are needing to act on several significant actions, I am concerned that the committee of the whole hasn't weighed in. And while I value the greetings, faith reflections and Bible study times, that time takes away from other discussion. At the retreat, there was discussion about removing some of the duties specified as council responsibility in the constitution.
- It would be good to know how the agenda is developed and have input on what formats and time allotments we have for certain items
- This is something that is already being tweaked in positive ways and further discussion could bring out more helpful suggestions for engagement.
- We should have time for assessment of what we're doing, where we've been as church, where we want to go, and how to get there.
- What you spend time on is what is most important to you. Our upcoming meeting allocates less than 20 minutes to congregation vitality and leadership development. So, it appears we have moved on from this strategic directive which is what we said we did not want to happen.
- How the Council uses its time together is an essential issue, so that, the work can be done effectively
- I am not sure all of the council would spend the time we do on all issues and some feel other issues are ignored or given only short attention
- We should examine whether committees should have an additional "off cycle" meeting in order to be able to shorten the Council meeting; the 6-7 hour time block given over on Friday should be halved - (offered as a starting point); also, I would offer more time for plenary discussion & less time for presentations not directly related to council business
- Choosing the best issues to address by the council for the future of the ELCA
- This should be an effort to maximize the time we have together.

<b>Frequency of meeting and opportunities for advice and consultation</b>	<b>72.73%</b>	<b>24</b>
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- If more frequent Council meetings is an option, it makes sense, but it has never been presented as an option. The Episcopalians meet twice as often and in different locations each time. We don't know what our options are.
- technology could be utilized more for efficiency and more regular communication
- We only meet twice a year with little contact between meetings. We should meet more often (3 times a year when there isn't a CWA) and should more monthly or bi monthly conference calls to keep us informed on what is happening.
- Like to consider 3 meetings per year, 1 with COB.
- I have no issue with this topic
- Meetings too packed?
- Opportunities for conference calls, loved the primers also
- Some of this would be an outgrowth of other topics of conversation
- Three meetings a year would likely allow for stronger governance and allow Council members to better fulfill their responsibilities.
- What is most needed of us as a council for the ELCA organization and others?
- Meeting electronically between meetings, and possibly inviting specific responses to the regular Executive Committee reports might increase engagement and ownership of Council work.
- I think this would be something to consider after the other topics have been addressed.
- Do we need to meet more often or not to fulfill constitutional responsibility.

- I think this is one of the reasons why people of different synods are elected to be part of the CC. People experience different contextual challenges and these are the basic information that needs to be collected, so the CC can analyze it, study it, make decisions and work with the churchwide staff.
- I appreciate the updates from the Exec when they meet. Finances no doubt dictate 2 meetings a year.
- Twice a year face to face may be adequate but advice could be offered in a more timely fashion by Zoom.
- Is there too much responsibility put on the executive committee with the whole council only meeting twice a year.
- This does not seem particularly necessary for an in person conversation. I'm not sure if we are actually ever asked for advice. Maybe we are.....
- Less concerned about frequency of meetings, more interested in communication and consultation between meetings.
- This seems okay to, but we should have an opportunity annually to meet with the conference of bishops.
- Cost is the issue
- more off cycle committee work via teleconference
- With acknowledge, many ways are available to do our work.
- This just has lower priority for discussion for me in comparison to the other topics.

<b>How and what information the Council receives</b>	<b>81.82%</b>	<b>27</b>
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- In spite of having professional churchwide staff to do it, we never seem to see any statistical analysis of what Lutherans think about anything, which might be based on surveys, etc. it's like we are afraid to know. For example, what reception rite do deacons themselves think is appropriate for the role in the church they sought?
- tell us what we need to know and give us access to further information we may wish to know.
- We are not kept informed on what is being discussed elsewhere. For example, we aren't informed of what topics are going to be discussed by COB....my bishop told me they were going to discuss the future of the ELCA. News to me!
- Exec committee recaps are only real communication of info between meetings.
- We receive much information that is unnecessary for us to fulfill our roles as I understand them.
- need all current and update info to remain on top of duties
- What do we need to know and what does only a committee need to know
- It is important that we provide the CC with information that guides discussion and decision making.
- Very important to have enough time to read, we are getting better
- This could easily be discussed digitally and is also related to clarity of function and purpose
- The CC agenda is built on who reports instead of what's most critical.
- We have a limited amount of time, and it can easily be filled with information. Is this the best use of our time together?
- Decisions are only as good as the information they're based on. I feel there are times we receive important information only after a request has been made for it.
- This is closely tied, for me, to the question of how detailed topics and issues which come before the Council are usually addressed first in a committee. So, in that case, it's a question of how best to communicate the Committee's consideration to the whole Council - something that I think could be improved. I also feel that in some situations, Churchwide staff are acting as gatekeepers are only sharing the information with us that they have decided we should have.

- We need to strike a balance between an overload of raw data (see LCRC agenda for this meeting) and overly-digested staff recommendations on important policy issues. I'm not sure we have it right yet.
- We don't need to receive information that is not relevant to our role and function
- I believe the churchwide staff and other committees are working their best to provide as much information to the CC as they can. I still rank this issue highly important because information needs to be interpreted and discussed before making any decisions on anything.
- Helpful to staff to know what the council wants to cover
- If/when roles for Conference of Bishops, CWO, etc are clear, then the info we receive should be appropriate. How we receive it ... we don't need oral repetition of what we already have in writing. Opportunities for questions, comments, etc are appreciated.
- The information drives the process
- Very appreciative of material given, especially summaries of the executive meetings. Do all council members need more voice between regular meetings?
- We receive a lot of information. Is it important that we all receive everything?
- We need to put in processes to make sure that key information is not withheld. We need dashboards set up that monitor critical areas, even in between meetings.
- Council receives a lot of material in a short period of time
- electronic agenda format needs to be more logically organized
- We don't always know what we don't know.
- This can be core or essential to how and why we spend our time and exert our efforts.

<b>Committee structure and process (e.g. frequency and timing of committee meetings, what work committees address versus whole Council, what committees the Council needs)</b>	<b>78.79%</b>	<b>26</b>
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- This has worked fine,
- this is important for priorities and efficiency of time/resources
- Committee workloads are not balanced. Legal has very little work until the year prior to CWA. Others such as Programs could use more time and help to adequately cover their area.
- Not sure current committees realign with 2025 goals
- I agree with separate committees and giving main points to whole council instead of the council trying to do all, all the time
- Change committees and roles
- Same as the agenda discussion above.
- Seems like a secondary topic that can only be clarified after other primary questions
- Clarify delegation to EC, restructure committees so there is attention to strategic plan and generative thinking
- Possible restructuring of committee based on current and future needs of the ELCA
- The current system works, but structure is always a key to effectiveness, so this is worth attention.
- I've come to really appreciate the Committee structure and how it assures that at least some portion of the Council is fully informed on all items which come before the Council. But, communication between Committees is very limited and if I want to know details about a topic which has come before another committee, it's cumbersome and difficult to get the reading done and to get a summary of the discussions (pro and con) which happened in a committee other than the one I'm assigned.

- Need to know how best to structure our work together
- It seems to me some committees have more issues to discuss and members of related committees will need more time/have to set aside times to discuss related issues. Some others are able to go through everything the agenda and finish the meeting on time. It is definitely not about whether or not the leader is more effective in keeping the time. But the nature and scope of the discussion. Or should we break down to more committees?
- Committees manage a lot of council business
- The committee time is valuable if we truly have some oversight and input. Sometimes it feels at the committee level that we are simply receiving information and what we need to do is rubber-stamp it. But with limited time and meeting twice a year, that's really all we have time for!
- There is value in the Committees and again I think a tool like Zoom could avoid a one day information dump
- I wonder if some of the work assigned to the Program committee needs more discussion by the whole council. They often have an exorbitant number of significant documents to review and make recommendations on. While I do trust the work my fellow members do, when we are needing to decide really weighty issues, would it be better for all voices to be heard. Reports given by committees are cursory and the whole council is not aware of what considerations were discussed in reaching decisions.
- Committee process with regard to staff role vs. council role is important.
- It has come up on multiple occasions that perhaps the particular committees we have and the overlap of their work could be approached differently. I would just like to hear what ideas for other approaches people might have.
- For the most part this seems to be okay.
- Budget team could get some work done in video meetings, but those meetings tend to be one-way communication. It also seems very redundant for everything done in Budget team to get redone for the whole council. Work should be done in one place or the other, but not both.
- Should be evaluated regularly
- I think there should be a review especially of the portfolios of program & evaluation committee, & finance - better agenda coordination to assure that resources are aligned with program objectives appropriately
- Analysis of what items need attention helps define structure
- This too is important/essential for efficiency, effectiveness and purpose.

<b>Council relationships with other groups (e.g. Conference of Bishops, Churchwide Organization administrative team, separately incorporated ministries)</b>	<b>78.79%</b>	<b>26</b>
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- This is straight forward.
- (most important) who, exactly, is "in charge" of what?
- We need to know what COB is going to discuss and what is of concern to Churchwide administration in advance. It seems like items are sprung on us at Council meetings with little advance warning.
- Would like to see COB utilize more frequently in an advisory role.
- In-person meetings need to be about building relationships.
- we have to have open relationships to have a good working council and system to continue to govern and grow
- Better ways to communicate
- This is another primary question that will provide clarity about some of the other questions



- CC role in relationship to groups named here is not clear
- To better cooperate with all parties/peoples involved in decision making.
- I believe we are collectively moving in the right direction on closer, stronger connections, though there's always room for improving relationships and the pace at which they are strengthened.
- These relationships are vital to us as a church, so I've ranked this moderately high, but I also feel like this is something we already do quite well.
- Need to know how we plan to work collaboratively with other groups
- Again, this is some other important sources for obtaining information and also an effective platform to discuss issues with clarity.
- Leadership relationships are important
- This is starting to be clarified! I wonder about giving more vote-representation to the Bishops who seem to deal with many of the issues we do before they come to us. It has been good to have the chair of the CoB with vote as well as voice on the CC.
- Helpful to know what the Council needs from the COB
- We have been working hard to work more collaboratively, there may yet be benefit in having overlapping meetings at least once a year, so that we could hear each other's thinking on crucial issues.
- It would be good to understand and strengthen these relationships, particularly SIMs, as we are not always clear on how they fit into the overall picture.
- How we relate to these other groups is highly important since they are typically the ones who have to live out or oversee the living out of council decisions in the actual ministry of the church
- Clarification and emphasis on interdependency
- That's mentioned above.
- There are critical issues that need to be addressed and all of the stakeholders need to be in relationship to make decisions
- still a work in progress
- Multiple groups need to be sure who does what
- This can impact how we prepare ourselves for open, honest and trusting dialogue and decision-making.

<b>Other?</b>	<b>12.12%</b>	<b>4</b>
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- there is always something else to cover that may not be known to all
- If we are going to operate as one church, and as church together, we must address this governance question.
- We can't do our work in the time allotted, or in attention given to it only a few days prior to each meeting. How do we help each other stay on top of voluminous information and reflecting regularly on our priorities between meetings?
- N/A

# Budget and Finance Committee Clarence Smith, Chair

November 2018



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# Actions that Require Church Council Action

- 2019 Spending Authorization
- Mission Support Experiment



# FY19 Revised Income Estimates and Spending Authorization



# Budget Proposal Highlights

- Year of transition as we align with FD 2025
- Incorporates new fundraising model
- Conclusion of Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA, absorption of these expenses



# Pathway to a Balanced Budget

- Operating expense savings
- Projected FY19 excess revenues over expenses
- Mission Development Fund reserves



# Income Estimate Highlights

- Mission Support decrease to \$43,000,000, a 1.1% decrease from FY 18 projection
- Increases in Vision for Mission, investment income, and temporarily restricted endowment income to reflect revised projections totaling \$1,470,000
- Decreases in unrestricted endowment income and bequest and trust income to reflect projected performance totaling \$865 thousand
- Designated and restricted fund releases of \$3.9 million, including operational support from prior year and transfers from Mission Development Fund
- ELCA World Hunger income estimate reduced by \$1.5 million



**INCOME ESTIMATES -  
CURRENT FUND**

	2018 Revised Budget	2019		
		CWA Budget	Proposed Revisions	Revised Estimate
<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>				
Mission Support	\$ 43,463,125	\$ 43,875,000	\$ (875,000)	\$ 43,000,000
Vision for Mission	800,000	800,000	1,200,000	\$ 2,000,000
Investment Income	1,625,380	1,465,620	709,760	\$ 2,175,380
Bequests & Trusts	1,375,000	1,250,000	56,250	\$ 1,306,250
Endowment	1,553,700	1,300,345	81,655	\$ 1,382,000
Rent	1,708,310	1,941,320	(233,010)	\$ 1,708,310
Other	3,145,000	2,940,400	204,600	\$ 3,145,000
Total Unrestricted	<u>\$ 53,670,515</u>	<u>\$ 53,572,685</u>	<u>\$ 1,144,255</u>	<u>\$ 54,716,940</u>





INCOME ESTIMATES - CURRENT FUND	2018 Revised Budget	2019		
		CWA Budget	Proposed Revisions	Revised Estimate
<b>TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED</b>				
Global Church Sponsorship	\$ 3,550,000	\$ 4,850,000	\$ (4,850,000)	\$ -
Global Church - Missionaries	-	-	2,200,000	2,200,000
Global Church - YAGM's	-	-	1,300,000	1,300,000
Global Ministries	-	-	1,000,000	1,000,000
International Women Leaders	-	-	220,000	220,000
Bequests and Trusts	1,525,000	1,525,000	(796,250)	728,750
Endowment	1,966,860	1,925,385	(184,385)	1,741,000
Unit Designated	85,000	85,000	-	85,000
Mission Investment Fund	1,500,000	1,500,000	-	1,500,000
Total Restricted	<u>\$ 8,626,860</u>	<u>\$ 9,885,385</u>	<u>\$ (1,110,635)</u>	<u>\$ 8,774,750</u>
<b>Total Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Income Funds</b>	\$ 62,297,375	\$ 63,458,070	\$ 33,620	\$ 63,491,690
<b>Other Fund Sources</b>				
Designated Funds Released	\$ 2,852,060	\$ 30,000	\$ 2,969,883	\$ 2,999,883
Restricted Funds Released	1,991,235	663,103	10,000	673,103
<b>Total Current Funds Available</b>	<u>\$ 67,140,670</u>	<u>\$ 64,151,173</u>	<u>\$ 3,013,503</u>	<u>\$ 67,164,676</u>



# Revised ELCA World Hunger Income Estimates

INCOME ESTIMATES - ELCA WORLD HUNGER	2018 Revised Estimate	2019		
		CWA Budget	Proposed Revisions	Revised Estimate
Direct Gifts	\$ 20,364,584	\$ 21,750,000	\$ (2,330,000)	\$ 19,420,000
Endowment	527,083	550,000	30,000	580,000
Bequests and Misc.	2,108,333	2,700,000	(1,200,000)	1,500,000
<b>Total ELCA World Hunger</b>	<b>\$ 23,000,000</b>	<b>\$ 25,000,000</b>	<b>\$ (3,500,000)</b>	<b>\$ 21,500,000</b>



# Spending Authorization Highlights

- Incorporation of Campaign expenses of approximately \$1.1 million (*Current Fund & World Hunger*)
- Personnel - salary increase of 2% and IT market rate adjustments (over three years) totaling \$760 thousand
- Reduced benefit costs due to change in benefit plan totaling \$375 thousand savings from FY18 actual to FY19; total savings \$700 thousand



# Spending Authorization Highlights

- Unit authorized spending held constant, except 10% reduction in travel and increase to Mission Advancement fundraising costs
- Planned changes in resources allocation and additional travel savings
- Change to health insurance and travel reduction are included as a reduction to General Treasury and will be allocated to units after completion of expense budgets; revision in Spring 2019



**PROPOSAL****2019 Current Fund**

	<b>Current Authorization</b>	<b>Proposed Revisions</b>	<b>Revised Authorization</b>
Domestic Mission	\$ 24,530,864	116,403	\$ 24,647,267
Global Mission	13,902,865	173,747	14,076,612
Mission Advancement	5,105,600	212,970	5,318,570
Office of the Presiding Bishop	6,072,395	101,789	6,174,184
Office of the Secretary	4,057,200	42,656	4,099,856
Office of the Treasurer	9,166,145	172,798	9,338,943
General Treasury	151,200	(641,956)	(490,756)
Retiree Minimum Health Obligation	1,000,000	-	1,000,000
Depreciation	3,128,561	(128,561)	3,000,000
Strategic Initiative Fund	25,840	(25,840)	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 67,140,670</b>	<b>\$ 24,006</b>	<b>\$ 67,164,676</b>

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# Revised ELCA World Hunger Spending Authorization

	ELCA World Hunger		
	Current Authorization	Proposed Revision	Revised Authorization
Domestic Mission	\$ 4,099,523	\$ (556,119)	\$ 3,543,404
Global Mission	16,574,043	(2,669,088)	\$ 13,904,955
Mission Advancement	3,076,434	975,207	\$ 4,051,641
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 23,750,000</b>	<b>\$ (2,250,000)</b>	<b>\$ 21,500,000</b>



# ACTION

## Recommended:

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.





# Mission Support Experiments



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# ACTION

## Recommended:

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



# ACTION

To request the five synod leaders and appropriate churchwide staff bring an initial report to the Church Council by the April 2019 meeting and a final report and recommendations to the Church Council by November 2019 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;



# ACTION

- 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.



# Other Items Discussed

- ELCA Foundation Transition
- Triennium Budget Planning
- Core Investment Policy Revision
- Financial System Replacement



# Thank you!

## Budget and Finance Committee Members & Staff Support

### Committee:

Hans Becklin, Dena Gable, James Jennings,  
Meri Jo Petrivelli, Clarence Smith, Ingrid Stafford,  
William Voss, Michael Ward, Bishop Richard Graham,  
Bishop Jeffrey Clements

### Staff support:

Jonathan Beyer (OT), Wyvetta Bullock (OB),  
Christopher Carpenter (OT), Lori Fedyk (OT),  
Victoria Flood (MA), Christina Jackson-Skelton (MA),  
Annette Roman (OT), Annette Shoemaker (FO)



# Thank you Christopher Carpenter



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# Questions



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Always

being made

New.



# Campaign Progress

*As of September 30, '18*

**\$207 million total impact**  
for priorities of the Campaign

- **\$165 million** in current gifts and commitments
- **\$42 million** in planned gifts



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# 2018 - Campaign Updates

## Changes affirmed by the Church Council Executive Committee:

1. Extend the period of the campaign through June 30, 2019
2. Count all gifts committed, both realized and outstanding, by this date
3. Count planned gift commitments in the Campaign



# 2018 Annual Theme: Leadership



- ELCA Fund for Leaders and Youth and Young Adults
- Rostered Ministers Appreciation this fall
- [ELCA.org/RMappreciation](http://ELCA.org/RMappreciation)



# 2018 - NEW Grant Opportunities

## Disability Ministries

- \$250,000 total
- New or expanded mental health ministries
- Announcement in early October
- Submission deadline: January 31, 2019

## Youth and Young Adults

- \$450,000 total
- Partnership of two or more ELCA-related ministries, one of which must be a congregation or synod
- Grants will range from \$5,000 to \$40,000
- Grant applications received September 4 – October 31



# 2018 Church Council Call-to-Action

- Review your own giving and participate in the Church Council Challenge – thanks for all of you who are responding to this call!
- Prayerfully discern making a planned gift for a campaign priority



# Finishing Strong: Ways to Participate

- Year-end: Good Gifts
- February 3: Big Game Challenge?
- March 6 – April 21: ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving
- March 8: International Women's Day
- Spring – Synod Assemblies



# ELCA Good Gifts

Supports wide-range of ELCA Ministries –  
85% ELCA World Hunger



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# March 8 – International Women’s Day Link with the ELCA International Women Leader’s Priority!



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# ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving March 6 – April 21, 2019



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# 2019 Synod Assemblies

- Consider featuring the Campaign “Where Needed Most” fund as part of your **2019 synod assemblies**
  - These undesignated gifts to the Campaign give flexibility to respond to the most critical ministries where additional funding is needed, as we complete the work of the current Campaign.



# Pathway to \$198 million in cash and commitments

- \$165 million as of Sept. 30
- + \$15 million projected income by Jan. 31
- + \$8-10 million projected Feb. 1 - June 30
- + \$4-6 million in outstanding major-gift proposals
- + \$2 million from synod campaigns and offerings
- + Other

**\$198 million+**



# 2019 Churchwide Assembly Opportunity to Celebrate and Give Thanks

ELCA Churchwide Assembly  
August 5 – 10, 2019  
Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
*We Are Church*



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Always  
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25 YEARS TOGETHER IN CHRIST



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**Preliminary report and Timeline  
of the  
Task Force to Consider a Future Campaign and Income Strategies**

**First Meeting: Nov. 7, 2018**

- Received reports on income history from Treasurer Fedyk
- Received a campaign report/recommendations from Christina Jackson-Skelton
- Discussed ELCA giving patterns with Doug Mason

The Task Force had robust conversations around trends in giving, trends in Mission Support, etc. As a deliverable, the Task Force created the following timeline to guide its work:

**November 2018**

Deliver timeline of initial work

**January/February 2019:**

Meeting of the task force, with agenda:

- Review priorities of the campaign. Assess the traction of the various areas of the campaign with various donor market segments.
- Recommend a process to align future major fundraising initiatives with Future Directions. Does this review call us to a campaign? Or to another model?
- Review the process the Church Council approved for future campaigns. Make sure that there is clarity on how future campaigns/initiatives will be approved and conducted.
- In consultation with Bishop Eaton, make a recommendation about a strategic initiative to launch immediately at the completion of the campaign. This initiative is meant to continue momentum in major gift fundraising and could be wrapped into a future campaign, should the campaign tool be adopted.
- At its meeting in November, the Task Force asked Treasurer Fedyk what the ideal budget projections are that would optimize the work of the CWO. Review those projections to inform decision-making.
- Begin deliberations on how to change the culture in the three expressions of our church around Mission Support. Are there opportunities for collaboration with synods and congregations? Are there ways to equip synodical bishops with skills and understanding of major gift fundraising? How do we communicate strategically to our congregations, and help bishops fill the disconnect between the CWO and congregations?

**March 2019**

Phone meeting to finalize report and initial findings

**April 2019**

Present initial report to Church Council. This report will also include recommendations about the continuing work of the Task Force, if needed.

**June 30, 2019**

The Campaign for the ELCA ends.

**July 2019**

Staff immediately transition major gift fundraising priorities around the new focus, including soliciting lead/matching gifts for this focus

**August 2019**

Churchwide Assembly celebrates the successful completion of the campaign. The new focus is introduced.

Task Force Members

Joe Nolte (chair), Churchwide Council  
Dr. Sylvia Black, Campaign Steering Committee  
Bishop Steven Delzer, Southeastern Minnesota Synod/Churchwide Council Liaison Bishop  
Bishop Suzanne Dillahunt, Southern Ohio Synod/Churchwide Council Liaison Bishop  
Lori Fedyk, Treasurer, ELCA  
Rev. Ron Glusenkamp, Campaign Director  
Bishop Richard Graham, Metro DC Synod/Churchwide Council Liaison Bishop (excused)  
Christina Jackson-Skelton, Executive for Mission Advancement  
Ingrid Stafford, Churchwide Council  
Rev. Michael Ward, Churchwide Council  
Sonja Wolfe, Churchwide Council

Resource Staff

Rev. Wyvetta Bullock, Executive for Administration  
Doug Mason, Campaign Counsel, Gonser Gerber

## Update on the Campaign for the ELCA

Five years ago, we set a goal of significantly increasing funding designated for existing and new ministry initiatives through *The Campaign for the ELCA*. Now, as we enter the campaign's final months, the support of ELCA synods, congregations and members has led to a total impact of nearly \$204 million, including \$162.5 million in gifts and commitments, as well as \$41 million in planned gifts, for campaign priorities.

Yet, there is more work to be done. Earlier this year, the Campaign Steering Committee convened in Chicago, Illinois to discuss the upcoming conclusion of the campaign, the impact we've had together thus far and the opportunities ahead. Out of these discussions came three recommendations, which were affirmed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council in June. They are:

- **Extend the period of the campaign through June 30, 2019:** While we have met with many ELCA members who wanted to learn more about our shared ministries and participate in the campaign, there are still many who haven't had the opportunity. By extending the period an additional five months, we hope to allow everyone who would like to participate to do so in time for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.
- **To count all gifts committed, both realized and outstanding, by this date:** Multi-year commitments help sustain ELCA ministries year after year and provide a way for ELCA members to participate in the campaign at a higher level than a one-time gift. As of August 31, 2018, there is \$5.6 million in outstanding multi-year commitments to campaign priorities, as well as \$157 million in cash gifts.
- **To count planned gift commitments in the Campaign:** Planned gifts are crucial to sustaining our ministries long beyond the campaign. All planned gifts will now be celebrated and formally counted as part of the \$198 million goal. As of August 31, 2018, nearly \$41 million in planned gifts have been committed to campaign ministries.

We have accomplished so much, and we couldn't have done it without your partnership. As we enter these final months, we ask each of you to help accelerate the successful completion of this effort. Our continued collaboration in this final year is important so that we achieve all we set out to do together. Let's finish strong as church together!

### ❖ Fundraising highlights

- As of August 31, 2018 gifts to *The Campaign for the ELCA* have a total impact of nearly \$204 million, including \$162.5 million in cash and commitments, as well as \$41 million in planned gifts, toward the ministries of the campaign.
- One of the hoped-for outcomes of *The Campaign for the ELCA* is to build a sustainable major gifts program for the church. During the final year of the campaign, Mission Advancement launched a special initiative called "Project 500" as part of the major-gifts strategy. The primary purpose is to focus our major gift efforts on engaging the top 500 major donor prospects.
- The campaign team continues to focus on securing matching gifts for various efforts, including:
  - International Women's Day 2018 – a \$100,000 match was secured and reached in March;
  - ELCA World Hunger's Global Farm Challenge – a \$515,000 match was secured last spring, and the match was reached in August, raising a total of more than \$1.1 million for ELCA World Hunger.
- The Campaign is connecting with synod bishops and other partners across the church to identify how we can work together to achieve our collective goals in the campaign's fifth year and working with congregations to connect their priorities and members with the work of the campaign.
- One of the campaign's goals in its last year is to increase employee engagement and participation. The campaign team is participating in an effort to create an employee giving committee and dedicated giving initiative within the churchwide organization.
- In August, the campaign director conducted phone calls with all Church Council members to provide updates and talk about our objectives for the campaign's final year. Campaign Steering Committee and



Church Council member, Joe Nolte, continues to be a liaison and provide updates to Church Council as well.

❖ **Synod engagement and support**

- We ask that synods consider featuring the Campaign “Where Needed Most” fund as part of the 2019 synod assemblies. These undesignated gifts to the campaign allow our church flexibility to respond in the time and place when it can make the biggest impact.
- The campaign team is continually working with synods as they implement their own campaigns in conjunction with *The Campaign for the ELCA* and/or lead efforts with donors and congregations in their region. In the final months of the campaign, we are tallying the total impact of these synod campaigns.
- One key way synods are collaborating to support the campaign is by holding events. These events have produced good opportunities for hosts and guests to deepen their commitment and engagement in ministries of the ELCA.
- In addition to work with synods, the campaign team continues to collaborate with congregations to connect their priorities and members with the work of the campaign.
- Earlier this fall, all synod bishops received a statement detailing progress towards their personal commitments to the campaign.

❖ **Church Council leadership and support**

- All Church Council members are encouraged to give, stretch, pray and tell about the Campaign for the ELCA and its significant impact on ministries in this country and globally.

❖ **Campaign communications**

- This year marks the Leadership annual theme year – lifting up ELCA Fund for Leaders and Youth and Young Adults – within the campaign. As part of the theme year, congregations are encouraged to participate in a “rostered ministers appreciation” initiative this fall. An accompanying toolkit with resources and activity ideas was mailed in June. These resources are also available online at [ELCA.org/Resources/Campaign-for-the-ELCA](http://ELCA.org/Resources/Campaign-for-the-ELCA) under the “Annual Themes” tab.
- Included in the ongoing efforts to raise funds for the Campaign “Where Needed Most” are direct mail appeals to mid-level and annual donors. So far, more than \$470,000 has been raised through these efforts. A final appeal dropped in mid-October.
- Later this fall, campaign major donors will receive a letter from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton detailing the campaign updates (extending the campaign by five months and including multiyear commitments and planned gifts in the total goal) and inviting them to consider making a planned gift, if they haven’t already done so.
- Plans are underway to announce the completion of the campaign and our collective impact. These announcements and accompanying materials will take place around the 2019 Churchwide Assembly next August.

## Update on Day of Discernment Event

*Pastor Eric Wester, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop, Federal Chaplaincy*

At the 2016 Churchwide Assembly (CWA), a memorial [CA16.06.30] was referred from the CWA to the Church Council. At its November 2016 meeting, Church Council assigned responsibility to Federal Chaplaincy Ministries (FCM) to take the lead in developing a response to the memorial.

A series of coordinating steps set the stage for conducting a “Day of Discernment” on July 26, 2018. Intervening steps were:

- work in consultation with Domestic Mission, Office of the Treasurer and colleagues in the Office of the Presiding Bishop,
- support ELCA Advocacy in issuing an *Advocacy Alert* calling the ELCA to prayer and action regarding broadening war efforts,
- including four members of Church Council to serve as advisors, and
- developing a program, presenter and participant lists, and coordinate planning, conduct and follow-up of the “Day of Discernment.”

On Thursday, July 26, 2018, Federal Chaplains Ministry convened a face-to-face gathering at the Lutheran Center. The anchor for consider on-going and expanded war-time efforts is the ELCA social statement, *For Peace in God’s World*. The day provided opportunities for listening, learning, emphasizing resources in this church and identifying issues and emerging concerns. Over 150 people were included in the invitation list and nearly all remain on an “email update” list. We had a total of 45 participants, slightly larger than originally envisioned.

Here are the schedule, presenters and topics for the “Day of Discernment:”

- 8:05 am Morning Prayer and Statement of Purpose *Pastors Eric Wester and Howard “H” Stendahl*
- 8:30 am **“Context: ELCA on War and Peace”**  
The Rev. Dr. Roger Willer and the Rev. Dr. John Stumme on process, background and trajectory of 1995 statement: *For Peace in God’s World*
- 9:00 am **“Twentieth Century Perspectives on Morality, Faith and Use of Force”**  
Dr. Eric Patterson, Georgetown University’s Berkley Center and Regent University and Author, *Politics in a Religious World: Building a Religiously Informed U.S. Foreign Policy*  
Response by Dr. Jose Rodriguez, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Chicago then  
Table Talk with Scribes
- 10:30 am **“Enduring Insights: Theological Treasures from *For Peace in God’s World*”**  
Dr. Dan Bell, Professor of Theology, Lenoir Rhyne University and Author, *Just War as Christian Discipleship: Recentering the Tradition in the Church Rather Than the State*  
Response by the Rev. Amy Reumann, ELCA Director of Advocacy, Domestic Mission  
Table Talk with Scribes
- 1:00 pm **“Contemporary Challenges and Topics for Discernment”**  
Chaplain (Colonel) Timothy Mallard, Director, Army Chief of Chaplains Ecclesiastical Relations and Convener, 2018 International Ethics Symposium, US Army and Royal Army Chaplains Department, UK  
Response by Dennis Frado, Lutheran Office for World Community and LWF, New York  
Table Talk with Scribes

2:30 pm      **“Collecting Essential Insights for Future Directions in Church Teaching”**  
Chaplain, Maj Gen Howard “H” Stendahl, USAF (Ret) Facilitated Small Group Reflection and Synthesis:  
“A Day of Discernment: How Do We Turn this into a Churchwide Discernment?”

How does our effort provide a springboard for:

- Naming the context and issues around expanding and continuing war-time efforts
- Faith resources from ELCA in social statements
- Proposed activities and practical steps

4:00 pm      Dismissal and travel to home station

The “Day of Discernment” provided a chance to gather many forms of input: presentations addressing sequential themes, diverse respondents to each of the presentations and table talk. All elements of the day were aimed to inform and activate discussions of discernment in six table groups (with seven or eight people per table).

A very important program feature was having a designated Scribe at each of our table groups. Our six Scribes invested their efforts in:

- (1) collecting the presentations,
- (2) taking careful notes of the responses and
- (3) doing heroic work to keep up with discussions at each of the six tables.

Below is a list of all who participated in the “Day of Discernment.” Thanks are due to all who made this happen. Participants expressed thanks and appreciation what they considered a significant event.

The Day will enable further discernment across the ELCA. Materials from the day, including presentations and scribal notes will be published on line. The primary tool for wider discernment across the ELCA will be a new study guide *For Peace in God’s World*, written in a way informed by the information shared at the “Day of Discernment.”

The follow-up work is to encourage further discernment across the ELCA. The primary tool for continuing efforts across the ELCA will be a new curriculum to study *For Peace in God’s World*. The final outcome is to foster continued discernment using this new study guide. This study guide will be published in 2019 under the direction of the Theological Discernment Team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

## Participants of the ELCA Day of Discernment

### Presenters

**Rev. Dr. John Stumme**  
Lutheran Ethicist  
Chicago, IL

**Rev. Dr. Roger Willer**  
ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Director, Theological Ethics  
Villa Park, IL

**Dr. Eric Patterson**  
Professor, Robertson School of Government  
Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA  
Research Fellow, Berkley Center for Religion,  
Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown  
University  
Washington, DC

**Rev. Dr. Dan Bell**  
Professor, Theology  
Lenoir-Rhyne University  
Ordained Elder, United Methodist Church  
Sandy, UT

**Chaplain (Colonel) Timothy Mallard**  
Command Chaplain, United States Army  
Europe/7<sup>th</sup> Army  
Wiesbaden, Federal Republic of Germany

**Chaplain, Maj Gen Howard Stendahl**  
US Air Force (Retired)  
ELCA Pastor  
Cibolo, TX

### Respondents

**Rev. Dr. Jose Rodriguez**  
Chair, Global Mission & World Christianity  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago  
Chicago, IL

**Rev. Amy Reumann**  
Director, ELCA Advocacy  
Silver Spring, MD

**Dennis Frado**  
Director, Lutheran Office for World Community  
New York City, NY

### Participants

**Kathleen (Kadi) Billman**  
Professor, Pastoral Ministry  
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago  
Chicago, IL

**Amy Blumenshine**  
ELCA Deacon  
Coming Home Collaborative  
Minneapolis, MN

**Allan Bostelmann**  
Minnesota Area Synod Public Voice Committee  
Minneapolis, MN

**Reid Christopherson**  
ELCA Church Council  
Garretson, SD

**Justin Clavet**  
Administrative Services Coordinator  
ELCA Office of the Secretary  
Naperville, IL

**Heather Dean**  
Program Coordinator  
ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Des Plaines, IL

**Rev. Elizabeth Eaton**  
ELCA Presiding Bishop  
Skokie, IL

**William Elmstrom**  
ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministries Advisory Committee  
Clinton, MN

**Rev. Murray Finck**  
Bishop Emeritus  
Pacifica Synod, ELCA  
Santa Ana, CA

**Jerry Folk**  
Madison, WI

**Thomas Frizzell**

Chaplain, US Navy Reserve  
Norfolk, VA

**Bill Galvin**

The Center on Conscience & War  
Washington, DC

**Rev. Richard Graham**

Bishop  
Metropolitan DC Synod, ELCA  
Washington, DC

**Ian Graue**

ELCA Lay Representative  
Raymond, MN

**Rev. Joyce Graue**

Church Council, ELCA  
Pastor, St. John's Lutheran Church  
Raymond, MN

**Sonia Hayden**

Executive Administrative Assistant  
ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Park Ridge, IL

**Kerstin Hedlund**

Chaplain, US Army Reserve  
Forest Park, IL

**Stephen Herr**

Pastor  
Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Gettysburg, PA

**Richard Hilden**

Minnesota Area Synod Public Voice Committee  
Minneapolis, MN

**Jennifer Johnson**

Program Director, Synodical Service  
ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Chicago, IL

**Marit Johnson**

Administrative Assistant, Natural Systems  
ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Chicago, IL

**Rev. Susan Lang**

Rev Writer Resources, LLC  
East Greenville, PA

**Rev. Stephen Martin**

Chaplain, Bureau of Prisons  
ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministries Advisory  
Committee  
Marana, AZ

**Rev. Walter May**

ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Assistant to the Bishop, Synodical Relations  
Chicago, IL

**Melinda Morton**

ELCA Pastor  
Centennial, CO

**Rev. Peter Muschinske**

Chaplain, US Navy Reserve  
Saint Louis, MO

**Judith Roberts**

Program Director, Racial Justice  
ELCA Ethnic Specific, Multicultural Ministries  
and Racial Justice  
Niles, IL

**Rev. Julia Shreve**

Chaplain, Veterans Affairs  
ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministries Advisory Committee  
Fargo, ND

**Rev. Dr. Ernest (Ernie) Simmons**

Professor, Religion  
Concordia College  
Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities  
Moorhead, MN

**Jodi Slattery**

ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Assistant to the Bishop, Governance  
Morton Grove, IL

**Michael Sonnenberg**

ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Federal Chaplaincy Ministries  
Alexandria, VA

**Lyman Smith**

Ecclesiastical Endorser and Clergy  
Presbyterian Church – USA  
Washington, DC

**Michael Troutman**

ELCA Deacon  
Minneapolis, MN

**Leslie (Les) Weber**

Erie, PA

**Rev. Eric Wester**

ELCA Office of the Presiding Bishop  
Assistant to the Bishop and Director, Federal  
Chaplaincy Ministries  
Arlington, VA

**Rev. Jeffrey Zust**

US Army Chaplain and  
ELCA Pastor  
Moline, IL

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## TOWARD A FAITHFUL AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABILITY

### Thought piece for the ELCA's Leadership Tables

#### Background

At its spring 2018 meeting, the ELCA Church Council endorsed a proposal from the Church Council executive and Future Directions Table to develop a paper on church sustainability.

The Called Forward Together in Christ process, leading to the adoption of Future Directions 2025, revealed different understandings of sustainability, which made it difficult at times to identify and reach consensus on strategies that would support the sustainability of the ELCA.

This paper aims to assist the ELCA's three leadership tables – the Conference of Bishops, the Administrative Team of the churchwide organization and the Church Council – arrive at a shared understanding of sustainability that is right for the ELCA's identity and missional purpose and to the many contexts this church lives and journeys in every day. It is hoped the paper will stimulate a discussion on sustainability that ultimately helps the three leadership tables inspire a positive discourse and develop clearer strategies for sustainability across the ELCA.

The paper was drafted by Lyla Rogan in consultation with a reference group. Particular thanks go to Bishop Tracie Bartholomew, Bill Horne, Christina Jackson-Skelton, Kathryn Lohre and Wyvetta Bullock. It draws on discussions involving the Future Directions Table, the Church Council and the Joint Executive Leadership Table over the course of 2017-18 and is framed to support implementation of Future Directions 2025.

The Lutheran World Federation has also been exploring what sustainability means in its context of being the global communion of Lutheran churches, and this paper draws on some of that thinking and work.

Sustainability – a faithful and positive aspiration

As Christians, we believe the church will always exist until Christ comes again in glory. As church, we are “created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world” (ELCA Constitution 4.01).

As long as Christ ordains, the ELCA exists as part of the Christian witness. We are entrusted to be faithful stewards, tending to the sustainability of this church.

**In the context of being Christ's church, sustainability needs to be understood as an ecclesial and spiritual matter and a function of responsible and accountable stewardship in the way the church is led, resourced and organized. Sustainability is about our living faith and care for what has been entrusted to us.**

#### **Biblical references**

John 10:10b

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Acts 6:1-6

With this understanding, sustainability is both a faithful and positive aspiration for this church. This paper is concerned with how this aspiration is expressed and championed by the ELCA's leaders and what can make it

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challenging. It offers a framework for describing sustainability that hopefully makes it easier for leaders to speak about sustainability with one voice and explore how it can be fostered and built.

This church has a complex ecology with multiple organizational and ministry settings and numerous pathways for participation and engagement. One of the challenges in promoting sustainability in this ecology is bridging the gap between different understandings of sustainability. Just as it is clear that this church exists to serve God's mission in the world, it is also clear that its institutional arrangements – the ways it plans, organizes, develops its leaders, gathers and uses its many gifts and resources – are vessels and processes through which God's mission is served. An important and perennial question for the ELCA's leadership tables is whether and how the institutional arrangements can evolve to better serve and realize the ELCA's shared purpose in serving God.

Kenneth Inskip's background paper for the Future Directions Table, *Priorities in Context – Sustainability and Membership Growth*, concluded that sustainability is contingent on a **shared set of sensibilities** between members, clergy and the leaders of the wider church. The paper emphasizes the need for greater clarity and more accessible communication on Lutheran theology and what it has to offer the world, and it lifts up shared values, exchange of learning and cooperative endeavor. Inskip's paper highlights the importance of continuing to explore and find shared meaning on what it means to be church, to be Lutheran, to be church together, and to be church for the sake of the world. However, the paper goes on to argue that shared theology and values may not be enough to build institutional connectedness. Becoming a more sustainable church will require the ELCA to present its values in ways that connect with the interests of the whole church and have meaning across generations, among people of color, across urban and rural communities, among new and older members of the church, and across ethnic and cultural groups. It also requires more intentionality in reaching out to, engaging with and listening to lay members of this church and both lay leaders and rostered ministers of different expressions and ministries.

Through its analysis of church and societal trends and comparisons over time in participation, resources for mission and the way these resources are used, the paper points to a **multidimensional view of sustainability – with attention to theological, ecclesial, spiritual and institutional elements**. This analysis has been considered together with themes from leadership table discussions to capture what sustainability means for this church and identify, in more tangible terms, markers of a sustainable ELCA.

Understanding sustainability in the context of being church

Rather than seek to arrive at a concise definition of the term sustainability, this paper unpacks the dimensions of sustainability in a church context in order to pinpoint the markers of a sustainable church.

Sustainability is first and foremost a **theological, ecclesial and spiritual matter**. It begins with a focus on living faith, as it is God's word that calls the church into being. Freed by God's grace, the ELCA exists to live faithfully, witness boldly, and serve joyfully ("Our Shared Purpose" in Future Directions 2025). Hence, sustainability is intrinsically tied to the ELCA's shared confessional identity and communion, to faithful discipleship, to capacities for witness and service, and a passion for God's mission in the world.

Sustainability is necessarily **future-oriented and hopeful**, and it is about **abundance and regeneration**, not mere survival or preservation of the status quo. For the ELCA, it is always connected to a **missional purpose** and not an institutional or corporate end in itself. Sustainability springs from the many expressions and ministries of the church sharing a bold vision and purpose. While diversity and different perspectives will



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always be part of the life and identity of this church, sustainability requires a deeper sense of all being part of one church with a shared mission and vision. Sustainability is built as the ELCA becomes a *thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people* and a *welcoming, visible and ecumenical church* committed to justice, peace and reconciliation (Future Directions 2025 goals).

A sustainable church is one that is shaped by and responsive to its many contexts and communities of faith – in identity, theology, faith practices, worship, ministries, leadership and relationships. Without **contextual relevance and legitimacy**, the church cannot be sustainable in today's world or into the future.

In the context of God's call to being church, sustainability is about **connectedness, mutuality and relationships**, with God, as people of God, and as different expressions and ministries of the ELCA. Shared purpose and identity, connectedness and relationships as one church comprising many parts are critical measures of sustainability.

A sustainable church in today's world cannot journey alone. Sustainability is built through our **accompaniment and communion with other Lutheran churches**, church to church, through The Lutheran World Federation, and in the depth and mutuality of our ecumenical and interreligious relationships. Sustainability is also helped by **strategic alliances and partnerships with secular institutions and other nonprofit organizations** that share some of our goals and can link us to networks, ideas and technologies with great potential for the ELCA.

The conservation and environmental movements offer a definition of sustainable development that has remained relevant and gained traction since the 1990s – *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*. This has elements of responsible stewardship and management of resources – both now and as caretakers for future generations and creation. And this seems highly relevant for the church.

As church together, sustainability is about **our vocation as responsible and accountable stewards of God-given gifts and resources – for God's mission now and into the future**. In this vein, it is about having a shared vision and clear goals, development of leaders across the church, effective governance, good communication and relational processes, well-managed and efficient organizations and ministries, effective use of knowledge and technologies, securing resources for mission, and maximizing the use of available resources and assets.

The markers of a sustainable church

Embracing a multidimensional view of sustainability allows us to identify more tangible markers of a sustainable church. In turn, these markers provide church leaders (individually and collectively) a more holistic way to assess, discern and decide what needs attention to build sustainability of the church. Church leaders in particular need to be able to understand and describe the markers of a sustainable ELCA if they are to promote and work on sustainability as a goal for this church.

Building from the dimensions discussed above, the markers of a sustainable ELCA are:

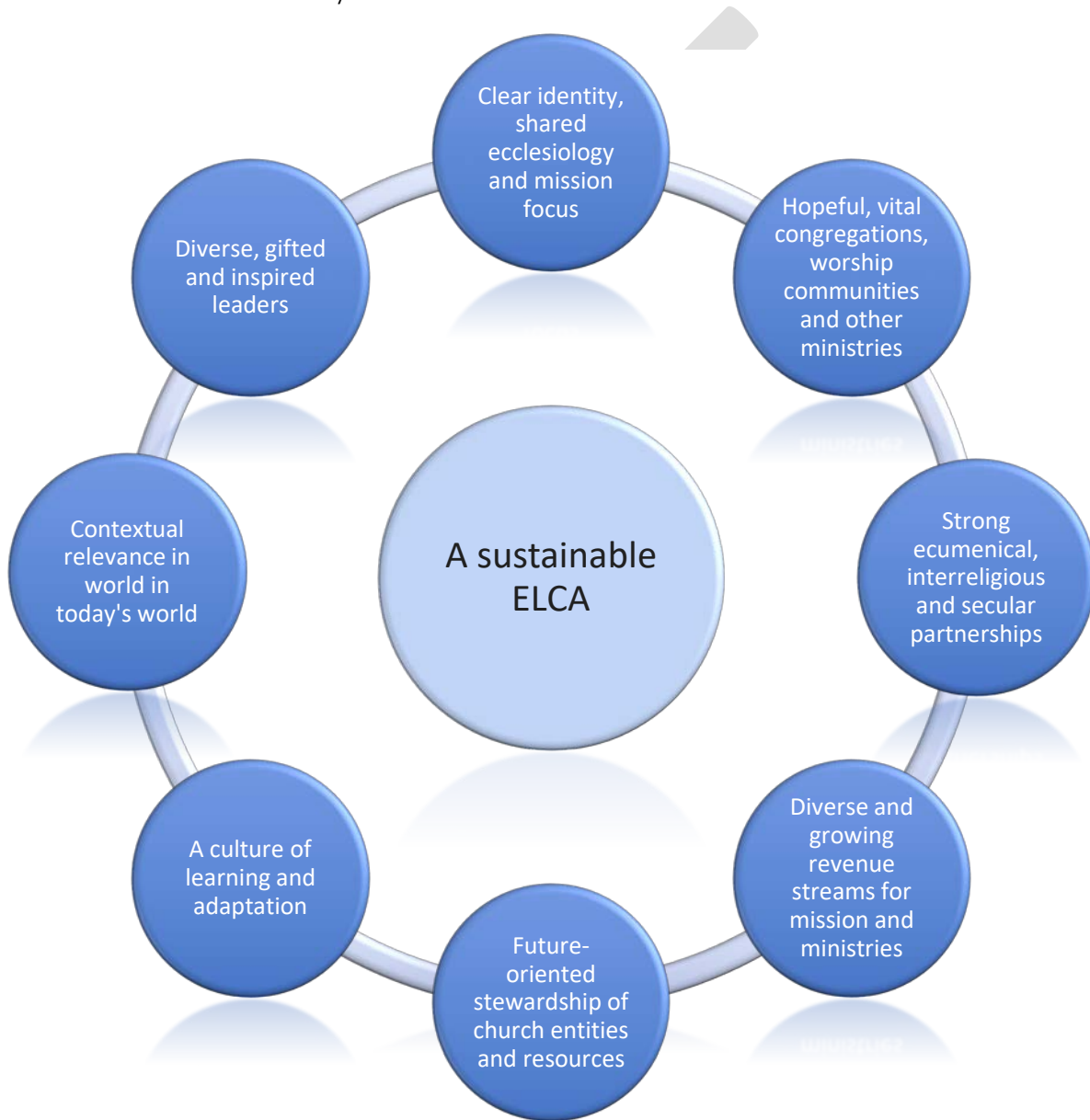
- Clear identity, shared ecclesiology and mission focus.
- Hopeful and vital congregations, worship communities and other ministries.
- Contextual relevance – in the lives of ELCA members, communities and today's world.
- Diverse, gifted and inspired leaders.
- A culture of learning and adaptation.
- Strong ecumenical, interreligious and secular partnerships.

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- Diverse and growing revenue streams for mission and ministries.
- Future-oriented stewardship of church entities and resources.

The diagram below shows the interconnectedness of the theological, spiritual, contextual, relational and organizational factors that affect the vitality and sustainability of the ELCA. This framing of faithful sustainability as multidimensional reinforces the interplay between the goals in Future Directions 2025 and shows them to be highly relevant foundations for a sustainable church.

Markers of faithful sustainability



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A multidimensional view requires leaders to see the different markers of sustainability to be important and mutually reinforcing. In this church's complex ecology and the current religious landscape, conversation and planning on some aspects of sustainability are difficult – especially around money, resources, roles and structures, and responsible and accountable stewardship of change. There can be a tendency for leaders to focus on one or a couple of dimensions of sustainability at a point in time or choose not to engage in the hard discussions and difficult decisions.

Promoting faithful sustainability as an aspiration for this church

A strategy that builds sustainability of the ELCA is helped by church leaders and agents of change in the church being better able to speak consistently, loudly and hopefully about sustainability as a faithful and important aspiration in the life of the church. It means equipping them to see bridges between the theological, ecclesial and institutional dimensions of sustainability. Church leaders and members need to become more comfortable talking about revitalization, growth and change as critical matters for church sustainability and project these discussions as being both faithful and serving God's mission.

The discourse will be stronger when, as church together, leaders can experience and project to others a shared identity, a vital living faith and a sustainable future. While trusting that the ELCA's future is ultimately in God's hands, it involves finding solutions to long-standing challenges that the whole church can understand, back and be inspired by. This means clearly expressing and building a shared sense that the interests of congregations and other ministries are furthered by this church's cooperative work. When people in all expressions and ministries can speak of "our church" ELCA will be better placed to build church vitality and sustainability.

What is hard in this?

Sustainability in most other contexts is seen as an essential and admirable goal, and it is rarely a term associated with deficit, although securing resources is an ever-present challenge for faith-based and nonprofit organizations. So, what makes the discourse on sustainability and finding new ways to achieve growth and sustainability as a church difficult?

**We live in the tension that Christ's church will always exist.** Our central Christian belief is that the church universal will exist until Christ comes again. Attending to the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of denominational structures and decision-making can feel in tension with our belief that the church will always exist. The ELCA's ecology, structure, networks and ministries, which we also refer to as "the church," are temporal and therefore must be given careful consideration as part of responsible stewardship of God's abundant gifts.

**The church is complex.** It is difficult for leaders and influencers of change to see the whole picture. There are at any time myriad initiatives and strategies in place or under development. It is difficult to convey how the various strategies for revitalization, leadership development and sustainability are linked or are mutually reinforcing, driven as they may be by individual congregations, synods or the churchwide organization, or mobilized through collaborative effort across expressions and within networks or groups tasked with leading work in different areas.

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**The ELCA finds it difficult to express a desire to be a growing church in Christ.** While there have been important initiatives relating to congregational vitality, leadership development, faith formation, Mission Support and fundraising, discussions about being a growing church remain difficult. There is a fear of failure and a natural belief in some parts of the ELCA that we are OK the way we are. While it is never just about filling the pews or counting the money, a vision of growing participation in the church and growing resources for mission should invoke a positive image and narrative, not a fearful one. Only through growth will there be an increase in people, communities and ministries following and witnessing Jesus, serving the neighbor and spreading the gospel.

**Conversations on church vitality sometimes cast a negative spin on the concern with sustainability.** This happens when sustainability is understood narrowly, confused with “financial sustainability” or taken to mean addressing decline in membership and funding for the church. There is a pressing need to turn around the unhelpful reaction to and shutting down of discussions that seek to examine data, analyze trends and

evaluate outcomes that will help this church envision new ways to become more sustainable. This means investing in creating a culture and mindset more open to learning, adapting, changing and taking risks. As in most settings, this is a task of leadership.

**The ELCA’s governance structures can impede a shared vision, common discourse and integrated strategy.** This church’s constitution created the ELCA’s expressions as autonomous entities with separate governance structures that coexist within the overarching governance framework of the ELCA churchwide assembly and Church Council. There is a clear hierarchy within each expression and ministry, but for the ELCA as church together, decision-making, planning and strategy development are largely decentralized. In addition, a range of consultative, peer-learning and advisory structures and networks play a role in shaping strategy and promoting learning. In a structure that is both hierarchical and decentralized, there may be a need to reassess which decisions should be made centrally in the interest of the vitality and sustainability of the whole church. The three leadership tables have already entered this space and have a role to play in imagining, recommending and deciding strategies that can affect the whole church, especially in areas that involve roles and structures, church finance and assets, and the ELCA’s future leadership profile. In a largely decentralized structure, collaborative leadership of change and effective change management are key to gaining acceptance that some decisions need to be made centrally.

**Decision-making, adaptation and change are slow.** Planning, evaluation and change management are not intrinsic to the ELCA’s culture and ways of working. Methodologies and thinking about good practice in these areas are not always embraced as relevant for the church. As the ELCA implements Future Directions 2025, clear strategy development, evaluation and knowledge exchange, and managing change become key. Effective management of change means having leaders who are able to make the case for change in positive terms, engage stakeholders in shaping options and decisions, take and communicate decisions, and follow through with implementation. It requires accepting there will be loss and attrition through change, as well as growth

#### **Integrated change leadership**

Successful and enduring change combines advantages of top down and bottom up approaches where:

- Top down is used to break up traditional patterns and implement difficult economic or structural adjustments.
- Bottom up provides for contextually relevant responses to opportunities and challenges and builds sustainable change and capacity for learning.

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and forward momentum. There is growing recognition that change efforts in most settings require a blend of top down and bottom up strategies if successful and lasting change is to be achieved.

**Communication and clear messaging across the church is a constant challenge.** The ELCA's complex ecology and its current structures make communication and connectedness difficult. There is clearly the technology and mediums to communicate consistently and with one voice to the wider church. However, the autonomy and independence of congregations, synods and other ministries means those messages may not be heard, used or embraced. Further, positive messaging about Lutheran theology, identity and congregational vitality means little if people's experience is very different from what the messaging is seeking to convey. The ELCA's structures and ways of relating can also make it difficult for leadership tables to tap into and respond to the experience of members, rostered ministers and lay leaders, church networks and social ministries.

**Lastly, the current reality IS challenging, and the ELCA is not alone.** In the U.S. and globally, there are disruptive trends that are reducing participation in organized religion and affecting the role and impact of churches. Finding solutions and ways to respond to these realities will require bold leadership, an investment of time and resources, and processes that support, acknowledge and share learnings and experience across the church.

One of most difficult problems is **finding new ways to raise, share and distribute financial support for the ELCA's three expressions and their ministries and programs.** The ELCA has successfully raised funds to support many of its local, national and global ministries. However, in the long run, increasing the membership and participation in this church will be critical to increasing revenue. Leaders need to be able to discuss "financial sustainability" without it becoming separated from other dimensions of sustainability.

The above list of factors is not presented to discourage efforts toward building sustainability. Sometimes "hardness" can become an excuse for keeping the status quo or justifying inaction. Failure to discuss and address these challenges will eventually damage the church. It will undermine the ELCA's efforts to become a vital, growing, diverse, welcoming and public-facing church that witnesses and serves Jesus and makes a difference in neighborhoods and the world.

The challenges identified also point to the importance of building connectedness and capacities as church together and collaborative church leadership through the ELCA's three leadership tables to:

- Convey in positive terms why sustainability matters.
- Name and tackle the difficulty and minimize its effects.
- Make decisions and implement changes in the interest of the whole church.
- Continue to develop an integrated mix of top-down and bottom-up strategies for church vitality, leadership and sustainability.

Where to from here in building a sustainable ELCA?

The first consideration arising from the discussion and analysis above is whether the three leadership tables will embrace sustainability, as a positive term and aspiration and promote an understanding of why a focus on sustainability is both faithful and important for the ELCA's future.

In some ways, this question has already been answered. Goal Five of Future Directions 2025 expresses the commitment to ELCA being a **well-governed, connected and sustainable church.** Just as it was important to

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give meaning to the term “congregational vitality,” the three leadership tables need to speak with one voice on what sustainability means for the ELCA and play their part in facilitating a positive discourse on sustainability across the church. So the question is not whether this should happen but how to do it. In discussing sustainability, it will be important to establish that sustainability is not just about church finances, assets and structures.

The second consideration is helping all expressions of the ELCA embrace the meaning of sustainability and see that church vitality and sustainability go hand in hand.

This does not mean a preoccupation with defining sustainability as a term. Rather, it means representatives of the three leadership tables will challenge narrow and negative interpretations of sustainability. It means promoting a view that vitality and leadership are markers of a sustainable church – together with more effective approaches to governance, church structures, resources for mission and connectedness as church, with communication a key to all of these.

More than ever, the ELCA has the means and opportunity to adopt more consistent messaging on the ideas and terms that matter for the life of the church. Clear and consistent messaging is a key to shifting hearts, minds and understandings. Hopefully, this paper will help find new messaging that reinforces the interconnectedness and necessity of focusing on church vitality, leadership and sustainability.

The third consideration is for the three leadership tables to note that progress on priority action areas under Goal Five relies on their strategic leadership, effective collaboration and an appetite for embracing and leading change. They will need to model a willingness to find, test and take forward new ways to build the sustainability of the church and to more clearly differentiate the roles of the synods and the churchwide organization. The paper invites consideration of decisions that should be taken centrally in the interests of the future church and how to move in this governance direction. The three leadership tables have a critical part to play here as whole-of-church leadership is unlikely to come from anywhere else.

A balanced strategy on sustainability in the short term could envisage a three-prong approach – congregational vitality, leadership development and church connectedness, and resources and structures. While congregational vitality and leadership have been widely embraced as strategic foci, there may be some ambivalence about lifting up other sustainability priorities to a similarly important and urgent level. This includes work on future funding models and stewardship of resources, revisiting roles and structures, and strengthening connectedness and accountability as church together.

A specific area identified in the Called Forward Together in Christ consultations and in discussions by the three leadership tables is the sustainability of the synods in their current roles, model and configuration.

Building on what is already happening

The three leadership tables, collectively and independently, have settled on a number of strategic commitments and initiatives that fit with the markers of sustainability identified above. And there will be much more happening within synods, congregations, the churchwide organization and other ministries that will contribute to ELCA’s sustainability. While not an exhaustive list, below are some of the important decisions related to sustainability and areas under development:

### Work in Progress September 3

- Implementation of Future Directions 2025 and a joint leadership commitment to take the goals and priority areas forward. Adoption of congregational vitality and leadership as critical foci for collaborative leadership and action across the ELCA.
- Growing cooperation and collaborative leadership by the ELCA's three leadership tables.
- Work on communicating and embracing the ELCA's identity – We are church, We are Lutheran, We are church together, and We are church for the sake of the world.
- The congregational vitality project (churchwide organization) and a number of synods experimenting with new ways to support vital congregations.
- Planning and realignment of the churchwide organization with Future Directions 2025.
- Discussion on future roles and structures of synods and the churchwide organization by joint leadership tables.
- The success of *The Campaign for the ELCA* (major gift infrastructure, new revenue sources and increased income) and resulting new and expanded ministries. Building on this success, the Church Council appointed a task force to consider a future ELCA campaign.
- Work of the Theological Education Advisory Committee – theological education for rostered ministers and lay leaders and sustainability of seminaries.
- Work with seminaries – models and curriculum for Master of Divinity degrees.
- The separate incorporation of the ELCA Foundation to strengthen governance and position it for future growth.
- Strengthening governance by the Church Council – Ad Hoc Church Council Working Group on Governance Policy.

The ELCA can also be proud of a range of self-sustaining churchwide ministries that are valued and recognized across the church, including: ELCA World Hunger, Fund for Leaders, "God's work. Our hands." Sunday, the ELCA Youth Gathering, the ELCA Mission Investment Fund, the ELCA Foundation and the ELCA Federal Credit Union.

A question to be addressed by the three leadership tables is how to raise awareness of what is happening, show these strategies as interconnected and relevant to the ELCA's sustainability, and do this in ways that build connectivity and a sense of being church together.

### Toward recommendations for the ELCA's three leadership tables

The considerations highlighted earlier and the following questions are intended to guide discussion by the three leadership tables during September/October.

1. Is the multidimensional framing of sustainability helpful? Once refined through further discussion, should the three leadership tables adopt this framework to demonstrate a shared understanding and joint commitment, and to mandate its use in further communication, planning and decision-making for the whole church?
2. Should priority be given to a communication strategy and messaging to encourage a positive dialogue on church sustainability and to emphasize its importance alongside the existing two foci of congregational vitality and leadership? Is this work for the churchwide organization given its whole-of-church focus and communication capacities and reach?

Work in Progress September 3

3. How will ELCA congregations be supported to engage with discussions on sustainability in their contexts and through their ministries? How are church leaders encouraged and supported to engage the harder conversations on resources, roles and structures, knowing these are important dimensions of faithful sustainability.
4. Given sustainability can be a goal within specific expressions and ministries and for the whole church, what decisions need to be taken centrally in order for them to have the gravitas and authority to effect change? What decisions relating to sustainability rightfully and necessarily sit with the Church Council as the formal governing body? And how does the council more effectively engage and draw on the Conference of Bishops and the Administrative Team of the churchwide organization to ensure its decisions are robust and able to be implemented?
5. Discussions on future directions and church sustainability have consistently identified the need to reassess the current synod model. Aspects of this are the number and configuration of synods needed in the future, the roles and functions of synods (including how these should interface with future roles and functions of the churchwide organization), and reassessment of the leadership emphasis and capacities of bishops. (One concern in the current arrangements is the administrative load carried by bishops.) A review of roles and structures has already been identified as a priority action under Goal Five of Future Directions 2025. How will this action be implemented?
6. If the markers of a sustainable church can be agreed upon, is there value in developing better ways to measure and assess progress in church sustainability and vitality? There is already work underway on measuring congregational vitality. If responsible and accountable stewardship, learning and adaptation are markers of a sustainable church, what else is needed in terms of data, results, research and analysis of trends on other dimensions of sustainability? (For example, stemming the decline or increasing participation, resources for mission, cost effectiveness of programs.)



## Synod Visit Reports

**Name: Linda Nou**

**Synod Visited: Oregon [1E]**

**Visit Date: May 18-19, 2018**

**Purpose of Visit: Synod council meeting and synod assembly**

1. *What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?*

I had the privilege of attending both the Oregon Synod Council Meeting on May 17 and the synod assembly on May 18. This year, the Oregon Synod was trying an experiment of having six regional gatherings prior to a one-day synod assembly to conduct business. Oregon is a large territory and attending an annual three-day assembly is cost prohibitive to many of its congregations. This year's format will be evaluated and decisions for the format of upcoming assemblies will be determined.

The regional gatherings were well attended and represented by 75 percent of all of their congregations. Prior to the regional gatherings, the synod council had made site visits to 58 of the synod's congregations as part of a Vitality Study and in preparation for the election of a bishop in 2019. Some of the highlights and learnings from both the visits and the gatherings are as follows:

### **Trends from Assessment and Visitation Data**

- A. 65% Congregations trying to maintain ministry and community life
- B. 20% Congregations ranked themselves highest in Vitality
- C. 15% Congregations in crisis

Group A          65% focus on maintenance

- Being a good neighbor
- Aging community with few or no young families and children
- Find divisive issues – past and present – hard to discuss; prefer not talking about them
- Facility challenges with aging buildings; little investment in upkeep
- Primary ministry emphasis is providing or funding community social services; worship and music a distant second
- Focus on homelessness vs. affordable housing
- Perseverant and scrappy as identified strengths
- Desire to become more accepting (considering RIC)

Group B          Vital - came in all sizes from multiple staff to limited pastoral coverage

- Strong relationships with non-members and community
- Wide political spectrum; able to talk about anything; moving beyond comfort zone is new normal
- Lack of hatred and hypocrisy; no judgment; RIC thing of the past
- Lived out spirituality vs. being religious
- Empowered laity
- Advocating for justice and peace; working on immigration and Sanctuary; environment
- Focus on affordable housing
- One on One's "Regularly", often during worship, listening sessions, community organizing
- Time pressure significant
- Multi-generational, often lots of babies and kids

Group C            In Crisis            Many of the same concerns as Group A:

- aging communities
- service/charity as major ministry
- Not enough people or resources to take next steps
- Limited or no pastoral leadership for the congregation
- Poor communication especially around divisive issues
- Some congregations – destructive behaviors related to congregational conflicts (e.g. secret meetings)

Looking at the religious affiliation in the communities where our congregations are located, the realization is that many rural, “conservative” communities throughout the synod have the same or lower percentage of religious affiliation as Portland (the most unchurched metropolitan area in the U.S.) The implications of this reality is the Oregon Synod faces even harder challenges with growing or maintaining current participation and financial support than much of the country. Declines will be steeper and more dramatic in the next five years with more and more congregations failing to be sustainable except as “house” churches with 30 or fewer participants.

### **2019 Bishop Election**

In addition to the data gathered above from the congregational visits, the team was also collecting information to write a Synod Profile of what they are looking for in their next bishop. A draft was presented at the council meeting.

### **Synod Assembly**

The assembly was well attended, and participants were enthusiastic.

2.        *How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?*

Over the years, I have developed a good relationship with Bishop Brauer-Rieke, his staff, and the synod council. The findings of their Vitality Surveys and prognosis for the future is telling. I believe they are being very proactive in assessing their situation and some of their methodology in assessment might be an asset to the larger church.

3.        *Please share how the Synod continues to engage Future Directions 2025.*

While they don't state their work in terms of Future Directions 2025, they are at work doing congregational vitality and leadership development.

**Name: Emma Wagner**

**Synod Visited: Delaware-Maryland Synod [8F]**

**Visit Date: May 31-June 2, 2018**

**Purpose of Visit: Synod Assembly/Voting Member**

1. *What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?*

In the last year, our synod has opened 5 new mission starts! All are geared towards reaching those we haven't traditionally engaged (ethnic specific communities and one LGBTQIA community). The synod has structured itself around its 4 goals: communication, connectedness, discipleship and leadership. Each goal is led by a part-time synod staff member and supported by a team.

2. *How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?*

Our synod continues to be strong in financially supporting World Hunger and we have several people resources connected to the churchwide organization in various leadership roles. The assembly passed a memorial titled, "Protection of the human rights of Palestinian Children living under Israeli military occupation."

3. *Please share how the Synod continues to engage Future Directions 2025.*

The synod independently identified leadership as one of its main priority areas for the next couple of years. They are putting resources into lay leadership, youth leadership development and candidacy. The bishop also noted during his report to the assembly that, "I want to put more money into new and renewing congregations rather than on how much our synod office spends in rent," which closely aligns with the other FD priority of vital congregations.

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**Name: Gary A. Pederson**

**Synod Visited: Southeastern Synod [9D]**

**Visit Date: May 31-June 3, 2018**

**Purpose of Visit: Attend Southeastern Synod Council and Synod Assembly meetings in Chattanooga, TN.**

1. *What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?*

The synod office is still in the process of moving to a new location at St. John's Lutheran Church, Atlanta, GA. The staff has been using a couple of rooms in St. John's during the renovation/construction of the new area with many files and items in temporary storage. The new synod office construction is currently ahead of schedule and is planned for dedication in September 2018. The Synod Council started planning for a debt reduction campaign for students at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, which will be presented to the 2019 Southeastern Synod Assembly for approval.

After 8 years of excellent service by Doris Underwood as Vice-President of the Southeastern Synod, the Southeastern Synod Assembly elected Imran Siddiqui to a 4-year term as Vice President on the first ballot. Imran has served on Synod Council for several years and should excel in this position.

The Southeastern Synod Candidacy Committee continues to handle an extremely large number of candidates for Ministry of Word and Sacrament and Word and Service. Currently there are six candidates awaiting call, 45 in seminary process, and 45 prospective candidates in discernment. With 96 candidates

working with the Candidacy Committee, the Southeastern Synod with the great assistance of the volunteers on the Candidacy Committee continues to provide many new ministers for the ELCA.

2. *How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?*

Deacon Sue Rothmeyer served as the churchwide representative. During her presentation, she highlighted many of the Southeastern Synod people serving on ELCA committees, task forces, Church Council (Rev. Bill Flippin and I), and others. The Southeastern Synod elected voting members to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly during this assembly. There was a great deal of interest by nominees in being elected to serve in this role and looking forward to attending the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

The Southeastern Synod continues to be a leader in producing new ministers for the ELCA. The Church Council and other synods should look at what is happening in the Southeastern Synod that could be a model for minister development throughout the ELCA. Bishop Gordy has presented several factors that contribute to the large number of candidates including strong youth and young adult ministry (led by Rachel Alley, Asst. to the Bishop for Young Adult and Youth Ministry), encouragement of young people with gifts for ministry by lay people and pastors and encountering of the Gospel by those who didn't grow up Lutheran but have become excited by the call to share the Good News.

3. *Please share how the Synod continues to engage Called Forward Together in Christ – ELCA Strategic Directions 2025.*

Our Assembly theme this year was “Reformation 500...Now What?” Deacon Rothmeyer, Bishop Gordy and our worship service preachers incorporated this theme into many of their comments. We spent a good bit of time discussing what our synod will be looking for in a new Southeastern Synod bishop next year. Bishop Gordy has made it clear that, after serving two terms, he will not be a candidate during the bishop election at our 2019 Southeastern Synod Assembly. He is very interested in having voting members and possible nominees consider this call carefully to determine who best would serve the needs of the Southeastern Synod in this position. With a new VP this year and a new bishop next year, leadership of the Southeastern Synod will change significantly.

**Name: Dena Gable**

**Synod Visited: Allegheny Synod [8C]**

**Visit Date: June 1-2, 2018**

**Purpose of Visit: Synod Assembly**

1. *What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?*

There were two ordinations at the Allegheny Synod Assembly. They celebrated 11 people currently in candidacy in the synod, the establishment of a new deaf ministry and increased mission support in 40 congregations. There is an opportunity for congregations to collect supplies for flood clean-up buckets and store them in each conference to be prepared for any need that arises. Individuals will be able to exchange letters with Allegheny's companion synod in Kenya. Other joys and opportunities were:

- Invitation to participate in the Global Farm Challenge;
- Commitment to reduce use of plastic at synod events and encouragement for congregations to do the same;
- Passage of anti-sexual harassment and leave policies to be implemented at the synod level and serve as models for congregations within the synod.

2. *How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?*

The churchwide representative, Gabi Alabouni gave an inspiring report about the ministry we do together, reminding people that we are the church, and raising up the need for diverse leadership. He presided at worship and made connections with many individuals throughout the two days.

3. *Please share how the Synod continues to engage Future Directions 2025.*

While Future Directions 2025 was not directly lifted up, the Allegheny Synod has strongly emphasized leadership as a priority, especially with the assembly theme of "How is the Holy Spirit Calling Us?" There was time taken in lifting up support for those in candidacy and an offering taken for the synod's seminary support fund. The assembly was asked to help identify the gifts of others in their congregations and encourage people to develop and use those gifts. The synod also has a discernment group for lay leaders who want to talk about how God might be calling them.

**Name: Man Hei Yip**  
**Synod Visited: Upstate New York Synod [7D]**  
**Visit Date: June 3-5, 2018**  
**Purpose of Visit: Synod Assembly**

1. *What are the joys and opportunities happening within the Synod?*

When I first got to the convention center where the Synod Assembly was held, I was greeted with friendly smiles. Young people also greeted me with arms wide open when I got into the elevator. People said hi to almost everyone they met. This is Upstate New York Synod. The greeting gestures and even a simple smile speak a thousand words. The synod is leading congregations to step outside their comfort zone and welcome strangers in their midst. More than welcoming, the synod is envisioning the way to be an inviting church. Congregations are not passively waiting for visitors to drop by. They are asked to seek out neighbors. The theme of this year was outreach and evangelism. Practical guides and tools were identified to help congregations reach out to others and make connections with needy neighbors. In addition, speakers talked about involving people who occasionally come to church to share God's specific gifts. To engage everybody and to provide opportunities for church members to work together for the sake of the world are effective ways to cultivate relationships. People feel secured and ready to share life with others.

2. *How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? What, if anything, should be shared with the Church Council and/or Churchwide Organization?*

Bishop John Macholz invited me to say a word, and I was honored to bring a greeting on behalf of the Church Council. Publicly expressing gratitude in person to the Synod's ongoing support goes a long way, and it also reminds people of the importance of doing mission together. I had great conversations with people I met. We talked around lunch/dinner tables. I answered questions about what Church Council members do, why we are here and the like. I also had the privilege of listening to people's stories and the challenges and opportunities of their congregations. Their voice and concerns become a credible source of information for the Church Council to make relevant decisions. The visit can help strengthen communication at both ends.

3. *Please share how the Synod continues to engage Future Directions 2025.*

The synod creates a five-year plan central to the 4G's presented by Bishop John Macholz. The term, 4G's, refers to "Grounded in Christ Jesus, Growing in Our Witness, Giving of Our Bounty, and Graced for the World." Congregations are encouraged to talk about faith and tell stories of God's grace to inspire others. When sharing one's faith story, one gains a deeper understanding of Christ, including his love and work in our lives. A renewed faith compels one to act in love. Thus, one learns to give, and care about others' wellbeing. These strategic steps are mapped out to help the synod achieve its mission and vision. Significantly, the synod's focus is consistent with the goals of Future Directions 2025. It offers insights into "equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world" and envisioning "a thriving church" that lives in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Deepening people's spiritual practices can increase church vitality, which helps initiate the process of becoming a sustainable church.

# Theological Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) Report

TEAC Church Council (CC)

November 2018

Reported by

John Lohrmann, TEAC Chair

Emma Wagner, TEAC Member



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# Agenda

1.

- Update on Theological Education Pilots and Asset Mapping Efforts

2.

- Revisit Enterprise Metrics and Answer Questions

3.

- Share Seminary Sustainability Efforts






4.

- Discuss Critical Questions for the Church





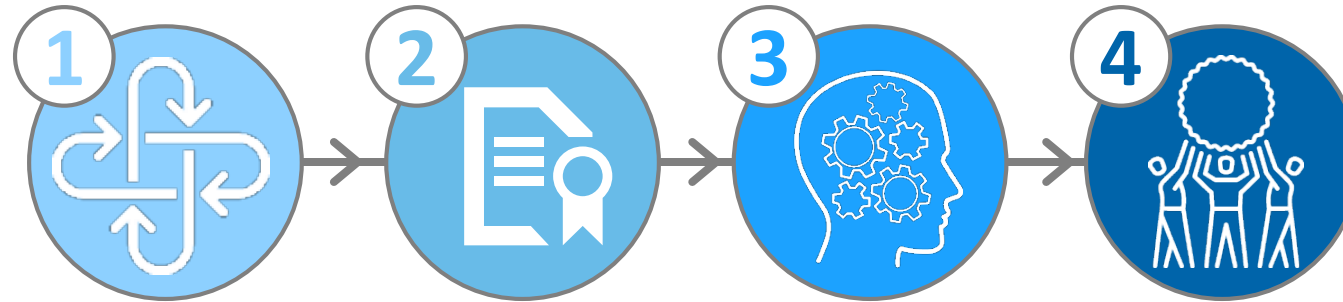
# TEAC Required Outcomes

-  More relevant and diverse leaders
-  More collective Theological education (TE) capacity
-  More *cost effective* approaches to TE
-  Less cost to students
-  Receptive faith communities



# Current TEAC Focus: Theological Education Roundtable Pilot

**Goal: Partner with the network of theological education programs to lift up effective and new ways of educating future leaders of all types.**



## Invite

Shared platform and open and dialogical process to promote innovative theological education programming

## Assess

Apply TEAC assessment criteria approved by CC to assess impact relative to faith formation and vocational discernment goals

## Share

Collaborate to make available innovative theological material and coursework across the ELCA ecology

## Promote

Promotion of programs as well as approaches with significant impact



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# Lay Program Asset Mapping

TEAC recognizes the significant role that lay leaders will continue to play in the future of the church, as such, we focus on linking theological education efforts within and between lay programs.



## Create

A database of lay programs



## Facilitate

A gathering of lay program leaders to share ideas, discuss challenges, and focus on priorities



## Share

Lay course content and resources



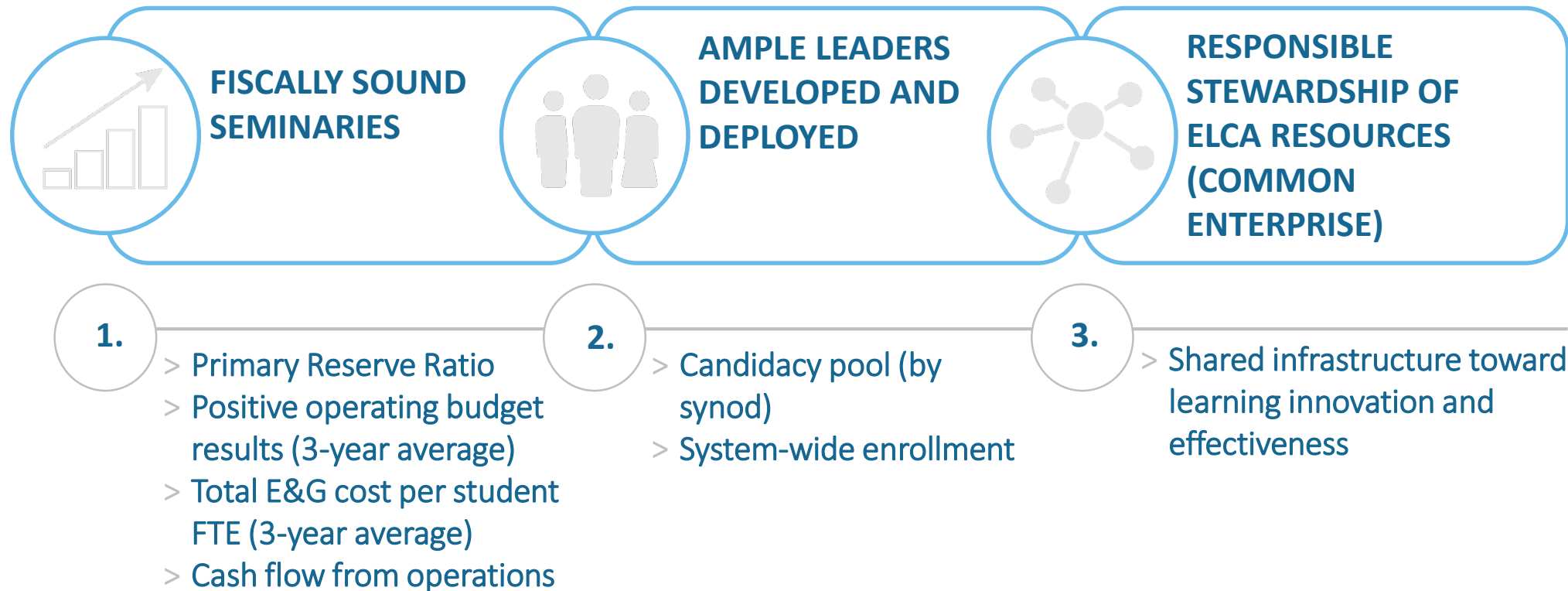
## Identify

Core materials and assess gaps in current available curriculum



# Current TEAC Focus: Enterprise-wide Metrics Overview

*Intended for use across the seminary system in assessing progress towards long-term sustainability and conversations with Church Council, synod leadership and major donors. These metrics are reviewed annually.*



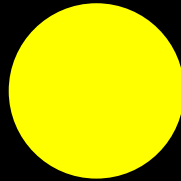
# Fiscally Sound – 2017 Results

## Ratio

## Status

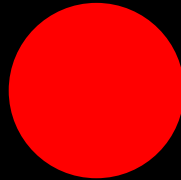
## Reason

1. Primary reserve ratio



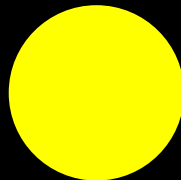
*Systemwide* – Meets benchmark  
*Individually* – Three fail to meet

2. Operating surplus / deficit



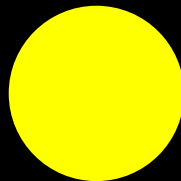
*Systemwide* – Does not meet  
*Individually* – Only PLTS meets

3. Total E&G cost / student



*Systemwide* – Cost increasing  
*Individually* – Range is significant;  
differs by \$65,000

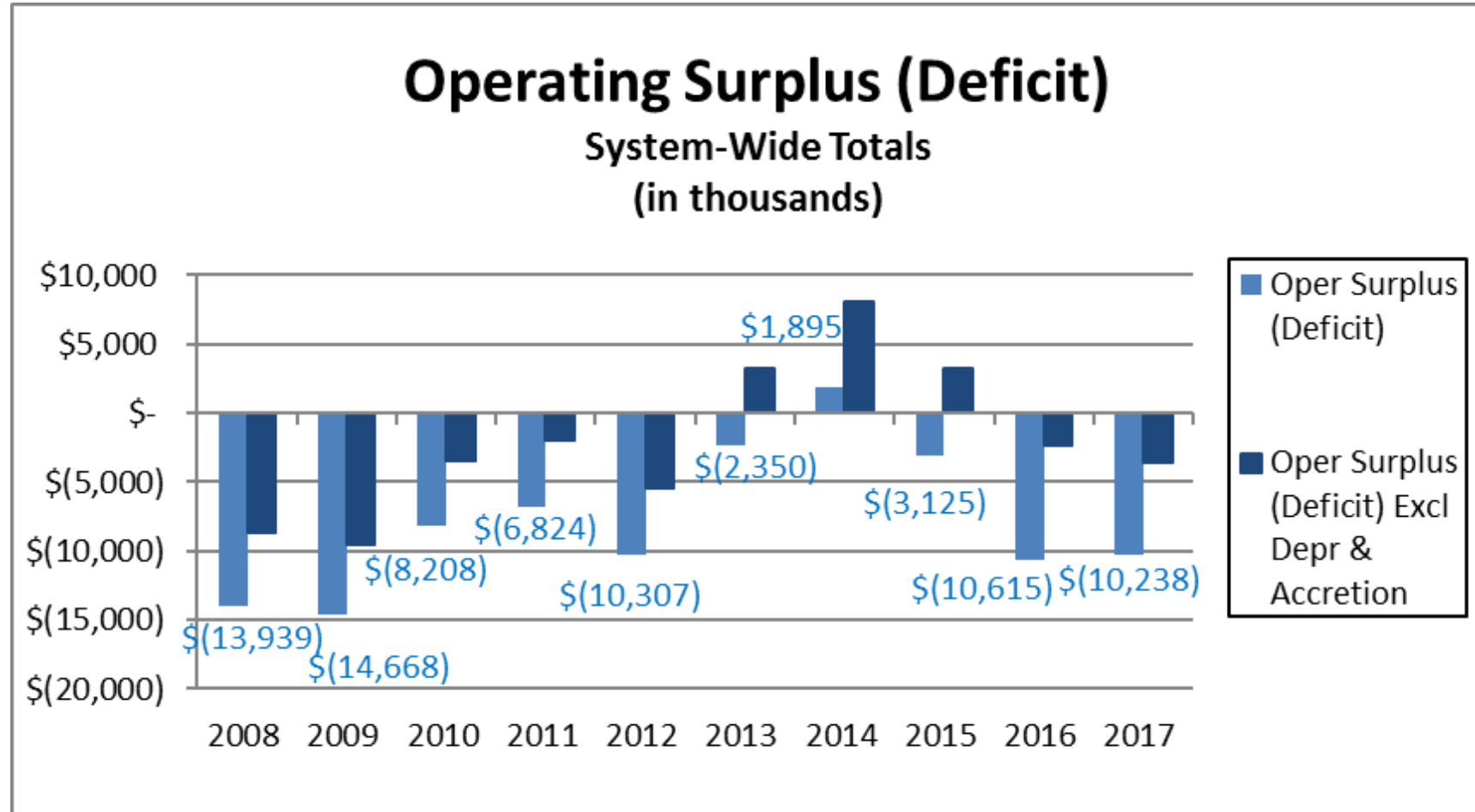
4. Cash income ratio



*Individual Institutions* – For most institutions - all but two - not sufficient



# Metrics, Realities, and Results - Summary



# Ample & Diverse Leaders

2017 Enterprise- metrics show us that:

- Annual candidacy applications have decreased from over 500 to 200 in the past 7 years
  - Ethnic-specific candidates comprise 15.6% of the 3,360 total application submitted since 2010
  - % of candidates placed is much lower for those in nontraditional categories
- Seminary enrollment has decreased by 25% during the past 3 years
  - M. Div enrollment has decreased by less (15% - past 3 years)
  - Ethnic-specific enrollees now make up a larger percentage of those enrolled (up by 2.7%) – still only about 15%



# Stewardship of Resources – Progress to Date to Address Metrics

Javier Goitia



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# Alliance Collaboration – Areas of Focus & Results

## ***Occurred:***

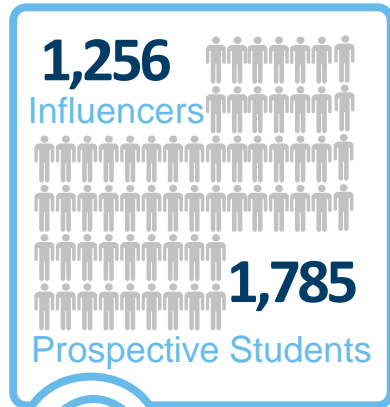
1. Antitrust concerns have been resolved
2. 5% Church Funding is in play
3. Joint seminary recruitment / discernment efforts

## ***Planned:***

1. Develop seminary manual to clarify expectations for ELCA seminaries
2. Joint research pairing faculty across seminaries with parish pastors to explore “game changing” questions



# Alliance Collaboration – 5% Funding Results



20+  
Events

“ Already adding value by raising the awareness of the issue and working to connect the dots and increase points of encouragement. ”  
– Executive Director

Expanded partnerships and facilitation of leadership forums with ethnic communities (e.g., Horizon Apprenticeship, Leadership Tables)

New partnerships and proactive participation with YAGM, Campus Ministry, Outdoor Ministry and Youth Gathering

Executed on marketing strategy by launching social media campaign, seminary website and vocation and discernment webpage



*What further steps can be taken to enhance our success together to identify, nurture and sustain ethnically and diverse candidates for public ministry?*

*What is the impact of recruitment collaboration?*

*How are we impacting a welcoming culture for discernment and placement?*



# Obligations: A frank discussion

- **Synod Funding** -- What is required to *truly* prioritize the development of future leaders?
- **All Are Welcome**— What is required to ensure diverse candidates are *truly* welcome within seminaries and upon call?



# Reference Materials



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# Theological Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) Report: *Enterprise Metrics*

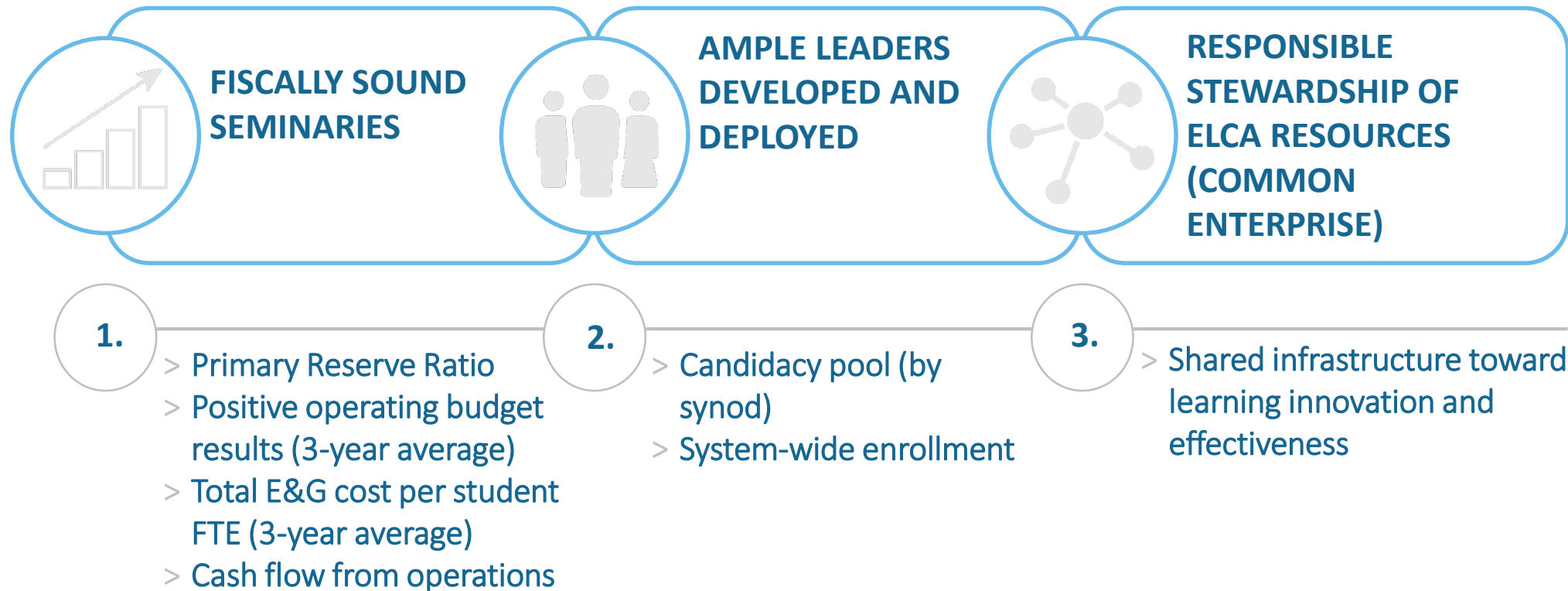
ELCA Church Council  
November 2018



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# Enterprise-wide Metrics Overview

*Intended for use across the seminary system in assessing progress towards long-term sustainability and conversations with Church Council, synod leadership and major donors*



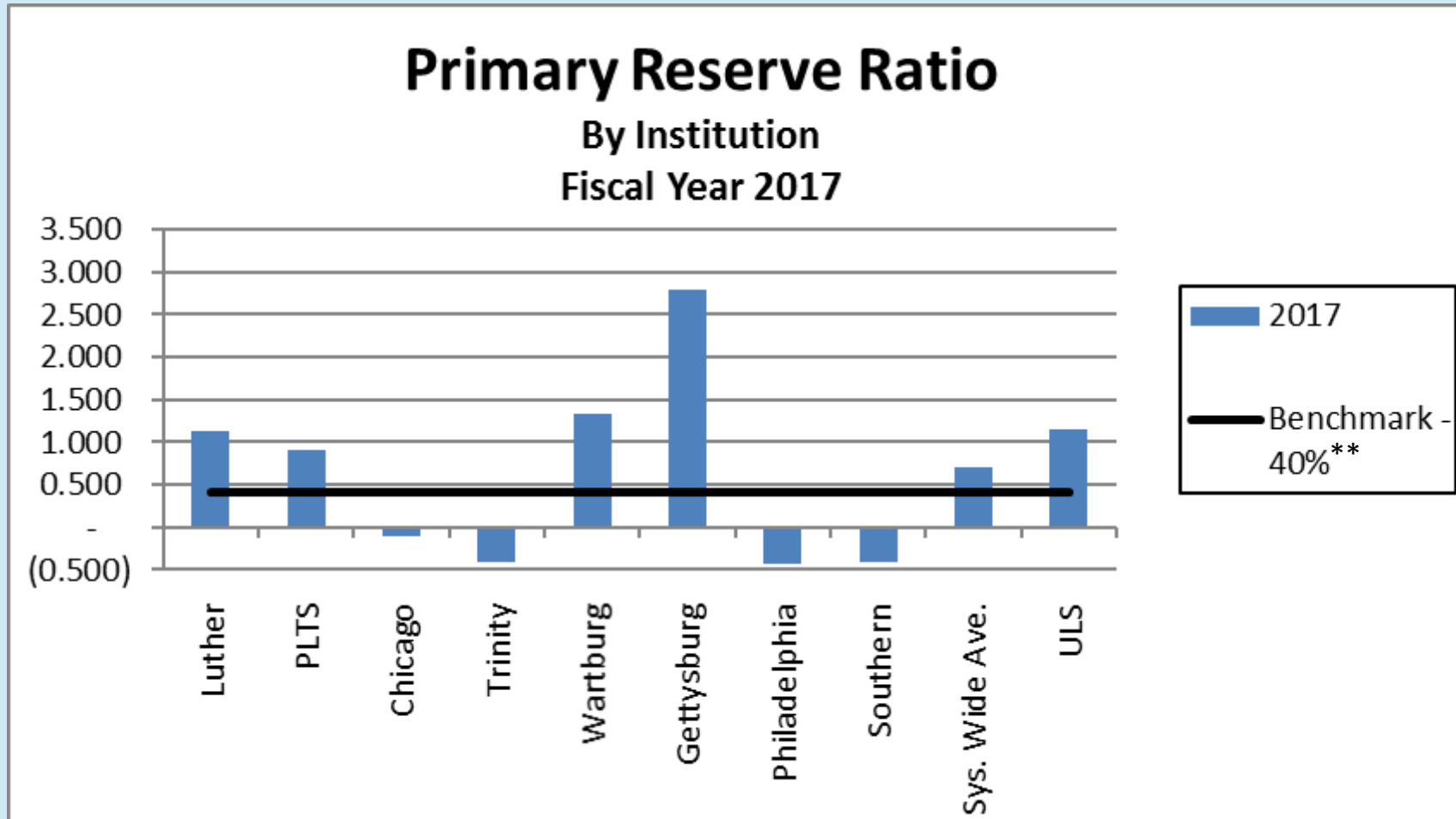
# 1. Enterprise-wide Metrics – Fiscally Sound Seminaries

1. Fiscally Sound Seminaries			
	Category	Measure(s)	Benchmark
1.1	<b>Primary reserve ratio</b>	Threshold Ratio	>. 40
1.2	<b>Positive operating budget results</b>	Level of net income surplus/deficit	+ Net income
		Variance amount of surplus/deficit	At or above mean
1.3	<b>Total E&amp;G Cost per Student FTE (3 year average)</b>	Total E&G cost per student FTE (three year average of ATS peers and comparison among ELCA sems)	Variance from mean
1.4	<b>Cash flow from operations</b>	Cash income ratio	+ Number/Higher = More Flexibility



# 1.1 Primary Reserve Ratio

> Expendable Net Assets by Institution\* / Total Expenses by Institution



\* Expendable Net Assets as defined by U.S. Department of Education

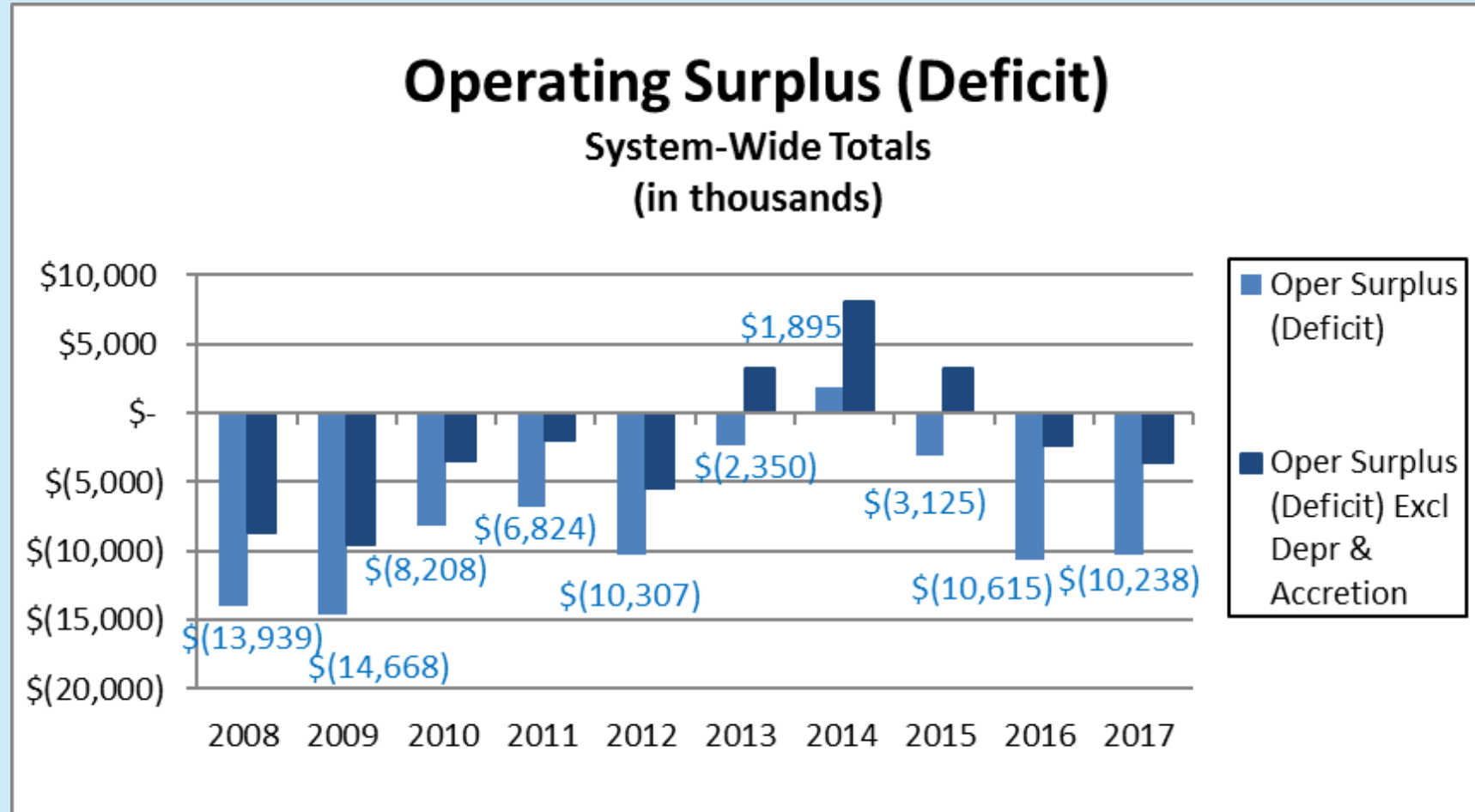
\*\* Benchmark is industry standard *Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education, 7th Edition* and the *Summer 2016 Update to the 7th Edition of Strategic Financial Analysis in Higher Education*, by Prager, Sealy, & Co., LLC, KPMG LLP, and Attain, LLC.





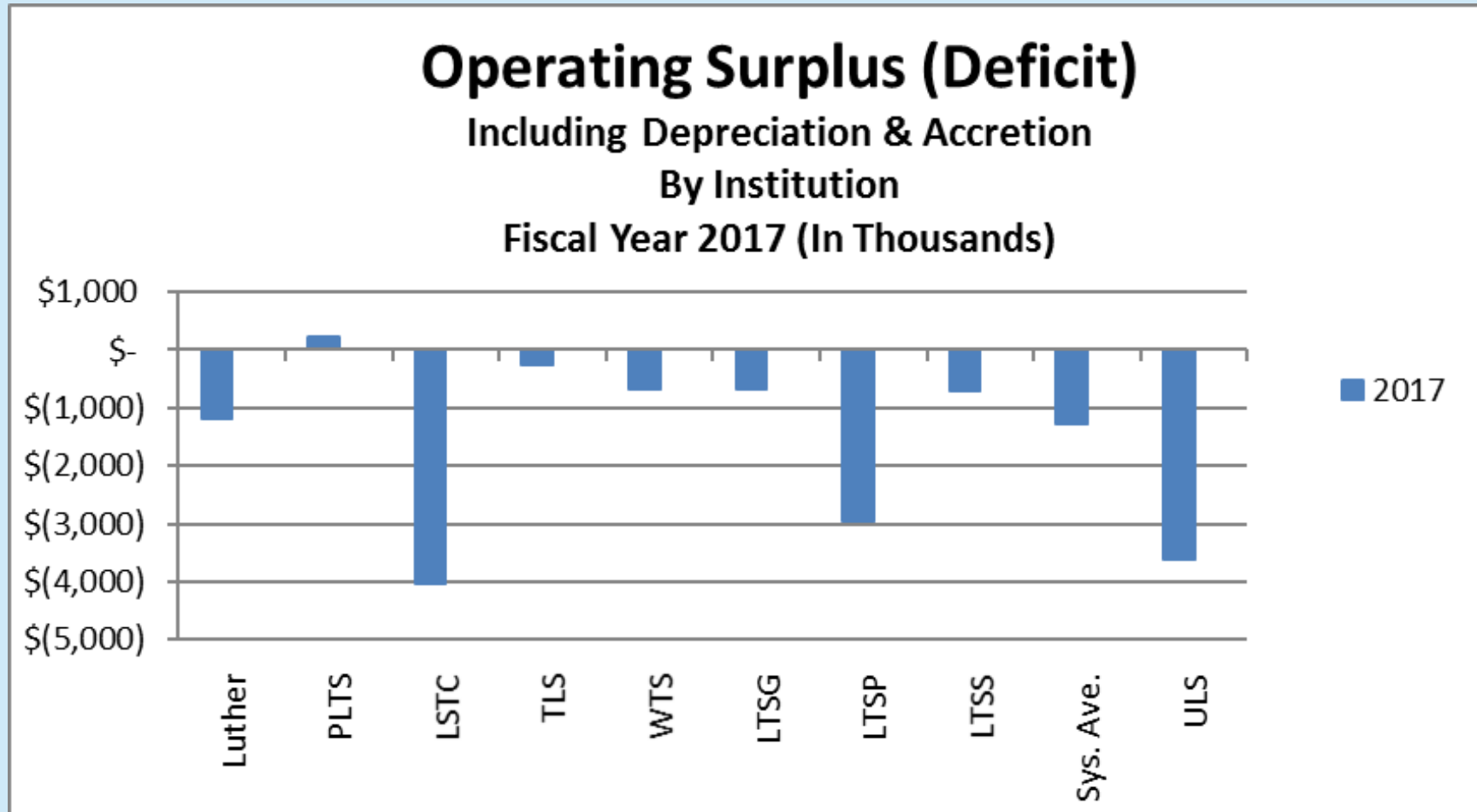
# 1.2 Positive Operating Budget Results

> Total Change in Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Net Assets System-Wide - Operating



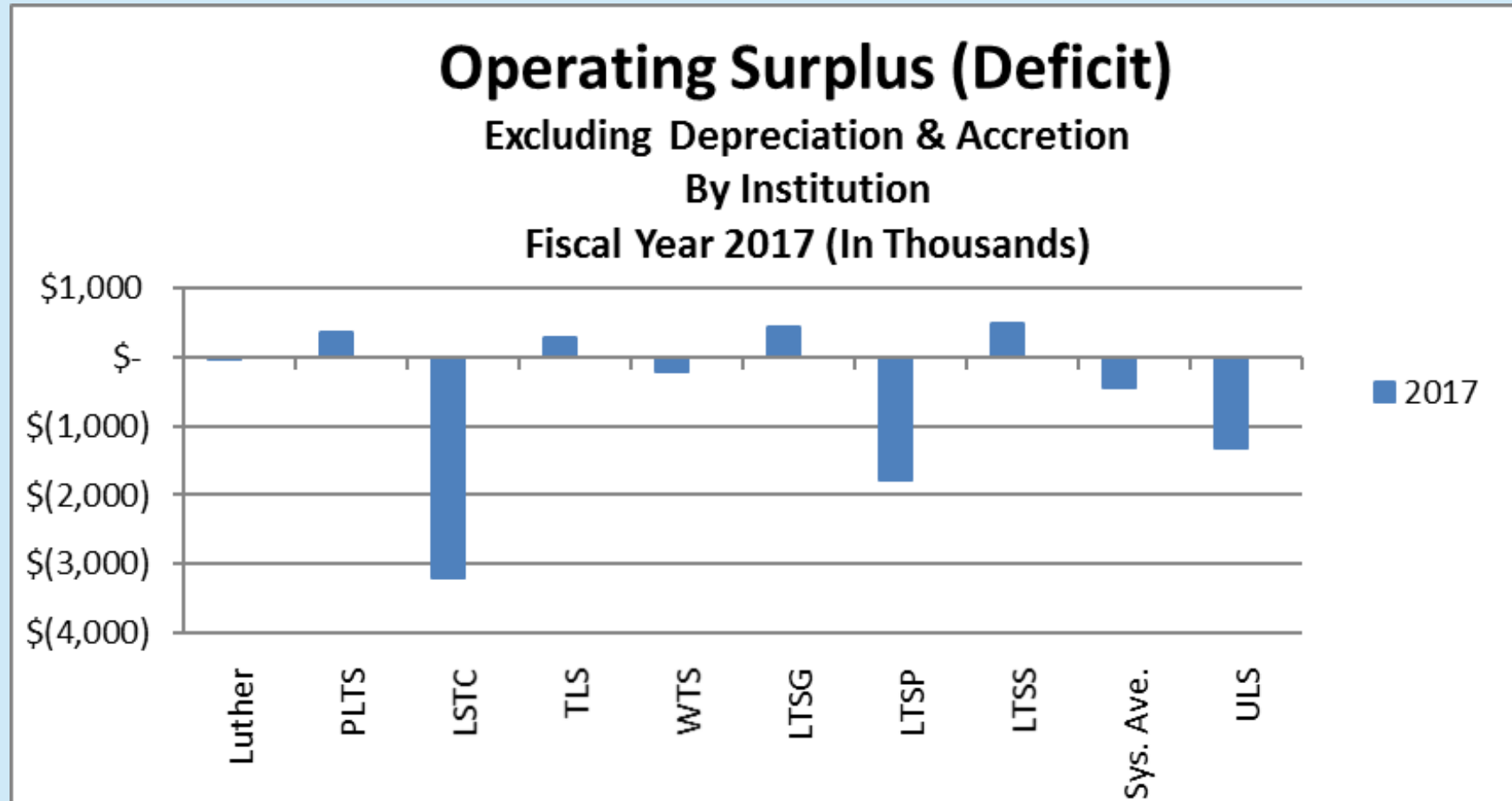
# 1.2 Positive Operating Budget Results

> Change in Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Net Assets by Institution *Including* Depreciation & Accretion - Operating



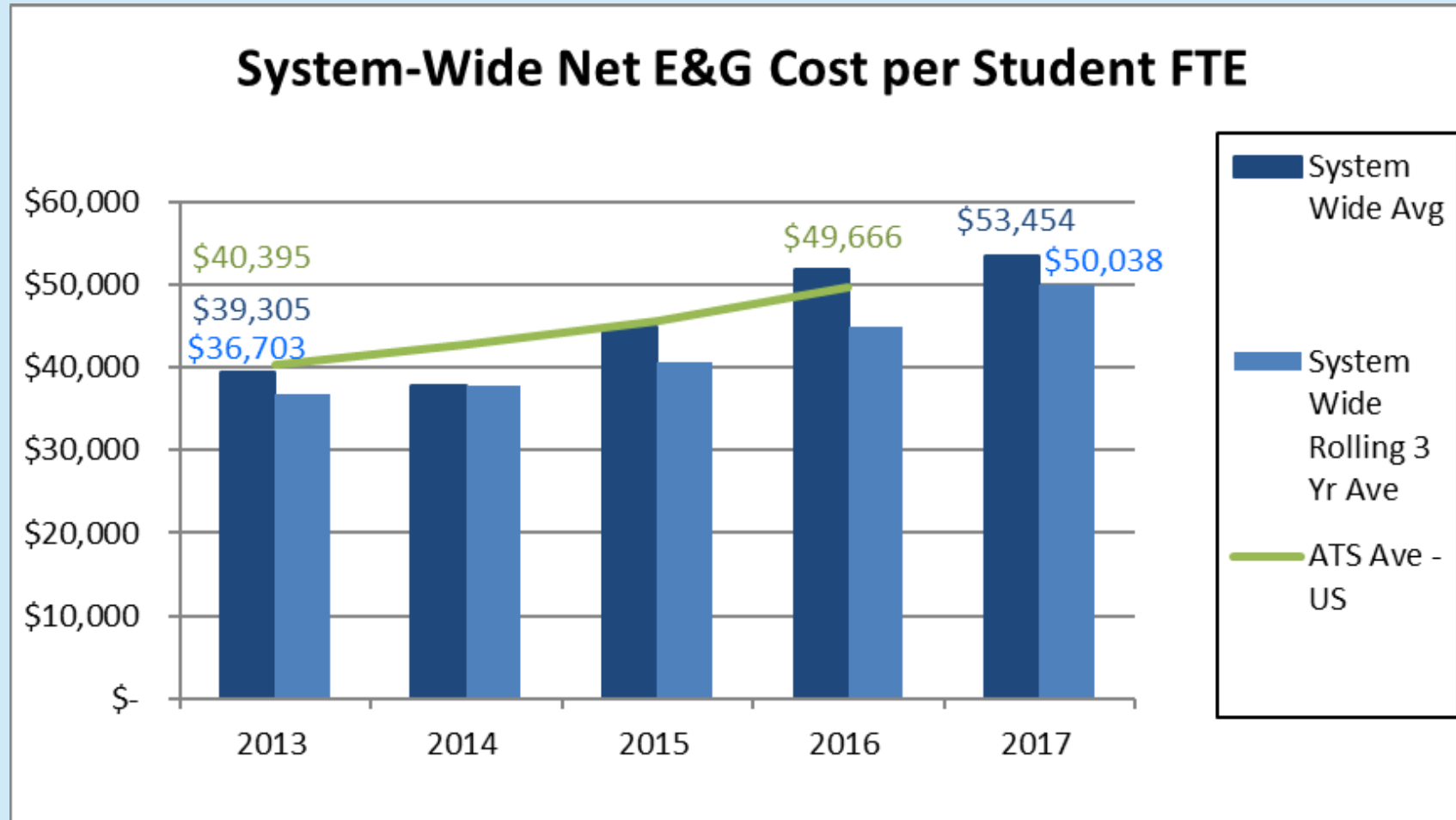
# 1.2 Positive Operating Budget Results

> Change in Unrestricted and Temporarily Restricted Net Assets by Institution *Excluding* Depreciation & Accretion - Operating



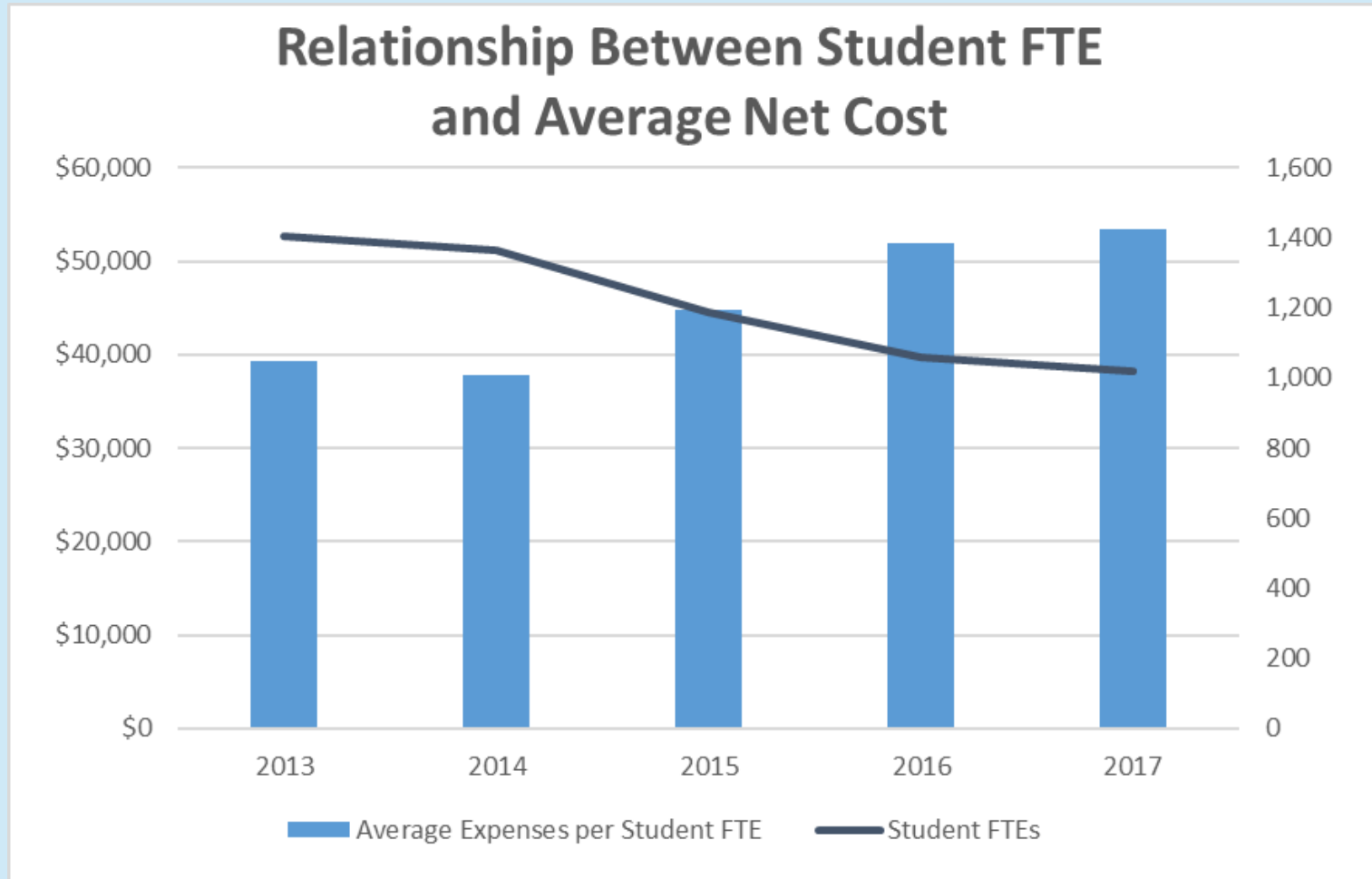
# 1.3 Total Educational and General Cost per Student FTE

> Total Educational & General Expenses System-Wide / Total Student Full-Time Equivalents (Fall Term) System-Wide



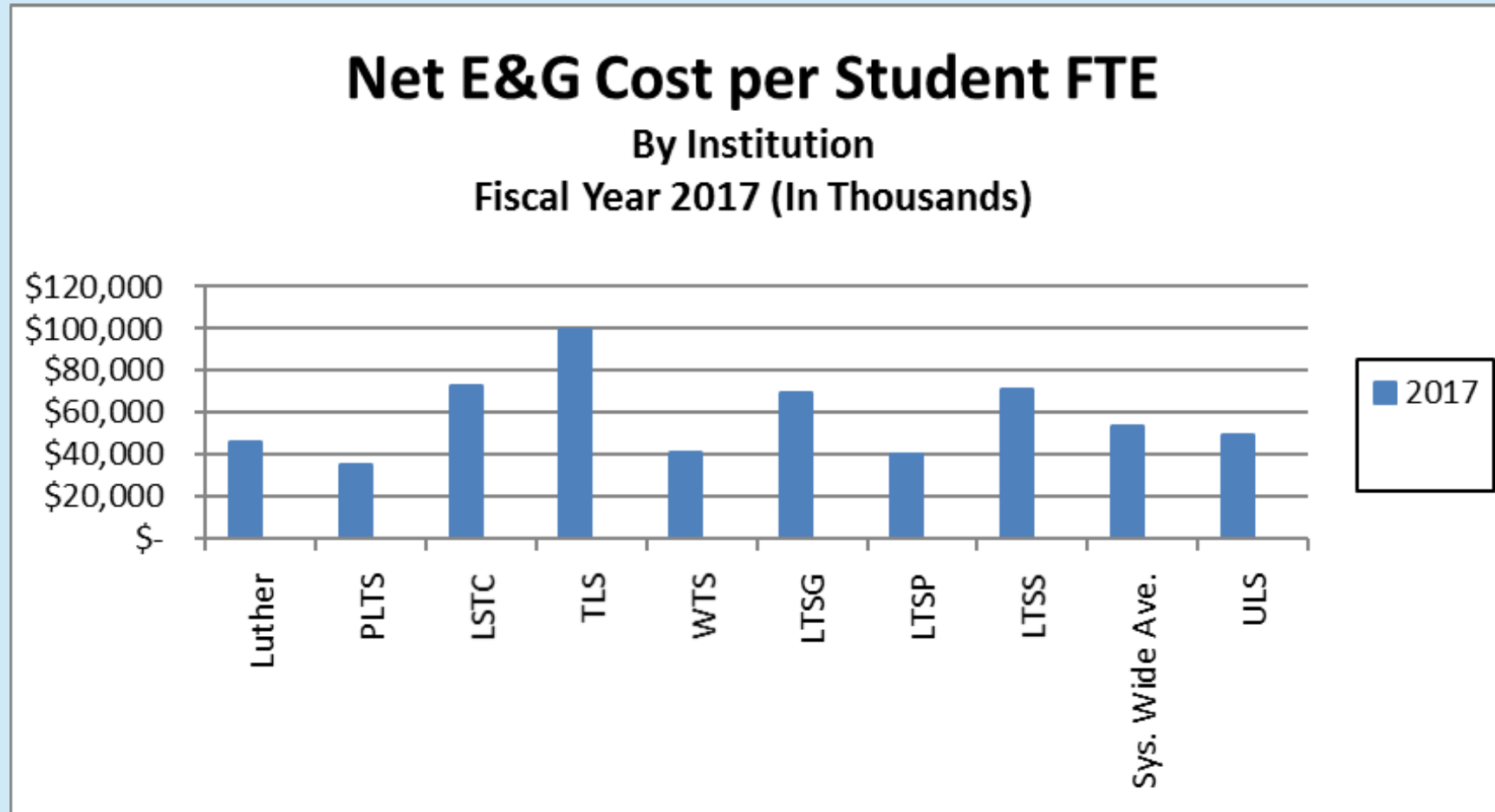
# 1.3 Relationship Between Student FTE and Average Net Cost

> System-Wide Average Educational Expenses / Student Full-Time Equivalents System-Wide



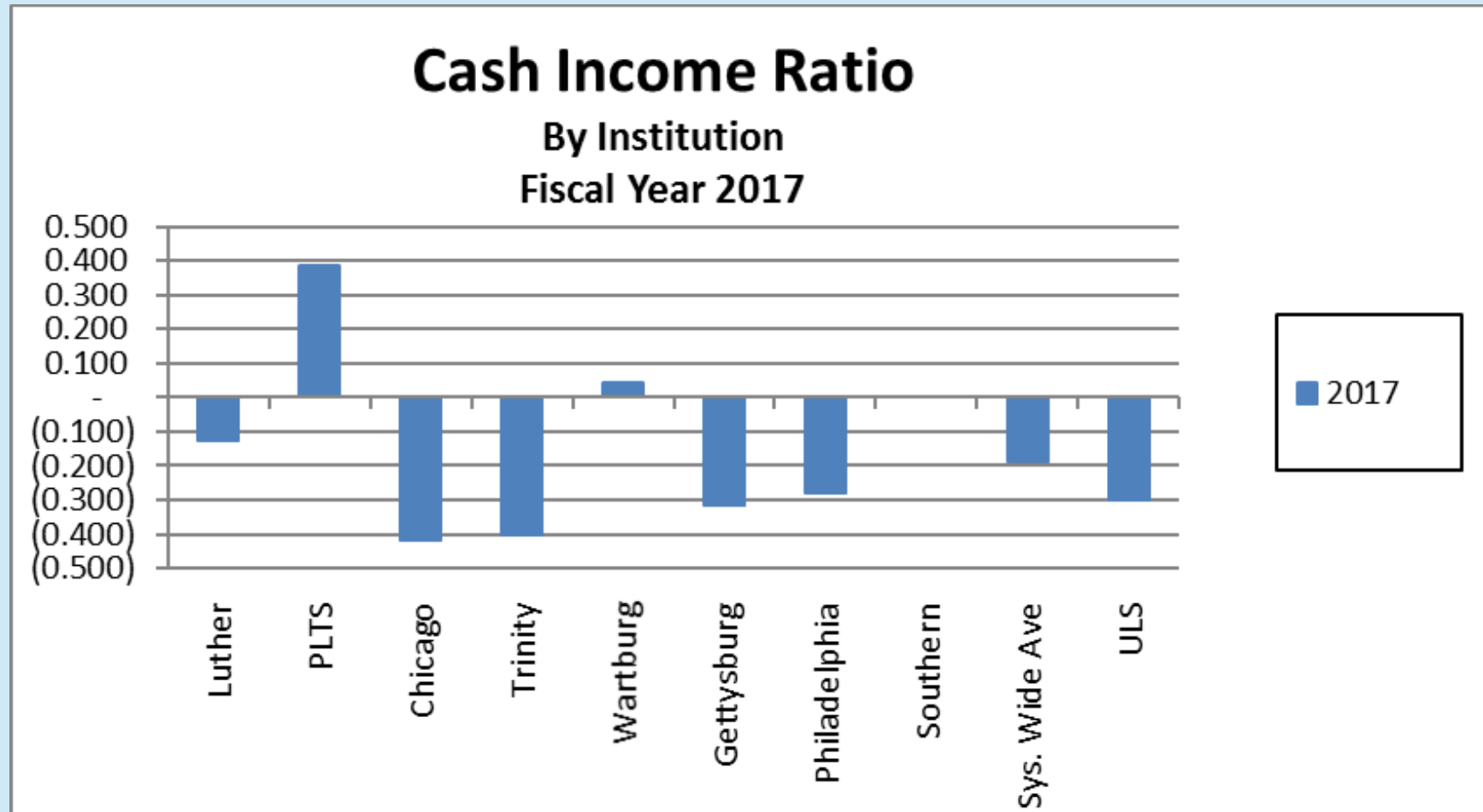
# 1.3 Total Educational and General Cost per Student FTE

> Total Educational & General Expenses by Institution / Total Student Full-Time Equivalents (Fall Term) by Institution



# 1.4 Cash Flow from Operations

> Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities by Institution / Total Unrestricted Income by Institution



## 2. Enterprise-wide Metrics – Ample Leaders

### 2. Ample Leaders Developed & Deployed

	Category	Measure(s)	Benchmark
2.1	<b>Candidacy Pool (by synod)</b>	Candidates entranced/average worship attendance	At or above mean (productivity)
		Candidates approved/ average worship attendance <sup>1</sup>	Increased %
		% of candidates meeting diversity definition	> 10%
2.2	<b>System-wide enrollment</b>	“Unique” Seminary Inquiries (number and variety) <sup>2</sup>	Growth above initial baseline
		Annual percentage increase in # of students	At or above mean
		Annual percentage increase in proportion of students of ethnic/racial background	Increasing % (2018 Goal >10%)
		Upward trend in % of faculty and staff diversity	Increasing % (Goal >10%)

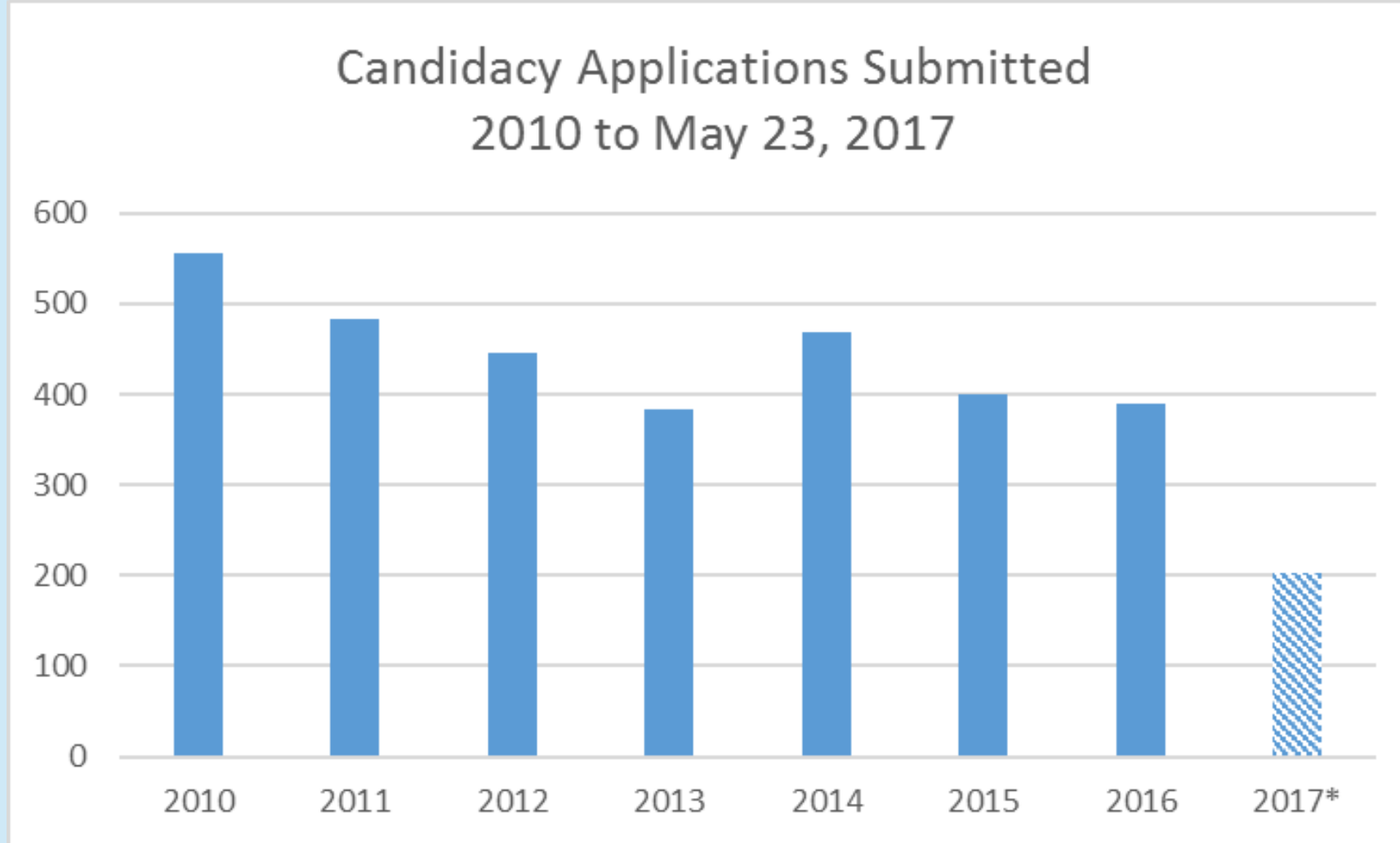
<sup>1</sup> Average worship attendance is suggested as members confirmed is not consistently available

<sup>2</sup> Unique is defined as one individual who inquiries to one or more seminaries





## 2.1 Candidacy – Applications



\* Application figure for 2017 represents only a portion of the year.



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

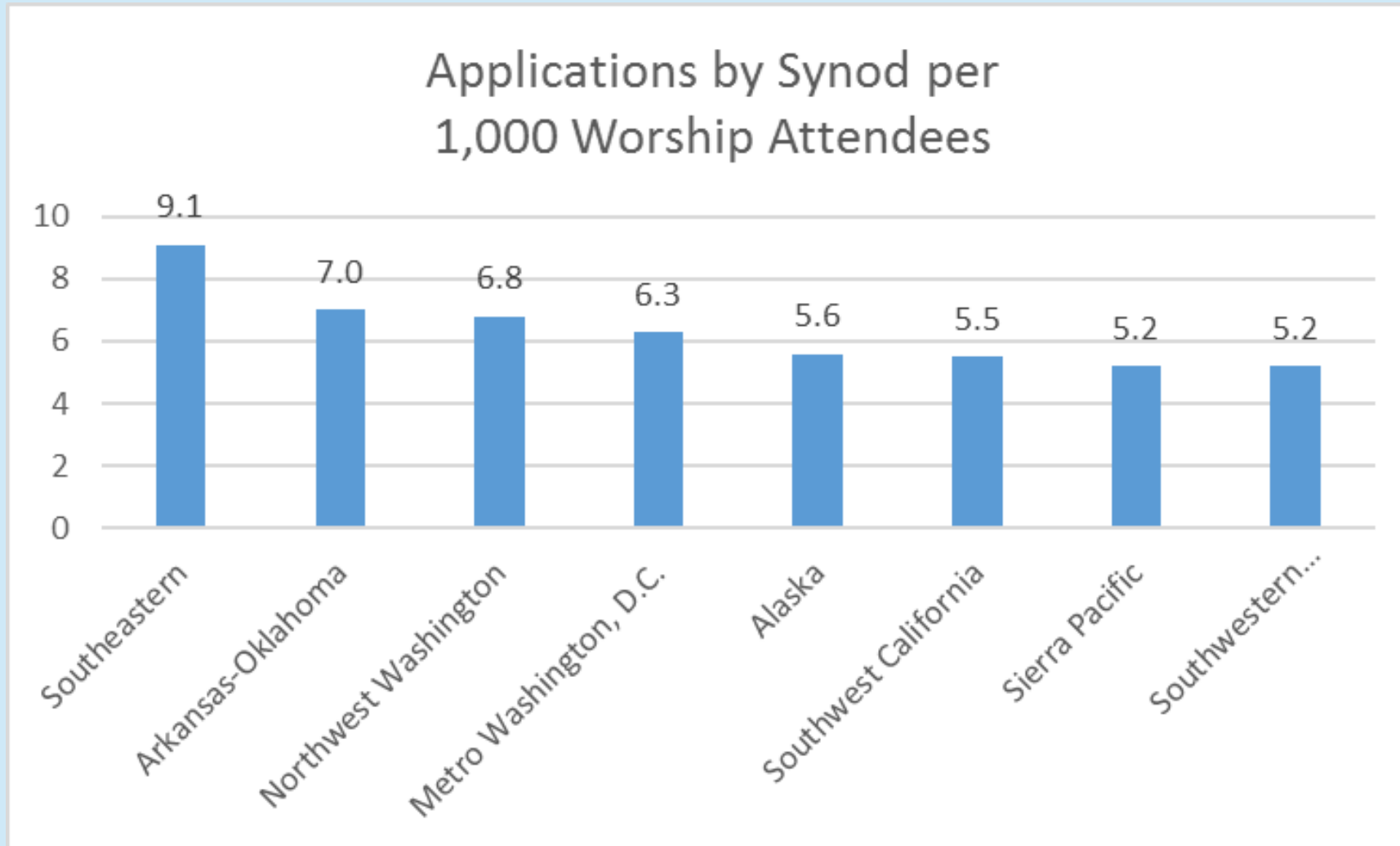
# 2.1 Candidacy – Ethnicity of Applicants

> Race/Ethnicity of Those Submitting Applications

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Caucasian/White</b>	2,810	84.4%
<b>African American/Black</b>	155	4.7%
<b>Hispanic</b>	127	3.8%
<b>Other</b>	105	3.2%
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	97	2.9%
<b>Native American/Alaskan Native</b>	24	0.7%
<b>Arab/Middle Eastern</b>	11	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	3,329	100%



## 2.1 Candidacy – Applications per Worship Attendees



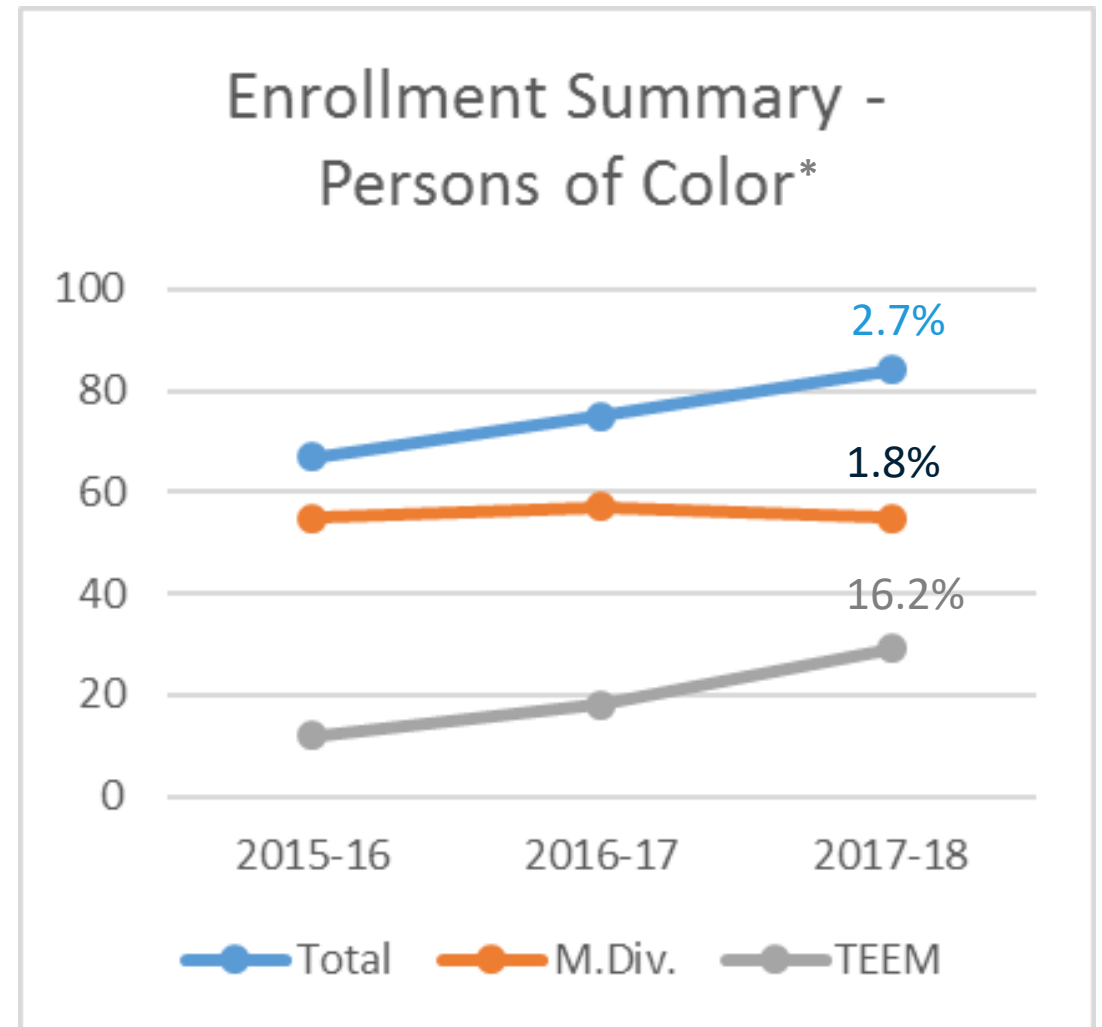
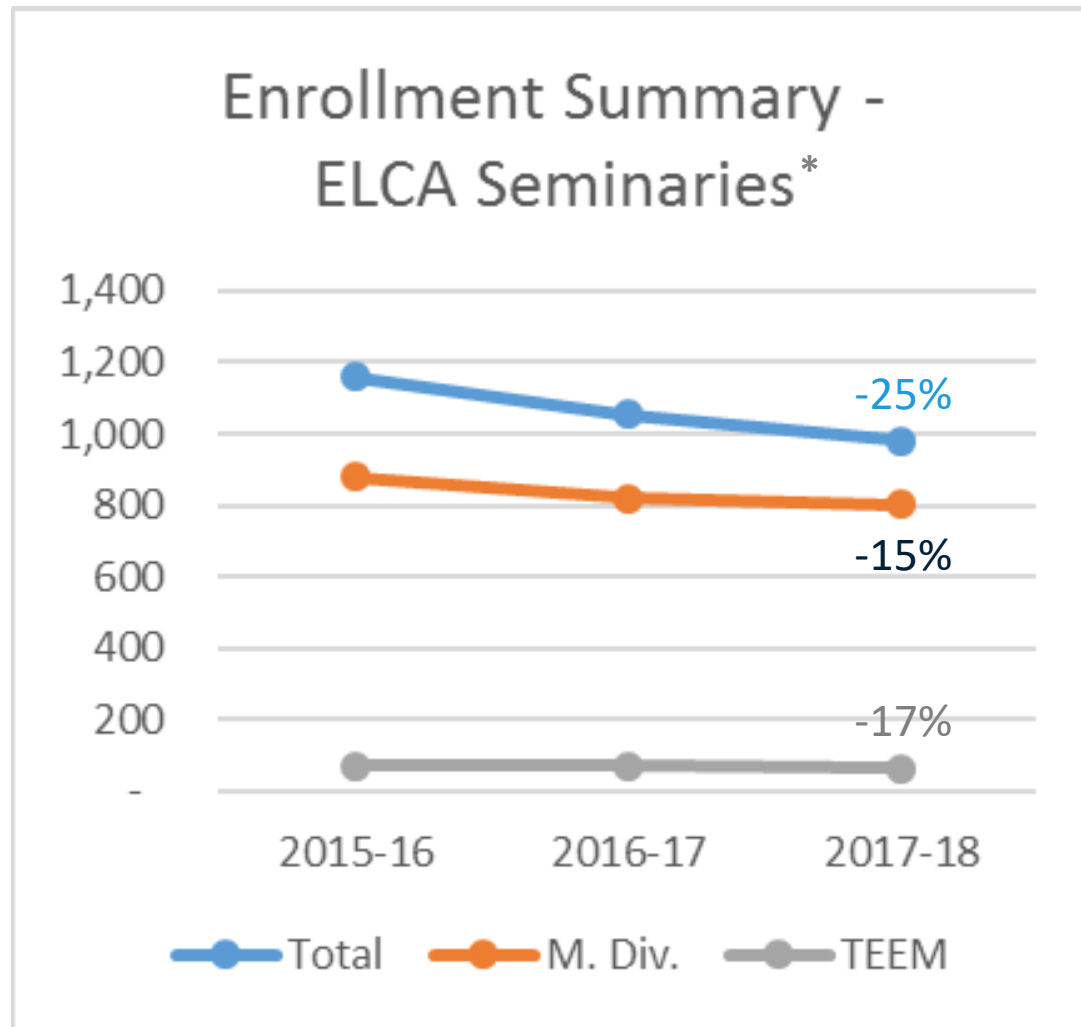
## 2.1 Candidacy – Applications by Size of Congregation

- > Number of Applications by Size of the Congregation (in Worship Attendance) with the Number of ELCA Congregations in Each Size Category in 2015

	Applications		ELCA Congregations	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>50 or less</b>	370	11.5%	3,332	36.9%
<b>51 to 100</b>	700	21.7%	2,750	30.5%
<b>101 to 150</b>	612	19.0%	1,289	14.3%
<b>151 to 350</b>	959	29.7%	1,319	14.6%
<b>351 to 750</b>	429	13.3%	288	3.2%
<b>751 or more</b>	159	4.9%	50	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	3,229	100%	9,028	100%



## 2.2 Enrollment



\* Percentages shown are the 3-year increase/(decrease) in enrollment.



# Enterprise-wide Metrics – Stewardship of Resources

## 3. Responsible Stewardship of ELCA Resources (Common Enterprise)

	Category	Measure(s)	Benchmark
3.1	<b>Shared Infrastructure Toward Learning Innovation and Effectiveness</b>	Increased sharing of expertise Number of shared faculty Qualitative factors (e.g., collaborative experimentation, guest lecturers, shared courses across geographies online, etc.)	Growth above initial baseline
		Shared approach to meeting emerging leader development needs	Demonstrated mechanism
		Increased funding available for collaborative pilots and innovative programs to address gaps (e.g., Latino programs, etc.)	Increased \$
		Survey measuring responsiveness to congregational needs and overall gaps	Improvement in results/action for issue items



# Evolution of Recommended Model

	Limited Central System (Model B)	Model B Governance Enhancements from Matrix Model Components	Evolved Philosophy to Collaborative Alliance
<b>Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate, centralized fiscal governing authority</li> <li>Delegated execution authority to subsidiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralized and delegated (by Church Council and local boards) oversight for cost effective “Common Theological Education Enterprise”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership among seminaries (led by Luther, LSTC, and Wartburg) to address the most challenging leadership issues while stewarding church resources</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board fiduciary and mission authority</li> </ul> </li> <li>Subsidiary Boards:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donor relations</li> <li>Operating decisions</li> <li>Accreditation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralized, coordinative body (with delegated Church Council authority) directs the funding for common mission-based initiatives through a networked approach</li> <li>Local governing authority for institution-based decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exists within current policy and bylaws</li> </ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Churchwide funding directed by Church Council via permanent advisory board (i.e., TEAC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Base budget funding from churchwide and synods authorized by the coordinative body under and incentive-based model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catalytic funding for experimentation will be sought from granting foundations and other interested supporters</li> </ul>



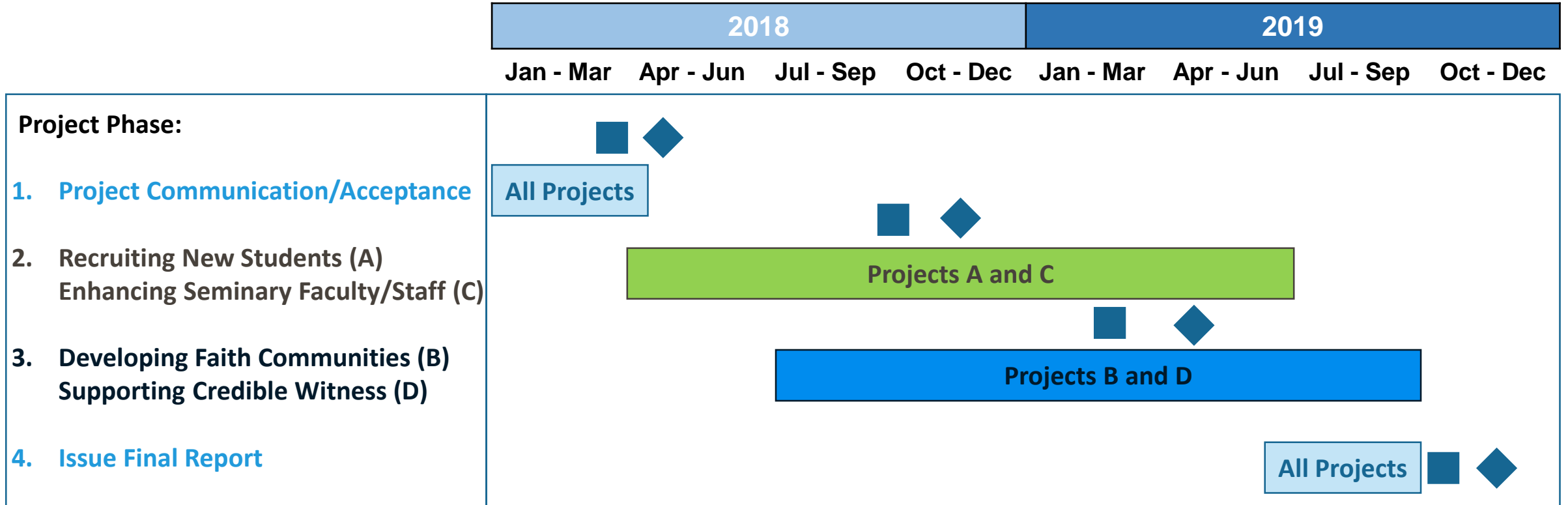
# Recommended Model: *Collaborative Alliance*

Governance Structure	Focus	Funding	Additional Governance Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Network for experimentation</li><li>• Church Council delegates authority to TEAC for accountability (in partnership for support and evaluation)</li><li>• TEAC charge will be to evaluate enterprise-wide metrics to identify progress related to stabilizing and shifting resources, and sustaining seminaries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaboration/joint experimentation in four areas:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruiting new students (<i>Project A</i>)</li><li>• Developing faith communities (<i>Project B</i>)</li><li>• Enhancing seminary staff/faculty (<i>Project C</i>)</li><li>• Supporting credible witness (<i>Project D</i>)</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial funding needed for a consultant project director</li><li>• Additional investments (e.g., travel, system enhancements, etc.) to be identified and evaluated</li><li>• No initial changes to synod or churchwide funding levels; anticipate formula evolving over time</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seminary manual may be critical to ensure:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parameters for shared faculty</li><li>• Capital investment ownership</li><li>• Avoidance of accreditation and antitrust issues</li></ul></li></ul>





# Collaborative Alliance Project Timeline - Overview



Reporting Milestones:

- Conference of Bishops
- ◆ Church Council Meeting



# TEAC Next Steps

Parallel effort to  
highlight program  
success

- Create a database of inventory programs
- How do we ***bring to bear resources*** of the church beyond the seminaries?
- What additional changes are needed for the funding models to fully ***support experimentation?***
- What ***policy and/or seminary manual updates*** are needed for this evolving model?



# Theological Roundtable Pilot

*It's about all forms of theological education...*

## Recommendation 1 – Sustaining the Network

Advisory Committee for  
ELCA Church Council

A

Synod/congregations to  
recognize centrality

B

Seminaries to develop  
common platform

C

Research and evaluation  
to do asset mapping

D

## Recommendation 2 – Vocational Discernment

Young adults

A

Ethnic-specific  
communities

B

Lay leaders

C

Rostered leaders

D

## Recommendation 3 – Stability of Seminaries

Educational  
enterprise

A

Platform with  
portfolio

B

Finances and  
student debt

C

Church funds for  
innovation

D

*...and not only our seminaries*



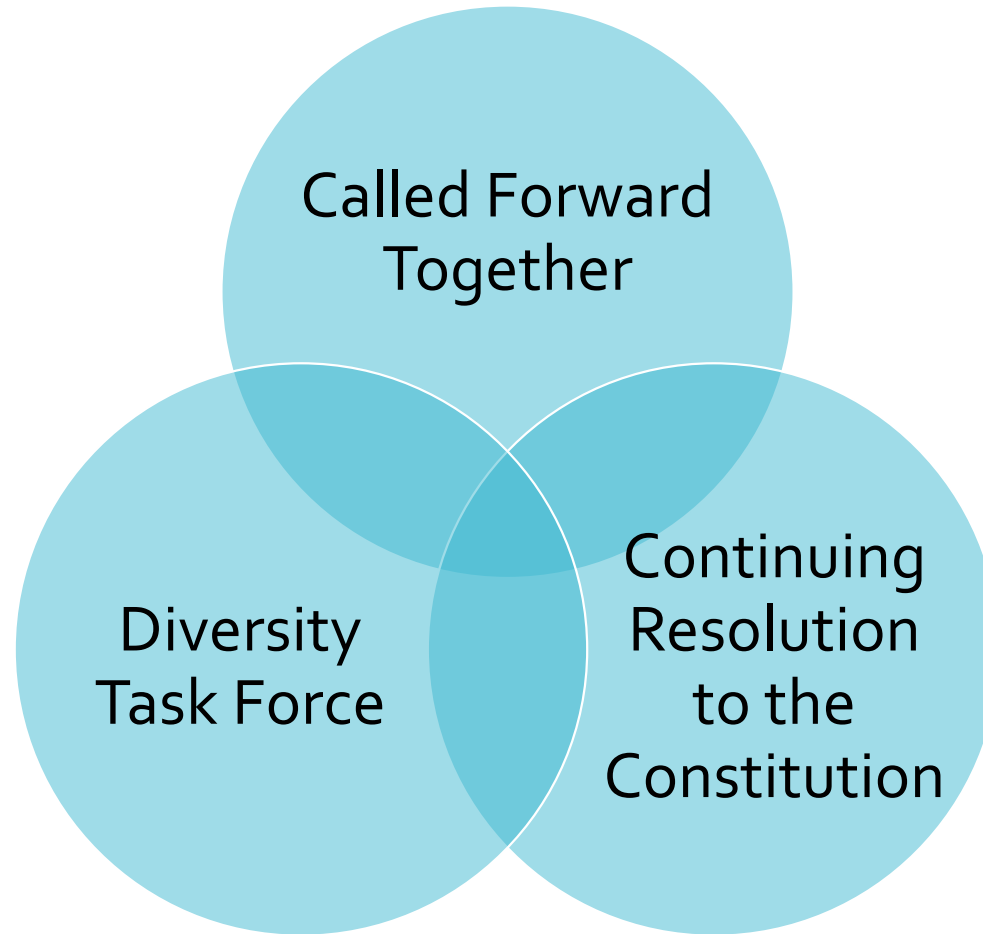
# 2016 Churchwide Assembly Actions

November 2018

Presenter: Judith Roberts

Program Director for Racial Justice

# Diversity Goals





Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

# FutureDirections

[www.ELCA.org/future](http://www.ELCA.org/future)

[Future@elca.org](mailto:Future@elca.org)

1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 2:14-20,  
Acts 10, Galatians 3:26-28

GOAL

**An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings.**

**AREAS FOR ACTION:**

- An outwardly focused church
- Church leadership profile
- Theological and cultural competence of leaders
- Addressing discrimination and oppression

# ELCA Constitutional Change 5.01.A87

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, at its constituting convention in 1987, adopted the following goal: "It shall be a goal of this church that within 10 years of its establishment the membership shall include at least 10 percent people of color and/or primary language other than English."





Strategy Toward  
Authentic Diversity  
within the ELCA  
(Motion B)  
Churchwide  
Assembly Action  
[CA16.05.25]

To refer Motion B to the Church Council.

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

- Consulting with WELCA, the Ethnic Specific Ministry Associations, the Multicultural and Racial Justice Team, the Conference of Bishops and ecumenical partners;
- Collecting existing resources such as those available from WELCA and the Ethnic Specific Ministry Associations and beyond the ELCA.



## Continuing Resolution to the Constitution

**5.01.A16.** This church commits itself to ethnic and racial diversity. Each expression of this church shall annually assess its ethnic and racial diversity when compared to the demographic data of its community or territory. The churchwide organization will work with synods as they assist congregations to reach out to persons of color or whose primary language is other than English.

**5.01.B16.** Each synod shall submit its goal and strategies to the appropriate churchwide unit or office and shall annually submit a report on progress toward its goals to the Church Council.

**5.01.C00.** The term, “persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English,” shall be understood to mean African American, Black, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, American Indian, and Alaska Native people. This definition, however, shall not be understood as limiting this church’s commitment to inclusive participation in its life and work.

**5.01.D16.** The Churchwide Assembly shall receive reports from the presiding bishop and the secretary that monitor this church’s progress toward meeting the commitment expressed in 5.01.A16.



# COB 2017 Photo





1) What are the synod goals?



2) What obstacles do you face in achieving these goals?



3) What resources do you need to overcome these obstacles?

Three Key Questions on implementing a multicultural strategy:

POSITION INFORMATION	
Director for Evangelical Mission Synod Name:	
Director, DEM Relationships & Synod Bishop	
Domestic Mission	

### Principle Accountabilities:

3). Responsible for the development and coordination of synod mission strategy including building and developing key relationships with missional leaders who will form the synod mission strategy table. This position and table pays particular attention to the implementation of ELCA commitments to be in ministry among ethnic, multicultural and emergent communities; as well as ministry among people living in poverty.

# Where would you place your synod?

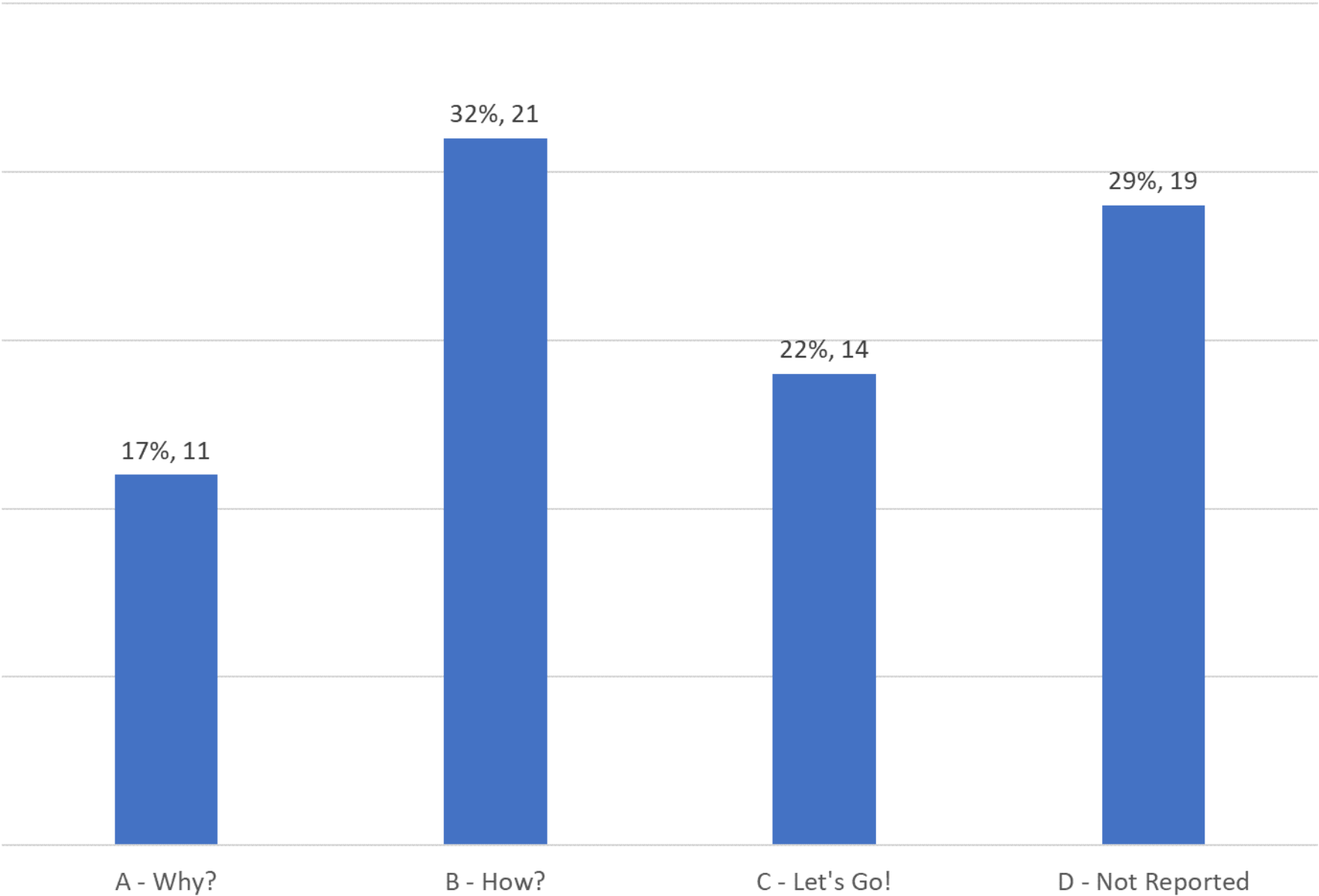
**WHY ?** *Why* & what issue needs to be a priority in their synod right now.

**HOW?** How questions acknowledge the need, but wonder *how* it can be addressed in their context.

**LET'S GO!** Synods know the issues and have developed a plan & Are ready to go.



Distribution of Groups (N=65)



Spring 2018 COB Responses




# Questions from the Why? Team

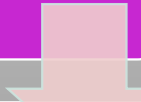
How do we reach the other when we can't even reach those like us?



How do we convince congregations and members this is important?



How do we make people aware of the diversity already present in their communities?



How do we convince synods this should be a priority; how do we make the case this is important?

# Questions from the How? Team



Presenting the “how” of this, not just the “why”?



What models/strategies/metrics are successful in addressing racism?



How do we get a group together to tackle this? How do we involve congregations and clergy?



What has worked elsewhere?



How to sell this to congregations in survival mode?

# Let's Go TEAM!!

## Major Components for Implementing Goals

- \*Anti-racism training at the synod and congregation levels.
- \*Youth lead diversity training.
- \*Ongoing relationship building with communities and neighborhoods.
- \*Considering adding a resolution to governing documents.
- \*Use of IDI [intercultural development inventory] to establish baselines.
- \*Each congregation is to develop a racial justice mission statement and appointment a member to synod wide task force.
- \*Create a synod position for Racial Justice Ministries.
- \*Getting demographic data about our neighborhoods.

Which groups or individuals in your synod are responsible for implementing your strategy?

- Antiracism teams
- DEMs
- Synod staff
- Youth ministry staff
- Synod council and/or officers
- Ad-hoc task forces
- Ecumenical/inter-religious task forces

# Reflective Learning Survey Responses

## Action Items

- Building synod teams, hiring additional staff.
- Engaged in self-learning through resources.
- Creating new relationships with local organizations.
- Getting to know their neighbors.
- Working with ecumenical partners
- Working with Synod, CW Staff and existing tasks force.
- New energy around the topic.
- Synod council is on board.
- Framing this work around inclusion and not guilt was key.
- Look to other synods/leaders for best practices.
- Provide workshops and learning opportunities.

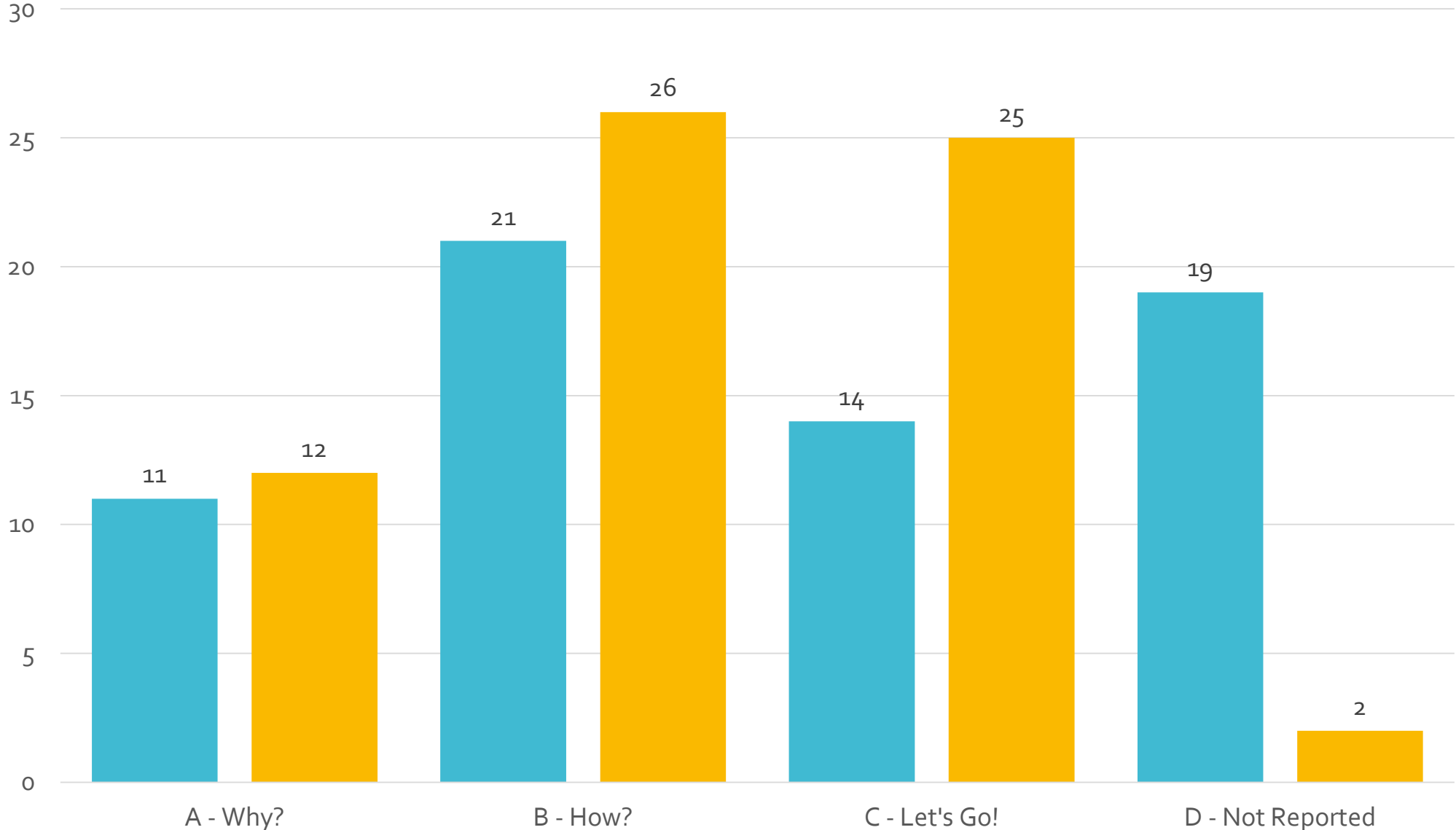
UNITY IN THE  
Body of Christ

EPHESIANS 4

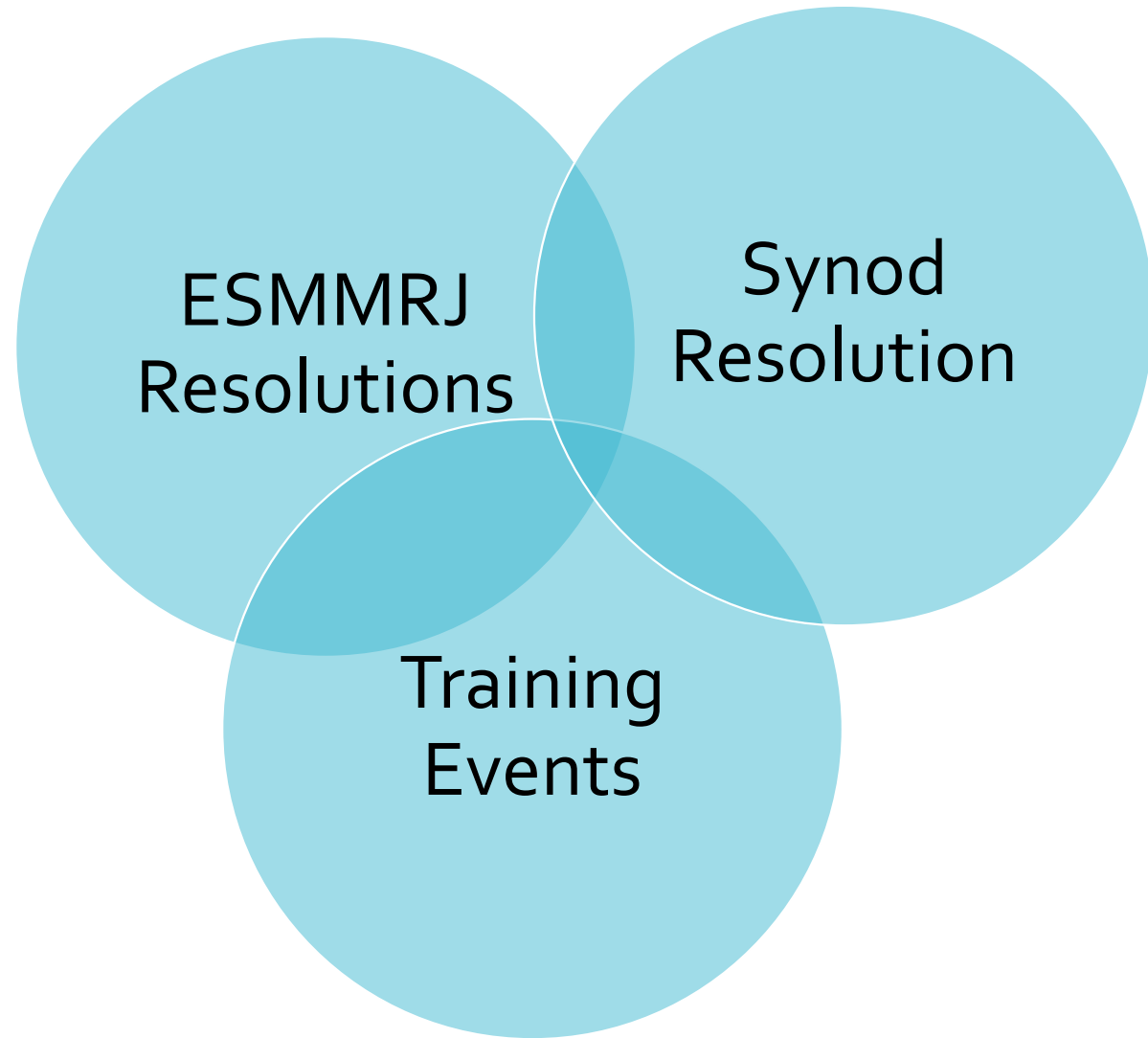
# Distribution of Synod Goals Towards Racial & Ethnic Diversity,

Spring and Fall, 2018

(N=65)



# Racial Justice



# ESMMRJ DM Unit CWA Actions

- **DM/OB Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery** CA16.02.04
- **DM Examining the Opportunities and Implications of Campaign Zero**, a policy platform in affirmation of Black Lives Matter CA16.02.03d
- **DM/GM/OB/OS African Descent Lutheran Lives Matter** CA16.05.15
- **DM Immigration (RES) AMMPARO EC16.06.19b** Latino Association and Program Director La Frontera & AMMAPARO.
- **OB/DM Deepening Relationships with Historic Black Churches** CA16.03.00n the ( Continued ongoing partnership for Ministry of Presence with OPB and African Descent desk, ADLA & Racial Justice).



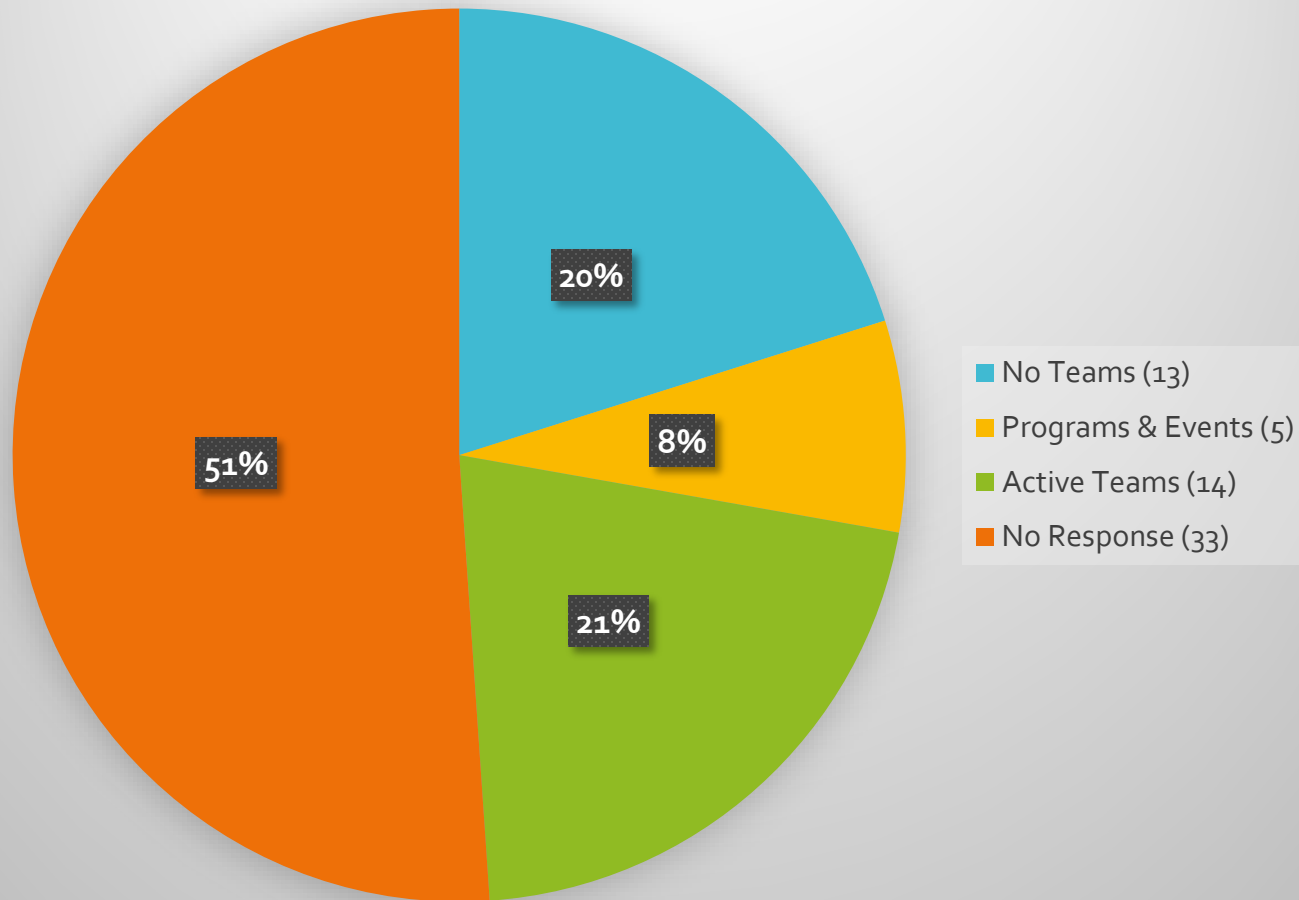


The 2016 ELCA  
Churchwide  
Assembly  
adopted  
**CA16.05.22**  
**Resolution on  
Racial Justice:**

*ELCA in assembly strongly encourage all rostered leaders to receive anti-racism training; and be it further RESOLVED, that the ELCA in assembly strongly encourage every synod to develop or maintain resources for anti-racism training for rostered leaders and congregations at least every two years.*



## Does your synod currently have an active Anti-racism/Racial Justice Team?



## Survey Responses from COB March 2015

32 responses received. Each synod is at a different point in providing antiracism training and resources. Some are working with national organizations, others have created tools and some synods don't know where to begin.

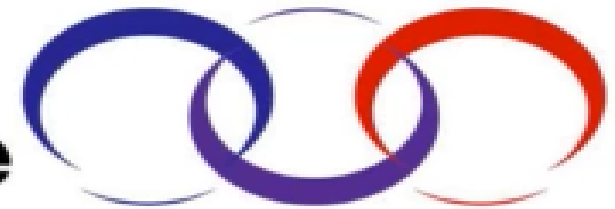


# Curriculum

Aligns with  
CA16.05.2

Resolution on  
Racial Justice

## **Transforming White Privilege**



A 21st Century Leadership Capacity

CAPD, MP ASSOCIATES and WORLD TRUST

# Synod Anti-Racism Capacity Training





1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 2 Corinthians 4:1-2,  
Micah 6:8, 2 Corinthians 9

## A well-governed, connected and sustainable church.

### AREAS FOR ACTION:

- Leadership in governance
- Resources for mission
- Communication
- Church structures

## Recommendations

Congregational Vitality Team, Research and Evaluation and Ethnic Specific, Multicultural Ministries & Racial Justice Team-- collaborate in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, Office of the Presiding Bishop and Church Council in creating a tool for reporting the ongoing work of diversity goal setting.

This report and future reports be integrated into the work plan and priorities of the Congregational Vitality Team.

Tool for collecting updates from synods and a metric for reporting and sharing be presented to the COB in Spring 2019 for final review.

Thank You!

**2018 Campus Ministry Report***Submitted by Don Romsa, ELCA Program Director for Campus Ministry***CONTENTS****A. INTRODUCTION****B. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SITE INFORMATION****C. LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS: BY THE NUMBERS**

- 1. Worship**
- 2. Evangelism and Outreach**
- 3. Faith Formation and Christian Education**
- 4. Creating a Welcoming and Caring Community**
- 5. Service, Justice and Advocacy**
- 6. Leadership Development**
- 7. Stewardship and Fundraising**
- 8. Connecting with the Wider Academic Community**
- 9. Ecumenical and Interfaith Connections**
- 10. Relationships with the Wider Lutheran Community**

**D. CLOSING COMMENTS: LCM RESEARCH PROJECT****A. INTRODUCTION**

Each year, the campus ministry sites of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) are asked to submit a report on their programs and activities. The information from these reports is used to prepare an annual summary report to the Domestic Mission unit and the ELCA Church Council.

This annual summary report reflects the ways in which the work of the churchwide organization, synods, and local campus ministry agencies is coordinated to advance the mission of campus ministry throughout the ELCA. The report provides significant data as the ELCA makes decisions regarding the future direction of campus ministry and the allocation of programmatic and financial resources.

**B. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SITE INFORMATION**

- **Type of Ministry:** 24% of the sites reported being ELCA center-based, 25% reported being ELCA congregation-based, and 22% identified themselves as ecumenical center-based. 7% of the sites described themselves as cooperating congregations in campus ministry. These percentages are roughly the same as the percentages reported in the 2017 annual reports.
- **Ethnic and Racial Background:** 95% of the campus ministry sites reported working with white/Caucasian students, 62% reported working with African-American students, 42% with Hispanic/Latinos, 39% with Asian/Pacific Islanders, 24% with Middle Eastern/Arab-Americans, and 17% with American Indian or Native Alaskan students. These findings indicated a slight increase in the number of campus ministry sites working with student populations other than white/Caucasian. Compared to last year, an additional 5% of the sites reported working with American Indian or Native Alaskan students. It should also be noted that compared to the 2014 reports, this year 15% more of the sites reported working with African-American students.
- **Religious Background:** Almost all of the campus ministry sites (94%) reported working with Lutheran students, 83% with non-Lutheran Protestants, 59% with Roman Catholics, 24% with Muslims, and 20% with Jewish students. These percentages indicate a slight increase in the number of campus ministry sites serving students from other Christian denominations and from non-Christian faith traditions. Over 70% of the ELCA Campus Ministry (LCM) sites reported working with students who have no religious affiliation. This last



statistic is important because it refers to those students who are often identified as the “Nones”, and recent studies indicate that the number of “Nones” continues to increase, especially among young adults. This is obviously a critical population of college and university students with whom to connect and build relationships.

- **Sexual Orientation:** Over 85% of the sites reported working with students who identify as gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender. This represents a significant increase over previous years. On some campuses, ELCA Campus Ministry is the only Christian ministry that openly welcomes students from the LGBTQ community.
- **Disability:** About one-third of the campus ministry sites reported working with disabled/differently-abled students, which also represents an increase over previous years.

### C. LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS: BY THE NUMBERS

The annual report invited the Lutheran Campus Ministry sites to summarize their yearly activities in ten categories. The report is intended to highlight both the strengths and areas of potential growth of each program as a way of providing feedback to the churchwide organization and synod offices. The content of the 2018 annual report was similar to the reports from 2010 through 2017 in order to identify and clarify ministry trends and statistical patterns. Data was collected from a total of 137 campus ministry sites (125 sites submitted information using an electronic annual report form, and 12 submitted hard copies of the annual report).

#### 1. Worship

- a. It is clear that worship remains at the heart of Lutheran Campus Ministry. Approximately 85% of the sites reported that Holy Communion was provided for students one or more times per week. Over half of the sites (65%) reported providing 1 to 5 worship services per month, while 30% provided 6 services or more each month. This pattern of a strong worship life within Lutheran Campus Ministry has held steady over the last several years.
- b. Student attendance at worship has trended slightly upward. Over one-third of the sites (37%) reported 11 to 25 students on average per week. Approximately 11% of the sites reported 26 to 50 students participating in worship each week, and about 6% reported over 50 students on average per week. Over half (52%) of the sites reported 25 or more students worshipping at least once per semester.
- c. The campus ministry sites reported that about 4,500 students attended worship at least once during the academic year, and many of these students attended worship gatherings on multiple occasions.
- d. The presence of a lively worshipping community on campus continues to be a key element of ELCA Campus Ministry, and it serves as a gift to college and university students across the country.

#### 2. Evangelism and Outreach

- a. Lutheran Campus Ministry sites reported initial contacts with a little over 10,500 new students last year, which is approximately the same number of initial contacts made during the previous year. This averages approximately 85 contacts per reporting site.
- b. Personal invitation from other students remains one of the most popular ways to make the ministry known to the campus community (82% of the sites reported this approach). Electronic communication was also a widely used method for outreach and evangelism, with almost all ministries using social networking sites like Facebook, their own websites, e-mail announcements, and text messaging to connect with students. Most of the campus ministry sites (86%) also had an active presence at student orientation and activity fairs at the beginning of each semester.
- c. Peer ministers continued to be an important outreach tool for almost half of the sites (48%).
- d. The campus ministries reported 46 baptisms of individuals over the age of 18.
- e. Outreach activities also included officiating at 119 marriages, and 55 funerals or memorial services that were conducted.

### **3. Faith Formation and Christian Education**

- a. Providing opportunities for young adult faith formation is a key component of Lutheran Campus Ministry programs across the country. Nearly all sites (87%) reported offering Bible studies for students. Many campus ministries also offered retreats (62%), spiritual direction (49%), and lecture series (34%) for the purposes of Christian education and faith formation.
- b. The use of a catechumen program is a growing means of faith formation among college and university students, with 22% of the sites making use of a catechumen program.
- c. Campus ministry staff and student leaders continue to be creative in selecting and developing materials for education and faith formation. Sites have utilized materials that focus on important questions about vocation, grace, doubt, ecumenism, interfaith relationships, faith and politics, the care of creation, and other critically relevant topics.

### **4. Creating a Welcoming and Caring Community**

- a. Providing hospitality and community building opportunities on campus are important tools for demonstrating the richness and wonder of God's grace. These spaces of hospitality continue to attract a wide range of students and help ministries reach out to underserved and marginalized populations on campus. This aspect of ministry has been key to connecting with students who have no affiliation with a religious community, with 73% of the sites reporting that "Nones" have become a part of their ministry community.
- b. Almost all ministries offered weekly meals for hospitality and community building (95%). Many offered an informal gathering space at their campus ministry facility on a daily basis (84%), with 75% of the sites also providing wireless internet access for students at the facility.
- c. Annual or semi-annual retreats and trips continued to be strong components of the campus ministry programs, with some groups participating in international travel experiences as a means of expanding student horizons and building community.
- d. Designations of Reconciling In Christ or as a "campus safe zone" have continued to increase each year. Many Lutheran Campus Ministry sites, particularly those with a Reconciling In Christ designation, reported that they are the only religious organization on their campus that actively extends a gracious welcome and open hospitality to students regardless of sexual orientation.
- e. Nearly all ministries (95%) reported that pastoral conversation was a means of providing a caring community. Most campus pastors and ministers also offer regular office hours to be present with students during the ups and downs of their university life. The amount of time per week dedicated to pastoral care conversations has held steady at an average of approximately 9 hours per week.
- f. Training peer ministers with basic support, listening, and referral skills continues to be an effective method of building a welcoming and caring community, as 46% of the sites reported having a structured peer ministry program.
- g. Many campus ministry staff (41%) help provide university-wide worship services, and about 32% also serve on university care or emergency response teams.

### **5. Service, Justice and Advocacy**

- a. Campus ministries continue to undertake a broad range of community service programs and projects. Participation has increased slightly over previous years, with 42% of the campus ministry sites drawing 6 to 15 students at least once, 28% involving 16 to 50 students, and 12% drawing over 50 students. Eight sites reported the participation of over 150 students in community service projects last year.
- b. The most popular kinds of service projects included working at a food pantry/kitchen/shelter as reported by 75% of the sites, and participating in programs serving children and youth (56%). Many sites also participated in the construction and rehab of homes, working with older adults, and assisting with environmental cleanup projects. It is estimated that students provided approximately 46,500 hours of service through these programs and projects during the last academic year.

- c. Over 40% of the sites reported offering a service-learning opportunity involving travel. Of those offering such opportunities, some trips drew a dozen students while others involved over 50 students. These service-learning trips included a variety of locations in the United States, plus Puerto Rico, Haiti, Mexico, Central and South America, and even Southeast Asia.
- d. With respect to justice and advocacy efforts, the ministries participated primarily in discussion, direct action, and educational programs. Other activities included hosting speakers with specialized knowledge, coalition-building, and sponsoring forums.
- e. Justice and advocacy programs related to hunger issues have continued to be strong with 60% of the sites reporting programs focused on hunger, as well as issues surrounding poverty (50%). Other significant areas of focus were racism (61%), sexuality and gender issues (60%), homelessness (43%), and care of the environment (42%). Activities related to immigration have become more prominent with almost half of the sites reporting programs on that issue.
- f. Campus ministry staff also observed that efforts to provide a caring and welcoming community, particularly for persons and groups who are underserved, marginalized or unpopular, are significant acts of justice and advocacy.

## 6. Leadership Development

- a. Lutheran Campus Ministry sites continue to provide many opportunities for the development of young adult leadership. Most sites reported students assisting in worship, coordinating events, and planning programs, while others have students that represent the ministry at university-sponsored events, and on university committees.
- b. Peer ministry programs continued to be strong, while participation in special leadership retreats was a popular method for developing and strengthening leadership skills among students.
- c. Enrollment in seminary remained steady among campus ministry-involved students who have graduated within the past five years (132). The ministry sites also reported 114 recent graduates in the candidacy process.
- d. ELCA-related service programs continued to be popular (Young Adults in Global Mission, Lutheran Volunteer Corps), as well as non-ELCA programs (Peace Corps, AmeriCorps), with 115 recent graduates currently involved in those programs. Campus ministry sites also reported 187 recent graduates involved in congregational or synod leadership roles.

## 7. Connecting with the Wider Academic Community

- a. Again this year, LCM staff were asked to respond to the question: *“In what specific ways were you involved in the wider academic community this past year?”* Some examples of the responses to that question were:
  - Providing pastoral and spiritual support during a campus crisis
  - Developing an on-campus food pantry for students in need
  - Organizing a food pantry for low-income families living near the campus
  - Providing educational programs in the residence halls
  - Serving on various university boards and committees
  - Serving on the university research ethics committee
  - Offering student wellness programs in partnership with the campus health center
  - Providing programs for new student orientation and for parents of new students
  - Leading memorial services following deaths within the academic community
  - Providing support for student groups on campus that are “marginalized” such as undocumented migrant students, LGBTQ students, and students with disabilities
  - Teaching university classes
  - Offering ethics forums in science, business, medicine, and other disciplines
  - Serving as a guest lecturer in university classes
  - Co-sponsoring interfaith forums for the entire academic community
  - Serving as an adviser or chaplain for various student organizations

## **8. Stewardship and Fundraising**

- a. The most popular strategies for raising financial support continued to be fundraising letters with 65% of the sites using this approach, face-to-face solicitations (58%), electronic newsletters (54%), print newsletters (49%), special fundraising events (48%), and e-mail messages (47%).
- b. Continuing a trend over the last several years, applying for and securing grants increased in popularity as a source of funding. Funds were also raised through congregations and congregation-based WELCA groups (59%), and annual appeals (50%). 44% of the sites also have funds available from an endowment, while planned giving is now a source of funds at 33% of the sites.
- c. About 65% of the sites reported that they provide for online giving. This is a significant increase over just a few years ago.
- d. Most of the ministries encourage student giving and do so primarily through worship offerings.
- e. The reports continued to show a significant amount of staff time devoted to fundraising activities. Most Lutheran Campus Ministry staff reported spending anywhere from 10% to 25% of their time on fundraising efforts.

## **9. Ecumenical and Interfaith Connections**

- a. Ecumenism and interfaith relationships continue to be important on college campuses across the country. Lutherans cooperate closely with Episcopal ministries, and regularly coordinate events among other Protestant groups. Lutheran Campus Ministry staff also work closely with Roman Catholic, Jewish and Muslim colleagues in serving the academic community. Over 100 of the Lutheran Campus Ministry staff reported that they serve in some official capacity in ecumenical groups or interfaith committees at their respective universities.
- b. There appears to be increased interest in campus-wide interfaith educational events on the part of many university administrators, and 24% of Lutheran Campus Ministry sites reported helping organize and co-sponsor these events.
- c. Shared meals (as reported by 66% of the sites), cooperative educational programs (64%), and joint service projects (51%) continued to be popular as important components of ecumenical and interfaith work. About half of the ministries also engaged in joint worship, and in co-sponsorship of speakers.

## **10. Connections with the Wider Lutheran Community**

- a. In terms of involvement in the wider Lutheran community, 70% of the campus ministries reported that the staff person led worship or preached in local congregations. 54% of the campus ministry staff assisted with local youth ministry and young adult programs, 47% worked with local congregations in service projects, and 33% provided educational forums for congregational members.
- b. At the synod level, 74% of the sites reported that they provided displays and other types of presence at synod assemblies. There were 47 LCM staff members who reported that they serve on synod committees or boards. 30% of the sites indicated that they provide educational programs for synod groups.
- c. In partnership with Lutheran Outdoor Ministry (LOM), 41 Lutheran Campus Ministry staff reported that they served as a resource for training and educational programs at one of the LOM sites.
- d. The Lutheran Student Movement (LSM) continues to operate in some regions, and there has been a renewed interest in providing an annual LSM gathering for college and university students. The third of these annual LSM gatherings took place in Chicago at the beginning of 2018 and was attended by about 75 college and university students. A Lutheran Student Movement board, consisting of a college or university student representing each of the nine ELCA regions, gives direction to the various LSM programs.
- e. The next annual LSM gathering will be held in Memphis at the beginning of 2019.

## **D. CLOSING COMMENTS: LCM RESEARCH PROJECT**

For the past two years, ELCA Campus Ministry has been conducting an extensive research project with three primary purposes:

- to understand more fully the contemporary world and life perspectives of young adults;
- to provide a window on the mission of Lutheran Campus Ministry on college and university campuses, and the effectiveness of Lutheran Campus Ministry in conducting that mission; and
- to identify effective practices and approaches for congregations and other faith communities to connect with young adults and engage them in ministry.

The specifics of the research were implemented by two church professionals who have extensive research experience, namely Dr. Roland Martinson and Dr. Jacob Sorenson. An advisory team, consisting of four Lutheran Campus Pastors and the ELCA Program Director for Campus Ministry, served as consultants throughout the research project. The work was funded by a Lutheran Campus Ministry endowment intended for research and program development.

The following is a description of some significant findings from the research project. A complete “Summary of Findings” can be found at: <https://lumin-network.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Lutheran-Campus-Ministry-Summary-of-Findings-FINAL-.pdf>

### **1. Young Adult Participation in a Community of Faith**

According to the National Study of Youth and Religion, only 48% of 18-23-year olds are active in a church or plan to attend religious services in the future. This is consistent with the literature about this age group which portrays emerging adults as the least religious segment of society. Studies use terms such as "lost" and "hemorrhaging" to characterize the faith attrition evident in those raised Christian as they progress through emerging adulthood.

The responses of the young adults surveyed in the Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM) research project showed a different pattern. In the survey, 89% of the students who are involved in Lutheran Campus Ministry indicated their plan to remain active in religious communities as adults, and 1 in 12 indicated a desire to pursue a vocation within the church. While the majority of the young adults who took the LCM survey were active in the ELCA (55%) or other denominations (27%) before coming to college, the solid retention of these young adults and slight expansion of faith among this age group through LCM is clearly a success for the program, and stands in contrast to the loss of faith and church activity usually found within this age group.

### **2. Leading Complicated Lives, These Young Adults Feel Pressured and Vulnerable**

The young adults in this survey indicated that they are facing an array of life transitions and cross-pressures. The pressure felt by the young adults comes from multiple sectors of life: academic, social, financial, familial, professional, and spiritual. The overall picture seems to be one of young adults struggling to hang on amidst life change and turmoil. Their tentative equilibrium was easily upset if they deviated from established norms or experienced unexpected challenges or crises. In looking at the survey items indicating the most severe trauma (death in the immediate family, rape, physical or emotional abuse, and attempted suicide), 45% of all respondents had experienced one or more of these. This included a third of males (34%), half of females (49%), and all but one of those identifying as transgender, non-conforming, or gender diverse.

In these pressured, complicated lives, students are clearly vulnerable. Almost a third (29%) of the young adult respondents indicated that they had been treated for clinical depression or anxiety. Nearly a quarter indicated that they had seriously considered suicide.

**3. A More Positive Note**

On a more positive note, the vast majority of the young adults who responded to the survey indicated strong feelings of self-worth. The great majority of the young adults in the survey (83%) agreed that they have important things to offer the church and the world.

**4. LCM Impact on the Lives of Young Adults**

The vast majority (88%) of these young adult participants reported that involvement in campus ministry was meaningful to them and had significantly influenced their lives. Lutheran Campus Ministry matters in particular ways to these young adults on each campus as a result of effective relationships and practices.

These young adults consistently and appreciatively spoke of Lutheran Campus Ministry as open, welcoming, safe and supportive communities. 97% of the survey respondents agreed that Lutheran Campus Ministry provides a welcoming, inclusive and safe place.

Young adults have a particularly deep desire to belong. These young adults found “belonging,” a “home,” and an “anchoring community” in the unique blend of elements present in these campus ministries. They found these faith communities personally impactful and dependable, especially in times of need. Three elements combined to provide this unique experience of belonging and support:

- Expansively Welcoming – The community was intentionally welcoming and supportive of young adults including those who were excluded by other segments of society. The litmus test for this element was outspoken inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons.
- Grounded in Christian Faith – The Lutheran Campus Ministry community’s identity was centered in a thoughtful, progressive understanding of the Christian faith and its teachings.
- Reaching Out to Others in Service – The community made a difference in other’s lives and provided students with opportunities to participate in these meaningful service activities.

**5. Feeling a Connection to God**

The young adults in this survey indicated that they felt most connected to God through:

- Small-group faith practices and worship
- Prayer
- Service to those in need and advocacy for justice
- Shared meals and fellowship

**6. Motivators for Getting Involved in the Faith Community**

For these young adults, the most important motivators for getting involved in the campus ministry faith community were:

- The presence of a welcoming and affirming community
- Opportunities for growing in faith
- Opportunities for service work and advocacy

**7. Characteristics of a VITAL Young Adult Faith Community**

The responses of the young adults indicated that, for them, the key characteristics of a VITAL young adult faith community were:

- A welcoming, inclusive and safe space
- Opportunities for genuine leadership in the faith community
- Following Jesus in providing meaningful service to people in need and advocating for justice
- Support in difficult and challenging times

**8. LCM Impact on the Wider Academic Community**

By means of interviews with university administrators and student services personnel, it is clear that Lutheran Campus Ministry agencies represent a robust expression and presence of the Christian faith in the life of the university community. While the form and extent of their presence and contributions vary

from site to site, these campus ministries are engaging the university's academic research, teaching and learning, ethical decisions, and student formation. Their activities take place in complex academic and societal contexts that are often divisive, conflicted, secular and fluctuating. In this dynamic milieu, Lutheran Campus Ministries are centers of mission and ministry within the life of these academic communities.

Lutheran Campus Ministries are centers of mission and ministry in differing ways on each university campus. Some examples follow:

- Some university officials spoke of Lutheran Campus Ministry as “a distinctive and active, radically welcoming, critical thinking Christian presence.”
- Some university staff referred to Lutheran Campus Ministry as “the go-to place for honest, inclusive convening and discussion that helps the university develop language and direct approaches to delicate issues.” They said, “Lutheran Campus Ministry establishes clearly defined, trusting relationships with students, staff and faculty through active response to issues from a shared vision and common values.”
- Other staff members spoke of campus ministry making contributions to “deliberations on ethics” and “conversations on religion and science.”
- Several university staff said, “the university relied on Lutheran Campus Ministry to provide spiritual support and guidance in times of student and campus crises.”

## **9. Showing Us a Way Forward**

This extensive research project has helped provide a way forward for campus ministry in the ELCA. First, it has given us a clearer picture of the contemporary world and life perspectives of today's young adults. Second, it has helped us evaluate our effectiveness at carrying out the mission and ministry of our campus ministry efforts across the country. Third, the research project has given us insight and clues into those practices and approaches that we hope will help the church become more effective in its ministry among young adults. As we make plans for our next steps in this project, we are excited to see where God will lead us in the days ahead.



# Declaration to the African Descent Community

FACILITATOR: JUDITH ROBERTS, RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES



# Session Goals



- ▶ **Engage**-Church Council around the Renewed Action Regarding Racism Towards Lutherans of African Descent Social Policy Resolution [CA.16.05.17].
- ▶ **Educate**- about the legacy of Slavery in America and within the ELCA.
- ▶ **Equip**-leadership to move thoughtfully through a process of creating a declaration.

# RENEWED ACTION REGARDING RACISM TOWARD LUTHERANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Social Policy Resolution  
CA16.05.17

- ▶ **Resolved:**
- ▶ To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Arkansas-Oklahoma, Metropolitan Chicago, Southeast Michigan, New Jersey, Metropolitan New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., North Carolina and Southeastern synods regarding African Descent Lutheran Lives Matter;
- ▶ To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the Domestic Mission unit and the Global Mission unit to assist in connecting, supporting and involving ELCA representation (particularly though not exclusively) of the people of African descent with the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and the initiatives of the U.N. International Decade for People of African Descent; to be intentional in the inclusion of the contributions of African descent Lutherans as part of these observances;
- ▶ **To confess and repent of the Lutheran church's complicity in 400 years of enslavement, oppression and marginalization of African descent people and other marginalized populations;**
- ▶ **To acknowledge with regret that the ELCA as an institution has and continues to contribute to racial harassment and discrimination against people of African descent through corporate action, policy and practices and to request the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization units, to review and report on current governing documents in light of these concerns;**
- ▶ To encourage synods and ELCA related institutions to do the same in its review and report of current governing documents related to setting policy and procedures on workplace harassment and discrimination, including racial harassment and discrimination;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Adopted by the Churchwide Assembly in August 2016**

## Apology Reaction from the African Descent Lutheran Association (ADLA) Pres. Rev. Lamont Anthony Wells

The African Descent Lutheran Association held its biennial association gathering in August of 2016. The assembly through resolution, requested further engagement with Church Council, Office of the Presiding Bishop and the DM unit regarding a process for relationship building and systemic analysis in response to a public apology. A letter with recommendations for this process was sent to DM unit, executive Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman to be shared at the fall 2017 Church Council meeting.

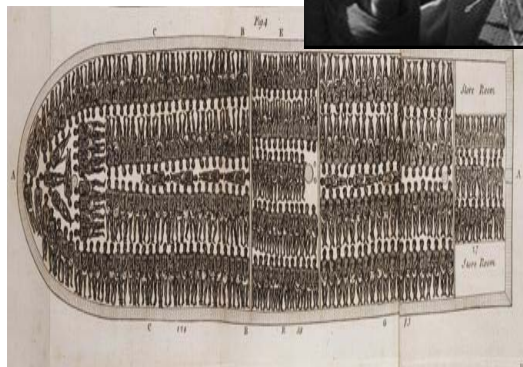


# Seven Generations Meditation

REV. JOANN CONROY

PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN INDIAN,  
ALASKA NATIVE MINISTRIES

# Connecting the Dots

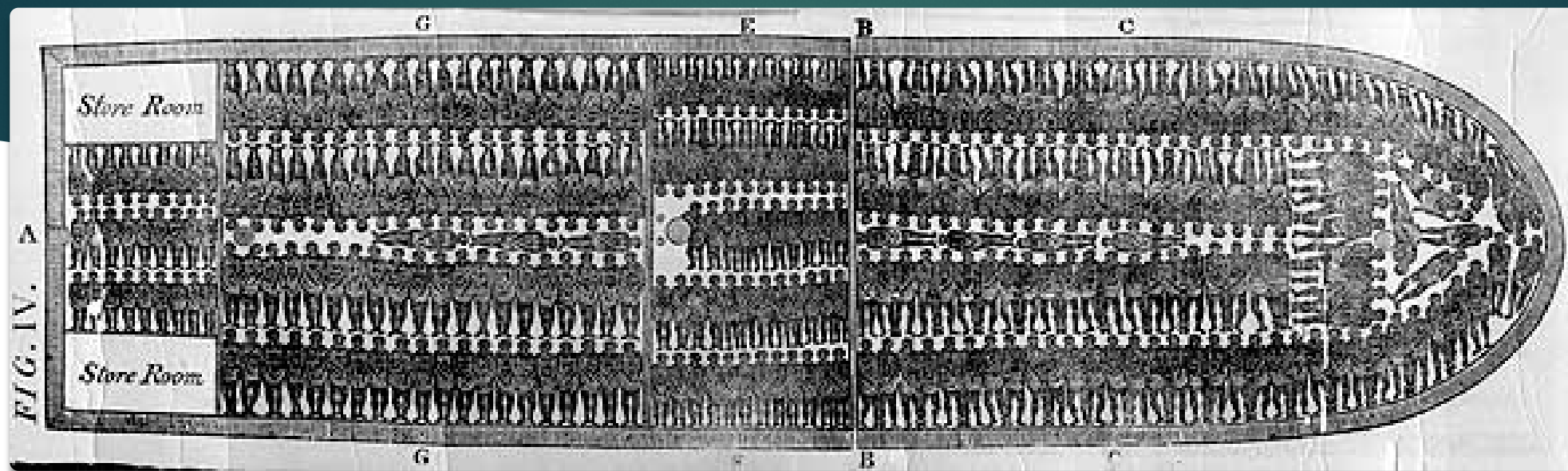


**NO IRISH NEED APPLY.**

Written and sung by Miss KATHLEEN O'NEIL.

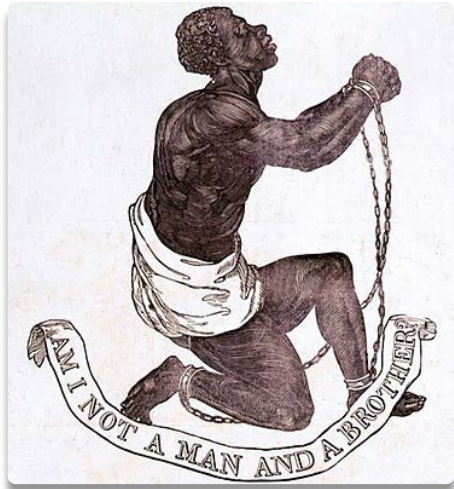
WANTED.—A smart active girl to do the general housework of a large family, one who can cook, clean plates, and get up fine linen, preferred.  
N. B.—No Irish need apply. *London Times Newspaper, Feb. 1882.*





2019 will mark the 400th observance of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans to be sold into bondage in North America: in 1619 at Jamestown.

# On the matter of slavery, Where was the Lutheran Church?



Anti-Slavery & Abolition



Quietism



Slave Owning & Profiting



# Unchained

Generational Trauma and Healing

Film produced by the American Bible Society.

\*\* Some content is sensitive in nature. Be aware of how your experiences and perceptions of race, trauma and slavery may influence your viewing experience. Remember your posture as a witness and a listener\*\*

# Following the film discussion

1) What in the documentary surprised you?

2) "Damaging another person damages you," says The Rev. Greg Thompson. What is your interpretation of that statement? In the context of racial healing, in what ways have you seen the statement ring true?



# Reality of African Descent Ministries



REV. ALBERT STARR,  
DIRECTOR FOR ETHNIC SPECIFIC,  
MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES TEAM

-African Descent Rostered Ministers are on average older the ELCA average

- African Descent Pastors on average stay longer in their 1<sup>st</sup> Call Congregation

- African Descent Rostered Women on average wait longer for 1<sup>st</sup> call than any other segment of the roster.

-African Descent 1<sup>st</sup> Call Pastors often cannot afford to take calls to low income ministry contexts due to higher student debt ratio.

- ELCA African Descent Congregations are mostly “inner-city/urban” and in communities that experienced “White flight”
- The majority of these congregations are in zip codes of high poverty index
- A high number of African descent congregations are in contexts heavily impacted by 2008 financial crisis, foreclosures, reduction/withdrawal of services, displacement due to gentrification.
- The median wealth of African American families is \$4,900 compared to \$97,000 median wealth for white families



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

A Social Statement on  
**Freed in Christ: Race,  
Ethnicity and Culture**

*Adopted by a more than two-thirds majority vote as a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the third Churchwide Assembly on August 31, 1993, at Kansas City, Missouri.*

**I. FACING GOD**

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**1. A Time of Vision**

For us as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America there is one God and one Lord, Jesus Christ, "... through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1 Corinthians 8:6).

Scripture speaks of one humanity, created by God. It recounts our rebellion and enslavement to sin. Scripture tells of a diverse people reconciled to God through the blood of the cross, a people set free for the work of reconciliation. It heralds a new freedom and future in one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

If the story of Babel is of a people scattered, the story of Pentecost is of a people called and gathered. Christ brings together the scattered children of God (John 11:52). The Holy Spirit breathes the freedom of the Gospel into the Church, where every people under heaven is represented.

A humanity enslaved to sin has been set free; a Church has been gathered in freedom. Cultural differences still matter, but they can be seen for what God intends—blessings rather than means of enslavement.

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# Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity & Culture

## Declaration of ELCA to Jewish Community

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on April 18, 1994, adopted the following document as a statement on Lutheran-Jewish relations:

In the long history of Christianity there exists no more tragic development than the treatment accorded the Jewish people on the part of Christian believers. Very few Christian communities of faith were able to escape the contagion of anti-Judaism and its modern successor, anti-Semitism. Lutherans belonging to the Lutheran World Federation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America feel a special burden in this regard because of certain elements in the legacy of the reformer Martin Luther and the catastrophes, including the Holocaust of the twentieth century, suffered by Jews in places where the Lutheran churches were strongly represented.

The Lutheran communion of faith is linked by name and heritage to the memory of Martin Luther, teacher and reformer. Honoring his name in our own, we recall his bold stand for truth, his earthy and sublime words of wisdom, and above all his witness to God's saving Word. Luther proclaimed a gospel for people as we really are, bidding us to trust a grace sufficient to reach our deepest shames and address the most tragic truths.

In the spirit of that truth-telling, we who bear his name and heritage must with pain acknowledge also Luther's anti-Judaic diatribes and the violent recommendations of his later writings against the Jews. As did many of Luther's own companions in the sixteenth century, we reject this violent invective, and yet more do we express our deep and abiding sorrow over its tragic effects on subsequent generations. In concert with the Lutheran World Federation, we particularly deplore the appropriation of Luther's words by modern anti-Semites for the teaching of hatred toward Judaism or toward the Jewish people in our day.

Grieving the complicity of our own tradition within this history of hatred, moreover, we express our urgent desire to live out our faith in Jesus Christ with love and respect for the Jewish people. We recognize in anti-Semitism a contradiction and an affront to the Gospel, a violation of our hope and calling, and we pledge this church to oppose the deadly working of such bigotry, both within our own circles and in the society around us. Finally, we pray for the continued blessing of the Blessed One upon the increasing cooperation and understanding between Lutheran Christians and the Jewish community.

# Opportunities for Building Racial Equity

## Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman



### **RENEWED ACTION REGARDING RACISM TOWARD LUTHERANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT**

Social Policy Resolution

CA16.05.17

*“To reaffirm the commitment of this church to create, sustain and reinvest in African descent communities, congregations and ministries including an update of the African Descent Ministry Strategy; To request the Domestic Mission unit, in partnership with the African Descent Lutheran Association, to find ways to increase the number of African descent leaders, congregations and communities served by at least 10 percent; and to recommit this church to growing its ethnic and racial diversity.”*

# Small Group Discussion

*The Council will bring this "Declaration" to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for its consideration and action with a recommendation to include this Declaration in the governing documents of the ELCA; the declaration is a statement. It will not be included in the governing documents of the constitution.*

*1. What could the Declaration achieve?*

*2. How does Church Council move forward?*

*Large group conversation on recommended next steps of action.*



"Everything  
that is done  
in the world  
is done  
by hope."

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Thank  
you!



# **CHOICE POINTS: THE CROSSROADS TO CHANGE**



# CHOICE POINTS

- Choice points are decision-making opportunities that influence outcomes.
- The cumulative impacts of many small choices can be as significant as the impacts of big decisions.
- When we're conscious of choice points and the related impacts, we're less likely to replicate implicit bias and the status quo, and we open new possibilities for equitable change.

# Taking Action

1. Connect with others in intentional and ongoing justice partnerships.
2. Reflect on your faith values and opportunities for changing habits and outcomes.
3. Project your values and vision through purposeful, collective and courageous action.



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.



# ADLA Consultation of Governing Documents

- ▶ Consultation included representation from the African Descent Lutheran Association, European Descent Lutheran Association, Office of the Secretary, African Descent Ministries & Racial Justice Ministries.

Proposed constitutional change to Chapter 4 Statement of Purpose \***C4.02.d**

- ▶ Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice and equality for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, standing with the poor and powerless and committing itself to their needs.



10 Minute Break



- ▶ Around 200 million people identifying themselves as being of African descent live in the Americas. Many millions more live in other parts of the world, outside of the African continent.
- ▶ People of African Descent represent 13% of the total population of the United States of America.
- ▶ Within the ELCA there are more than 46,100 members that identify as people of African Descent, or 1.9% of the ELCA's total population.

2015 - 2024  
INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF  
**AFRICAN DESCENT**

# Early History of the Enslavement of Africans



Elmina trading post erected by the Portuguese in 1482 in Elmina, Ghana. Became a significant location in the transatlantic slave trade. Recognized by the United Nations Scientific Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The institution of the enslavement of Africans lasted over 300 years. by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)



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# Session Outline

- ▶ Overview of the Social Policy Resolution.
- ▶ Comments from African Descent Lutheran Association President, Rev. Lamont Wells.
- ▶ Centering Meditation on 7 Generations, Prairie-Rose Seminole,
- ▶ Documentary Film & Discussion, Judith Roberts, Program Director for Racial Justice
- ▶ **15-minute Break**
- ▶ Urgency of Now, Rev. Pastor Albert Starr, Director for Multicultural Ministries,
- ▶ Opportunities for Equity, Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman
- ▶ Where Do We Go From Here?, Judith Roberts

# Questions continued

Thompson shares three patterns of thinking used to justify a system of enslavement they are:

1. **Animalization**— “They’re not human.”
2. **Demonization**— “They are human, but something is very wrong with them.”
3. **Infantilization**— “They are human, nothing is really wrong with them, but they are not our intellectual equals.”

*In what ways do these ideas manifest themselves today? What feelings do they evoke in you?*

# Scripture, Slavery & Trauma

3) Talking about generational slavery and its traumatic effects on the nation can advance important dialogue. How does scripture shape your thinking of race, slavery or trauma?

4) Slavery in America harmed both the enslaved Africans and those who enslaved them. What is the role of the ELCA in facilitating healing?

**Name: the Rev. Vicki Garber**  
**Meeting: Report of Final meeting with PC-USA (PMAB)**  
**Date: April 25-27, 2018**

This was my final meeting as the ELCA representative to the PMAB (Presbyterian Mission Agency Board). This final meeting was very different than most of the meetings that I had attended with the PMAB. The group has been struggling with the mandate from the General Assembly (GA) to reorganize and downsize. That struggle culminated at this meeting.

We did 'regular' business items as usual: budget, committee reports and so on. But almost the whole meeting was used to grapple with the reorganization piece. Part of the angst was the feeling that the changes were being imposed from an entity appointed by the GA upon the PMAB and the fact that that task force didn't really take into account (or didn't seem to take into account) the working task force of the PMAB. This was compounded by the fact that the task force felt unheard and put down by the PMAB working group as well. All of this was probably complicated further by the fact that their interim Executive Director had resigned and the role was being filled by a second 'temporary interim'. This meeting was his last meeting as well. In some ways it was a perfect storm. It was also extremely emotional and many people that I have grown to love and care for expressed deep hurt over how the meeting went. Additionally, there was a lot of anger among some of the board.

At the end of the meeting, an overture was made by the PMAB for representatives of PMAB to meet with the task force in the presence of a mediator to try to reconcile their differences before the upcoming GA meeting. That overture was rejected. At the last communication that I received, PMAB was going to GA with an alternative proposal and many were expecting contention in the sessions because of the inability to resolve these differences prior to GA.

I have served with the PMAB for 6 years. Over the years I have learned a lot about Presbyterian polity and thought. Individuals and the group have often asked for my opinion and I have been willing to give it carefully, always remembering that I can only speak for myself but that I need to be faithful to the ELCA desire for ecumenical connectedness as well as solid witness to our understanding of the Gospel. We have had numerous diversity and inclusivity trainings. Attention is paid to the greater church. All of that made this meeting painful for me as well. It was like being an onlooker to a painful surgery of someone I love.

Having said all of that, I can affirm an ongoing and deep desire on the part of staff and the board to continue the well-grounded connections between our two churches.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

**Name: Clarence Smith**

**Meeting: General Synod Council meeting of the Reformed Church in America (RCA)**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, MI**

**Date: October 18-20, 2018**

There are 12-14 folks brand-new to the General Synod Council. The first evening, Liz Brand from the RCA staff offered a presentation on Governance Policy. The RCA is governed using the Carver governance model. Because this topic is of interest to me, I found the presentation to be engaging and fascinating.

On October 19, the day began with worship at followed by presentations from the various Commissions. The fall meeting of the General Synod Council (GSC) includes presentations and meetings for the various Commissions (e.g., Church History, Worship, Theology, etc) of the RCA. Later, in the morning, the GSC met separately. Their role is to approve (or re-approve) various policies. The moderator designates two different governance process observers. The group took time to complete annual Conflict of Interest forms and a new Whistleblower Policy form. I noted that almost all members of the GSC are either ordained or an elder within their congregation. One RCA minister serving on GSC is currently called to an ELCA congregation.

The GSC discussed the need for GSC membership requirements at the General Synod 2019 meeting. These items will be forwarded to the Commission on Nominations. GSC members are elected for a 3-year term (I believe they can be re-elected for one additional term). The General Synod meeting is an annual meeting. The specific policies that were discussed and approved were the Executive Limitations policies. These policies are determined by the Book of Church Order (BCO) and the General Secretary is charged with implementation of those policies. The General Secretary, Eddy Aleman, provides written description of how he has implemented these policies. The GSC discusses and then votes to approve or reject the implementations. Besides Executive Limitations policies, the GSC approves additional policies. The remainder of policy approvals, however, occur in the spring meeting.

The moderator (Lee DeYoung) provided me with 5 minutes to address the GSC. I introduced myself and provided greetings on behalf of the ELCA Church Council. I briefly described our governance and structure and mentioned that we are on similar journeys, comparing the ELCA's Future Directions 2025 with the RCA's document, Transformed and Transforming.

The RCA has spent much of the last several years discussing LGBT issues within the church. It is a polarizing, and often divisive, topic. Much of the GSC discussion was directed toward planning for its General Synod meeting in June 2019. Many GSC members want to limit the number and content of "overtures" (what the ELCA calls memorials or resolutions), in order to take a break from the issue and postpone any decision-making to 2020 or beyond. (There is a Vision 2020 task force presently at work that will bring recommendations to the 2020 General Synod meeting, I believe.) Strongly related to this specific topic, was the discussion of the "Great Lakes Catechism", an RCA document reflecting a conservative approach to LGBT issues. The Great Lakes Synod had requested the RCA staff mail a copy to each congregation (if not each household). The response of RCA staff was that no budget existed to accomplish the mailing. The synod replied that it would bear the expense of providing copies, so the issue was sent to GSC as an agenda item. Ultimately, the GSC said no to the request. Their rationale included the notion that the document is available online. (Indeed, a link to the document can be found on the rca.org website).

Other GSC items included reports from the Investment Advisory Committee and the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

On Saturday morning, the day again began with worship. Following worship, there was a presentation by the Rev. Weener, the RCA staff member responsible for Church Multiplication. The RCA has a goal of 1,000 congregational starts within the next 20 years (to 2038). This is equivalent to one new start each week for the next 20 years, and if successful, would allow the RCA to double from its current size. When broken down, the 1,000 congregational goal is as follows:

- 500 brand new congregations
- 100 multi-site congregations (planting a new campus for an existing church)
- 200 “global” plants (so outside the US)
- 200 pilot projects (experiments with learning or service communities)

Other similarities with ELCA noted by this observer:

- RCA is embarking in online learning delivery for theological content
- Want to strengthen relationship with its seminaries and colleges
- Disability concerns within the church
- Questions about sustainability and funding models within the Church. The RCA is actively pursuing a model for congregational assessments.

# A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment:

A policy statement of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PROPOSED DRAFT



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

September 24, 2018

Dear Conference of Bishops and Church Council,

Over the first six months of this year, individuals, congregations, networks, and institutions of this church joined you in sharing feedback on the draft inter-religious policy statement. Thank you for your role in encouraging participation. It has been a rich, informative, and energizing process, and I am grateful for the collective wisdom that has been shared and received.


Over the summer months, the drafting team worked to revise the document accordingly. Some of the changes are structural, and others pertain to the content. On the whole, you will find a draft that is resonant with the first, but also notably different. On behalf of the task force, which has unanimously signed off, I am pleased to share with you the proposed draft inter-religious policy statement.

**At this stage in the process, we invite you to review this draft and submit in writing (to [Kathryn.Lohre@elca.org](mailto:Kathryn.Lohre@elca.org)) any specific amendments to the text by Friday, Oct. 19.**

The task force will consider all proposed amendments and make its recommendations to the Church Council by Friday, Oct. 26. We hope that this step will provide a final opportunity for you to raise – and for the task force to address – any major concerns.

It is exciting to be on the cusp of considering a common basis for our inter-religious relations across the diverse ministries and contexts of this church. I hope that you will experience renewed joy and fresh insights as you read this document. I also hope that you will be able to experience its potential as a tool to aid practical application and theological reflection in the places where you worship and serve.

Yours in Christ,



Patricia J. Lull, Bishop  
Saint Paul Area Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Chair, ELCA Inter-Religious Task Force



## Inter-Religious Task Force Participants

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Assistant to the Presiding Bishop

Executive, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations & Theological Discernment

1                   **A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment:**  
2                   **A policy statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

3  
4                   **FOREWORD: HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

5  
6                   The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has been engaging in  
7                   inter-religious relations since its formation in 1988, building upon the legacy of its  
8                   predecessor bodies, the work of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the witness  
9                   of our ecumenical partners.

10  
11                  As part of the global Lutheran communion, we wrestle with and lament Martin Luther’s  
12                  troubling legacy regarding inter-religious relations, especially his anti-Judaic and  
13                  anti-Islamic writings. Importantly, the first major inter-religious witness of this church  
14                  was the adoption of a “Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community” (1994), which  
15                  repudiated Luther’s vile anti-Judaic diatribes and reached out in love and respect to the  
16                  Jewish community.

17  
18                  Over the years, our inter-religious relations have deepened and expanded. As a  
19                  church, we have developed educational resources, engaged in dialogue and common  
20                  action, defended our neighbors against religious bigotry, and cared for our various  
21                  partnerships. While we have focused on Jewish and Muslim relations, we have also  
22                  participated in organizations and efforts that reflect the broader diversity of religions  
23                  and worldviews in the United States and globally.

24  
25                  Our 1991 policy statement, “A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment,” called for “a  
26                  separate, official statement” that would reflect the “distinct responsibility for the church  
27                  to enter into conversations and reach deeper understanding with people of other  
28                  faiths.” This inter-religious policy statement seeks to fulfill this recommendation, and  
29                  complements our church’s ecumenical policy statement.

30  
31                  Whenever possible, the ELCA cooperates with other Christians in building relations with  
32                  those of other religions and worldviews. Councils of churches are an important avenue  
33                  of dialogue and common action. While not all Christians are interested in or supportive  
34                  of inter-religious relations, this commitment is receiving increased attention in many  
35                  churches. Our Christian companions have greatly enhanced our journey. In fact, the  
36                  inter-religious statements of our ecumenical partners have informed the development of  
37                  this document.

38 At the same time, the ELCA has something distinctive to say about our inter-religious  
39 commitments. As a policy statement, this document provides a common framework for  
40 the diverse ministries of this church. The 12 commitments provide a succinct summary  
41 of the policy and may prove useful in certain contexts as a stand-alone aid. The  
42 afterword goes deeper into the biblical, confessional, and theological basis for the policy.

43  
44 As used in this document, the word “religion” refers to various forms of beliefs and  
45 practices, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism,  
46 Taoism, and traditional indigenous spiritualities. Whenever “neighbor” is used, it refers  
47 to all those who profess a religion, as well as those who do not, including those who  
48 consider themselves atheists or agnostics or ascribe to other worldviews that are not  
49 explicitly religious. “We” refers to the individual members and participants, as well  
50 as to the congregations and ministries of the whole church. This document seeks to  
51 address a Lutheran approach to understanding and engaging with our neighbors in a  
52 multi-religious, pluralistic context.

53  
54 As descriptions of the teachings of other religions and worldviews are readily available  
55 elsewhere, this policy statement does not seek to explain or categorize them. Neither  
56 does it seek to provide a theology of world religions. Instead, its focus is on our dual  
57 calling to witness to Christ and to love our neighbor. As such, this document serves  
58 as an invitation to individuals, congregations, ministries, institutions, and expressions  
59 of the ELCA to engage constructively with our neighbors of other religions and  
60 worldviews. In this declaration, our neighbors may also find greater clarity about who  
61 we are, what they can expect of us, and why and how our Christian faith and Lutheran  
62 self-understanding compel us into dialogue and common action.

63  
64 In all of this, may greater understanding and cooperation throughout the *Oikoumene*  
65 – the whole inhabited earth – enhance the justice, peace, and life abundant that God  
66 intends for us all.

67  
68 **INTRODUCTION**

69  
70 As the ELCA, we enter into inter-religious relations on the basis of our Christian identity  
71 and Lutheran self-understanding. As we engage with our neighbors of other religions and  
72 worldviews, it is important that we clearly articulate who we are, what we believe, and why.

73  
74 “This church confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the  
75 power of God for the salvation of all who believe” (ELCA Constitution, Chapter 2).  
76 As a confessional church, we understand ourselves to be evangelical, catholic, and

77 ecumenical. “To be *evangelical* means to be committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.  
78 ... To be *catholic* means to be committed to the fullness of the apostolic faith and its  
79 creedal, doctrinal articulation for the entire world. ... To be *ecumenical* means to be  
80 committed to the oneness to which God calls the world in the saving gift of Jesus Christ”  
81 (“A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment,” 1991).

82  
83 “Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made  
84 and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation”  
85 (ELCA Constitution, Chapter 2). This is the gospel – the good news of what God has  
86 done, is doing, and will do for all in Christ. It is a gift from God, freely given, without any  
87 requirements that need to be fulfilled. “Sharing the good news,” or evangelism, is using  
88 words and deeds to pass this life-changing message along to others. We describe this as  
89 the work of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). As witnesses to the good news of  
90 Jesus Christ, we entrust to the Holy Spirit the work of turning that witness into faith.

91  
92 With the work of being a witness comes an invitation to love God and to love and  
93 serve the neighbor, which is known as the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40).  
94 This neighborly response is not fueled simply by human kindness. We believe that  
95 God entrusts to us as “in clay jars” (2 Corinthians 4:7) the “message of reconciliation”  
96 for all (2 Corinthians 5:19). We believe that “Christ, our peace, has put an end to the  
97 hostility of race, ethnicity, gender, and economic class” (“Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity,  
98 and Culture,” ELCA social statement, 1993, p. 1). In a deeply divided world, and as a  
99 faithful response to Christ’s message of reconciliation, we seek right, peaceful, and just  
100 relationships with all our neighbors, including those of other religions and worldviews.  
101 We do this as an expression of our Christian faith, and as a continuation of the covenant  
102 God made with us in holy baptism “to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,  
103 and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)*,  
104 Affirmation of Baptism).

105

## 106 **CONTEXT**

107

108 Our context, whether understood locally or globally, is multi-religious. Our Lutheran  
109 vocation both shapes *and* is shaped by our engagement with religious diversity.

110

### 111 *Encountering religious diversity*

112

113 Religious diversity has continually shaped American society, starting with the indigenous  
114 peoples of this land. Though many colonizers came to this land in search of religious  
115 freedom, they systematically and violently denied it to the indigenous peoples already here.

116 We publicly confess this sin in our 2016 ELCA “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery,”  
117 which was an important step in a long path toward “repentance and reconciliation to native  
118 nations in this country for damage done in the name of Christianity.”

119

120 Every chapter of U.S. history has had a lasting impact on our identity as a religiously  
121 diverse nation. This includes our sinful history of slavery, as well as various waves of  
122 migration and immigration. In recent decades, this history, as well as new patterns of  
123 forced displacement and new kinds of religious affiliation, has resulted in rapid and  
124 radical changes to our multi-religious landscape. Christians in the United States are now  
125 more likely than in previous generations to encounter neighbors of other religions and  
126 worldviews in their communities, schools, workplaces, civic spaces, circles of friends,  
127 and families.

128

129 *Responding to our context*

130

131 As a church, we must consider anew our calling and commitments in a multi-religious  
132 world. Many Lutherans and Lutheran ministries already participate in inter-religious  
133 activities such as theological dialogue, advocacy, and service, which build mutual  
134 understanding and advance the common good, defined as justice and peace for all of  
135 creation. As Lutherans, we are called to move from mere coexistence to a more robust  
136 engagement. It is through authentic, mutual relationships that we can truly love our  
137 neighbors as people made in the image of God. This commitment includes confronting  
138 whenever possible the often-compounding oppressions experienced by people of various  
139 religions and worldviews on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, and class.

140

141 *Fear and division*

142

143 There are many ways individuals and communities can respond to religious  
144 difference. The most harmful responses are grounded in ignorance and fear,  
145 which can breed stereotypes. In the extreme, these responses can fuel incidents  
146 of religious bigotry, restrict religious freedoms, and arouse conflicts that are  
147 destructive of life, property, and the environment.

148

149 We live in a context of ongoing anti-Muslim bigotry and anti-Semitism, as well as  
150 incidents of harassment and violence directed against these and other minority  
151 religious and ethnic communities. In some cases, the words and deeds of a  
152 few are used to discredit entire religious communities. Unfortunately, in every  
153 religion, Christianity included, some people distort, misuse, or abuse religion to  
154 incite violence and cause harm. We ought not allow these voices to determine or

155 influence our perception of our neighbors. The ELCA must play an active role  
156 in dispelling fear of our neighbors, opposing religious bigotry, and standing with  
157 those who are the targets of fear, discrimination, hatred, and violence.

158

### 159 *Inaction*

160

161 Another possible response to religious diversity is inaction. For some of us, an  
162 encounter with religious difference may seem a distant reality or one we are not  
163 quite ready to acknowledge. We may have limited information and experiences,  
164 which can mean we are less motivated to reach out to our neighbors. All of us  
165 have been exposed to stereotypes, which may seem harmless when not acted on  
166 or spoken aloud. Yet, in the face of bigotry, such stereotypes are not neutral. They,  
167 too, can be destructive. Luther interprets the Eighth Commandment, “You shall  
168 not bear false witness against your neighbor,” to mean not only that “we do not  
169 tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations”  
170 but also that we should “come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret  
171 everything they do in the best possible light” (Small Catechism). Such action is, in  
172 fact, required of us.

173

### 174 *Active engagement*

175

176 When the alternatives are so devastating, respectful conversation, dialogue, advocacy,  
177 accompaniment, friendship, and cooperation are imperative. We are called to move  
178 beyond encountering our religiously diverse neighbors to actively engaging with  
179 them. This calling leads to concrete commitments that we strive to live out as people  
180 of faith. We are freed in Christ to engage our neighbors in a multi-religious world.

181

### 182 *Expanding our inter-religious commitments*

183

184 Our relationship to each of our neighbors of other religions and worldviews is  
185 vitally important. At the same time, Christians have had a particularly rich yet  
186 complex relationship with Jews and Muslims. In significantly different ways, all three  
187 traditions claim to worship the God of Abraham. Given this kinship, Lutherans have a  
188 responsibility to overcome stereotypes and misunderstandings of Muslims and Jews  
189 and to seek fuller understanding and cooperation. Doing so may well involve rethinking  
190 aspects of Christian self-understanding.

191

192 This “Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment” reaffirms the 1994 “Declaration of the  
193 ELCA to the Jewish Community.” At the same time, it extends the scope of our calling

194 to additional neighbors too – including those of other religions, those who identify with  
195 multiple religious and spiritual traditions, and those who are not religious.

196

197 Beyond Judaism and Islam, the ELCA engages with other religious communities,  
198 including Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs, among others. The state, national, and world  
199 councils of churches have played a significant role in expanding the breadth of our  
200 inter-religious dialogue and in exploring how we understand and relate to other  
201 neighbors who self-identify as Christian, but are not trinitarian, such as The Church of  
202 Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Jehovah's Witnesses. On the whole, we affirm the  
203 value of pursuing inter-religious dialogue in partnership with others whenever possible.

204

205 The ELCA also participates in multi-religious coalitions, organizations, and initiatives  
206 that seek the common good. Though many religious traditions and worldviews are  
207 represented, these interactions provide opportunities for particular relationships  
208 to grow. As we are more frequently asked to articulate who we are and what we  
209 believe, multi-religious groups can also be spaces where we grow in our Lutheran  
210 self-understanding and vocation.

211

212 Occasions arise when reaching out directly as Lutherans is an important expression of  
213 our calling to love and serve our neighbor; for example, in response to an incident of  
214 religious bigotry or in pursuit of dialogue around a specific theological issue. Expanding  
215 and at the same time deepening our relations with our neighbors of other religions is a  
216 growing opportunity for the ELCA, and for the ecumenical movement as a whole. As our  
217 neighborhoods come to reflect greater religious diversity, our call to love and serve our  
218 neighbors also expands.

219

220 *Relating to neighbors who are not religious*

221

222 This declaration focuses on neighbors who practice other religions. However, many  
223 people in the United States are religiously unaffiliated. Some, such as atheists or secular  
224 humanists, have rejected religion and a belief in God; others have affirmed individual  
225 spirituality over institutional and/or church affiliation. As Lutherans, we affirm that we  
226 are called to build relationships with all our neighbors. Many who are unaffiliated are  
227 longing to see Christians practicing the generosity and love they profess and are eager  
228 to cooperate on projects that improve the larger community. Such cooperation is a way  
229 of practicing our calling, as well as a way of giving authentic witness to our faith.

230 *Pastoral considerations*

231

232 There are many pastoral considerations beyond the scope of this declaration, for  
233 example, the common reality of multi-religious family life. Therefore, the church  
234 recognizes the need for the ongoing development of appropriate pastoral aids, including  
235 guidelines for inter-religious marriages, pastoral counseling, religious education, and  
236 joint prayer services. In general, the ELCA is open to participating in inter-religious  
237 prayer services that honor the integrity, distinctive commitments, and gifts of each  
238 tradition, and reflect prayerful understanding and careful planning.

239

## 240 **VISION**

241

242 A biblical understanding of God's vision inspires our calling. The prophets received and  
243 shared this vision, and Jesus taught and embodied it.

244

### 245 *A biblical vision*

246

247 God's vision is of a world in which humans and creation, in all their glorious diversity,  
248 live in unity, justice, and peace. In such a world, hope abounds, and fear no longer  
249 separates one person from another or one people from another. In this vision, "justice  
250 roll[s] down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24)  
251 and "the leaves of the tree [of life] are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2b).  
252 We envision a world in which God's grace and mercy are celebrated, and all of God's  
253 creatures and all of God's creation are regarded with value and treated with care.

254

255 The Scriptures reflect God's yearning for such a world, but they also recognize that we  
256 live between the inauguration of God's vision and its fulfillment. In the meantime, we  
257 struggle to "renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God" (*ELW*, Holy Baptism)  
258 as we experience the gift of Christ in us and the gift of the Holy Spirit calling us to  
259 celebrate every sign of reconciliation and wholeness.

260

261 As a community of faith, we are inspired to put God's vision into practice here and  
262 now, even if we can see only vague outlines of its fulfillment. We realize that we will  
263 fall short of the glory of God. Nevertheless, we live in love and hope. We seek to foster  
264 healthy relations and healthy communities in which all can flourish. We break the cycle  
265 of escalating retaliation that divides and destroys. With God's help, we seek to mend and  
266 heal the world that God so dearly and deeply loves.



267 Guided by God’s vision and sobered by this realization, we seek, as one part of our  
268 undertaking, to achieve mutual understanding among all people of different religions  
269 and worldviews and to inspire all to work together for the common good. In doing so we  
270 give an account of the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15b).

271

272 *Mutual understanding*

273

274 When we engage our religiously diverse neighbors, we can expect both a new  
275 understanding of the other and a deeper understanding and appreciation of our own  
276 Christian faith. “Mutual understanding” involves moving from factual knowledge of  
277 commonalities and differences to grasping coherence and even glimpsing beauty. In  
278 discovering how others love and cherish their religious traditions, we more deeply love  
279 and cherish our own. We empathize with the challenges and struggles others face in their  
280 religious commitments, as well as appreciate their joys. Mutual understanding opens the  
281 possibility of friendship and accepting responsibility for each other’s well-being.

282

283 As such, mutual understanding does not diminish but rather deepens our own faith.  
284 Luther was clear that our understanding of faith can and does grow and change: as we  
285 experience new things in life, study and learn, and meditate and pray. Hence, a person’s  
286 understanding can change without one’s faith being undermined. By engaging our  
287 neighbors, we learn to articulate our own faith more clearly and to see in it things we  
288 had not noticed or appreciated before. We learn to express what being a follower of Jesus  
289 really means to us. We learn that religious differences need not erect barriers. In all of this,  
290 relying on the Holy Spirit, we experience more of the mystery and glory of God.

291

292 *Common good*

293

294 As we strive to show forth God’s vision, we are called to work toward justice and  
295 peace for all people and creation, that is, the common good. Religious diversity, when  
296 accompanied by mutual understanding and cooperation, enriches the whole. Through  
297 inter-religious relationships, we receive the gifts of our neighbors and experience more  
298 fully the exquisite realization that all are made in the image of God. A deep appreciation  
299 of the similarities and differences among religions and worldviews enhances working  
300 together for the common good. At the same time, cooperation can enhance both  
301 mutual understanding and the self-understanding of each participant. Seeking mutual  
302 understanding and the common good are active steps we can take toward God’s vision  
303 of life abundant for all.

304 **CALLING**

305

306 Our calling is a dual calling: to be faithful witnesses to Christ *and* to love God by loving  
307 and serving our neighbors. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) stands alongside  
308 the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40).

309

310 Our Lutheran tradition distinguishes between “two kingdoms” of God. When Luther  
311 made this distinction, he was thinking not of two separate geographical territories but  
312 of two different ways, or “rules,” in which God interacts with humans. These include:  
313 1) showing mercy, overcoming our alienation, and giving us new life through Jesus  
314 Christ and 2) working through social, political, and economic institutions and authorities  
315 to safeguard human life and welfare.

316

317 Sharing the good news, or evangelism, contributes to the first rule. We do this in  
318 response to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-10). Serving the community, which  
319 includes inter-religious relations, contributes to the second. We do this in gratitude  
320 for God’s mercy and in response to the Great Commandment to love God and to love  
321 our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). In both rules, or kingdoms, God calls us to  
322 approach all relationships with love, grace, mercy, and a concern for distributive and  
323 restorative justice.

324

325 *Evangelism*

326

327 We are committed to engaging our neighbors without compromising who we are or the  
328 fullness of the calling we have received. An integral part of this calling is to be witnesses  
329 to Christ (Acts 1:8)—to evangelize. As understood by Lutherans, evangelism is sharing  
330 through our lives the joy of the good news of what God has done in and through Christ.

331

332 This sharing occurs in many ways, in word and in deed—always respecting the dignity  
333 of the other and always offered in love. It occurs best in the context of an already  
334 established relationship of trust. We acknowledge that at times we have betrayed this  
335 trust, substituting manipulation and coercion for evangelism. As we express the power  
336 of life in Christ, we do so in ways that honor our convictions that every human is made  
337 in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and that all of creation is good (Genesis 1:31).

338

339 We also rely on the Spirit, who alone creates faith. As we are taught in Luther’s Small  
340 Catechism, “by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my  
341 Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel [and]  
342 enlightened me with his gifts” (*ELW*, Explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles’

343 Creed). We are saved by grace, unable to do anything to contribute to our own salvation,  
344 or to that of others.

345

346 Our faith compels us to respond to the gift we have received through the Spirit  
347 by freely and joyfully sharing the good news. We have claimed this evangelical  
348 commitment, and it is reflected even in our name. We know that “the Gospel is more  
349 than human recollection of, or our confession about, what God has done in the past.  
350 ... It is proclamation with the power of God’s deed in Christ and in his resurrection (2  
351 Corinthians 5:19b-21), an event that opens to us the future of God’s eternal love”  
352 (“A Declaration of Ecumenical Commitment,” 1991).

353

354 With such a sure and certain promise, we anticipate that not only may God work  
355 through others, God may also work through us when we witness to a God of  
356 generosity and forgiveness, a God who loves humans, values their freedom, and works  
357 for their wholeness. As we engage our neighbors in the fullness of who we are and in  
358 whom we believe, we expect that so, too, will our partners share with us their deepest  
359 selves and convictions.

360

361 *Inter-religious relations*

362

363 Having received both the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, we recognize  
364 that inter-religious relations are part of our calling to love the neighbor. We are called by  
365 God and freed in Christ to witness to the life-changing news of Jesus Christ and to love  
366 and serve our neighbors in a multi-religious world. This vocation includes loving and  
367 serving both those who share our faith in Jesus Christ and those who do not. It is our  
368 duty and joy to extend God’s love, grace, mercy, and justice to all those who are made in  
369 the image of God and to the whole of creation. In other words, we are called to  
370 inter-religious engagement because we are Lutheran. We live out this calling in three ways.

371

372 *Love our neighbor*

373

374 Central to the Lutheran tradition is every person’s calling, or vocation, to love  
375 and serve God and our neighbor. As Luther reminded us, God asks that we  
376 direct our gratitude for God’s generosity outward to others rather than upward  
377 in activities intended to please God. Luther called this our vocation. Alongside  
378 “grace alone,” this was arguably his second most important teaching. Vocation  
379 affects every area of life. Our vocation, our calling to be a neighbor, excludes  
380 no one, even those whose religion is different from our own. Commenting on  
381 the parable of the Good Samaritan, Martin Luther defined the neighbor this

382 way: “Now our neighbor is any human being, especially one who needs our  
383 help” (Martin Luther, “Letters to Galatians, 1535,” *Luther’s Works*). We are to  
384 extend God’s mercy to all, and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Luke 10:25-37,  
385 Matthew 19:19).

386

387 *Serve (alongside) our neighbor*

388

389 Our vocation includes service to the individual neighbor and to the community as  
390 a whole. To know how to best serve the community, we need to understand what  
391 benefits all parts of that community. This means reaching out to neighbors across  
392 the boundaries of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and class. Our vocation also  
393 includes serving *alongside* our neighbor, as we respond together to meet the needs  
394 of others. While we may not necessarily share the same religious inspiration for  
395 doing so, our shared vision for peace and justice leads us to engage in service for  
396 the sake of the world.

397

398 *Live in solidarity with our neighbor*

399

400 Being a neighbor can be risky. When power is abused, and fear grips a community  
401 or a nation, standing up for those who are being targeted or excluded takes  
402 courage. We are called to exhibit this courage and take this risk. In the face of  
403 social pressures that make us feel paralyzed, our calling includes developing  
404 a sense of agency—that is, a sense that each of us can make a difference. Our  
405 attention needs to be focused on our God-given gifts and responsibilities rather  
406 than on the many impediments to acting on behalf of those who are being  
407 maligned or harassed or harmed, recognizing that some of our neighbors are  
408 experiencing multiple forms of oppression at once. For all of this, a support  
409 community of fellow believers and inter-religious partners can make an  
410 empowering difference.

411

412 In the United States, many Christians live in neighborhoods that are predominantly  
413 Christian, where social expectations, such as holidays, school vacations, work rules,  
414 and the clothes we wear, have accommodated their beliefs and practices. The same is  
415 often not true for our neighbors who practice other religions or those who practice  
416 no religion at all. They can be at a disadvantage and made to feel like outsiders. As  
417 a result, we are called to be sensitive toward our neighbors of other religions and  
418 worldviews, engaging them in the spirit of accompaniment. This includes listening  
419 and learning, giving and receiving. It also means recognizing that other religions  
420 are organized differently, sometimes with very few or no structures corresponding

421 to our own. Assumptions about cultural norms, affecting both ourselves and our  
422 neighbors, need to be constantly identified and avoided. Determining together the  
423 right pace for building and deepening partnerships is a way in which we can begin to  
424 practice mutual hospitality and live in solidarity with our neighbor.

425

426 Our calling is to be both faithful witnesses and good neighbors. We enter into this calling  
427 in a spirit of humility and self-criticism, repentant of our past mistakes, anticipating that  
428 we will continue to fall short of God’s vision, and committed to the justice, peace, and  
429 well-being of our neighbors. We accept that we will have unanswered questions about  
430 how God is working in and through our neighbors of other religions and even in and  
431 through us. Yet, we anticipate that in loving, serving, and standing in solidarity with our  
432 neighbors, we will experience the presence of God, participate in building a more just  
433 and peaceful world, and find our faith enriched.

434

### 435 **COMMITMENTS**

436

437 We participate in God’s mission in an increasingly multi-religious world. Locally and  
438 globally, there are examples of religious communities coexisting peacefully but also  
439 examples of conflict, violence, discrimination, bigotry, intolerance, and persecution. In the  
440 midst of this, God has entrusted to us a vision of unity, justice, and peace. Therefore, in  
441 faithful response to God’s love in Christ Jesus, we are called and committed to:

442

- 443 • **Seek mutual understanding** with our neighbors of other religions and  
444 worldviews.
- 445 • **Cooperate** with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews as instruments  
446 of God’s justice and peace.

447

448 Across the ELCA, the form of our inter-religious relations will vary depending on  
449 context. As a church, we hold these commitments in common as a policy to guide our  
450 work and as a measure of accountability to our inter-religious partners.

451

- 452 1. The ELCA will pray for the well-being of our wonderfully diverse human family,  
453 including our neighbors of other religions and worldviews (*ELW*, Prayer for the  
454 Human Family, p. 79).
- 455 2. The ELCA will articulate why we both cherish the gospel, Scripture, the creeds, and  
456 confessions at the core of our Christian identity and Lutheran self-understanding  
457 and seek to understand our neighbor’s core identity and self-understanding  
458 in a spirit of mutual respect (“Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World:  
459 Recommendations for Conduct,” the World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council

- 460 for Interreligious Dialogue & World Evangelical Alliance, 2011).
- 461 3. The ELCA will witness to the power of life in Christ in and through our daily  
462 lives. We will seek to be ethical, transparent, and concerned for the integrity  
463 of our neighbor's rights and religious sensibilities as we share our faith with  
464 others (Report from Inter-Religious Consultation on Conversion, World Council of  
465 Churches, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 2006).
- 466 4. The ELCA, in dialogue with our partners, will seek to understand the religions  
467 of the world so as to enhance mutual understanding as well as to be able to  
468 identify the misuse of any religion to justify oppression, such as violence,  
469 genocide, or terrorism.
- 470 5. The ELCA will seek to know our neighbors in order to overcome stereotypes  
471 about them, "to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret  
472 everything they do in the best possible light" (Small Catechism, Eighth  
473 Commandment).
- 474 6. The ELCA will explore and encourage inter-religious friendship, accompaniment,  
475 and partnership with all who seek justice, peace, human wholeness, and the  
476 well-being of creation (ELCA Constitution, Chapter 4.03.f).
- 477 7. The ELCA will, whenever possible, work with other Christians and through  
478 ecumenical and inter-religious coalitions in its quest for inter-religious  
479 understanding and cooperation ("Lund Principle," 1952).
- 480 8. The ELCA will seek counsel from other religious groups in its discernment of and  
481 advocacy for the common good.
- 482 9. The ELCA will defend the full participation of all in our religiously diverse society,  
483 "strengthening public space as a just place for all" regardless of religion or  
484 worldview ("The Church in the Public Space: A Statement of The Lutheran World  
485 Federation," 2016).
- 486 10. The ELCA will defend human rights and oppose all forms of religious bigotry,  
487 violence, discrimination, and persecution and stand in solidarity with those who  
488 experience them, whether they are Christian or of another religion or worldview  
489 ("Human Rights" ELCA Social Message, 2017; "For Peace in God's World" ELCA  
490 Social Statement, 1995; "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture" ELCA  
491 Social Statement, 1993; "Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective" ELCA Social  
492 Statement, 1991).
- 493 11. The ELCA will confess when our words or deeds (or lack thereof) cause offense,  
494 harm, or violence to our neighbors of other religions and worldviews and will  
495 repent and seek forgiveness from God and reconciliation with our neighbors  
496 ("Luther, Lutheranism, and Jews," The Lutheran World Federation, 1984; ELCA  
497 "Declaration to the Jewish Community," 1994; ELCA "Repudiation of the Doctrine  
498 of Discovery," 2016).

499 12. The ELCA will produce study and dialogue materials and pastoral guidelines for  
500 understanding and engaging with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews  
501 and seek counsel from inter-religious partners in the development of such  
502 resources.

503

#### 504 **AFTERWORD: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS**

505

506 As a policy statement, this document seeks to provide a common framework for  
507 inter-religious relations across the ELCA. This work takes a variety of forms and moves  
508 in differing directions. That is, dialogue can foster study, and study can lead to dialogue.  
509 Conversation can lead to cooperation, and cooperation can foster dialogue. Group  
510 experiences can produce one-to-one relationships, and one-to-one relationships can  
511 lead to group encounters. Whatever form inter-religious relations takes, the goal should  
512 be to achieve ever-deeper mutual understanding and to maximize cooperation for the  
513 sake of the world, and all of creation.

514

515 Many ELCA members and participants have experience with inter-religious relations. Their  
516 good work opens opportunities for us to replicate or to join rather than needing to invent  
517 or to initiate. It is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of these activities. Food  
518 banks, social service projects, and racial and economic justice work, when undertaken  
519 cooperatively with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews, are examples. So are  
520 advocacy endeavors, such as working for the care of creation or the reduction of HIV  
521 and AIDS. Some congregations share their buildings with other religious communities  
522 and find the relationship mutually enriching. ELCA colleges and seminaries have faculty,  
523 students, and courses that reflect religious diversity. They also have programs and groups  
524 that seek to foster sensitivity to religious difference and competencies for vocational living  
525 in a multi-religious world. When welcoming and receiving refugees as new neighbors,  
526 Lutherans have carefully and compassionately tended to the important dimensions of  
527 religion and culture. For more examples, see *Engaging Others, Knowing Ourselves: A  
528 Lutheran Calling in a Multi-Religious World* (Lutheran University Press, 2016).

529

530 While the framework offered by this policy statement is flexible, it is also firmly rooted in  
531 the scriptural, confessional, and theological witness of the Lutheran tradition. While we  
532 may undertake our calling to inter-religious relations in various contexts and ways, we  
533 do so undergirded by what we hold in common. Therefore, this declaration will close with  
534 an exploration of two key questions: “What do the Scriptures say about people of other  
535 religions?” and “What are some of the Lutheran convictions that influence our calling?”

537

538 *God's vision*

539

540 God's revelation has entrusted to us a vision of whole, healthy relationships among  
541 humans, between humans and the whole of creation, and between humans and God.  
542 Several passages in the Bible help us to see God's vision more clearly. We think of the  
543 wolf lying down with the lamb; swords beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning  
544 hooks; workers able to enjoy the fruits of the trees they have planted; people turning the  
545 other cheek and going the second mile; and a city with its gates wide open for all, with  
546 plenty of food, water, and medicine, and with God so close that no special building is  
547 needed (Isaiah 2:4, 65:21-22; Matthew 5:39-41; Revelation 21:22, 25 and 22:1-2).

548

549 In light of God's vision, our calling is to help each other, and our neighbors, to make  
550 it manifest. With our lives, we become signs of this vision; through our whole, healthy  
551 relationships we come to see it more clearly. Our calling to live out this vision includes  
552 our relationships with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews. Every time we  
553 initiate, restore, heal, and embody such relationships, we take a step, however feebly,  
554 toward the wholeness that God intends. Our hope for the realization of God's vision  
555 guides and supports our calling and commitments.

556

557 *Other religions in the Bible*

558

559 The Bible contains no uniform perspective regarding people of other religions. In some  
560 cases, the leaders of Israel try to draw a sharp line between the Israelites and their  
561 neighbors. In other cases, God is portrayed as working through neighbors who practice  
562 other religions. There are numerous examples:

563

- 564 • Moses receives valuable advice from Jethro, a priest of Midian, not an Israelite,  
565 who also happens to be his father-in-law (Exodus 18).
- 566 • Cyrus of Persia, who did not worship the God of Israel, is "anointed" by God to  
567 deliver the Israelites from exile (Isaiah 45:1).
- 568 • Jesus encounters a Canaanite woman and is moved by her faith to heal her  
569 daughter (Matthew 15:27).
- 570 • Jesus responds to the needs of a Roman centurion, a commander within the  
571 occupying forces—not likely a person who practiced Judaism (Matthew 8:5-13 and  
572 Luke 7:1-10).
- 573 • In the story of Abimelech, Abraham, and Sarah, it is the outsider Abimelech who  
574 listens to God and does what is right (Genesis 20).



- 575 • The Canaanite named Rahab hides the two spies Joshua sent to find out about  
576 Jericho prior to its conquest (Joshua 2).  
577 • And the magi from the east, who likely did not practice Judaism, visit and honor  
578 the infant Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12).

579

580 These are but a few examples of how God loves and works with, in, and through people  
581 of various religions. These passages reveal the surprising truth that God at times invites  
582 Christians to learn from and even emulate people of other religions. These scriptural  
583 stories invite us to listen, ponder, and discover, from a position of humility, how God  
584 might use inter-religious relations to instruct us and challenge our faith to grow today.

585

586 WHAT LUTHERAN CONVICTIONS INFLUENCE OUR CALLING?

587

588 *Theology is relational*

589

590 Lutheran theology is relational. Our religious communication needs to be assessed on  
591 whether it restores whole relationships and opens the door to new life or whether it  
592 harms another person or disregards the value of God’s creation. When said in the wrong  
593 way or in the wrong setting, even “the right words” can be harmful. The same is true  
594 for actions. They, too, need to be evaluated in terms of their benefits or their damage to  
595 others and to the larger community. So, a relational theology examines both our words  
596 and actions in terms of whether they strengthen or undermine healthy relationships.  
597 This applies to words and actions that give expression to God’s love and forgiveness  
598 (in response to the Great Commission) and to words and actions that seek to aid a  
599 struggling neighbor (in response to the Great Commandment).

600

601 Another indication of a theology that is relational is the Lutheran understanding of faith  
602 as trust. Faith is relational and not simply, or even primarily, about affirming beliefs.  
603 Faith is a response to the love of God, not a prerequisite for that love.

604

605 The observation that theology is relational helps us understand why Lutheran theology  
606 so often employs paradoxes—that is, it affirms as true two seemingly contradictory  
607 statements, such as “a Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none” and  
608 “a Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all” (Luther, “The Freedom  
609 of a Christian”). Other examples are that God is both hidden and revealed and that a  
610 Christian is both justified and a sinner. This capacity for paradox can also be extended  
611 to the tension we hold between our dual commitments to evangelism and inter-religious  
612 relations. These formulations seek to point beyond themselves to a deeper truth that is  
613 relational rather than propositional.

614 The stance of this declaration is influenced at every point by the relational character of  
615 Lutheran theology.

616

617 *Grace without prerequisites*

618

619 This declaration affirms and celebrates the gift of new life that comes from God but does  
620 not seek to explain God's relationship with other religions. There are several reasons for  
621 this. Our Lutheran tradition has emphasized that God's grace is given as a gift without  
622 any prerequisites. When God restores relations with us, it is entirely a result of God's  
623 action, not something we have earned. As a result, we cannot know the limits of God's  
624 grace and love. Any attempt to define a limit introduces a prerequisite. Because we do  
625 not know its limits, God's remarkable generosity toward us frees us to engage in inter-  
626 religious outreach, and in this way to embody for our neighbors God's generosity. Our  
627 calling is to come to know our neighbors, to assist them, to work with them, and in  
628 doing so to see in them the image of God.

629

630 *Limits on our knowing*

631

632 The Lutheran tradition offers other reasons for caution about our claims to know.

633

- 634 • Luther said that no human could know another person's relationship with God.  
635 What that person says or does gives us clues, but, ultimately, we cannot see into  
636 someone else's heart (Luther, *Bondage of the Will*).
- 637 • Similarly, Luther insisted that we cannot know the inner workings of God. God  
638 has revealed God's attitude toward us, overall purpose, and character, but the  
639 inner workings of God remain hidden. Hence, we must be careful about claiming  
640 to know God's judgments regarding another religion or the individual human  
641 beings who practice it.
- 642 • There is another reason for caution. As mentioned above, the Lutheran tradition  
643 has understood the word "faith" to mean trust rather than affirming beliefs.  
644 Hence, we also must be careful not to judge our neighbors only on the basis  
645 of their religious beliefs, as they may or may not tell us much about how our  
646 neighbors relate to God. There is no substitute for exploring together what  
647 matters most to others and to us.

648

649 The full story of the relationship between our neighbor and God is beyond our  
650 knowledge, and even our calling. In the context of inter-religious relations, we do not  
651 need answers to these questions in order to treat one another with love and respect, find  
652 ways to cooperate for the sake of the larger community, practice hospitality, or witness

653 to the good news of God's love, forgiveness, and new life in Christ. All we know, and all  
654 we need to know, is that our neighbors are made in God's image and that we are called  
655 to love and serve them.

656

657 *Ever-depending on forgiveness*

658

659 Our calling to inter-religious relations depends on God's forgiveness. We need to  
660 acknowledge not only our own personal errors and omissions but also the collective  
661 errors of our tradition. These include misdeeds, such as our readiness to benefit from  
662 the conquest of American Indian people and land, chattel slavery, the treatment of  
663 the Jews during and after the Reformation, and our readiness to take up arms against  
664 those of another religion. And they include failures to reach out to people of all races,  
665 ethnicities, and cultures within our church and in society. Not only do we rely on  
666 forgiveness for the past, we also rely on forgiveness for the present and the future.  
667 Because our responsibility for others has no limits, inevitably our best efforts will fall  
668 short, and we are likely to make new mistakes that harm others. When we engage our  
669 neighbors, we therefore rely on forgiveness as we reach out into unfamiliar territory,  
670 navigating religious and cultural differences. The promise of forgiveness sets us free to  
671 risk the unfamiliar.

672

673 *Acknowledging suffering*

674

675 At the heart of Luther's "theology of the cross" is a unique view of God present in the  
676 person of the crucified Jesus. Jesus' suffering on the cross was a redemptive suffering  
677 for the sake of all. The Jesus who endured the cross is also present with us, all humans,  
678 and the whole creation in times of suffering (Romans 8:18-25).

679

680 This understanding of a "theology of the cross" causes us to take the reality of suffering  
681 seriously. As Christian disciples we are called to take up the cross, acting on behalf of  
682 others to seek ways to end the suffering of others, even though doing so may lead us to  
683 suffer with them. This is part of our vocation as Christians. And, when ending suffering  
684 is not possible, we are still called to accompany – to be with – those who suffer, just as  
685 in Christ God came to be with us.

686

687 Acknowledging the reality of suffering unites us not only with God but also with one  
688 another. The commonality and universality of human suffering binds us inextricably  
689 to each other. This reality influences our understanding of our vocation. When we  
690 acknowledge the suffering of those whose beliefs are different from our own and  
691 when we recognize the commonality of suffering, we find a fuller, more compassionate

692 understanding of those who differ and a common calling to alleviate suffering wherever  
693 it exists. At the same time, when we recognize the suffering of other Christians who  
694 experience discrimination or attacks because of their religious beliefs, we can appreciate  
695 how inter-religious relations can support not only cooperation but, indeed, survival.  
696 Amid suffering of all forms, we stand together, not apart.

697

698 *God in the world*

699

700 As we respond to our calling, we are confident that God is at work caring for all of  
701 creation, respecting human freedom and dignity, and fostering wholeness. We are sent  
702 out into the world by a God who is already at work. When we reach out to a neighbor,  
703 we are reaching out to someone who, whether the person acknowledges it or not, has  
704 already received gifts from God. In addition, just as the love of God reaches us through  
705 the words and actions of others, so our own words and actions can serve as “channels”  
706 (Luther’s word) of God’s gifts to others.

707

## 708 **CONCLUSION AND BENEDICTION**

709

710 We are called to learn to know and understand our neighbors and to work together  
711 for their well-being. We are called to work with them to overcome the obstacles  
712 and suffering they face, and to build justice and peace for all people and for God’s  
713 creation. We are called to overcome the isolation that separates neighbors from one  
714 another. Having heard the good news of Jesus Christ, we are called to live in hope and  
715 engagement, not fear and inaction.

716

717 Our calling is a responsibility, yes, and it is also a joy. Engagement with our neighbors  
718 enriches our lives and our faith. In relationship with our neighbors, we come to  
719 understand more fully the depth and breadth of the riches of God and to appreciate  
720 more deeply the wonder of God’s generous love, which we experience through the life,  
721 death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We discern more accurately how to reflect God’s  
722 generosity in our thinking and in our behavior. As individuals and as neighbors, we  
723 benefit from the increased health of our communities and from a world that is more just  
724 and peaceful. Authentic and mutual relationships are transformative.

725

726 May God bless the efforts of this church as we set our sights on God’s vision,  
727 as we seek to respond to God’s calling in our context, and as we strive to uphold  
728 these commitments.

## Notes



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## **Lutheran Disaster Response US Update**

### *Responses to 2018 Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael*

- \$200,000 has been granted to Lutheran Services Carolinas to provide relief assistance in both North and South Carolina. The grant provides staffing support for one disaster coordinator in Northern Carolina and one in South Carolina, in addition to other “unmet needs” supplies for survivors.

### *Relief support not yet granted but are in the process granting include:*

- \$100,000 to Lutheran Services Georgia for a 6 month – relief grant to assist with relief work in Southwest Georgia in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. The grant will include staff support for a disaster case manager, unmet needs for survivors and other programmatic needs. We plan to continue to support the work of Lutheran Services Georgia beyond the Relief phase onto the long-term recovery period.
- We are working with Florida Bahama Synod on a 6-month relief program to address needs of survivors on Panama City, FL and the adjacent areas.

### *Response to 2017 Hurricanes in the Caribbean Synod*

- \$1,294,000 has been granted to Lutheran Social Services of Puerto Rico (LSS-PR) to respond to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. The grant is used to support a comprehensive, multi-year disaster response program implemented by LSS-PR for survivors. Services included are: emotional and spiritual care; home repairs and rebuilds, volunteer management – using outside volunteers to assist survivors to repair and rebuild homes; renovation of the Lutheran Camp as the hosting site for volunteers and disaster case management.
- \$1,160,000 has been awarded to Lutheran Social Services of Virgin Islands (with \$300,000 released for year 1.) The grant is for a three-year program that helps survivors rebuild and repair homes using outside volunteers on St. Croix.
- LDR staff continues to accompany the Synod, LSS-PR and LSS-VI in significant ways to address needs on the islands for years to come. Some of the church properties on Virgin Islands have been damaged, LDR-US staff is working with the Caribbean Synod and the congregation to address this matter.

### *Response to needs of 2017 Hurricane Maria evacuees from Puerto Rico in Pennsylvania*

- \$98,670 has been granted to Liberty Lutheran, PA, to assist Hurricane Maria evacuees from Puerto Rico resettling in the Philadelphia area. Services provided include disaster case management and other necessary services for survivors.
- \$134,555 has been granted to Diakon Lutheran Ministries, PA to address needs of Hurricane Maria evacuees staying in Central Pennsylvania in Lower Susquehanna Synod areas. Services provided include disaster case management, employment and housing assistance.

### *Response to needs of 2017 Hurricane Maria evacuees from Puerto Rico in Pennsylvania*

- \$689,000 has been awarded to Lutheran Services of Georgia (with \$275,000 released for year 1) to implement a 30-month program to assist Hurricane Irma survivors in the Georgian coastal areas to rebuild their homes and lives through disaster case management, volunteer management and construction management services.

### *Response to 2016 Spring Flooding and 2017 Tornadoes in Mississippi*

- \$15,000 has been granted to the Southeastern Synod to assist them with their continual recovery work for survivors of the 2016 Spring flooding and 2017 tornadoes in Hattiesburg, MS and its surrounding counties.

*Responses to 2016 Hurricane Matthew*

- \$72,854 has been granted to Lutheran Services of Georgia to respond to 2016 Hurricane Matthew in the Georgia coastal areas. Services provided to survivors include volunteer management and construction management to help survivors to repair and rebuild their homes.

*Response to 2015 South Carolina Flooding*

- \$118,892 has been released to Lutheran Services Carolinas for their 2-year response program to assist survivors of the 2015 South Carolina flooding in the Midland areas. The funding is for a 2-year program that they started in 2016, with main focus on providing disaster case management services.
- We are in the process of working with Lutheran Services of Carolinas to support their year III response to this disaster with a \$150,000 grant.

*Response to Hurricane Harvey*

\$159,940.00 to Upbring for Disaster Response Coordinator for Agency and Synods

*Response to Hurricane Sandy*

\$5,000 to Diakon Lutheran Services for final work in Maryland

*Response to 2017 California Wildfires*

\$160,000 to Lutheran Social Services of Northern California for unmet needs in Lake and Mendocino Counties  
\$10,000 to Lutheran Social Services of Northern California for partial support of a Camp Noah in Mendocino County.

*Response to 2016 Flooding in West Virginia*

\$235,000 for construction materials and private bridge repair

*Response to 2018 Flooding in Upper Peninsula*

\$28,600 to Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Peninsula for unmet needs for the impacted communities

*Other Distributions*

\$23,749 to Lutheran Social Services of New York for legal services for unaccompanied minors

\$6,831 to Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota to assist with translation of Camp Noah materials into Spanish



## **Lutheran Men in Mission**

*Submitted by: Deacon Doug Haugen, Executive Director*

The vision of Lutheran Men in Mission is for every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ. The mission is, by God's grace, to intentionally disciple men by personally modeling the character of Jesus Christ by living and leading a lifestyle intended to help transform them from having an inward focus to a culture of naturally loving and serving our neighbors.

## **Events**

Lutheran Men in Mission is moving from large, in-person events every three years (preceded by our triennial business meeting) to annual, on-line meetings and frequent, live-streamed events. The first annual meeting took place May 19, 2018. The first Bold Gathering live stream took place April 14, 2018, emanating from Bethany Lutheran Church in Elkhorn, WI. In twenty-minute presentations, six speakers dealt with topics including Reaching Young Families and New Generations, The Impact of One Year to Live, Creating Bold Communities, A Man and His Identity, Organic Growth and Why Men Belong and Creating and Sustaining Change. The sub-theme of the next Bold Gathering is Endurance. It will emanate from Hope Lutheran Church in Fargo, ND October 27, 2018.

For the third year, Lutheran Men in Mission sponsored a team for Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI). Twenty-five riders of all ages and five staff used the experience to draw attention to men's health, raise funds and promote the ministry of Lutheran Men in Mission.

Lutheran Men in Mission continues to conduct *One Year to Live* retreats on a regular basis. *One Year to Live* is a retreat model developed by Lyman Coleman in cooperation with Lutheran Men in Mission. The retreat is designed to help men take an honest look at their faith, what is keeping them from experiencing God more fully, and what they believe God is calling them to do for the rest of their life within the safety of a small group. The retreat is completely "lay lead" as all the small group facilitators and staff members have been participants in earlier retreats. With the retreats conducted since the last Church Council meeting (a total of 11 retreats conducted so far this year and four more scheduled) there are now nearly 1,500 men who have experienced the *One Year to Live* weekend. The intent is to eventually bring this to every synod.

## **Leadership**

Lutheran Men in Mission is the engine leading an inter-denominational, ecumenical group of men's leaders in establishing a movement that is generating a network that anyone can come to with questions on male issues and the "how tos" of men's ministry. The group consists of the most creative "out-of-the-box" thinkers on men's ministry from various ethnicities, ages and geographic areas. The group includes ELCA and non-ELCA Lutherans as well as representatives of the United Methodist, Episcopal, Disciples of Christ and Mennonite churches. The first initiative of this group is "Project XII" that was rolled out in 2015. This project includes the curation of resources all the participant groups are aware of in personal faith development, and ministry and organizational leadership, and creation of resources to fill areas of need in each of these categories. An editor/webmaster was recently contracted. Please go to <https://www.projecttwelve.net> to see what is being done. We are well on our way toward fulfilling our vision through social media, networking within the ELCA and other church bodies, and developing strategies, resources and events that reach all men for Christ.

## **Resources**

The *Master Builders Bible for Men* continues to be our strongest resource with over 62,000 in circulation. Along with the 20,000 questions for small groups, what makes this resource unique is the thirty-two-page section for men's ministry leaders. These Bibles normally sell for \$25, but with our Advent special, they will sell for \$175 for a case of 10 until Christmas Eve.

*ManTalk* is a deck of playing cards designed to help men engage in meaningful (and fun) conversation. Four categories of questions deal with relationships, sports and leisure, lessons and reflections, and ethics and spirituality. The most recent (Fall 2018) issue of the *foundations* newsletter focuses on the RAGBRAI ride and the upcoming Bold Gathering.

**DIGEST OF BOARD ACTIONS**

**Unit:** Lutheran Men in Mission

**Submitted by:** Doug Haugen, Executive Director

**Date of Board Meeting:** October 2018

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**Category 1:** *(Policies with an impact beyond the unit, which require Church Council approval.)*

None

**Category 2:** *(Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit.)*

1. Accepted the resignation of Douglas (Doug) Haugen as Executive Director
2. Initiated the process to fill the position of Executive Director
3. Moved forward with development of strategic plan to reach all men.

**Category 3:** *(Other procedures and board actions.)*

1. Heard a report from Heber Rast, representative on the Justice for Women Task Force
2. Welcomed Bishop Erik Gronberg, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, to the board
3. Moved forward with plans to send personnel to assist with disaster relief in the US Virgin Islands

# **LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY STUDY**

## **SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS 2018**

**Roland Martinson, STD  
Jacob Sorenson, PHD**

# LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY STUDY

## SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

### 2018

Jacob Sorenson, PHD    Roland Martinson, STD

The Lutheran Campus Ministry Study seeks to identify and explore characteristics, practices and challenges of faithful and effective Lutheran campus and young adult ministry in the current context of student sensibilities and ongoing changes in higher education and the church. The study:

- explores the contemporary world and life perspectives of young adults;
- provides a window on the mission of Lutheran Campus Ministry on university campuses;
- identifies significant Lutheran Campus Ministry outcomes;
- identifies effective campus and young adult ministry practices;
- sheds light on Lutheran Campus Ministry's challenges and vulnerabilities; and
- identifies promising directions for Lutheran Campus Ministry's sustainability and vitality.

## THE STUDY'S METHODOLOGY

Four inter-related forms of investigation in the study draw information from a wide range of current research and stakeholders. The study includes:

1. a literature review of research and writing on young adult and campus ministry;
2. site visits and stakeholder interviews on 6 campuses in 6 regions across the country;
3. student surveys of 845 campus ministry participants; and
4. 10 campus pastor and campus minister interviews.

These investigations occurred during 2016 – 2017. The full reports and findings are available on the LuMin website: [lumin-network.com](http://lumin-network.com).

## EIGHT MAJOR FINDINGS

### FINDING 1:

#### **Lutheran Campus Ministry Draws on Faithful Commitments to Address Critical Ministry Challenges**

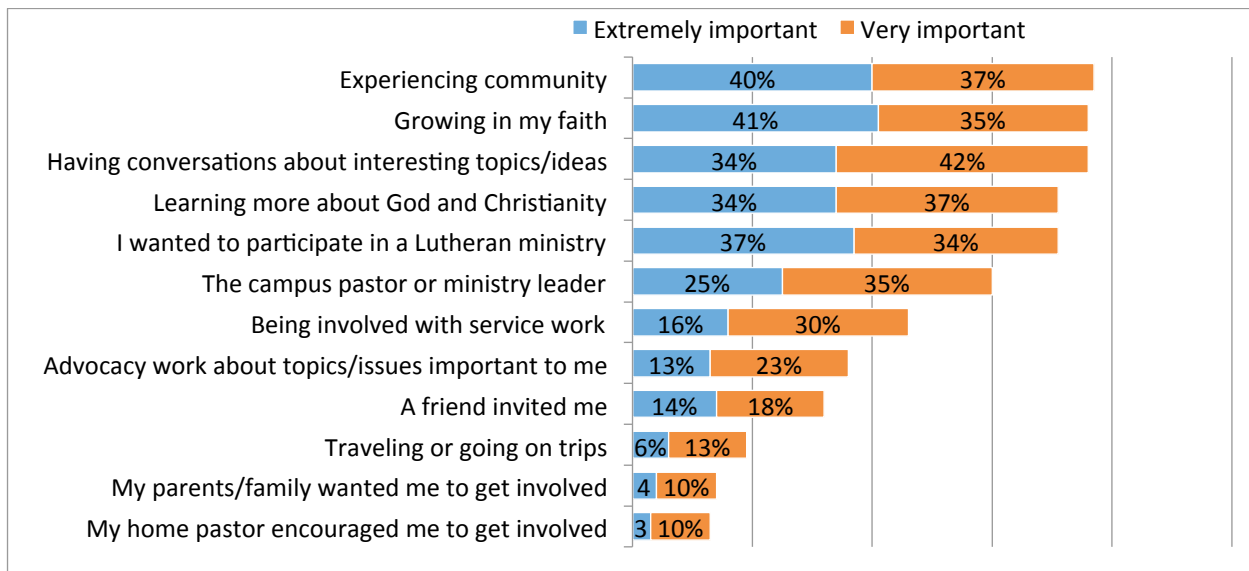
In Lutheran Campus Ministry's attempt to provide an imaginative, faithful, effective and sustainable ministry on college and university campuses, it encounters a number of challenges:

- the changing consciousness and lifestyles of students;
- the difficulty of outreach on complex and multi-layered campuses;
- the shifting and expanding roles of campus ministry staff and boards;
- the diversity and divisiveness of current university and societal culture and discourse;
- the changing relationship of campus ministry to congregations and the church; and
- the identification of sustainable financial models.

In addressing these challenges, Lutheran Campus Ministry brings a distinct identity and a trusted reputation to university campuses. These campus ministries publicly engage academic life and campus culture in ways that intentionally and robustly connect faith and reason. These ministries have established, or are establishing, a particular brand of religious life and faith that is constructive and generative of societal and ecological well-being and student wholeness. They are doing so via graceful presence, hospitality, exploratory theological discourse, trusted relationships, community service, and advocacy.

These dynamics are evident in what students cited to be important in their involvement in Lutheran Campus Ministry:

**Figure 1: Motivating Factors for Students to Become Involved and Stay Involved with Lutheran Campus Ministry (n=849)**



## FINDING 2: Leading Complicated Lifestyles, Students Are Pressured and Vulnerable

The students in this survey are facing an array of life transitions and cross-pressures. Most are living away from home and adapting to life with roommates. Almost all respondents are full-time students, many are working part-time, and most are involved in multiple extracurricular activities while still managing to maintain a significant online presence via a mobile electronic device. A student from Oregon State University described her feelings in the first weeks of college as “chaos everywhere,” but indicated she settled in when she learned to accept, “That’s just what college feels like.”

The pressure felt by the students comes from multiple sectors of life: academic, social, financial, familial, professional, and spiritual. The overall picture is of students struggling to hang on amidst life change and turmoil. Their tentative equilibrium was easily upset if a student deviated from established norms or experienced unexpected challenges or crises. Considering the survey items indicating the most severe trauma (death in the immediate family, rape, physical or emotional abuse, and attempted suicide), 45% of all respondents had experienced one or more of these. This included a third of males (34%), half of females (49%), and all but one of those identifying as transgender, non-conforming, or gender diverse

Electronic device usage was ubiquitous, especially around social media. 55% of the students in this survey indicated they were on their devices 3-4 hours or more per day. Major differences existed between women and men. Females were more likely to use social media apps (88%, compared with 71% for men). Males were more likely to use their devices for Internet browsing (63%, compared with 47% for women), video streaming (51% for men to 40% for women), mobile gaming (19% vs.10%), and sports apps (13% vs.2%).

In these pressured, complicated lives, students are vulnerable. Almost a third (29%) of student respondents indicated that they had been treated for clinical depression or anxiety; 45% had experienced a crisis or trauma themselves or in their families; and nearly a quarter indicated that they had seriously considered suicide.

On a more positive note, the vast majority of students indicated strong feelings of self-worth. The great majority of students in this survey (83%) agreed that they have important things to offer the church and the world.

### **FINDING 3: Lutheran Campus Ministry is Impacting University Life**

Lutheran Campus Ministries represent a robust expression of Christian faith in the life of the university. While the form and extent of their presence and contributions vary from site to site, these campus ministries are engaging the university's academic research, teaching and learning, ethical decisions, and student formation. Their activities take place in complex academic and societal contexts that are often divisive, conflicted, secular and fluctuating. In this dynamic milieu, Lutheran Campus Ministries are centers of mission and ministry within the life of their universities.

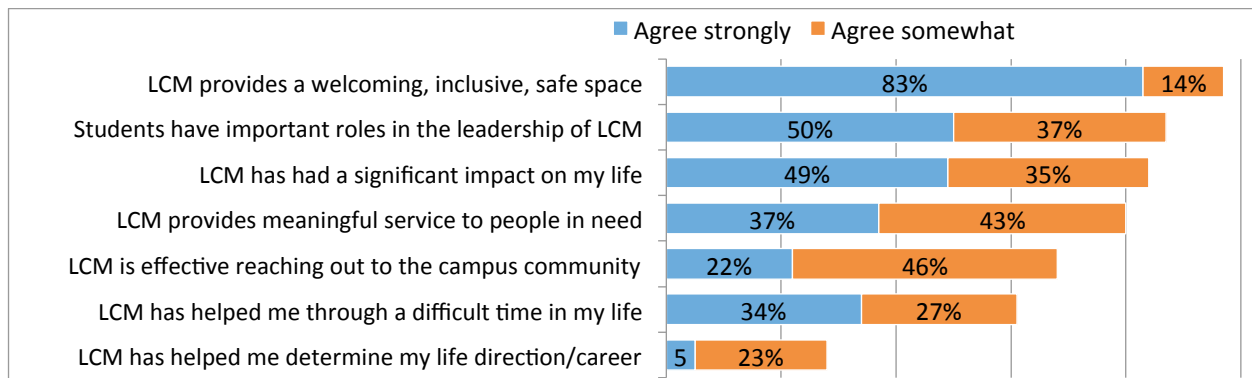
Lutheran Campus Ministries are centers of mission and ministry in differing ways on each university campus.

- Some university officials and campus ministry staff people spoke of Lutheran Campus Ministry as “a distinctive and active, radically welcoming, critical thinking Christian presence.”
- Some university staff spoke of Lutheran Campus Ministry as “the go-to place for honest, inclusive convening and discussion that helps the university develop language and direct approaches to delicate issues.” They said “Lutheran Campus Ministry establishes clearly defined, trusting relationships with students, staff and faculty through active response to issues from common values.”
- Some university staff and campus ministry staff people spoke of “Lutheran Campus Ministry setting ‘messy tables’ on campus for conversations on controversial issues.”
- Other staff members spoke of campus ministry making contributions to “deliberations on ethics” and “conversations on religion and science.”
- Some university staff said “the university relied on Lutheran Campus Ministry to provide spiritual support and guidance in times of student and campus crises.”

## FINDING 4: Lutheran Campus Ministry is Making a Real Difference in Students' Lives

The vast majority (88%) of student participants reported that involvement in campus ministry was meaningful to them and had significantly influenced their lives. Lutheran Campus Ministry matters in particular ways to students on each campus as a result of effective relationships and practices. Students indicated that:

**Figure 2: Student Perceptions of Lutheran Campus Ministry (n=849)**



Thus, Lutheran Campus Ministry makes a difference in students' lives in identifiable ways. Some of the impact is specific and dramatic, shaping lives, and changing students' life directions and callings. One student declared: "Campus ministry literally saved my life." He went on to describe conversations and intervention from the campus minister and supportive students that brought him out of the depths of despair. Another student shared the struggles of losing a parent during college and being involved with what he described as an emotionally and spiritually unhealthy romantic relationship. "I was kind of lost," he reflected, "but in the last two years, I've not only found myself again; I've been more proud of myself and just who I am and accepted that." He went on to describe the support of the campus ministry community as the catalyst for his recovery. "They didn't go away," he said, describing how the community affirmed him and welcomed him back to group gatherings after a long absence.

Some of Lutheran Campus Ministry's influence is more general by contributing to student development at the university. Some of this influence sustains students during their high-pressured transitional years in college. It also expands the students' faith horizons and deepens their values by providing opportunities to pursue their questions, to serve others, and to make a genuine difference in their communities.

For a great number of students, especially for the 82% of students that had been active in their faith communities and the faith practices of their families, Lutheran Campus Ministry served as a continuation and expansion of their faith journey from childhood and their teenage years. Lutheran Campus Ministry offered continuity of experiences and practices, most especially worship (84% of the students worship weekly or more) and supporting personal prayer (62% of the students praying weekly or more).





- **Reaching Out to Others in Service** – The community made a difference in other people's lives and provided students opportunities to participate in these meaningful service activities.

These Lutheran Campus Ministries were niche, anchoring communities on huge campuses. A student at UNC-Chapel Hill said, "Campus ministry has been a place where I feel like I can come, and I can be safe, and I can wrestle with life's problems. And it's a community that I know that no matter what's going on out there, they're still going to be here for me and also for other people."

### **FINDING 6: Lutheran Campus Ministry Embodies Promising Practices for Young Adult Ministries**

On these campuses, there were a variety of practices that seemed to be making a difference in young adult faith and life. While each practice was engaging and impactful, several of the practices were creating greater impact and generating greater ministry momentum. The following ten practices reflected some of the most significant elements in these campus ministry programs. While these ministry practices were identified among young adults on university campuses, they might well be transferable to faith communities engaged in young adult ministry most anywhere:

1. welcoming, connecting and supporting young adults in authentic, gracious community;
2. exploring ways to embody, conceptualize and narrate God's presence in daily life;
3. meeting and deeply knowing young adults in their own life contexts and settings;
4. providing a safe place where young adults can explore challenging questions about life and faith;
5. providing a listening ear and consistent support for young adults, especially during times of transition, stress and crisis;
6. involving young adults as creators and leaders rather than simply consumers;
7. providing a faith community that integrates both physical presence and virtual connections;
8. establishing a sacred space where worship can be experienced authentically, contextually and multi-sensually;
9. including experiences in traditional and newly designed faith practices that include Scripture reading and study, personal and corporate prayer, and times for silence and reflection; and
10. providing significant opportunities for meaningful service and advocacy that promote the pursuit of justice and wholeness for all.

### **FINDING 7: Lutheran Campus Ministry Leadership Is a Key Factor in Its Effectiveness**

No other factor had more influence on the strategies, character and effectiveness of these campus ministries than the campus pastor or campus minister. Among interviews with university staff, board members, and especially among student survey responses, campus

ministry leadership qualities and tenure were consistently highly valued, celebrated and consequential.

Students, unsolicited, said and wrote: “Pastor is trusted.” “Pastor is full of the love of God and wise.” “Pastor is someone who listens, asks and invites questions, and spends time with us.” “Pastor is open and caring and makes Bible study interesting and fun.” “The chaplain supported me and accompanied me in my sinfulness and brought me to baptism.”

University staff members, especially those in student services, spoke of the importance of the perspectives, presence and trust-worthiness of Lutheran campus pastors and ministers in support of the university’s mission, and the pastors and ministers’ participation in student development and crises. Both university staff and campus pastors and ministers spoke of the importance of longevity, i.e., developing and sustaining trusting, informed working relationships over time. They also spoke of the disruption when a long-term campus pastor or minister leaves.

While campus ministry staff members, given their particular interests and capacities, influenced their universities each in their own ways, the most prevalent, influential characteristics of these campus pastors and ministers were:

- highly relational and collaborative;
- well-informed, constructive theologians, speaking, writing and expanding theological horizons and advancing faith and learning across campus ministry and their campuses;
- deeply committed to matters of diversity and justice, and spearheading these values and activities at the university and its surrounding community;
- developing the organizational structure, strategies and leadership in their campus ministry; and
- empowering university systems and staff, faculty and students to do more effective work.

Across these campus ministries, student peer ministry was deeply valued by students, and it served as a major contributor to these ministries’ effectiveness. Students appreciated the opportunities afforded them to develop as leaders. One student put it: “I enjoy my LCM crew very much; it’s a place to develop my leadership skills; peer ministry opportunities are important.” Participation in campus ministry leadership was among the most reported factors that kept students connected to Lutheran Campus Ministry throughout their university years.

Campus leadership teams in Lutheran Campus Ministry mattered greatly to students. Students valued trusted relationships with their campus pastors, campus ministers and peer ministers, especially relationships in which they felt heard and understood. Leaders who accompanied them in asking and pursuing their questions were important. Students noticed when Lutheran Campus Ministry leaders embodied the gospel and the Christian faith.

Board leadership is a large factor in campus ministry effectiveness. Several board members understood their roles in connecting campus ministry to area congregations and their synods. Some had a critical role in fund-raising. Many saw their task, in large part, as supporting the campus pastor or minister, so that person would be free to do ministry. One board member said they wanted the campus pastor “to feel empowered to make the changes to programming or start new programs as they see fit.”

## **FINDING 8:**

### **Lutheran Campus Ministry: Great Ministry, Greater Potential . . . Yet Vulnerable**

Within these faithful, impactful ministries embedded in the university and the Church, there is ongoing promise for greatly influencing the university's and the Church's missions, and most especially the lives of students.

Coupled with this promise, however, there are complicating disruptions, not only in academia, the Church and campus ministry, but in society at large. The changes are creating challenges as well as new opportunities for shedding ineffective approaches and continuing and expanding the promising practices of Lutheran Campus Ministry. In this study, indicators of the challenges and opportunities for new intersections of engagement emerged often, and in certain patterns.

What can be accomplished going forward appears to be largely dependent on how campus ministry leaders and the Church surrounding them respond to three arenas of challenges.

#### **Changes in campus ministries' constituents and contexts:**

- Shifts in student consciousness and lifestyles; increasing pressure and stress experienced by students.
- Less effective faith formation of incoming students.
- The character and expression of religion including Christianity has greatly diversified.
- Challenge of outreach to students, faculty and staff, many with fewer faith connections.
- Higher education and the Church are disrupted and are in multiple transitions.

#### **Long-standing models of campus ministry are dated:**

- Theological commitments and expression need to be more full-bodied and engaging.
- Campus ministry built around worship and chaplaincy is becoming less engaging and possible with new generations of students and other university constituents.
- Responding to the shifting role of spirituality in campus culture and student outcomes is now critical.
- Virtual ministry resources and approaches, while complicated, are often enabling campus ministries to engage students more intensely, and to reach larger audiences.
- Outreach is a major challenge. Imaginative campus outreach via trusted presence, new buildings and spaces, integrated engagement, and greater visibility is underway.
- There are more and more demands on campus ministry staff, especially in an era of staff cuts and fund-raising demands. Burnout is a real possibility.

#### **In many places, resources in support of campus ministry are diminishing:**

- Where will campus ministry professionals of the future come from; how will they be developed; who will support them?
- At a time when active, engaged boards are more and more critical to campus ministry effectiveness and sustainability, board members are often difficult to recruit and are often accustomed to reactive roles when proactive participation is needed.
- In most cases there is less money. However, within the decline, some campus ministries are expanding, and new and more integrated funding sources are emerging.
- As financial resources shrink, there are fewer funds for staff and programming, thus there is more pressure on the campus ministry staff person to raise money while doing

more of the work of ministry. All this weighs on the spirit and resiliency of those in campus ministry, limiting their scope and staff longevity. It has become clear that expanded fiduciary leadership is needed.

## WHAT NEXT?

The rich data of this study's investigations call for ongoing interpretation, especially by campus ministry practitioners. Groups of campus ministry staff members on particular university campuses might well reflect on the study's findings especially with an eye toward drawing thoughtful conclusions and developing its implications on their context.

There is much here that calls for widespread distribution across the Church. Lutheran Campus Ministry is a critically important ministry of the Church at work under the radar. This study's portrait of Lutheran Campus Ministry begs to get out.

Many specific concerns and promising possibilities across the face of campus ministry call for action. Leaders in campus ministry at all levels might well take initiative, experiment, perhaps seek funding that would support their getting to work on these innovations.

All dimensions of this study raise more questions even as they shine light on these faithful and effective practitioners of campus and young adult ministry. This study is but the beginning of an inquiry that might well continue for the sake of the Church's important presence in the lives of universities, their students, and young adults in non-academic settings.

## WITH APPRECIATION TO THE ADVISORY TEAM

Throughout this research project, a team of four Lutheran Campus Ministry practitioners served on an Advisory Team, and provided real world insight and perspectives that helped shape the direction and scope of the research. We offer words of deep appreciation to these gifted campus ministry professionals:

**Chris Heavner** (Clemson University)

**John Lund** (University of Montana)

**Kate Reuer Welton** (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities)

**Rachel Young Binter** (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)

**Lutheran World Federation, Women in Church and Society**  
**North American Regional Reporting**  
**Mary J. Streufert, Director, Justice for Women, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
**August 2, 2018**

**1. What are the changes and impacts generated with the programs developed by the women's network?**

The most significant effect of Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Women in Church and Society (WICAS) efforts has been the Gender Justice Policy. Here are a few ways this is so:

- a. The Gender Justice Policy is an important influence and common text of commitment for the many forms of partnerships member churches of North America have within the global communion. It serves as a global reference and commitment for mutual dialogue, commitment, and accountability for our two churches with LWF partners.
- b. It has been helpful for the ELCA "Women and Justice: One in Christ" social statement task force to have the Gender Justice Policy as a global theological and pragmatic document so that their work can focus on the issues and responsibilities within our own context—while being in conversation with global concerns and themes.
- c. It was helpful to have LWF influence to move the ELCA churchwide office to adopt a commitment for the organization to use gender analysis and to work to foster gender justice in other ways, as well. The principles and methodology of the Policy is being used in the organization in the interim until the ELCA has a final social statement that will serve as this church's authority on gender justice.
- d. In our churches more widely, pastors, students, and lay members are grateful to learn about the LWF Gender Justice Policy and to understand the relationship between each church's work (such as on an ELCA social statement on women and justice or the ELCIC's work to support justice for indigenous communities) and the communion's work. In other words, the Gender Justice Policy helps members to remember that we each have our own respective contextual problems, challenges, and responsibilities, too.

Another significant effect of LWF WICAS efforts within the ELCIC and the ELCA will most likely be the effect the 2017 LWF Assembly resolutions will have on our respective and joint church efforts. For example:

- a. Gender-based violence and sex education: What are we able to do together on these two areas of ministry?
- b. Education and scholarships: How are our respective member churches connecting to the LWF Theological Education and Formation network that is developing? In what ways are our respective seminaries and other theological education efforts attending to concerns expressed through the LWF assembly about women's access to theological education, about funding more broadly, about Lutheran-specific theological formation for ministry candidates, and about needs to connect contexts and contemporary issues to enduring human questions that surface in theology?

2. **With whom has the network developed programs, joint activities, events, etc.?**
- a. There are a number of networks in North America. Largely, they work independently of each other. Some collaboration occurs at times. These networks include seminary and university faculties, Lutheran Women in Theological and Religious Studies (LWTRS), Women of the ELCA, and various peace and justice networks in each member church in NA. *As a sample, in 2017:*
    - i. LWTRS collaborated with ELCA Justice for Women to hold a theological event, “Embodied Freedom.”
    - ii. Justice for Women collaborated with Women of the ELCA to hold a learning booth on women’s reproductive healthcare at their triennial gathering, as well as to hold workshops on the study guide, “Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations towards a Social Statement.”
    - iii. ELCA Justice for Women collaborated with other ELCA church office colleagues to implement the principles and methodology of the Gender Justice Policy into their work through multiple workshops.
    - iv. The Gender Justice Policy was shared with the LWF delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

### 3. **Timeline**

See above for a sample of 2017 work.

4. **What lessons have been learned? (What have been successful strategies? What have been the challenges? What are the opportunities?)**
- a. In sharing the Gender Justice Policy, participants almost always need a short version of the key commitments and ideas or to read and digest only a portion of it at first.
  - b. It has been helpful to have the influence of the LWF to move commitments in the ELCA.
  - c. It has been challenging to manage significant collaboration between the ELCIC and the ELCA because of limited staff time. One factor that may assist the region to move forward more overtly and in communion with each other is the fact that now the WICAS North American regional coordinator is part of the regional conversations through the region’s regularly scheduled calls and contacts.
  - d. With significant cultural changes related to gender justice in this region, we have an opportunity to collaborate on responding to and preventing gender-based violence.
5. **What are the main theological issues we have discussed?**
- a. Biblical hermeneutics, including feminist
  - b. What it means to be a church for others in the public sphere
  - c. The challenges and opportunities related to women’s public voice and ecclesial authority
  - d. The effects of racism and sexism on women of color in ministry in the ELCA and in the academy
  - e. God language and images

- f. Christology
  - g. Theological anthropology
6. **What has been the interaction with our church leadership, local churches, bishops, etc.?**

This varies and depends upon what network is interacting with which group identified in this list. This can only be answered with a sample of reflections.

Networks that support gender justice do not regularly and overtly have influence upon and access to institutional church leadership, both at the church office level and with bishops as a body.

Individuals from networks often have individual strong relationships with individual bishops or a small group of bishops in their region.

Many individual pastors, organizers, and academics have good and strong relationships with local congregations.

**Message of the Leadership Conference  
Lutheran World Federation Member Churches in  
Latin America and the  
Caribbean & North America  
Buenos Aires, Argentina  
09 – 12 May, 2018**

The Leadership Conference (COL) of the LWF member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean & North America took place from 09 to 12 May in Buenos Aires, Argentina, centred in God's mission under the theme *Let's go! Lutheran Churches on the Move in Mission*. Representatives of the United Evangelical Church – Lutheran Synod (IEU-SL) in Cuba and the Agustina Lutheran Church in Guatemala (ILAG), who are in the process of becoming members in the LWF, participated as special guests.

From the presentations of the convened churches, we were able to learn about the churches' missionary work, as well as current challenges and alternatives they face. Among the challenges are: sustainability, climate change, growth and missionary advancement, institutional strengthening and leadership, Christian education at different levels (theological formation etc.), revival of youth ministries, mission in context, Lutheran identity, migration, social violence and violence against women. We see with concern the loss of members in different churches.

The churches in the region are confronted with the need to work in challenging social realities but these realities call us to continue with prophetic action in contexts where we develop our mission work.

We have heard central aspects of the mission work of the churches in LAC and North America and how they carried out mission in different geographical contexts and at particular times in history. In this way, reflecting on the way in which we arrived at the current mission work, we appreciate how, through the history of each of our churches, we find that the Lutheran doctrine is the same but the social contexts different. This allows us to see the historical richness in each country that participated in this conference. Theology differs according to how mission is done at each moment in time. We have seen how the theology of conquest, accompaniment, liberation, life, sacrament, and of mission have been the basis for the mission of God. We have noted that the commemoration of the 500 years of the protestant Reformation was an opportunity and moment to heal memories, establish relationships, and walk ecumenically, as well as to re-signify our Lutheran identity. At a general level, we conclude that it is necessary to have a self-critical reflection on matters of liturgy, theological formation, and the growth and strengthening of the churches.

As the Women and Gender Justice Network, part of the leadership conference, we express our concern and rejection of the growing manifestation of violence that is arising in our countries, violating the rights and dignity of human beings, especially





of women and children. As churches committed to God's mission, we denounce violence as sin and demand that public and ecclesiastic policies be created, implemented and applied in order to guarantee life, security and equity in society.

As a Youth Network, we will work on the three themes agreed in the last Pre-Youth Assembly held in Namibia in 2017: education, revival of churches, and equity. The first theme is oriented to systematize and disseminate all courses and workshops in the region for youth formation. The aim is to promote digital spaces to share materials produced. Regarding the second theme, we propose resuming the day of prayer for young people, strengthening pastoral work in universities, and to encouraging discussion on contextual and actual themes in our churches. We also recommend the practice of equity both in the network and in our churches. As young Lutheran persons, we commit to the mission of God as protagonists aware of the context in which we live and act in our communities, congregations, churches and in the world.

Theological formation and education has been a constant concern in the region. Different actions from the academia were presented by theological institutions sharing the levels of education and actions in ministerial formation through network. They respond to the needs of the churches given their relevance to mission work. Issues such as the modality of online and short courses in different levels, according to the needs of the churches, are received with gratification, as well as the facilitators' willingness to travel to different churches and, over all, the possibilities of financial support. It is satisfying to see that there is a dialogue between the churches, the training institutions and the LWF to continue promoting networking. The regional ministerial and theological network can become more solid, dynamic and participatory in its journey, allowing exchange of knowledge and experiences. It has been six years since 2012, in which different aspects were considered: needs related to formation in the region, mapping of institutions of formation, dialogue between the churches and centers of formation, developing different curricula and guiding documents with strategic focuses. The churches gathered in this leadership conference have commissioned the area secretary to follow up on the recommendations that affirm the intention to work together in ministerial and theological formation.

Finally, the LWF member churches gathered in the leadership conference offer their gratitude to the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELU) and the Evangelical Church of the River Plate (IERP) for their commitment, friendliness and hospitality in the organization and development of this event, as well as the Lutheran communion worldwide for making possible the realization of the 2018 leadership conference.



# The Lutheran World Federation

For a just, peaceful and reconciled world

The LWF was established in 1947 as a federation of Lutheran churches. One of its first important efforts was responding to human suffering in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Today, the LWF is a communion of 148 churches in 99 countries

- 55 in Asia
- 31 in Africa
- 41 in Europe
- 19 in Latin America and the Caribbean
- 2 in North America



THE  
LUTHERAN  
WORLD  
FEDERATION

In 2017, LWF served 3 million people. LWF expects to serve 3.5 million people in 2018.

## Staff

- 75 staff in the Communion Office in Geneva
- 59 international staff in country programs
- 7,815 staff in country programs (including national staff and incentive workers)

General Secretary: Rev. Dr Martin Junge (Chile/Switzerland)

President: Archbishop Dr Panti Filibus Musa (Nigeria)

## Program areas include

- Emergency response
- Livelihoods
- Education
- Gender justice
- Youth participation
- Human rights advocacy
- Capacity building for peace
- Faith-sensitive psychosocial support
- Climate justice
- Intercultural theology and theological formation
- Church cooperation and communion building
- Ecumenical dialogue and cooperation
- Interfaith dialogue and cooperation
- Capacity building for diakonia
- Leadership and good governance

## Country programs

- Angola
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Colombia
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- El Salvador
- Ethiopia
- Haiti
- Iraq
- Jerusalem
- Jordan
- Kenya – Djibouti – Somalia
- Mauretania
- Myanmar – Laos
- Nepal
- South Sudan
- Uganda

## Emergency hubs

- Kathmandu (Asia)
- Nairobi (Africa)
- San Salvador (Latin America and the Caribbean)

## Strategic Priorities

- A communion strengthened in worship and ongoing theological discernment, ecumenical dialogue, and interfaith collaboration
- Member churches growing in capacity for holistic mission and deepening relationships with each other
- Effective and empowering diakonia addressing human suffering, injustice, and emergencies.

## Cross-cutting priorities

- Gender justice
- Youth participation
- Theological reflection and formation
- Climate justice
- Role of churches in human rights, reconciliation and development

## Core Values

- Dignity and justice
- Compassion and commitment
- Respect for diversity
- Inclusion and participation
- Transparency and accountability

## Partners

- UNHCR and other UN organizations
- ACT Alliance
- European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
- Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid
- Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, US Department of State
- Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Caritas Internationalis

## Related Organizations

LWF has long-standing, vital relationships with agencies of LWF member churches

## Updates from Lutheran World Federation

engaged in humanitarian assistance and development.  
7 of 18

These bi-lateral and multi-lateral partnerships are lived out at the global, national, and regional levels. We collaborate closely on program planning and operations, joint advocacy, and share staff. In all our partnerships, we aim to develop mutually beneficial cooperation that prioritizes the needs of those we serve. These related organizations provide a major share of our program funding.

- Australian Lutheran World Service
- Bread for the World
- Canadian Lutheran World Relief
- Christian Aid
- Church of Sweden
- Czech Diakonia
- DanChurchAid
- Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
- FinnChurchAid
- Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
- Hungarian Interchurch Aid
- Icelandic Church Aid
- Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation
- Norwegian Church Aid
- Lutheran World Relief

## Accountability Standards

We are direct signatories of:

- Core Humanitarian Standard
- The Code of Conduct for International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief
- The Sphere Standards

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## Message to the member churches on Being churches of hope - resisting forces of exclusionary populism

**The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 June to 2 July, 2018, under the theme “freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8), deliberated and adopted the following message to the LWF member churches:**

### Being churches of hope - resisting forces of exclusionary populism

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)*

- (1) LWF member churches in different societies struggle with the effects of rising populism. While populist movements often claim that they aim at protecting the interest of the people, they frequently contribute to increasing fear and exclusion in society. The space for sincere deliberation on issues of public concern is shrinking. Hate speech and post-truth propaganda undermines basic trust within society which is a precondition for democracy. Fear can lead to resignation and withdrawal from engagement in civil society, enmity and exclusion of others. In some cases, populist movements with an ethno-nationalist agenda even claim to defend the Christian faith against “others”.
- (2) The LWF Council is deeply concerned about these developments. We are worried about the destructive effects on people’s lives and on the political processes. We are appalled that some movements distort the gospel, and instrumentalise Christian identity for their own purposes.
- (3) When we see people bound by fear, we lift up the message of Christ. It is a message of hope that drives out fear; a message of compassion that challenges

indifference; a message of justice that resists oppression; a message of reconciliation that holds fast to peace-building. This good news is desperately needed today. Jesus Christ stood with those who—often in God’s name—were being crushed by the prevailing religious–political alliance of his time. He confronted a status quo that was based on exclusion and oppressive violence and pointed at the in-breaking reign of God as the horizon against which to assess present realities. Jesus’ call to conversion is a call to transform an unjust status quo, and to begin aligning to the future that God promises.

- (4) The LWF Council encourages its member churches, including their related theological institutions:
- (5) To discern current dynamics in the world and churches through prayer and theological analysis. There are different, sometimes conflicting perspectives within the church, therefore it is important that churches create spaces where these perspectives can be in sincere dialogue to deepen discernment. The churches are called to critically remember where church and theology have been complicit in ethno-nationalist populist agendas and point to the need for repentance.
- (6) To engage in society by radiating the hope that Christ instills in us and the compassion into which Christ calls us. In the face of distorted political processes and unjust economic systems the churches uphold human dignity and promote justice and peace, rule of law and respect for diversity. Such engagement will gain momentum when it is carried out together with ecumenical, interfaith and other civil society partners. The churches are called to build bridges of mutual trust and collaboration. As a global communion of churches, we know that we are a people, embodied in a diversity of ethnicities, cultures, genders, races and languages in majority and minority contexts around the world.
- (7) to resist oppressive and exclusionary systems and structures and to transform our communities into non-violent spaces of full, just and safe participation for all. The origin of the church’s reflection, action, and being is Christ. Christ points to the “least of all” who are excluded from community. The churches need to actively contribute to debates in society where perverted narratives about Christianity are being used and to emphasize that the Christian “values” are those of love, compassion and solidarity.
- (8) In order to break the vicious cycle of fear, hate and enmity we, as the LWF Council, call for dialogue and exchange within and between churches. To overcome the forces of ethno-nationalist populism, we call for churches to discern, engage and resist, based on the faith, love and hope to which Christ has called us.



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## Message to the LWF Member Churches on Encouraging meaningful participation of youth in the life and work of member churches

**The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 June to 2 July, 2018, under the theme “freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8), deliberated and adopted the following message to the LWF member churches:**

### Encouraging meaningful participation of youth in the life and work of member churches

*Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)*

- (1) The LWF Assembly and Council have on several occasions issued resolutions and public statements on the participation of youth in the life and work of member churches. The Stuttgart Assembly resolution on “Inclusiveness in the Lutheran World Federation” and the Windhoek Assembly resolution on “Youth participation” are some cases in point among others.
- (2) The Council is encouraged by the progress in youth participation in the LWF governance meetings, however, meaningful youth participation remains a challenge in some member churches. Youth in the LWF have voiced concerns about the gap between good policies adopted about youth participation and actual practice in some member churches.
- (3) The Council strongly affirms the Youth Message that was adopted at the 12th Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia and urges church leaders to focus on creating space for intentional inclusion of youth. They bring particular skills, knowledge and experience to the life of the church.



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## Public Statement on Israel-Palestine

**The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 June to 2 July, 2018, under the theme “freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8), deliberated and adopted the following message to the LWF member churches:**

### Israel-Palestine

*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. (Romans 10:12)*

- (1) The Council wishes to call on the LWF member churches to renew their awareness of the situation in Israel and Palestine where the occupation continues today. Much less concern is being expressed in the public arena about the situation of the Palestinian people, with its on-going effects on daily life and an increasing number of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories.
- (2) The Council reaffirms the LWF’s support for a two-state solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine even though currently there are no active negotiations between the parties.
- (3) Bearing in mind that U.S. President Donald J. Trump has visited Jerusalem and recognized Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel, the LWF continues to recognize Jerusalem as a capital city shared between the two peoples and three religions and opposes all actions which seek to change the status quo absent a final status agreement.
- (4) The Council calls upon the Member Churches to inform their members about the public statement by the LWF Council on the situation in the Middle East in 2011 as a basis for building awareness, engaging in advocacy and accompanying the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).
- (5) The Council also reaffirms on-going interreligious dialogues of the ELCJHL among the Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities as well as the support and encouragement received from the Middle East Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.



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## Public Statement on the separation of children from their families at the US-Mexico border

**The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 June to 2 July, 2018, under the theme “freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8), deliberated and adopted the following message to the LWF member churches:**

### Separation of children from their families at the US-Mexico border

*Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt (Matthew 2:14)*

- (1) The LWF Council expresses its deep distress about the situation on the US-Mexico border that has resulted in migrant children being separated from their families. Such a practice is cruel, inhumane and results in profound and damaging, long-term effects, especially psychological, on these children and their parents.
- (2) While the US Administration’s policy has been modified recently, the Council shares the concern of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America about what the revised policy “does and does not guarantee. There is no provision for reuniting children already separated from their families, nor for children whose parents have already been deported.”
- (3) Like the LWF Council’s 2015 resolution on migrants, the Council commends prophetic voices on the treatment of migrants, such as that of Bishop Eaton who convened 20 other U.S. ecumenical and inter-religious partners and issued a joint statement in early June 2018.
- (4) The LWF Council calls upon the US Administration to review its policies towards asylum seekers, stop detaining families and utilize community-based alternatives to detention as piloted by the U.S.-based Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS).



- (5) The Council is deeply aware of the precarious situation of migrants in other parts of the world, such as Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia and the Pacific. It expresses its hope that the negotiations underway toward agreement on a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will lead to better conditions, international cooperation and security for migrants and their families.
- (6) The Council appreciates Presiding Bishop Eaton's recent counsel: "In his explanation of the Lord's Prayer in the Small Catechism, Martin Luther reminds us that good government is part of our daily bread. As Lutherans and as citizens, we can work with elected officials toward humane, just, and compassionate solutions."



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## Resolution on UN Security Council Reform

**The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 June to 2 July, 2018, under the theme “freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8), deliberated and adopted the following message to the LWF member churches:**

### UN Security Council Reform

*Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. (Psalm 34:14)*

The LWF Council:

- (1) Deeply regrets that the United Nations Security Council has been unable to adequately respond to the crisis in Syria, the Israel–Palestine conflict, the situation in South Sudan, and others,
- (2) Recognizes, at the same time, that the Security Council can only be as strong and effective as its members and the international community want it to be,
- (3) Further recognizes that the Security Council’s lack of response to some of the most flagrant and bloody conflicts today is due to the veto power held by five Member States, which often continue to set their particular geopolitical interests above the common interest and their Charter obligation of maintaining international peace and security,
- (4) Recalling the LWF Council’s 2015 call “upon the United Nations Security Council to suspend the use of the veto power by the Permanent Five members in matters related to preventing or ending genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity,”
- (5) Calls upon the Member Churches and Communion Office to advocate for the UN Security Council reform proposals that stipulate that the veto should not be used in cases of mass atrocities such as crimes against humanity, crimes of genocide and war crimes.



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## Resolution on the Situation in North-East and Central Nigeria

**The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 June to 2 July, 2018, under the theme “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8), deliberated and adopted the following resolution:**

### The Situation in North-East and Central Nigeria

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, but violence takes lives away.* (Proverbs 11:30).

The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland 27<sup>th</sup> June – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018, wishes to extend its prayers for and solidarity with the churches and people of Nigeria, and especially for the people of the LWF member churches—The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) and the Lutheran Church in Nigeria.

In recent weeks North East and Central Nigeria have witnessed a devastating escalation in protracted communal violent attacks. This comes as a result of a renewed wave of brazen attacks by some nomadic Fulani herdsmen against the sedentary farming communities. Hundreds of community members are reported to have been killed in the past week as a result. These gory attacks happened barely a week after some well-armed Fulani herdsmen carried out a similar attack in one of LCCN’s congregations in Adamawa State. Sadly, the congregants were attacked when they were observing a church tradition of keeping awake in worship for the funeral service of a member of the congregation. More than 18 mostly women and children were reportedly killed.

The protracted communal conflicts in these regions have traditionally been driven by existential reasons in which subsistence farming communities try to fend off encroaching Fulani cattle from destroying their crops and livelihoods. However, the recent attacks by

the marauding Fulani herdsmen seem to be different in dimension, scope and intensity as the herdsmen are heavily armed as reported by eyewitnesses.

Therefore, the Council is deeply concerned that the escalating violence has gone beyond ordinary disagreements and is being motivated by political, ethnic and religious factors as well as the desire to grab ancestral land of the sedentary communities. Killing women and children in places of worship and attacking communities in their villages during dry season negates the pretext of fighting over grazing land and water points.

## The Council

condemns in the strongest possible terms the violent escalation in the regions and the deplorable killings, including women and children in their homes and places of worship;

### calls upon the Government of Nigeria to:

1. swiftly and decisively intervene to halt further violent escalation and attacks against the communities by the heavily armed Fulani herdsmen;
2. urgently launch an investigation into the recent attacks and hold the perpetrators accountable before the court of law;
3. embark on a comprehensive and impartial disarmament campaign to end the proliferation of arms in the hands of the civilian population, including the Fulani herdsmen; and
4. initiate a comprehensive peace process led by religious leaders and traditional elders to amicably address the underlying causes of the conflict, serve justice and accountability for the lives lost, and the destruction of property, so as to foster reconciliation and mutual peaceful coexistence in the region and the country at large going forward; and

### calls upon the member churches to:

pray for peace in these regions;

consider solidarity visits; and

advocate with their governments to raise these concerns with the Nigerian authorities.



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## Resolution Supporting the roll-out of Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration

**The LWF Council, meeting in Geneva, Switzerland from 27 June to 2 July, 2018, under the theme “freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8), deliberated and adopted the following message to the LWF member churches:**

### Supporting the roll-out of Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration

*I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me... (Matthew 25:35)*

- (1) Since the Second World War the world is witnessing the largest number of people ever on the move, many of whom have been forced to flee their homes. On their way to safety or to seek better opportunities, many lose their lives, fall prey to human traffickers and face several other forms of violence and abuse. Sadly, many governments are defaulting on their international law obligations to protect the human rights of all people on the move and to provide support for refugees and asylum seekers.
- (2) In response to this global challenge, the United Nations is poised to adopt two important documents towards the end of the year on how the international community should respond to migration and mass displacements. The documents outline specific mechanisms for responsibility sharing among Member States.
- (3) In Windhoek, the Assembly adopted a resolution on refugees, internally displaced persons and forced migration, whereby the Assembly urged the LWF communion office to strengthen the implementation of the UN Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and actively contribute to the development of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact on Migration (GCM).

To this end, the Council calls upon:

- (4) the LWF member Churches:
  - 1) to continue to support the work of the LWF World Service as they assist refugees and host communities, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention, reconciliation, and peacebuilding;
  - 2) to affirm the Department for Mission and Development (DMD) “Symbols of Hope” program in relation to migrants and collaborate with it where appropriate;
  - 3) to promote and advocate for the implementation of both compacts in their respective countries; and
  - 4) to lobby their respective governments to play their part in supporting refugees and responsibility sharing with major refugee hosting states; and
  
- (5) the LWF communion office:
  - 1) to familiarize the member churches with both of the compacts; and
  - 2) to support member churches as they advocate for the implementation of the compacts.

# The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament

as established by

*A Formula of Agreement (1997)*

and agreed among the participating churches

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Reformed Church in America  
United Church of Christ

This document is a resource to assist the churches of *A Formula of Agreement (FOA)* to grow in mutual understanding and, in particular, to implement the *FOA*'s provisions for the mutual exchange of ministers of Word and Sacrament.

*First issued January 2000; revised February 2004 and September 2018.*



**Evangelical  
Lutheran**  
Church in America



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## Introduction

Through adoption of *A Formula of Agreement (FOA)*, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ entered into a relationship of full communion with one another. Among other things, full communion means that the four churches “recognize each other’s various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament.”

This resource seeks to help the church bodies grow in their wise implementation of this provision. It includes both principles identified from the beginning and fruits of subsequent experience. This opening statement, common to the four *FOA* churches, is followed by sections prepared by each church to help the others understand its procedures, commitments and distinctive terms.

Together, these materials support rather than replace direct conversations and personal relationships among those in our church offices who oversee particular instances of exchange of ministers. It is essential that there be proactive, open and continuing communication among these offices; no document can convey the complexity of ways that the procedures of each church are lived out, and a commitment to help one another in honoring the diversities of each tradition is part of the meaning of living in communion.

*“Minister” in this document refers to ministers of Word and Sacrament in the four churches.*

## Principles for the exchange of ministers

1. This orderly exchange of ministers is for the sake of participation in the mission of God and can be an important sign of our unity in Christ. Thus, the needs of mission are always paramount. Ministers in one church *may be invited* to serve in another church; they do not have a *right* to serve in the other church.
2. Exchangeability, as part of common ecumenical commitment to collaborate as members of the one body of Christ, can enhance shared ministry and mission by encouraging more flexible, responsive and effective placement of ministers. Thus, orderly exchange encourages those in our churches responsible for ministerial placement to invite the service of ministers available in other churches and make use of their gifts; it encourages ministers in each church to respond to such invitations or, where appropriate, to express their openness to serve in another church.
3. While we are members of the one body of Christ Jesus, there is also diversity in the body. Therefore, the means of implementing orderly exchange need not be identical in each participating church. The existing polity of each church continues to be respected. It is important, however, that provisions parallel each other as much as possible and that each church be conversant with the provisions of the others.
4. One of the ways diversity is expressed is in the various ways the churches are organized, live communally, and allow for the care and discipline of their congregations and ministers. While ministers retain their ministerial membership in their own churches, the orderly exchange of ministers is understood to be at the invitation of the receiving church and subject to that church’s placement procedures and polity. It is within this context that responsibilities of both care and discipline are exercised.

5. *A Formula of Agreement* is a commitment to ongoing relationship among the four churches, which is undergirded by ongoing conversation and mutuality in the *FOA* spirit of “mutual affirmation and admonition.” Good practice in the exchange of ministers requires both the establishment of proper boundaries and the complete and mutual disclosure between church bodies of information concerning past and present ministry of these ministers, including discipline related matters, both during initial consideration and throughout any period of service under orderly exchange. Good practice will also require continued conversation to share both the celebrations and the challenges of implementation.

### **Implementation of the principles for the exchange of ministers**

1. A minister of a full communion church may be eligible to engage in extended service in any position open to a minister in another participating church except as noted otherwise in the polity of either church. These provisions for exchangeability under the *FOA* do not directly affect these continuing practices:
  - Ministers’ occasional service in participating churches, while it may be further encouraged by full communion, continues to be authorized according to the polities of each of the churches.
  - Service in another church under the provisions of full communion does not accomplish or intend transfer of ministerial membership. When such transfer does seem appropriate, it will be authorized according to the polities of the two churches.
2. In evaluating the availability of ministers of Word and Sacrament, regional bodies of each participating church will do so in accordance with the stated intentions in *A Formula of Agreement*.
  - a. Judicatories should:
    - Be in conversation with *FOA* counterparts in their geographic regions about general mission objectives which could be supported through orderly exchange of ministers.
    - Explore with their congregations where there may be appropriate opportunities for orderly exchange of ministers.
    - Consult with their own ministers and those of the *FOA* partners concerning the gifts and commitments necessary for carrying out orderly exchange within the spirit and intentions of the *FOA*.
  - b. Ministers open to service in another church body should:
    - Consult, as appropriate, with their own judicatory leadership concerning availability and suitability for service in another full communion church body.
    - Use the ministerial profile or mobility forms of the sending church body and provide other documentation as requested.
    - Contact (either directly or consultatively with one’s own judicatory office, as appropriate) a regional staff person of the full communion church in the region or area one wishes to serve and follow that church’s procedure, and refrain from contacting a congregation directly unless instructed by the appropriate regional or judicatory official of that congregation’s church body.

3. Placement and oversight procedures of the inviting church shall be observed. Those responsible for placement will consider both ministers' faithful formation in their own tradition and their familiarity with that of the inviting church.
  - The churches expect that those who would serve in a congregation of another church will be formed and grounded for ministry in their own tradition. Therefore, such service is not intended for a first call.
  - To be invited for service in another church, a minister will demonstrate to that church's appropriate regional body both knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, theological and liturgical identity, practices of ministry, and discipline of that church. The minister will then be expected to preach, teach, administer the sacraments, and participate in the governance of that church in a manner consistent with that knowledge and appreciation.
4. Approval for extended service shall occur only in consultation with, and the concurrence of, the sending body.
  - When granting concurrence for a minister to serve in another church, the sending body will do so in accordance with the stated intentions in *A Formula of Agreement*.
  - Each church will develop a provision whereby a minister may be granted full participation in the appropriate regional body of the church in which the minister is serving, which may include privilege of voice and vote.
5. The minister is responsible for maintaining continued ministerial standing with and remains accountable to the sending body. Therefore, exchange of information concerning a specific disciplinary matter is initiated when an allegation of misconduct is first made, and appropriate next steps are agreed upon by representatives of the churches involved.
  - In a disciplinary review or judicial process, the minister remains under the jurisdiction of the sending body, and the inviting body may be asked to participate as appropriate.
  - The inviting body retains the right to rescind the invitation to service, even in situations where a formal disciplinary process may not be initiated by the sending body.
6. Since ministers remain members of their sending body, they continue to participate in the pension and benefits program of the sending church. The inviting church should therefore be expected to contribute to the minister's pension and benefits program in keeping with the practices of the sending church.
7. Responsibility for pastoral care of ministers is shared by both churches: in the ELCA, the synod; in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the presbytery; in the Reformed Church in America, the classis; and in the United Church of Christ, the conference or association.
8. The four churches will continue conversations among their ecumenical relations and ministry staff persons to share experiences, address difficulties, and clarify procedures in order to enhance the orderly exchange of ministers and to find ways to celebrate more visibly our full communion relationship and its opportunities for expanded mission.

The national staff offices welcome and encourage the sharing of questions, concerns and experiences from local and regional settings.

## EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

### Full Communion bylaws

For the implementation of church-to-church relationships of full communion, the following bylaws in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* apply.

**7.31.08. Invitation to Service.** In accord with bylaw 8.62.11. and following, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may serve contractually in a ministry setting of this church under a “Letter of Invitation to Service” upon the authorization of the bishop of the synod in which such service occurs.

**8.62.11.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament—upon endorsement by the synodical bishop and by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Sacrament is listed on the roster—under policies developed at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. A minister of Word and Service of this church serving temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, may be retained on the roster—upon endorsement by the synodical bishops and by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister of Word and Service is listed on the roster—under policies developed at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. A letter of call may be issued to a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving temporarily in such a church body, by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a Synod Council, in accord with the Table of Sources of Calls (ELCA churchwide continuing resolution 7.44.A16.b.).
- b. A letter of call may be issued to a minister of Word and Service of this church, serving temporarily in such a church body, by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or a Synod Council, in accord with the Table of Sources of Calls (ELCA churchwide continuing resolution 7.74.A16.b.).
- c. A letter of call issued by the Church Council or a Synod Council for service in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly shall be governed by churchwide constitutional provision 7.43. and churchwide bylaw 7.43.01.

**8.62.12.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be authorized by the synodical bishop to serve in a congregation or employing entity of this church. Such service shall be rendered

- under a contract between the congregation or employing entity and the minister of Word and Sacrament in a form proposed by the synodical bishop and approved by the congregation or employing entity. Any such service shall be in accord with churchwide policies developed at the direction of the presiding bishop and secretary, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 8.62.13.** Whenever a rostered minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is to serve or is serving in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Churchwide Assembly, or whenever a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been so declared and established is to serve or is serving in this church, a full sharing of relevant information concerning such rostered minister's experience and fitness for ministry is expected between the synodical bishop (or other appropriate office or entity) of this church and the appropriate person, office, or entity in the other church. Relevant information related to fitness for ministry shall include, but is not limited to, any information concerning disciplinary proceedings or allegations that could result, or could have resulted, in disciplinary proceedings.
- 8.62.14.** A minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be granted the privilege of both voice and vote in the Synod Assembly during the period of that minister's service in a congregation of this church, in accord with ELCA churchwide bylaw 8.62.12.
- 8.62.15.** The availability of a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be understood normally in three categories: availability to serve in an occasional situation; availability to meet an extended need, including service in "yoked parish" settings; and availability for a transfer of roster status.
- a. *Occasional service:* An occasional situation is defined as one in which a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synodical bishop.
  - b. *Extended service:* A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be invited to serve as the pastor of an ELCA congregation for an extended period of time, yet remain a minister of Word and Sacrament of his or her present church body. Such a person would be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation in a manner that is consistent with the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and to live in a manner consistent with the ministerial policy of this church. Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synodical bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of the ELCA in a given situation.
  - c. *Transfer:* A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists who seeks to serve indefinitely within the ministry of Word and Sacrament of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may apply for admission to the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and be approved through the candidacy process for admission to the roster. Such a minister would then become an ELCA pastor upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in an ELCA congregation or other setting.

- d. Roster status in more than one church body is precluded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As required by ELCA churchwide constitutional provision 7.22. and bylaw 7.31.01., ministers on the Word and Sacrament roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America must accept and adhere to this church's Confession of Faith, as well as abide by this church's standards and policies for ministers of Word and Sacrament.
- 8.62.16.** Rostered ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, while serving in an ecumenical setting, remain subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists is understood by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the church body in which the minister is rostered or holds ministerial membership. Such a minister, while serving in an ELCA congregation or other ministry, is expected to abide by the standards and policies of this church related to ministers of Word and Sacrament.
- 8.62.17.** When a minister of Word and Sacrament from a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by a Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America completes a contract for extended service, the synodical file on that minister shall be sent to and retained by the Office of the Secretary.

## **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Cooperation with other church bodies in the exercise of Word and Sacrament ministry**

The Lutheran-Reformed proposal for full communion adopted by the 1997 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, *A Formula of Agreement*, declared, “that they [the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and the United Church of Christ (UCC)] recognize each other’s various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament.”

In accord with the governing documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, policy related to the orderly exchange of ministers between the participating church bodies is developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such policy would apply to ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church who, while being retained on the roster of the ELCA, would serve temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established, and to ministers of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established who would serve temporarily in a congregation or other ministry setting of this church.

The *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, adopted by the Church Council in March 2017, outlines the following practices related to the availability of ministers of Word and Sacrament between the ELCA and church bodies with which a relationship of full communion has been established. “Resources for familiarization with the life and practice of the ELCA” is an appendix on page 88.

[http://download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Policies\\_Procedures\\_Roster\\_Mgmt.pdf](http://download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Policies_Procedures_Roster_Mgmt.pdf)

**Background:** In accordance with the governing documents of the ELCA, policy related to the orderly exchange of ministers of Word and Sacrament between the participating church bodies is developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such policy would apply to ministers of Word and Sacrament in this church who, while being retained on the roster of the ELCA, would serve temporarily in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established, and to ministers of Word and Sacrament in a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established who would serve temporarily in a congregation or other ministry setting of this church without being admitted to the roster of the ELCA.

See “Admission to the Roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament of Persons Ordained in Another Christian Tradition” [page 11 of the roster manual] for the process by which a minister of Word and Sacrament in a full communion partner church body, intending to serve indefinitely in the ELCA, may apply for admission to the ELCA roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament. Such a person would then become an ELCA pastor upon receipt and acceptance of a regular call and installation in an ELCA congregation or other approved setting.

Roster status in more than one church body at a time is precluded in the ELCA.

## I. Ministers of Word and Sacrament of another church body serving in the ELCA

*NOTE: A minister of Word and Sacrament of a full communion partner church serves in an ELCA congregation UNDER CONTRACT, NOT UNDER CALL by the congregation.*

- A. Occasional service.** A minister of Word and Sacrament in a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation on an occasional basis with the authorization of the synod bishop.
- B. Extended service.** A minister of Word and Sacrament in a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists may be invited by the synod bishop to serve as the pastor of an ELCA congregation for an extended period of time, yet remain an ordained minister of that church body. Such a person will be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in an ELCA congregation in a manner that is consistent with the “Confession of Faith” of the ELCA, and to live in a manner consistent with the expectations of this church as stated in “Vision and Expectations.” Such service shall be rendered only as authorized by the synod bishop in order to serve the ministry and mission needs of the ELCA or its ecumenical partners in a given situation.

Service in a congregation of this church or employing entity shall be rendered under a contract between the congregation or employing entity and the minister of Word and Sacrament, for a stated period of time in a form proposed by the synod bishop and approved by the congregation. Extended service is reviewed annually by the Synod Council or Church Council.

Upon the recommendation of the synod bishop and approval by the Synod Council, the synod bishop authorizes an extended service ministry.

1. Upon such authorization the minister of Word and Sacrament enters service in the ELCA through the entry rite, “Invitation to Extended Service,” which acknowledges the service of the minister of Word and Sacrament as pastor in a congregation or other setting of ministry in this church.

The Rite of Installation is **NOT** used as that rite is for use only for a regularly called minister of Word and Sacrament of the ELCA.

2. A minister of Word and Sacrament who is approved to serve in an extended service ministry in the ELCA may be granted voice and vote in a synod assembly.

At any time for the sake of the ongoing ministry, the synod bishop may withdraw authorization for service (or the congregation, employing agency or the minister may terminate a contract for extended service) after consultation with the other parties to the contract.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament who have ceased to be “rostered” or the equivalent by a full communion partner church body are not considered eligible for such service unless or until they are received on the roster of the ELCA or of another full communion church.

## II. ELCA ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in another church body

A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church, serving for an extended period of time in a church body with which a relationship of full communion exists, may be retained on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament upon the recommendation of the synod bishop and by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the minister is listed on the roster.



Congregations that cease to be rostered by a full communion partner church body are not eligible for service by a pastor of the ELCA until the congregation is received by the ELCA or another church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established.

### III. Procedures

**A. Assessment.** Authorization for extended service is given by the Synod Council, on the basis of the synod bishop's assessment of the suitability for service of the minister of Word and Sacrament. The bishop may wish to appoint a panel to assist in this determination. The appropriate churchwide unit recommends that this not be a responsibility of the full synod Candidacy Committee, although members of the committee may serve on the panel.

**B. Pension and medical insurance.** A determination of the medical and disability insurance for the minister of Word and Sacrament will be made. The guiding principle has become that a minister of Word and Sacrament serving under provisions of a full communion agreement remains in his or her parent church body's pension and benefits plan, and the congregation or other ministry setting contributes to that plan.

It is anticipated that a congregation of this church will be able to contribute to the plan of another church body in order to provide appropriate medical coverage and a pension plan. Similarly, a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church serving in another church body will need to determine that Portico Benefit Services (or another comparable plan) coverage is provided by the employing body.

**C. Accountability and pastoral care.** A minister of Word and Sacrament in another church body is accountable to the jurisdiction or judicatory in which that person is "rostered" or in other ways a member. Similarly, a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church serving in another church body remains on the roster of this church and is accountable to the bishop of the synod in which rostered. The synod bishop is responsible for appropriate pastoral care and leadership for all ELCA congregations, including those served by ministers of Word and Sacrament of other church bodies (ELCA constitutional provision 10.31.a.3.).

**D. Exchange of information.** The assessments, authorizations, and reviews necessary to the "orderly exchange of ordained ministers" between church bodies with which a relationship of full communion exists require the complete and continuing disclosure to the synod of all information concerning the past and present ministry of these ministers serving in the ELCA, or of ELCA ministers of Word and Sacrament serving under call from a synod council or the Church Council. Such disclosure must include any disciplinary proceedings, including discipline related to conduct during service in the ELCA by a minister of another church body.

**E. Source of call.** A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church serving in a congregation, local, or regional ministry setting of another church body serves under a letter of call from the Synod Council in which that minister is rostered. An ELCA minister of Word and Sacrament serving in a national ministry setting of another church body serves under a letter of call from the ELCA Church Council. This call is subject to annual review by the Synod Council or Church Council.

**F. Titles.** The usual title "pastor of (insert name of congregation)" would be used for ministers of Word and Sacrament serving in an ELCA congregation. The recognized professional title of "The Rev." for an ordained minister also would be applicable, in view of the officially recognized status of that minister of Word and Sacrament in a church body with which the ELCA has a relationship of full communion.

## **Glossary of Terms — Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

### **Bishop**

In the ELCA, a bishop is a minister of Word and Sacrament given responsibility to provide pastoral care, teaching and leadership in a synod and its congregations. The bishop is chief executive officer of the synod, as well as its chief ecumenical and inter-religious officer, and is to strengthen the unity of the Church. Bishops exercise solely this church's power to ordain (or provide for the ordination by another synod bishop of) approved candidates for ministry of Word and Sacrament; and they consecrate (or provide for the consecration of) approved candidates for ministry of Word and Service. Bishops are elected by synod assemblies to six-year terms and may be re-elected.

### **Bishop's Assistant or Associate**

A member of the synod staff, either a rostered minister or a layperson, who assists the bishop in carrying out the responsibilities of that office, including matters regarding placement and rostering.

### **Bishop, Presiding**

A minister of Word and Sacrament who is a teacher of the faith of this church and provides leadership for the life and witness of this church. The presiding bishop is the chief executive officer of the churchwide organization and is the chief ecumenical and inter-religious officer of the ELCA. The presiding bishop is elected to a six-year term and may be re-elected.

### ***Book of Concord***

*The Book of Concord* (1580; current English translation 2000) is a collection of 10 foundational documents for Lutheran theology: the three ecumenical creeds, Augsburg Confession, Apology, Smalcald Articles, Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Small Catechism, Large Catechism and Formula of Concord. It became the official standard of doctrine for most Lutheran Churches; the ELCA constitution accepts the *Augsburg Confession* as a "true witness to the Gospel" and the other confessional writings as "further valid interpretations of the faith of the Church." Most familiar of the Reformation-era texts is Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*, which continues in common use as a formative presentation of Christian affirmations. Its teachings and even phrases are instantly recognizable to many Lutherans.

### **Church Council**

The Church Council of the ELCA is the board of directors of the churchwide organization, serving as the interim legislative authority between meetings of the Churchwide Assembly. The Church Council meets at least two times each year, and is composed of the four churchwide officers (presiding bishop, vice president, secretary and treasurer), the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and at least 32 and not more than 45 other persons elected to six-year terms by the Churchwide Assembly.

An ELCA minister of Word and Sacrament serving in a national ministry setting of another church body serves under a letter of call from the Church Council.

### **Churchwide Assembly**

The Churchwide Assembly is the highest legislative authority of the churchwide organization. It reviews the work of the churchwide officers and churchwide units. It establishes churchwide policy

and adopts the budget for the churchwide organization. It has the sole authority to amend the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA. The Churchwide Assembly meets triennially in regular session.

### **Churchwide Organization**

The churchwide organization functions interdependently with the congregations and synods of the ELCA. It is responsible for developing churchwide policy, standards for leadership, including rostered ministries, and the coordination of the work of the ELCA both globally and throughout the territory of the ELCA.

### **Conference of Bishops**

The Conference of Bishops is composed of the bishops of the 65 synods, the presiding bishop and the secretary of the ELCA. The conference meets at least two times each year and is a forum in which goals, objectives and strategies may be developed and shared concerning pastoral leadership, care and counsel for the synods. The Conference of Bishops reviews recommendations from the appropriate churchwide units pertaining to policies and programs, and in particular participates in the development and study of ecumenical and inter-religious documents and assists bishops in their ecumenical and inter-religious roles.

### **Congregation**

Congregations, together with synods and the churchwide organization, are one of the three interdependent expressions of the ELCA. They act through their Congregation Meetings and typically delegate authority to an elected Congregation Council.

### **Congregation Council (see also Church Council and Synod Council)**

Like synods and the churchwide expression, an ELCA congregation has a council. Typically the congregation delegates many matters of governance to its council, which it elects from its members. Each congregation's constitution specifies the pastor's role on its council.

### ***Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions***

The basic commitments of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as well as its organizational outline, structural patterns, and rubrics of governance are expressed by its constitutions, bylaws and continuing resolutions. These documents govern the life of the ELCA as congregations, synods and the churchwide organization.

### **Deacon**

Since 2016, ministers of Word and Service are known as deacons. Some deacons are members of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and are known as Sisters.

### **Evangelical**

“Evangelical” was an original designation for the reformers, from the Greek word for “gospel” or “good news.” Still used this way in German-speaking areas to designate Christians who are not Roman Catholic or Orthodox, the term is also used currently by The Lutheran World Federation to characterize Lutheran tradition. While in the United States the word has distinctively taken on additional connotations from other historical developments, its use in the name of the ELCA honors

and reclaims the heritage of witnessing to the “good news” of God’s grace and living as “gospel people,” sharing God’s love for the world.

### **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)**

The ELCA came into being on January 1, 1988, by the uniting of three church bodies. Lutheran roots on this continent are deep. In the mid-17th century early Lutherans came from Europe, settling in the Virgin Islands and the area that is now known as New York. The Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the first Lutheran church body, was established in 1748. The ELCA is currently the largest of the Lutheran bodies in the United States.

### ***Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)***

(See Worship Resources)

### **Full Communion**

“Communion” comes from the biblical *koinonia* — to share, act together, live in fellowship. It describes a relationship of churches where each maintains its autonomy but fully recognizes the other as church.

The Preface to *A Formula of Agreement* includes a definition full communion for this ecumenical relationship, closely related to the ELCA’s explanation of “full communion” in *Ecumenism: A Vision of the ELCA* (1991). Among the characteristics is that the churches “recognize each others’ various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament.”

### **Letter of Call**

A call is an action through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a “letter of call.” A letter of call is issued by that ELCA expression (congregation, synod or churchwide organization) most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.

### **The Lutheran World Federation**

The ELCA belongs to The Lutheran World Federation, a Communion of Churches. This is a global body of churches in the Lutheran tradition which unites its members in “pulpit and altar fellowship” and describes Lutheran identity as evangelical, sacramental, diaconal, confessional and ecumenical.

### **Membership**

ELCA members are the baptized members of its congregations. Baptized members are those persons who have been received by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism in ELCA congregations, or, having been previously baptized in the name of the Triune God, have been received by certificate of transfer from other Lutheran congregations or by affirmation of faith.

### **Pastor**

Ministers of Word and Sacrament are known as pastors, especially those who serve in congregational settings. The term “pastor” may describe a minister of Word and Sacrament serving in a non-congregational setting as well.

## **Representational Principles**

Among the principles of organization, the ELCA currently provides that at least 60 percent of the members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards and other organizations shall be laypersons; that, as nearly as possible, the lay members shall be 50 percent female and 50 percent male, and that, where possible, the representation of rostered ministers shall be both female and male. It is also determined that a minimum goal of 10 percent of the membership of its assemblies, councils, committees, boards or other organizational units be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English. It is also a goal of the ELCA that at least 10 percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults.

## **Region**

There are nine geographic regions within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, recognized as a partnership among groups of synods within the region and the churchwide organization.

## **Roster**

The ELCA has two rosters: the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and the roster of Ministers of Word and Service. For each roster there are four mutually exclusive categories: under call, on leave from call, on disability status or on retired status.

## **Rostered Ministers**

Those listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament or on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service are collectively known as rostered ministers. Every rostered minister must be a member of an ELCA congregation. (For those granted retired or disability status, rare exceptions are made.)

## **Rostered Minister Profile (RMP)**

The RMP is a 16-step document designed to stimulate reflection, to summarize a rostered minister's interests and ministry, and to be used as a professional résumé. It is used by ELCA rostered ministers and candidates for rostered ministry to express their interest in and availability for a call.

## **Synod**

There are 65 synods in the ELCA. Each synod, together with the churchwide organization, bears primary responsibility for the oversight of the life and mission of the ELCA in its territory.

## **Synod Council**

The Synod Council is the board of directors of the synod and serves as its interim legislative authority between meetings of the Synod Assembly. For the ELCA, a minister of Word and Sacrament serving in a congregation, local or regional setting of another church body serves under a letter of call from the council of the synod in which that minister is rostered.

## **Synod-authorized ministries**

When need exists to render Word and Sacrament ministry for a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not possible to provide appropriate pastoral leadership, the synod bishop — acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference

of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council — may authorize a person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer this ministry. Such an individual shall be supervised by a minister of Word and Sacrament appointed by the synod bishop; such service shall be rendered during its duration under the sacramental authority of the bishop as the synod’s pastor. Such an individual will be trained to fulfill this ministry for a specified period of time and in a given location only. Authorization, remuneration, direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synod leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry. Authorization for such service shall be reviewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation. (ELCA bylaw 7.31.09.)

Synod-authorized ministers are not available for exchange through full communion agreements.

### **Synod Assembly**

The Synod Assembly is the highest legislative authority of the synod, with a regular meeting held at least triennially (with most synod assemblies meeting annually). All rostered ministers are voting members, as are representative lay members from every congregation within the synod.

### **Worship Resources**

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006) is “commended” for use in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This is a core rather than a comprehensive resource; it reflects a body of prayer and song that our churches consider worthy to hold in common. The book contains notable representatives of a wide variety of liturgical texts and musical forms that point to larger repertoires outside this volume — expressions desired in every context by an increasingly diverse church.

Examples of this widening circle of resources include *Libro De Liturgia Y Cantico* (1998) and *This Far by Faith: An African American Resource for Worship* (1999); *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly* (2009); supplemental resources on marriage, <http://www.ELCA.org/Resources/Worship#Liturgy> and many more in diverse media.

*The Use of the Means of Grace* was adopted for “guidance and practice” by the 1997 Churchwide Assembly as “a statement on the practice of Word and Sacrament.”

[http://download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/The\\_Use\\_Of\\_The\\_Means\\_Of\\_Grace.pdf](http://download.ELCA.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/The_Use_Of_The_Means_Of_Grace.pdf)

## **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

### **Processes and resources for exchange of ministries with participating churches in *A Formula Of Agreement***

*The orderly exchange of ministers is intended for those who are already ordained as Ministers of Word and Sacrament in one of the Formula churches. As stated in the principles of orderly exchange, it is “not intended for first calls.” The 2008 General Assembly approved the following Authoritative Interpretation (2008, 48, 51, 279, Item 04-24): The words “not intended” in the Orderly Exchange document closes the door to ordination to a first call in another denomination. This interpretation within the PC(USA) applies to both those Formula church candidates who might want to serve PC(USA) churches and PC(USA) candidates who might want to serve Formula of Agreement churches.*

#### **I. Provisions for ministry by ministers of Formula churches in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

The following provisions are governed by the general principle of Presbyterian polity that *the Presbytery decides who shall be members and approves calls for service in churches.*

##### **A. Service of a joint congregational witness, as well as with ecumenical parishes, cooperative ministries, and new worshiping communities.**

1. Covered by G-5.05 (section of the Form of Government of the *Book of Order*).
  - a. Presbytery approves call of union or federated church to a minister to serve as pastor or associate pastor, or appoints a minister to serve in a temporary ministerial capacity in a Presbyterian church, or approves the invitation of a cooperative specialized ministry to a minister to serve in that ministry.
  - b. The minister may be enrolled as a temporary member of a presbytery with the rights and privileges of membership (voice, vote, serve on committees, hold office) during that service. (*G-2.0506*)
2. The minister may not be called to an installed ministry in a Presbyterian church by virtue of this membership in a presbytery.
3. The minister must be in good standing with a governing body of jurisdiction in the church of which he/she is a member.
4. The governing body with jurisdiction over the minister approves the ministry according to its applicable procedures.

##### **B. Installed ministry and temporary service in a Presbyterian congregation**

1. Extended service, which is the only category to which the orderly exchange of ministers under the Formula of Agreement applies, is defined within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as either installed ministry or temporary service in a Presbyterian congregation.
2. Installed ministry within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) can either be for an indefinite term or a for a designated term up to 3 years. Temporary service is for a specified period not to exceed twelve-months, but may be renewed. (*G-2.0504 a,b*)

3. G-2.0506 provides an exception, for ministers from Formula churches, to the general rule that only ministers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may be called and installed as pastors, co-pastors, and associate pastors in Presbyterian congregations (except those covered in A above).
  - a. Presbytery approves the call of the congregation using the procedures of the presbytery. *(G-2.0803)*
  - b. The minister is installed as pastor, co-pastor, designated pastor, or associate pastor. *(G-2.0805)*
  - c. The minister may be enrolled during this service as a member of presbytery with all rights and privileges. *(G-2.0506)*
4. The minister must be in good standing with a governing body of jurisdiction in the church of which he/she is a member.
5. The governing body of jurisdiction approves the ministry according to its applicable procedures.
6. The minister remains a member of her /his church, subject to the discipline of that church, and continues under the benefits plan of that church.

### **C. Reception of a minister of a Formula church as a minister member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

1. Ministers seeking to transfer church membership from another church will be considered under the applicable provisions in G-2.0505.
  - a. Ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will have to “submit satisfactory evidence of possessing the qualifications of character and scholarship required of candidates of this church.” *(G-2.0607 & G-2.0610)*
  - b. Ministers of the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ will also have to meet the requirements of G-2.0607 and G-2.0610, but there is a provision that may allow an exception for them to the candidate examination requirements if the minister has been ordained more than five years. *(G-2.0505a(2))*
2. Ministers seeking transfer will need to be in good standing in their own churches and be granted dismissal by the governing body of jurisdiction.
3. This is not an avenue for avoiding candidacy requirements in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

## **II. Service by a Minister of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in another Formula Church**

### **A. Service in union and federated churches, ecumenical parishes, cooperative ministries *(G-5.05)***

1. Approval of invitation for service is by supervising judicatories of all participating churches.
2. Presbytery approves call of union or federated church to a minister to serve as pastor or associate pastor, or approves the invitation of a cooperative specialized ministry to a minister to serve in that ministry.
3. The minister may accept membership or participation in the supervising judicatory for the duration of the service. The invitation for such membership or participation is at the discretion and according to the provisions of the inviting church.



4. The minister remains a member of his/her presbytery, subject to the discipline of this church, and continues under the benefits plan of this church.

**B. Temporary service in a congregation of another Formula church (G-2.0506)**

1. Approval of invitation for service is by the supervising judicatory of inviting church according to provisions of that church.
2. Presbytery validates (approves) temporary ministerial service in a congregation of a Formula church. Presbytery reviews service at least annually and may withdraw approval.
3. The minister may accept membership or participation in the supervising judicatory for the duration of the service. The invitation for such membership or participation is at the discretion and according to the provisions of the inviting church.
4. The minister remains a member of his/her presbytery, subject to the discipline of this church, and continues under the benefits plan of this church.

**C. Installed ministry or extended service in a congregation of another Formula church (G-2.08)**

1. Approval of invitation for service is by the supervising judicatory of inviting church according to provisions of that church.
2. Presbytery validates (approves) extended ministerial service in a congregation of a Formula church. Presbytery reviews service at least annually and may withdraw approval.
3. The minister may accept membership or participation in the supervising judicatory for the duration of the service. The invitation for such membership or participation is at the discretion and according to the provisions of the inviting church.
4. The minister remains a member of his/her presbytery, subject to the discipline of this church, and continues under the benefits plan of this church.

**D. Transfer of a minister member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to a judicatory of a Formula church**

1. A minister may request transfer of ministerial membership to another of the Formula churches.
2. Such a minister will remain on the rolls and under the authority of his/her presbytery until notice is received from a judicatory of a Formula church that the minister has been enrolled or rostered.

**A minister may not be transferred if any disciplinary matter is pending.**

**III. Resources**

*A. At the Presbytery level*

1. Executive or General Presbyter (or mid council leader charged with supporting the work of the presbytery related to teaching elders/Ministers of Word and Sacrament and inquirers and candidates for ministry)
2. Stated Clerk

3. Committee on Ministry (or the presbytery committee or process that is charged with the care of teaching elders/Ministers of Word and Sacrament)
4. Committee on Preparation for Ministry (or the presbytery committee or process that is charged with the care of inquirers and candidates for ministry)

*B. At the Synod level (applicable for ministries that cross presbytery boundaries)*

1. Synod Executive (All but two of the 16 synods have someone performing the executive function)
2. Stated Clerk
3. Appropriate Committees (synod structures vary dramatically)

*C. At the General Assembly level*

Office of the General Assembly

- a. Ordered Ministries and Certification – (502) 569-5421 or (888) 728-7228 x5421
- b. Call Process Support – (502) 569-5730 or (888) 728-7228 x5730
- c. Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations – (502) 569-5423 or (888) 728-7228 x5423
- d. Constitutional Interpretation – (502) 569-5432 or (888) 728-7228 x5432

*D. Information about Staff serving in positions listed above*

See the PC(USA) directory for presbytery leaders at <http://ogaapps.pcusa.org/directories/#/mgb>.

## **Call Process in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

Whether a call is to a congregational setting or to a setting outside of a congregation, the call of a new pastoral leader to ministry within the bounds of a presbytery supports the mission and vision of that presbytery through the particular church. Each presbytery seeks leaders who will enhance the presbytery's mission at a particular time and in a particular place. While the process by which a pastoral leader is called varies among presbyteries, all processes are guided by *The Book of Order*, which is Part II of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), all congregational pastoral relationships are established by the presbytery and require the concurrent approval of the presbytery, the congregation or its session, and the pastoral leader. Pastoral leaders within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are called Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Teaching Elders.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament may be installed as pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor of a congregation. This installed pastoral relationship may be for an indefinite period of time or for a designated term as determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament may also serve in temporary pastoral relationships that do not carry a formal call or installation; the relationships are established with the session of the congregation in concurrence with the presbytery. These temporary relationships are approved by the presbytery, which also determines the titles and the terms of service. The terms of service for temporary pastoral relationships are for a specified period not to exceed twelve-months, but may be renewed. (*G-2.0504 a,b*)

Within the PC(USA), calls are often filled through the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) system. This database system connects pastoral and lay leaders to calling organizations by matching the Ministry Information Forms (MIF's) of calling organizations with Personal Information Forms (PIF's) of call seekers. After the initial connection, call seekers and calling organizations are encouraged to engage in deeper conversation with potential "fits" as they seek to discern the will of Christ for ministry together. At this time, the use of CLC is restricted to individuals and entities with an official affiliation to the PC(USA).

Ministers of Formula of Agreement partners who are interested in serving in a PC(USA) congregation may express their interest by contacting the local presbytery to which the congregation belongs. The process is described in more detail below in the Orderly Exchange Process. It is expected that those seeking to serve a PC(USA) congregation will have compatible theology with the denomination and be willing to learn and abide by its polity.

Regardless of denominational affiliation, all pastors called to serve a PC(USA) congregation are called to preach and teach the faith of the church so that the people are shaped by the pattern of the gospel and strengthened for witness and service. Pastors also serve as presbyters and members of presbyteries. They participate in the responsibilities of governance within local presbyteries and the larger church, always seeking to build up the body of Christ through the sharing of their ministry gifts, service, leadership, devotion, knowledge and decision making.

**Ministers of Formula of Agreement Denominations**  
(ELCA, PC(USA), RCA and UCC)  
*The Process of Orderly Exchange*

Ministers of Formula of Agreement denominations (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ) under Orderly Exchange” may serve as an installed or temporary pastor of a PC(USA) congregation by invitation from a PC(USA) presbytery (regional mid council).

**Highlights of the Formula of Agreement and the Orderly Exchange process are:**

- The orderly exchange process begins with the identification of a ministry need by the appropriate regional body of the “inviting” congregation and the identification of an ordained minister from a Formula of Agreement partner church who may serve in that ministry setting.
- The judicatory of the “inviting” congregation initiates the process of the orderly exchange between the congregation to be served and the ordained minister. The ordained minister does not initiate the process of exchange.
- The “inviting” congregation should consult with the appropriate regional body of the ordained minister to determine the suitability of the potential service and to receive the concurrence of the “sending” body – presbytery, classis, conference and association or synod. The ordained minister remains accountable to the sending church for continuation of ministerial status.
- A ministry in a congregation of another church is not intended for a “first call” candidate. Experience in and knowledge of one’s own tradition is seen as necessary before serving in a different tradition.
- This agreement applies only to persons who are ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament and does not apply to persons who are locally trained and authorized ministers – commissioned pastors (RCA), commissioned ruling elders (PC(USA)), licensed ministers (UCC), synodically authorized ministers (ELCA).
- Ministers serving in an orderly exchange should be temporary under this agreement. Should an ordained minister of one church intend to serve permanently in another church then the process of the transfer of ministerial status should be followed.
- Should a disciplinary process be necessary, the ordained minister remains under the jurisdiction of the sending body, but the inviting body may be asked to participate as necessary.
- Pension and medical coverage is through the denominations of membership.

The complete policy and process document, “A Formula of Agreement – The Orderly Exchange of Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament,” is available on the Web at:

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/ecumenical-formula-agreement/>.

Presbyteries may enroll ministers of another Christian church temporary membership in the presbytery for a period of service who is serving temporarily in a validated ministry in this church, or in an installed relationship under the provisions of the Formula of Agreement (*Book of Order, Appendix B; G-5.0202*), when the minister has satisfied the requirements of preparation for such service established by the presbytery’s own rule. (*G-2.0506*) As a temporary member, a pastor may be granted voice and vote in meetings, are authorized to administer the sacraments and moderator meetings of the session.

## **Glossary of Terms — Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

### **Book of Confessions**

The confessional portion of the *Constitution* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The included confessional statements range from the Nicene and Apostles Creeds, through the sixteenth century Reformed confessional documents, to “A Brief Statement of Faith” adopted in 1991 as part of the reunion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and the Belhar Confession from the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa adopted by the PC(USA) in 2016.

### **Book of Order**

The procedural portion of the *Constitution*. It includes the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, Form of Government, Directory for Worship, and the Rules of Discipline.

### **Call**

Used two ways in the *Book of Order*: either as the formal action of a congregation, electing by vote a pastor or associate pastor for the congregation, or as the less formal approval by a presbytery of a minister’s service in a number of settings. (*G-2.05*)

### **Church Leadership Connection (CLC)**

The online database and search system that supports the PC(USA)’s national call system.

### **Commissioned Pastor (see Ruling Elder Commissioned to Particular Service)**

Presbyterian ruling elders who have been given a particular commission to provide pastoral services in a congregation or to do some other presbytery-authorized ministry under the guidance of a minister mentor. (*G-2.10*) Orderly exchange of ministers under the Formula of Agreement does not pertain to Commissioned Pastors.

### **Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

Also *Constitution*. The guiding documents for doctrine and practice in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). See *The Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order* above.

### **Deacon**

The ordained office in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of which the focus is on compassionate care for members and non-members of a church. A session may assign additional duties to deacons. Orderly exchange of ministers under the Formula of Agreement does not pertain to PC(USA) deacons.

### **Disciplinary process**

Provisions in the Rules of Discipline, the fourth section of the *Book of Order*, for resolving conflicts involving governing bodies (remedial cases) or for resolving questions of fitness for ministry in relation to allegations that the person has committed an offense (disciplinary cases).

### **Executive**

The chief administrative and/or mission staff person of a presbytery or synod may be called Executive Presbyter or Synod Executive. Those serving in the these executive roles may also be called General Presbyter, Presbytery Leader, or another title indicating their staff role.

### **General Assembly**

The highest council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the church.

### **Installation**

Formally used in the *Book of Order* for the worship service at which a pastoral relationship is formally established between a congregation and a pastor or associate pastor. Also used formally for the worship service marking the beginning of service of elders on the session of the congregation or deacons in service in the congregation. Used also for services marking the beginning of service of officers and staff in the church.

### **Installed Pastor / Installed Pastoral Relationship**

A Minister of Word and Sacrament/teaching elder can be called to a permanent or designated pastoral position, and the presbytery shall complete the call process by organizing and conducting a service of installation. Once the installation is complete, the Minister of Word and Sacrament/teaching elder is the installed pastor. Not all pastoral relationships are installed positions. (G-2.0805) Installed pastoral relationships are only open to PC(USA) Ministers and Ministers of Formula Agreement churches through the orderly exchange process.

### **Joint Witness**

When its strategy for mission requires it, a presbytery may approve the creation of a joint witness between congregations of this denomination and congregations of other Christian churches that recognize Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, accept the authority of Scripture, and observe the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Such joint witnesses shall be subject to the constitution of each denomination involved. Wherever the constitutions of the denominations differ, the mandatory provisions of one shall apply in all cases when the others are permissive. Wherever there are conflicting mandatory provisions, the congregational council shall petition the next higher councils or governing bodies to resolve the conflict. (G-5.05)

### **MIF / Ministry Information Form**

The form completed and listed on the Opportunity Search of the Church Leadership Connection by calling organizations. A calling organization may be a church or any institution that is officially affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

### **Pastor**

A person called by a congregation or its session and validated by the presbytery of which it is a part to provide spiritual leadership, nurture, and care. Such individuals may be ministers of the Word and Sacrament within the PC(USA), Formula churches, or other Christian churches, or ruling elders of the PC(USA) with specific commissions from the presbytery (referred to as either "commissioned pastors" or "commissioned ruling elders"). Persons with orders of or authorizations for ministry

other than minister of the Word and Sacrament in churches other than the PC(USA) may not be considered for pastoral roles with its congregations. Pastoral relationships with PC(USA) congregations may be defined as either “pastor” or “associate pastor” and for terms defined either as “temporary,” “installed for a definite term,” or “installed for an indefinite term.” Only ministers of the Word and Sacrament from the PC(USA) or the other Formula churches may be considered for “installed” pastoral relationships (whether of “definite” or “indefinite” term).

### **PIF / Personal Information Form**

The form completed and entered into Church Leadership Connection by call seekers. A call seeker may be a Minister of Word and Sacrament, a candidate for ministry of Word and Sacrament, or a lay professional with membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

### **Presbytery**

The regional body with jurisdiction over the churches in a geographical area [an exception: presbyteries identified with an ethnic language constituency] and over the ministers whose church membership is held in the presbytery. (*G-3.03*) There are currently 170 presbyteries. This is the inviting body for the Formula of Agreement exchange of ministers.

### **Ruling Elder**

In Presbyterian polity, governance is by presbyters (teaching elders, also known as ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ruling elders). Ruling elders are elected from the membership of the congregation and serve on session and participate with ministers in presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly. Parity is a principle for participation in those bodies (half ruling elders, half teaching elders/ministers of Word and Sacrament). Orderly exchange of ministers under the Formula of Agreement does not pertain to ruling elders.

### **Ruling Elder Commissioned to Particular Service (also known as Commissioned Pastor)**

Presbyterian ruling elders who have been given a particular commission to provide pastoral services in a congregation or to do some other presbytery-authorized ministry under the guidance of a minister mentor. (*G-2.10*)

### **Session**

The elected governing body of a local congregation, consisting of the pastor who serves as moderator, other installed pastoral staff, and the elders elected from and by the congregation. (*G-3.02*)

### **Stated Clerk**

The elected officer of a presbytery, synod, or the General Assembly who keeps the minutes and records of the governing body, and is the chief correspondent for the governing body in ecclesiastical matters.

### **Synod**

The governing body with jurisdiction over a number of presbyteries. The focus of synod function has varied from being strictly ecclesiastical or programmatic. (*G-3.04*) There are currently 16 synods.

### **Teaching Elder / Minister of Word and the Sacrament**

The ordained office with responsibility for preaching, administering the sacraments, providing pastoral care, and guiding with ruling elders the spiritual life and mission of a congregation. Ministers of Word and Sacrament may engage in a wide variety of ministries upon the approval of the presbytery. *(G- 2.0503a)*

### **Temporary Member**

A presbytery may enroll a minister of another Christian church who is serving temporarily in a validated ministry in this church, or in an installed relationship under the provisions of the Formula of Agreement *(Book of Order, Appendix B; G-5.0202)*, when the minister has satisfied the requirements of preparation for such service established by the presbytery's own rule. *(G-2.0506)*

### **Temporary Pastor / Temporary Pastoral Relationship**

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a teaching elder, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place. *(G-2.0504)*

### **Terms of Call**

The terms of compensation for a pastoral call. The terms are to meet or exceed presbytery minimum requirements at the time of the call, and include participation in the benefits plan. The session reviews the terms annually, and the congregation votes to approve the terms annually.



## REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

### The Orderly Exchange of Ministers of Word and Sacrament Policy Paper

The purpose of this paper is to outline ways to implement within the Reformed Church in America the orderly exchange of ordained ministers between denominations. This paper is being distributed along with the paper *Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Ministers of Word and Sacrament*, which has been written by representatives from the four churches of *A Formula of Agreement*. Three sections follow below: Background, Categories of Service, and Procedures for the Exchange of Ministers. The majority of this paper is devoted to ministers from other denominations serving within the Reformed Church in America. Reformed Church in America ministers serving outside of the Reformed Church in America may be subject to similar policies and procedures found in the polity of other denominations. The authority of this paper is derived from its sources.

#### I. Background

In June of 1997, the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America approved *A Formula of Agreement (FOA)*, a document that declares “full communion” between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and three churches of the Reformed tradition: the United Church of Christ (UCC), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC(USA)) and the Reformed Church in America (RCA). Prior to this action, the General Synod passed an important resolution clarifying the effect of approving *A Formula of Agreement* on our relationship with the two other Reformed denominations. *A Formula of Agreement* does not establish a new and different relationship between the Reformed churches. General Synod declared that, by virtue of our Reformed polity and the fellowship shared in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, our relationship with the UCC and the PC(USA) remains the same in accord with our own understanding of “full communion,” which we define as “full table and pulpit fellowship and the recognition of each other’s ministries, in keeping with the authority and responsibilities of the classes and the consistories.” The General Synod went on to say, “Specifically, this means for the Reformed Church in America that admittance to the pulpit is governed by the classis and admittance to the Lord’s Table is governed by the board of elders. This understanding is in keeping with the RCA doctrinal standards, the RCA Liturgy, and the RCA *Book of Church Order (MGS 1997, p. 185)*.”

Along with other commitments, full communion is understood to mean that the four churches “recognize each other’s various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and sacrament.” The phrase “to recognize each other’s ministries” means that the *four FOA* churches recognize as *valid* each other’s ordination to the Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament, the Office of Deacon and the Office of Elder. This means that re-ordination is not required when a minister moves from one denomination to another. The phrase “orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and sacrament” speaks about the *availability* of ordained ministers to serve across denominational lines. Ordained ministers in one church *may be invited* to serve in another church; they do not have a *right* to serve in the other church. The word “exchange” is a technical term that is meant to affirm the validity of the ordination of ministers of Word and sacrament. It carries the meaning of eligibility and interchangeability—that ministers may be eligible and available to serve in one denomination for an extended, but limited time, while retaining membership in another, following the polity of each denomination.

In 2002, a new section was added to the *Book of Church Order* that allows consistories to call ministers of Formula churches to become pastors of the local congregation.

## II. Categories of Service

In a conversation with the other *FOA* churches in March 1999, three categories of service for ordained ministers were identified: 1) occasional service, 2) extended service, and 3) transfer of membership. All three are possible means for ministers to serve in a denomination other than the one in which they were ordained. However, the goal of the *FOA* was not to encourage ordained ministers to transfer membership from one denomination to another. The *FOA* seeks to allow a more effective use and deployment of the ordained leaders of each denomination on an occasional or temporary basis in order to enhance our shared ministry and mission. The paragraphs below identify the sections of the RCA *Book of Church Order (BCO)* that apply to each category of service and provide some commentary on their application.

### Occasional Service

An ordained minister of another denomination may be asked to preach or administer the sacraments in an RCA congregation on an occasional basis. The governing body of the local congregation (consistory) is given the authority to decide whether or not to invite a specific person to preach or administer the sacraments following the provisions printed below.

*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Sec. 11e

The consistory of a church may invite or permit ministers of other denominations whose character and standard are known to preach for them. Ministers of other denominations or their counterparts whose character and standard are not known shall not be engaged to preach in a local church until they have furnished to the consistory written evidence of recent date of their good ministerial standing and of their authorization to preach the Word. The consistory shall then determine whether to issue an invitation to preach. Ordinarily, the preaching of the Word shall be performed by an ordained minister or a theological student appointed pursuant to the Government of the Reformed Church in America, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Section 7. In special circumstances, an elder commissioned by the classis as a preaching elder may preach. However, a consistory may authorize, in occasional or special circumstances, other persons to preach.

The consistory has significant freedom in deciding whether a person is qualified to preach in a particular local church. However, the consistory acts under the supervision of the classis and the classis may intervene if the principles above are not followed.

### Extended Service

A minister of a Formula church may serve a congregation of the RCA for an extended period. The first, and primary, way would be through the call of a consistory to serve a congregation. The relevant section reads:

*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Sec. 4

A consistory may call a minister of a Christian church that the General Synod has declared to be in full communion with the Reformed Church in America. The classis shall install the minister

according to the order for installation in the Liturgy but the minister shall not subscribe to the declaration. The minister shall be a member of the classis for the period of the call.

A called minister in the RCA is installed as pastor and teacher of a congregation. Installation confers a connection that can only be dissolved by mutual request of the minister and consistory (except under certain conditions) and with the approval of the classis. Arrangements for ministerial compensation are set out in the instrument of the call and are reviewed by the classis only if new arrangements fall below the threshold set out in the call. The call binds minister and congregation in mutual accountability.

In becoming a member of the classis for the period of the call (see below), the minister receives the privilege of voice and vote at the classis. Furthermore, he or she does not subscribe to Declaration for Ministers, as that would make her or him subject to discipline at levels including deposition from office and excommunication. However, ministers from *Formula* churches would agree to act in a manner consistent with the declaration and to accept the counsel and admonition of the classis. In effect, it would be to subject oneself to “admonition and rebuke, the lowest form of discipline. It is understood that while a classis of the RCA cannot suspend or depose from office, in cases where such would be appropriate, the classis could require termination of the ministry with the local congregation.

A second option for extended service may be rendered under a contract between the RCA congregation and the ordained minister. A minister may be invited to serve as an assistant minister or as the only ordained minister of a church. All contracts must be approved by the consistory of the local congregation and the classis of which that congregation is a member.

*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 2, Sec. 8 (Assistant Ministers)

A consistory may contract with one or more assistant ministers to serve along with its minister(s) serving under a call. The contract(s) shall follow the guidelines established by the classis. The minister may be commissioned by the classis as a minister under contract, but shall not be *ipso facto* a member of the church or the consistory.

Assistant ministers serve under contracts. Associate ministers serve under approved calls. A contract is not the same as a call. Calls are extended for an indefinite period of time and require membership within the RCA, except as provided for within the framework of the *FOA*. Contracts are temporary and must be reviewed annually by the classis. The minister under contract may or may not be a member of the classis. The RCA assistant ministers may or may not be installed, depending on whether they are members of the classis. The installation of an assistant minister has a different effect than the installation of a minister serving under a call from a church. When a classis approves a contract between an assistant minister and a church, it approves the provision for dissolution of the relationship contained in the contract. Each classis is free to establish guidelines for the approval of contracts with regard to the length of contract, minimum salary guidelines, the dissolution process, and any other requirements that the classis may adopt. For ministers serving under a call, the classis may dissolve the relationship between the minister and the congregation only by their mutual consent or by a two-thirds vote of the classis delegates.

Although assistant ministers are always ministers under contract, not all ministers under contract are assistant ministers. Since the term “stated supply” was abandoned in 1987 (see *MGS 1987*, p. 179), at least three types of ministers under contract can be found in the *BCO*:

1. Ministers serving churches without an installed pastor,
2. Specialized transition ministers (STM), and
3. Assistant ministers serving on staff in churches.

The following section of the *BCO* speak about ministers under contract:

*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 7, Secs. 4, 5, 8, 9 (Ministers under Contract)

Sec. 4. The classis, at the request of a church or with its consent, shall appoint one of its ministers or a minister of another classis, or of another approved body, the minister under contract of a church that is without an installed minister. The appointment shall be for a term of not more than one year. It shall be subject to renewal after proper review by the classis. The minister under contract shall perform the duties and receive the financial support which is agreed upon and shall report to classis whenever that body shall require it.

Sec. 5. The classis shall determine whether a minister under contract who is also a member of the classis shall be appointed supervisor of the church served. The minister under contract shall preside at meetings of the consistory of the church if invited by the consistory to do so, but shall not have the right to vote.

Sec. 8. A consistory or governing body shall not enter into a contract with a minister, a licensed candidate, or a candidate for the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry except by approval of the classis. Between sessions of classis the approval may be given by the president and the clerk of the classis.

Sec. 9. The approval of the classis shall be required before a consistory or governing body and a competent minister, or ministers, may contract for the purpose of maintaining public worship, under that consistory’s or governing body’s direction, in a place or pulpit in any locality, or provide assistance for its own installed minister/s. In such cases a formal call is not required, though the classis shall review all contracts annually. Ministers employed by such contracts may or may not be required to be members of the classis.

Notice the words “of another approved body” in Sec. 4 above. The RCA does not maintain a list of approved bodies. Formula churches meet these criteria along with other Reformed bodies. All ministers will be expected to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in a RCA congregation in a manner that is consistent with the RCA doctrinal standards, the RCA liturgical standards, and the RCA *Book of Church Order*.

*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 15, Sec. 15

A minister of another denomination whose ordination meet the criteria of Chapter I, Part II, Article 14, Section 1, whose good standing has been certified by that denomination, and who serves with the approval of classis as a minister under contract, an assistant minister, a minister in a cooperative specialized ministry in which classis shares sponsorship, or a minister to a congregation composed of denominational units at least one of which is associated with the

classis, or an installed minister, may upon request and with the approval of classis, hold membership in the classis. Such members shall have the rights and privileges of membership for the period of the approved service, but may not represent their classis in the higher judicatories, assemblies, agencies, or commissions of the Reformed Church in America.

Such members shall not subscribe to the declaration, but, in accepting membership, shall agree that in their duties approved by the classis they will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the declaration and accept the counsel and admonition of the classis.

### **Transfer of Membership**

An ordained minister of another denomination who desires to serve indefinitely within the RCA may apply for a transfer of membership. An ordained minister is received and installed by a classis only after accepting an approved call. An entire article of the *BCO* has been written to provide guidance for the transfer process.

*Book of Church Order*, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14 (Reception of Ministers and Licensed Candidates from Other Denominations)

Sec. 1. A classis shall recognize as valid only such ordination in another denomination as is able to meet the following conditions: intended to be within and to the ministry of the catholic or universal church; performed by a duly organized body of Christian churches, and by the authority within such body charged with the exercise of this power, accompanied by prayer and the laying on of hands.

Sec. 2. A classis shall not receive any licensed candidate or minister under its care from any body of professing Christians which maintains doctrines opposed to those of the Standards of the Reformed Church in America, unless that licensed candidate or minister shall make a complete and explicit declaration in writing renouncing such doctrines as being contrary to the Standards.

Sec. 3. When an application is made for admission to the classis by a licensed candidate or a minister from another denomination, the classis shall consider only an applicant who has satisfied educational requirements that are equivalent to those required in the Reformed Church in America, and it shall subject the applicant to such examination before classis as shall demonstrate the applicant's understanding of the theology, history, government, and disciplinary procedures of the Reformed Church in America; understanding of and adherence to the Standards of the Reformed Church in America; and loyalty to its agencies.

Sec. 4. When an ordained minister of another denomination wishes to apply for admission to the classis, that minister shall furnish the classis with the following or the equivalent:

- a. a written statement from the body holding the minister's credentials attesting that the minister is an ordained minister in good and regular standing;
- b. a completed Minister's Profile form;
- c. copies of academic degrees;
- d. a seminary transcript;
- e. names, addresses, and telephone numbers of five persons who are qualified to comment on the applicant's ministry;

- f. a statement from the applicant which attests to knowledge of Reformed Church history, readiness to adhere to the Standards of the RCA, and a basic knowledge of and readiness to support Reformed Church agencies and institutions.

Sec. 5. An ordained minister from another denomination may seek to receive preliminary approval to candidate with RCA congregations.

- a. Prior to becoming a serious candidate for a call from a congregation in the Reformed Church in America, an ordained minister who is affiliated with another denomination shall meet with the appropriate committee of a Reformed Church classis, which shall determine whether, in its judgement, the minister is able to meet the requirements set forth in Chapter 1, Part II, Article 14, Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4. The committee's judgment, whether positive or negative, shall be sent by the stated clerk to the Office of Ministry Services for attachment to the applicant's Minister's Profile form and such distribution as may be appropriate.
- b. If the committee's judgment is negative, the classis may appoint one or more of its ministers to assist the applicant in preparation for a second meeting with the classis committee, which shall take place not less than six months after the initial meeting. The committee may also require additional formal study prior to a second meeting.
- c. When an ordained minister who is affiliated with another denomination has met with a classis committee in order to determine whether the minister is qualified to be considered for a call to a Reformed church, and the committee is not satisfied with the minister's qualifications, any subsequent meetings for the same purpose shall take place within the same classis, unless the classis specifically requests another classis to act on its behalf.
- d. When a classis is requested to approve a call to a minister who is affiliated with another denomination, prior to its examination of the applicant it shall obtain full information from the chairperson of the committee which reviewed the applicant's qualifications, as outlined in a, b, and c above.

Sec. 6. A licensed candidate from another denomination shall not be ordained as a minister before serving in a supervised ministry for a period of up to twenty-four months. The classis shall petition General Synod to provide this superintendence through the board of trustees of an RCA seminary or the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA), which will determine the length of the period of supervision.

This article sets up a lengthy and complicated procedure with significant requirements for any ordained minister who is considering a transfer to the RCA.

### **III. Procedures for the Exchange of Ministers**

In dialogue with the other *FOA* churches, it was agreed that the "orderly exchange of ministers" should allow ordained ministers to serve a church in another denomination for an extended time while retaining membership within the denomination of origin. The rationale for this agreement includes the need for flexibility in the process of sending and receiving ministers and the requirements of insurance plans and pension benefits. The other *FOA* churches have made provision for extended service without a transfer requirement. The RCA faces several difficulties in implementing this agreement.

## **The Nature of Calls and Contracts**

The use of contracts for ministers serving churches has been a matter of debate in the RCA. In 1995, a paper on clergy contracts was adopted as a study resource for understanding the difference between contracts and calls. (See *MGS 1995*, pp. 209-212.) The paper states, “It is clear the issuance of a call and the provisions which surround the call to the minister are intended to be normative for congregations of the Reformed Church in America.” The RCA is faced with the difficulty of providing a means of extended, but temporary, service by ordained ministers of other denominations that does not violate its theological sense of a call to ministry.

An understanding from the ELCA of the source of a call may be helpful in resolving this difficulty. All ministers must serve with a commitment to a call that they have received from God. The *FOA* churches have agreed that approval for extended service shall occur only in consultation with, and concurrence of, the sending body. When ordained ministers serve outside of their denomination, the question arises of who should issue and approve a call. For the ELCA, a call issued to a minister that holds ordination in another denomination should be understood to have its origin in the sending denomination. For example, an ordained minister of the ELCA serving in an RCA congregation as a minister under contract serves under a letter of call from the ELCA Synod Council in which the ordained minister is rostered (or has membership). An ordained minister of the RCA must receive approval before accepting a contract with an ELCA congregation (as a specialized ministry). The approval of the ministry (or call) by the sending body allows the minister to continue an active status within the sending denomination. The contract establishes the particular understandings that have been reached between the minister and the receiving congregation and its supervising body and supplements the call of the sending body. A practical difficulty within the *BCO* is the limit of contracts to no more than one year for RCA churches without an installed minister. (It can be argued that no such requirement exists for assistant ministers; a classis may approve a multi-year contract for an assistant minister as long as it includes an annual review.) In a church without an installed pastor, the *BCO* says, “The appointment shall be for a term of not more than one year.” It may be helpful to amend the *BCO* by dropping that sentence. Although all contracts are subject to the review by the classis each year, a classis could then approve a multi-year contract as part of an extended service arrangement with an ordained minister from another denomination. The annual review by the classis would include the constitutional inquiry to ensure that the salary, housing, arrangements for professional development, and all other benefits received by the minister meet the terms of the original contract, subsequent revisions thereof, and the minimum standards of the classis.

## **Approval Process for Contracts**

A consistory is charged with executing a call upon a minister of Word and sacrament. It is most unusual for a consistory to work through a search committee that will sort through possible candidates, conduct interviews, and arrange to hear candidates preach. The consistory is required to “endeavor to hear the mind of the congregation” concerning candidates for the pulpit. After, the classis must approve the call. Only then is the call fully approved and can be offered to the candidate for his or her response.

In adopting the *FOA*, it was understood that nothing in the document changed the method of the RCA for accepting ministers from other denominations. The classis, under the superintendence of the General Synod, has the responsibility and authority to examine all candidates for ministry and make a determination of whether a minister of another church (or the RCA) is fit for the ministry of

Word and sacrament within the classis. The *BCO* contains a lengthy process for the reception of ministers and licensed candidates from other denominations. It gives little guidance for the approval of contracts. The classis may adopt its own procedure for the approval of contracts and may include some of the requirements for the reception of ministers from other denominations in the contract approval process. Within the RCA, the classis is responsible for evaluating whether or not a candidate has a knowledge of and appreciation for the history, polity, theological and liturgical identity, practices of ministry, and discipline of the RCA.

### **The Supervision of a Church**

When a minister under contract serves an RCA church that has no installed minister who is serving under a call, another minister appointed by classis serves as that church's supervisor, unless the classis determines that a minister under contract who is also a member of the classis shall also be the supervisor. (See *BCO* Chapter 1, Part 2, Article 7, Section 5 above.) Before a minister from another denomination may function as the supervisor of a congregation, the classis must make the minister a member of classis. Membership establishes a level of accountability that qualifies a minister to serve as a supervisor. Since the RCA has agreed to provide an opportunity for full participation in the classis for a minister from another denomination serving an RCA church, appointment as the supervisor of the church is the next logical step.

### **Form of Installation**

A minister of a Formula church who is called to serve a congregation will be installed as pastor and teacher of that congregation. Prior to the installation, the consistory is required to publish the name of the candidate for three weeks to allow time for objection to the installation. The installation will follow the appropriate rite in the Liturgy (itself part of the Constitution of the RCA). The rite includes an interrogation of the candidate and concludes with a declaration of installation. However, a minister of a Formula church will not read the "Declaration for Ministers of Word and Sacrament" by which the minister is received as a member of the classis.

### **Accountability and Pastoral Care**

An ordained minister of the RCA remains subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the RCA while serving in a church of another denomination. An ordained minister of another denomination serving within the RCA is understood to be subject to the standards, policies, and discipline of the denomination in which the minister holds membership. However, a minister serving a church within the RCA shall agree that in their duties approved by the classis they will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Declaration for Ministers and accept the counsel and admonition of the classis. For installed ministers of Formula churches in an RCA congregation, this would mean that should the classis judge that the minister is unfit for ministry, that minister's service to the local congregation would be terminated. The RCA classis would expect to cooperate with the relevant body of the sending denomination in any disciplinary action that body might judge appropriate. All contracts should make it clear that the service of a minister may be terminated by the classis if the classis decides that the conduct of a minister makes them unfit for ministry within the RCA. The classis is responsible for the pastoral care of each enrolled minister and the minister's immediate family. Following the principles of the orderly exchange document, pastoral care of ministers who are serving under contract in RCA churches will be shared by the denomination of membership and the RCA classis.



### **Retirement Benefits and Medical Insurance**

The *FOA* churches have agreed that an ordained minister will participate in the retirement, health, and other benefit plans of the denomination of membership, not the denomination of service. It is anticipated that an RCA congregation will be able to contribute to the retirement and insurance plan of another denomination when a minister from another denomination serves an RCA congregation. Similarly, an ordained minister of the RCA serving in another denomination will be able to arrange for payment of the RCA insurance premiums and contributions to the RCA retirement plan. Due to insurance and retirement fund regulations, the transfer of membership would make such an arrangement impossible, so it is critical that ministers who are available for extended service be given the opportunity to retain their membership within their denomination of origin and continue the insurance and pension coverage that they have.

### **Dissolution of Pastoral Relationship**

The conclusion of a pastoral relationship between an installed minister and a congregation takes place by means of a process called “dissolution.” Under normal circumstances, a consistory and minister jointly request of the classis that a member of the classis be present at a meeting of the consistory at which the request for dissolution will be voted. In attesting to the joint nature of the request, the member of the classis presents the request to the classis, which then votes to approve (or deny) the request. Only then is the minister released from her or his relationship to the congregation. However, either the minister or the consistory may request of the classis a dissolution without the agreement of the other party. In such instances the matter is set before the classis in full and open session for the decision of the classis.

### **RCA Ministers Serving in Other Denominations**

An ordained minister of the RCA may serve in another denomination on a temporary basis while retaining membership within the RCA. Ministers who serve in this manner are considered “specialized ministers.” In order for ministers to retain their ordination within the RCA, all forms of ministry must be performed under the jurisdiction or with the approval of a classis of the RCA. Following the principles of the orderly exchange agreement, the classis is required to take an active role in the approval process for the sending of RCA ministers to other denominations. Ministers that serve in other denominations while retaining their membership in the RCA remain subject to the discipline of the RCA classis that holds their ordination. However, it is understood that the receiving body has the authority to dissolve the relationship between an RCA minister and a congregation of that denomination without the need for approval by the RCA classis.

### **Conclusion**

As stated at the beginning, most of this paper is devoted to the questions that may arise when ministers from other denominations serve within the RCA. The RCA is learning from the other *FOA* churches what policies and procedures they use in receiving ordained ministers from the RCA. This paper attempts to address the RCA church order issues regarding the orderly exchange of ministers. Other issues are equally important. We are committed to continue conversations both within RCA and with the *FOA* churches to clarify our policies and procedures in order to enhance the orderly exchange of ministers.

## **A Summary of the Pastoral Search Process Reformed Church in America**

The following steps in the search process are detailed in the Pastoral Search Handbook:

- Conclusion of minister's relationship
- Appointment of classis supervisor
- Pastoral leadership during the interim (specialized transition minister)
- Appointment of a search committee
- Preparation of the self-study
- Preparation of the church profile form
- Preparing for candidates (information packet)
- Interviewing candidates
- Checking candidates' references
- Hearing a candidate preach
- Procedures for considering a seminarian
- Recommending a candidate to the consistory
- Seeking the will of the congregation
- Negotiating the call
- Installation

The first step in the search process is the selection of a search committee. The consistory is responsible for the selection of the search committee. The search committee's tasks begin with preparation of a self-study and church profile form. The profile form is sent to the Office of Ministry Services and also to the regional synod office. These offices will return minister profiles of possible candidates. Also, congregations may solicit from church members and local clergy the names of potential candidates.

The search committee reviews the profiles, checks primary and secondary references, and conducts telephone and personal interviews. The personal interview should take place at the calling church with time for the candidate to tour the church facility, the parsonage, if the church has one, and the community. This interview should include only members of the search committee and the candidate.

After the initial interview process, if both parties are interested in exploring the relationship further, the search committee is ready to observe the candidate leading worship and preaching. It is suggested that an opportunity for the candidate to preach in a nearby church be provided instead of going to the candidate's church.

Only one candidate should be recommended to the consistory. The candidate is invited to meet the congregation and to lead a worship service. The congregation is involved in the final decision. If the congregational vote is positive after having met the candidate, the consistory can make the official call with the approval of the local classis. When a call is extended, it should include details of the position that may not be included in the standard form of the call. The call should also clarify salary and benefits, housing allowance, and who will be responsible for incidentals such as utilities and auto expenses.

## **Glossary of Terms — Reformed Church in America**

**General Synod** – The General Synod is the highest assembly and judicatory of the Reformed Church in America. It consists of two minister delegates and two elder delegates from each of the classes having four thousand or fewer confessing members on the roll of its churches, and one minister delegate and one elder delegate for each two thousand confessing members, or fraction thereof, from each of the classes having more than four thousand confessing members on the roll of its churches as computed in accordance with the Bylaws of the General Synod; one elder or minister delegate from each of the regional synods; five General Synod professor delegates, drawn from each of the theological seminaries of the Reformed Church and the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency; a number of furloughing missionary and chaplain delegates; and corresponding delegates provided for in the Bylaws of the General Synod. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates and those minister delegates who are actively serving in ministries under the jurisdiction or with the approval of an assembly. The General Synod is a permanent, continuing body which functions between stated sessions through the General Synod Council, commissions, and agencies.

**Regional Synod** – The regional synod is an assembly and judicatory consisting of ministers and elders delegated by each of the classes within the bounds determined for it by the General Synod. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates and those minister delegates who are actively serving under the jurisdiction or with the approval of the classis. Each regional synod may determine the method of selection and the number of delegates from each classis within its bounds. The regional synod is a permanent, continuing body which functions between stated sessions through committees. A regional synod may retain its designation as a particular synod for its legal documents.

**Classis** – The classis is an assembly and judicatory consisting of all the enrolled ministers of that body and the elder delegates who represent all the local and organizing churches within its bounds. The classis is a permanent, continuing body which functions between stated sessions through committees. Voting rights shall be limited to elder delegates and those enrolled ministers who are actively serving as ministers either under the jurisdiction of or with the approval of the classis. The classis approves a call extended by a congregation to a Minister of Word and Sacrament. While the classis is not the inviting body, *FOA* candidates would be wise to contact a classis clerk before contacting a congregation's search team.

**Consistory** – A consistory is the governing body of a local church. Its members are the installed minister/s of that church serving under a call, the elders and deacons currently installed in office, and commissioned pastors authorized by the classis. The consistory extends the call to a Minister of Word and Sacrament, pending approval from the classis.

**Minister of Word and Sacrament** – The Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament is one of servanthood and service representing Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit. Ministers are called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to the ministry of the Word of God. In the local church the minister serves as pastor and teacher of the congregation to build up and equip the whole church for its ministry in the world. The minister preaches and teaches the Word of God,

administers the sacraments, shares responsibility with the elders and deacons and members of the congregation for their mutual Christian growth, exercises Christian love and discipline in conjunction with the elders, and endeavors that everything in the church be done in a proper and orderly way. As pastor and teacher the minister so serves and lives among the congregation that together they become wholly devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ in the service of the church for the world.

**Commissioned Pastor** – A commissioned pastor is an elder who is trained, commissioned, and supervised by a classis for a specific ministry within that classis that will include the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. The commission shall be valid for the period of assigned service. Commissioned pastors are not covered by *A Formula of Agreement*.

**Preaching Elder** – A commissioned preaching elder shall be an ordained elder in the Reformed Church in America with gifts for preaching.

**Ministry Call vs. Contract** – Call: The consistory shall provide a minister, or ministers, for the church. It has the authority to call persons to the ministry of the church if the charter of the church has not made other provisions. The consistory shall endeavor to learn the mind of the congregation with respect to any person who may be called to the ministry of the church. The judgment of the congregation in such matters shall be considered to be of significant weight, but not binding. The instrument of the call to a minister shall be signed by the members of the consistory. If the call is approved by the classis and accepted by the person called, the latter's name shall be published in the church on three successive Sundays, so that opportunity may be afforded for the raising of lawful objections. If no such objections are raised, the classis or its committee shall install the minister according to the order for installation in the Liturgy. A consistory may call a minister of a Christian church that the General Synod has declared to be in full communion with the Reformed Church in America. The classis shall install the minister according to the order for installation in the Liturgy but the minister shall not subscribe to the declaration. The minister shall be a member of the classis for the period of the call. A consistory may call one or more associate ministers. The form of the call to an associate minister shall be the same as that to the senior minister, except that the word "associate" shall be inserted before the words "pastor" or "minister," wherever they occur in the text of the call. The associate minister shall be a member of the consistory. Contract: A consistory may contract with one or more assistant ministers to serve along with its minister(s) serving under a call. The contract(s) shall follow the guidelines established by the classis. The assistant minister may be commissioned by the classis as a minister under contract, but shall not be *ipso facto* a member of the church or the consistory.

**RCA Standards** – The RCA's Standards of Unity are the Belgic Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism with its Compendium, the Canons of the Synod of Dort, and the Belhar Confession.

## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

### **Provisions Regarding *A Formula of Agreement***

The United Church of Christ has the following provisions that provide for an “orderly exchange” of ordained ministers as called for in *A Formula of Agreement*. Long-standing ecumenical commitments have influenced the ecclesiastical procedures in the United Church of Christ and allow the ministry provisions outlined in *A Formula of Agreement* to be implemented in the United Church of Christ.

### **Occasional Service**

An ordained minister of another formula communion may, when invited, preach or administer the sacraments in a United Church of Christ congregation.

A United Church of Christ ordained minister may accept an occasional invitation to preach or administer the sacraments in a congregation that is part of another formula communion. No further authorization is necessary on the part of the United Church of Christ.

### **Extended Service**

A calling body of the United Church of Christ may invite an ordained minister of another formula communion to provide extended ministerial service to that calling body. The minister remains an ordained minister in the other communion.

The pastor serving a United Church of Christ local church may be granted Dual Standing by the United Church of Christ Association Committee on Ministry. The ordained minister retains ecclesiastical credentials in the other communion and is extended United Church of Christ collegial support, oversight and accountability while serving a United Church of Christ calling body. Dual Standing may be withdrawn at any time by the Association and Dual Standing ceases when the minister is no longer serving the calling body for which it was granted.

Upon the appropriate invitation of another formula communion and with the concurrence of the United Church of Christ Association Committee on Ministry that holds the minister’s ordained ministerial standing, a United Church of Christ minister may accept a specific invitation to serve a calling body of another formula communion while retaining ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ. UCC Clergy are not permitted to personally circulate UCC Ministerial Profiles. All validated profiles will be provided to formula communions for search purposes through the Conference where the UCC Minister holds standing. It is the expectation that United Church of Christ ministers on extended service as pastor of a local congregation in another formula communion concurrently maintain any requirements for ministerial standing as set forth by their Committee on Ministry. When serving in another formula communion, the minister will apply for and receive the appropriate authorization of that communion.

### **Dual Standing**

There are occasions when an ordained minister of another denomination is called to serve in a ministry setting of the United Church of Christ. Ordained ministers of another denomination who receive a call to serve in a UCC ministry setting can apply for Dual Standing to the Committee on

Ministry where the ministry setting is located. Dual Standing is a temporary standing in the United Church of Christ, valid only for the duration of the call. The application to the Committee on Ministry should include:

- o a current criminal background check and self-disclosure statement
- o a letter of standing from the original denomination;
- o a demonstrated knowledge of United Church of Christ history, theology and polity;
- o a demonstrated capacity to function in and appreciate the United Church of Christ.

Committees on Ministry meet with candidates for Dual Standing and complete an initial intake interview. This interview, in dialogue with the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers, will determine the Committee's decision to say Yes to Dual Standing, Yes, but... with additional requirements before granting Dual Standing, No, but... with a decline but also an invitation to return after completing certain requirements, or No to Dual Standing.

Once satisfied, the Committee on Ministry may grant Dual Standing for the duration of the call within the UCC ministry setting. Oversight for ministers with dual standing is held primarily in the denomination of origin. The minister is responsible for any requirements of maintaining standing in the United Church of Christ as established by the Committee on Ministry for its ministers (boundary awareness training, anti-racism training, attendance at Association and Conference annual meetings). Not maintaining the requirements for standing may result in the removal of Dual Standing. If a disciplinary concern is raised regarding an ordained minister with Dual Standing, the Committee on Ministry may vote to receive the findings of a disciplinary review led by the denomination of primary standing or the Committee may undertake its own Fitness Review.

Dual Standing can be removed by the Committee on Ministry at any time and is not transferable. Dual Standing does not grant an ordained minister access to a UCC Ministerial Profile or to the UCC search and call system.

### **Privilege of Call**

Some persons will be led by personal faith and vocational pilgrimage to transfer their ministerial credentials permanently to another formula communion. The United Church of Christ understands such a move of ministerial credentials to another formula communion to be a permanent transfer whereby the person becomes a member of the ordained ministry of another communion. Persons who move beyond occasional or extended service and serve permanently, indefinitely, or in succeeding periods of extended service are encouraged to consider a permanent transfer of ministerial credentials.

An ordained minister of another Formula of Agreement communion who wishes to permanently enter the ordained ministry of the United Church of Christ applies for Privilege of Call. Upon approval by the appropriate Committee on Ministry of an Association of the United Church of Christ the person is granted Privilege of Call. This enables the person to enter the search and call process of the United Church of Christ. Upon receiving and accepting a call to ministry that is accepted by the committee on the ministry as a valid call within the United Church of Christ the person is granted UCC ordained ministerial standing. The person has now entered the ordained ministry of the United

Church of Christ. The new United Church of Christ ordained minister then relinquishes ordination credentials in the previous communion.

A United Church of Christ ordained minister who desires to permanently enter the ordained ministry of another formula communion follows the processes and procedures required by that denomination for entrance into the ordained ministry of that communion. Upon receipt of credentials in another communion, the individual is expected to resign ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ. If necessary, the Association where the individual held United Church of Christ ordained ministerial standing terminates the person's ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ because the person has entered the Ordained Ministry of another communion.

**Search and Call Process in the United Church of Christ**  
*(updated information for Formula of Agreement, March 24, 2017)*

1. The heart of the Search and Call process in the United Church of Christ is discernment – discernment of local church search committees as to who God is calling them to consider – and discernment of candidates as to where God would see their skills and gifts to be most appreciated.
2. Persons authorized to do so complete a Ministerial Profile and a Snapshot. The Ministerial Profile includes a Criminal Background Check, a Self-Disclosure Form, and three written references. Forms are submitted to one’s Conference office for validation. An online platform allows for profile downloads by Conference or Association staff with the consent of the minister. Summary information is searchable to conference staff when they preview Snapshots.
3. A Local Church seeking a new pastor completes a Local Church Profile and submits it to the Conference or Association of which it is a member.
4. Local Churches seeking a new pastor are listed in UCC Ministry Opportunities, a website updated in real time.
5. Candidates who hold ministerial standing in the UCC or who are Members in Discernment who have been approved for ordination pending call may have their Ministerial Profile circulated. Neither the candidate nor the national setting sends these directly to the Local Church. Rather, the candidate requests that the Conference or Association staff of the Conference where the Local Church seeking a pastor resides to send that profile to the Local Church in which they are interested. If a current, validated profile is available, the Conference or Association staff automatically sends that profile to the specified Local Church.
6. The Search Committee of a Local Church seeking a new pastor reviews the profiles, checks additional references by telephone, contacts candidates it wishes to pursue, sends local church profile and other information about the church/community, conducts interviews of a selected number of candidates, hears them preach and experiences their worship leadership.
7. The Search Committee recommends a final candidate to the Local Church for vote. The candidate is invited to preach during worship on a designated Sunday, after which a special meeting of the Local Church is convened to vote on the candidate. If approved, the Local Church and candidate enter into covenant with one another for a new ministry.
8. If necessary, the Committee on Ministry of the Association or Conference in which the Local Church holds standing considers a request to transfer the ministerial standing of the called pastor into that Association or Conference.
9. At some point during the first year of service, and following the transfer of ministerial standing, the Local Church requests that the Association install the minister as Pastor and Teacher.
10. Ordained Ministers from Formula of Agreement communions do not have access into the UCC’s Ministerial Profile Portal. Formula ministers may inquire to UCC Conference / Association staff about specific congregational openings or in general about serving in a UCC church within that geographic area. Conference and Association staffs maintain the right to share denominational paperwork of a formula minister with a Local Church Search Committee. If called, it is expected that the formula minister would apply for Dual Standing.



## **Glossary of Terms — United Church of Christ**

### **Association**

An Association is that body within a Conference of the United Church of Christ in which all local churches in a geographical area and all authorized ministers hold their standing.

### **Call**

A Call is the official invitation from a local church or other calling body to a particular authorized minister to fulfill a leadership position.

### **Call Agreement & Covenants**

A Call Agreement is the employment document between a minister and a congregation. Covenants (between three, four, or more entities) are documents of mutual accountability between the minister, Local Church of membership, Association, through its Committee on Ministry, and calling body, if different than the Local Church.

### **Calling Body**

A calling body is an organization or institution (a Local Church, Conference, pastoral counseling center, etc.) that seeks the services of an authorized minister.

### **Committee on Ministry**

The Committee on Ministry (sometimes called Church and Ministry Committee or Department of Church and Ministry) is the body in an Association or Conference which is delegated responsibilities for church and ministry concerns, which include the authorization, review, and discipline of authorized ministers in that Association.

### **Conference**

A Conference is that body of the United Church of Christ which is composed of all Local Churches in a geographical area, all authorized ministers holding standing or Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing in its Associations or in the Conference itself when acting as an Association.

### **Conference Minister**

The Conference Minister is the pastor and chief executive officer of a Conference of the United Church of Christ.

### **Congregational Meeting**

A congregational meeting is an official gathering of a congregation, called to make organizational and fiduciary decisions for the church, as well as extending an official call to pastoral leadership or terminating such call.

### **Criminal Background Check and Self-Disclosure**

Part of the discernment process for clergy, included as part of the ministerial profile, which gives ministers the opportunity to make a conscientious assertion about legal, ecclesial and personal ethics and gives space for relevant commentary.

### **Dual Standing**

A Committee on Ministry may grant Dual Standing to an ordained minister from another denomination who is engaged in any of the following ministries: serves as pastor of a Local Church of the United Church of Christ; serves an agency or Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ; serves as a pastor of a yoked charge or a federated church which is affiliated with the United Church of Christ; serves in an ecumenical ministry, one constituent of which is a local church or agency of the United Church of Christ. Dual Standing lasts for the duration of the Call.

### **Four Forms of Local Church Pastorates**

The Settled Pastor of a church is that person extended an official on-going Call by a local church or other calling body. An Intentional Interim serves a congregation in order to prepare them during a transitional time for a new minister; intentional interims are not eligible for long-term Calls to that specific setting. Designated-Term Ministers are called for a designated-time and a designated purpose such as revitalization, new church start, closure or merger. Designated-Term ministers are eligible for a call to settled ministry in that specific setting. Supply Ministers fulfil short term, occasional coverage such as pulpit supply, sabbatical supply, parental or military leave supply.

### **Installation**

Installation is that act whereby an Association, in cooperation with a Local Church, officially endorses and celebrates the Call of a new minister to that Local Church or other officially recognized calling body.

### **Local Church**

The basic unit of life and organization of the United Church of Christ. There are approximately 5,000 congregations with full standing in the denomination. All clergy are required to hold membership in a Local Church.

### **Local Church Profile**

The instrument provided by the national setting to Local Churches, which provides search committees with the necessary forms to develop a comprehensive informational document that can then be sent to prospective candidates for a ministerial position.

### **Manual on Ministry**

The Manual on Ministry is a resource of the denomination to equip the authorization of ministry in the United Church of Christ. Its primary audience is the Committee on Ministry.

### **Member in Discernment**

A Member in Discernment is an individual member of the United Church of Christ who is discerning a call to authorized ministry, in covenant with their Local Church and their Committee on Ministry. The Member in Discernment process is intended to engage all discernment partners in reflection, conversation and assessment, so that the need of the church for excellent and faithful ministers may be met through wise decisions by all involved in the discernment process.

### **Ministerial Profile**

The Ministerial Profile is an instrument of the national setting of the United Church of Christ that, when completed, allows ordained and commissioned ministers to have their personal, academic, and ecclesiastical information sent to local churches or other calling bodies that are searching for leadership in the United Church of Christ.

### **Ordained Ministerial Standing**

Ordained Ministerial Standing is the authorization granted by an Association minister to an ordained minister to exercise all of the prerogatives of that ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ. Ministerial Standing is granted at the time of ordination and may be transferred from Association to Association.

### **Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing**

The United Church of Christ holds particular ecumenical agreements with The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and The United Church of Canada which allow for the possibility of holding Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing while serving a Ministry Setting within the UCC.

### **Marks and Code**

The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers (the Marks) are a tool for ongoing discernment and assessment during the ministerial formation process and throughout one's service in ministry. The UCC Ministerial Code is the foundational document by which all ministers with standing are expected to abide. All clergy and candidates should be familiar with these two vital UCC documents.

### **Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization**

The Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization ministry team of the United Church of Christ supports, resources and develops the capacities of other settings of the church in their oversight and accountability of ministers in the United Church of Christ.

### **Privilege of Call**

Privilege of Call is a temporary status granted by a Committee on Ministry to an ordained minister of another denomination who desires to permanently transfer ministerial credentials to the United Church of Christ. Once granted Privilege of Call a minister has access into the UCC search and call system in order to seek a Call within the United Church of Christ and, upon receiving a Call, to apply for Ordained Ministerial Standing.

### **Sacraments**

The United Church of Christ recognizes two sacraments – Baptism and Holy Communion.

### **Search Committee**

A search committee is a committee formed within a church to assist the congregation to secure new pastoral leadership at the time of a pastoral vacancy.

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
**8765 W. Higgins Road**  
**Chicago, IL 60631**  
**[www.ELCA.org](http://www.ELCA.org)**

**Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**100 Witherspoon Street**  
**Louisville, KY 40202-1396**  
**[www.PCUSA.org](http://www.PCUSA.org)**

**Reformed Church in America**  
**475 Riverside Drive, 18th Fl.**  
**New York, NY 10115**  
**[www.RCA.org](http://www.RCA.org)**

**United Church of Christ**  
**700 Prospect Avenue**  
**Cleveland, OH 44115**  
**[www.UCC.org](http://www.UCC.org)**

## **Entrance Rite Discernment Group Update**

In the spring of 2018, the Entrance Rite Discernment Group (ERDG) proposed recommendations were shared with the Conference of Bishops and Church Council for feedback. With the affirmation of the Church Council, the proposed recommendations were sent via email to all rostered ministers in April with the hope of engaging the church in conversation around the specific proposed recommendations.

The ERDG received feedback from the Conference of Bishops and Church Council last spring, as well as rostered ministers, ecumenical partners, and other leaders throughout the church over the last few months. Additionally, engaging in conversations with full communion partners resulted in verbal and written responses ([see appendix](#)).

A final recommendation, reflecting the feedback that was received, was reviewed by the Conference of Bishops in October. The final recommendation, accompanying this report, addresses the three recommendations requested by the Church Council:

*The Church Council authorized 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.*

As this piece of the work of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group comes to an end, it is the hope of the ERDG to create additional resources over the coming months, including the possibilities of an additional FAQ resource and a workshop template that could be used by synods in preparation for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Members of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group include:

- The Rev. Robert Driesen and Bishop Mark Narum, co-chairs
- Bishop James Dunlop
- Sister Elizabeth Colver, Deacon
- Cynthia Gustavson (Church Council representative)
- The Rev. Dr. Kathryn Kleinhans
- Deacon Dr. Lake Lambert
- Dr. John Litke (lay leader)
- Dr. Susan McArver
- Deacon Louise Williams

Churchwide Office staff include:

Krista Anderson, Chris Boerger, Kevin Strickland, Greg Villalon, with Kathryn Johnson serving as ecumenical consultant and Julia Vega providing administrative support.

## 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 to a Word and Service Task Force, convened in response to Church Council action [CC10.11.64] taken in November 2010.

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 Jan. 1, 2017 [CA16.05.11]. The assembly also endorsed the recommendation 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 authorized 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 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.

#### Rationale: 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."<sup>1</sup>

The church historically has 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

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<sup>1</sup> *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](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Diaconal_Ministry_Entrance_Rite_Question.pdf).

empower, equip and encourage the whole people of God for their own daily baptismal vocation of service to the neighbor and care of creation.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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, called pastors, 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.”<sup>4</sup> 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.”<sup>5</sup>

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 congregation only, while the Moravian Church in America ordains its deacons as one of the three traditional orders of ministry (deacon, presbyter, bishop).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "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/zOMeY5N2y0TCZV6p5L4tQYjIqzI6Z5xocYg.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> 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](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Initiatory_Rituals_for_Public_Ministry.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> "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.

<sup>5</sup> 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](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Ecumenical_and_Global_Perspectives.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> 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](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Deacon_Descriptions.pdf).

Recognizing that deacons and pastors 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.

**Rationale: Roles and Responsibilities**

The ELCA constitution (7.20. and 7.50.) specifies the distinctive roles and responsibilities of those on each roster. Pastors hold primary responsibility for preaching the Word, administering the sacraments, conducting public worship and providing pastoral care (7.31.02.). Deacons 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 deacons 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 pastor or a deacon, ordination affirms the call of the church, commits the individual to carry out faithfully 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 “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.

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 twofold 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.”<sup>7</sup>

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 better to realize its mission today. “Such a diaconal ministry is biblically rooted, historically informed, ecumenically related and missionally driven.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Gafkjen, 2.

<sup>8</sup> 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](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Theology_One_Lutheran_Diaconate.pdf). Larson's essay contains a more expansive theological discussion of this topic.



### **Recommendation regarding “Representational 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.”

#### **Rationale**

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 provision 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 deacons and pastors are included in leadership positions appropriate to their contexts.

### **Recommendation for Appropriate Symbols of the Roster**

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

#### **Rationale**

Deacons in the ELCA serve in widely varying ways. They may serve in the ministries of a congregation, synod or churchwide expression 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 all dimensions of their vocational faithfulness, including their service in the world. For much of Christian history, deacons held important liturgical responsibilities in this worship.

The World Council of Churches’ 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.”<sup>9</sup> Deacons are called to “give particular attention to the suffering places in God’s world; speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God’s love for the world; and equip the baptized for ministry in God’s world that affirms the gifts of all people.”<sup>10</sup>

By virtue of their vocation, therefore, deacons are distinctively positioned to contribute to the worshipping leadership of the Christian assembly. For example, in leading the intercessions and in preaching, deacons speak the needs of the world to the church, invite the assembly to join in prayer for those who suffer, and call upon those gathered to go out to serve. A deacon reading the gospel lesson traditionally has exemplified the close relationship between what God’s people believe and how they serve.

Welcoming reclaimed liturgical roles for deacons works in mutuality with the increased roles lay persons have assumed in worship leadership as part of 20<sup>th</sup> century liturgical renewal. Deacons, for example, may be among those who take on the roles of assisting minister, those

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

<sup>10</sup> ELCA Constitution 7.61.02

serving communion in the assembly or those carrying the communion to those who cannot be present. With the formation of the Roster of Ministers of Word and Service, congregations may want to explore again ways appropriately to involve deacons and lay people together in roles of worship leadership, providing yet another opportunity to highlight the intersections of church and world, while also honoring both ancient and contemporary practice. While deacons live out their connections with the worshiping assembly in diverse ways, that relationship is essential to the understanding and witness of the deacon as public leader of the church.<sup>11</sup>

Especially when leading worship, deacons may wear a diaconal stole. The deacons' stole is widely recognized ecumenically as a symbol of the diaconate. The stole, usually worn diagonally across an alb, emphasizes the importance of connecting worship and service and identifies the deacon as a public minister of the church.

Outside the assembly's worship, the cross is an appropriate symbol as it identifies the deacon as a presence of the servant Christ in the world. The Entrance Rite Discernment Group suggests that the appropriate Churchwide staff facilitate a conversation among deacons to propose a single cross design that can be worn as a pin.

### **Recommended Actions**

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 this church to develop an appropriate rite and rubrics for the ordination of deacons;
4. direct the worship staff of this church 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 of this church with proposing appropriate amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* 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 Ministers of Word and Service or Ministers of Word and Sacrament;
6. review the ELCA candidacy process for appropriate modifications as necessary;
7. charge the secretary of this church with considering and proposing possible amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* to accomplish its recommendations;
8. call upon this church to increase opportunities for lifting up, recognizing, fostering and encouraging recognition of deacons 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.

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<sup>11</sup> For a deeper consideration of the connection between the deacon and the worshiping community, see Lathrop.

### **Further Hopes and Dreams Going Forward**

Diaconal ministry in its various expressions is central to the church's life and witness. The Entrance Rite Discernment Group anticipates far more than a change in governing documents is being envisioned. As Bishop William Gafkjen noted when introducing the proposal for a unified diaconal roster to the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, we are commending to the church,

*"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. [These recommendations are] 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."<sup>12</sup>*

They are, in fact, 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 deacons and pastors are equally valued as leaders of the church, sharing one ministry of the gospel with distinctive and mutually complementary emphases. 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.

*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.<sup>13</sup>*

We envision extended leadership, in new places and contexts, and in collaboration with our full communion and other ecumenical partners, 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.<sup>14</sup>*

We envision renewed congregational vitality expressed in outward facing communities engaged in lively mission in the world.

We envision that integrating diaconal witness and leadership more deeply into the life of this church, will strengthen its diaconal commitment as an essential part of the Christian life. The life of faith is a relationship embracing both confidence in God, often manifest by creeds and confessions, and also response to God's call expressed in every Christian's vocation.

This future will only happen if this church, in all its expressions, consciously grows into it. We pray this church will reflect on these dreams and act on these matters for the sake of the gospel witness of the church in the world.

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<sup>12</sup> William Gafkjen, "Presentation: Word and Service Roster Recommendation" (unpublished typescript, Aug. 8, 2016), 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

**Conversations with Full Communion Partners  
Concerning the Recommendations of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group**

At the Program and Services Committee meeting on April 6, 2018, it was recommended to, “encourage the Entrance Rite Discernment Group to share the proposed recommendations throughout the church and to full communion partners for further conversation.”

Accordingly, all full communion partners were invited to respond to the “Report and Recommendations of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group.” This invitation continued conversations about diaconal ministry initiated at several points in the ELCA’s considerations of the ministry of Word and Service.

All the responses received were encouraging, alluding to analogous challenges and opportunities from the lives of the ecumenical partner churches and looking forward to continued collaboration. This positive character characterized responses from full communion partners whose own understandings and practice of the diaconate span considerable diversity.

Written responses were prepared by the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC) and the United Methodist Church-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Coordinating Committee (UMC-ELCA CC); these are included in this document. LECC’s response grounds its responsibility for continued engagement and conversation in the text itself of *Called to Common Mission* and concludes:

LECC is convinced that Lutherans and Episcopalians have much to learn from each other: our distinctive experiences of diaconal ministry, both historical and contemporary, offer wisdom which can enrich both churches.... Looking beyond the 2019 Churchwide Assembly decisions, LECC see both challenges and opportunities, and invites careful and hopeful collaboration toward our common flourishing.

The UMC-ELCA Coordinating Committee made a proposal which was accepted by the ERDG and is incorporated into the current recommendation:

In the “Hopes and Dreams” section, we suggest the following edit to the text in the penultimate paragraph: “We hope and dream for extended leadership, in new places and contexts, in collaboration with our full communion and other ecumenical partners, that is not only visible in communities of faith but also visible in the world.”

Churches with whom the ELCA is in full communion under *A Formula of Agreement* expressed support, noting that the “orderly exchange of ministers of Word and Sacrament” is not affected. “We would celebrate,” said a representative of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); it “echoes trends seen also in the new Manual on Ministry” for the United Church of Christ. The President and General Minister of the UCC wrote:

I believe this is an important step to take. It honors deep commitments throughout the history of the church to set aside those called to diaconate work. In earlier times, monks, brothers, nuns, and various ordered ministries emerged for the sake of honoring those whose call was to serve.....And in our more recent times, the Deaconess movement was a way of recognizing the very special call to serve.

I fully support what the ELCA is doing and would be very open to engaging critical ecclesial and theological voices across the UCC in discussions about what a new pathway to diaconal ministry for us might look like.

**Statement from the UMC-ELCA Coordinating Committee  
to Entrance Rite Discernment Group**

Candler School of Theology, Emory University  
Atlanta, GA  
July 13, 2018

At its annual meeting, the UMC-ELCA Full Communion Coordinating Committee has reviewed the draft recommendations from the Entrance Rite Discernment Group (ERDG) of the ELCA concerning the ordination of Ministers of Word and Service and the symbols of this ordained office. The Coordinating Committee is exceedingly grateful for the opportunity to review these recommendations. We have considered the possible implications of these recommendations for our full communion relationship and await future action on these by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2019.

The United Methodist Church has similarly undergone a process of discerning and defining its ministries of Word and Service, concluding with the decision to form a permanent order of Ordained Deacons, and thus views these recommendations for the ELCA with great interest, anticipation, and hope for future possibilities in our shared ministries.

The Coordinating Committee takes seriously its responsibility to discern and encourage new areas of partnership between our two churches and to increase opportunities for our churches to live more fully into the commitments expressed in our full communion agreement. Should the ELCA adopt the recommendations of the Entrance Rite Discernment Group, our Coordinating Committee understands that one of our responsibilities will be to further explore the possible ecumenical implications of any such action, including how our churches may recognize and share in one another's diaconal ministries.

We offer one minor textual change to the current recommendations from the ERDG to make an explicit recognition that this change in the orders of ministry in the ELCA will have important ecumenical implications. In the "Hopes and Dreams" section, we suggest the following edit to the text in the penultimate paragraph: "We hope and dream for extended leadership, in new places and contexts, in collaboration with our full communion and other ecumenical partners, that is not only visible in communities of faith but also visible in the world."

Again, we are grateful for the opportunity to discuss these recommendations and will continue to be in prayer for further developments.

## **Response to the ERDG Report and Recommendations**

From the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee  
Meeting in Niagara Falls, Ontario, September 24-6, 2028

The Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC) notes with warm appreciation the work of the ELCA Entrance Rite Discernment Group, and has discussed its recommendations at several recent meetings. This committee has examined topics around diaconal ministry on multiple occasions over the twenty years of the relationship established by *Called to Common Mission*, and we have followed attentively the work of ERDG through its several stages.

Our responsibility to explore the diaconate rests on *Called to Common Mission* (CCM) itself. Noting that CCM did not “require” the ELCA’s ordination of its deacons, deaconesses, or ministers (the terms then current), CCM states:

Both churches acknowledge that the diaconate, including its place within the threefold ministerial office and its relationship with all other ministries, is in need of continuing exploration, renewal, and reform, which they pledge themselves to undertake in consultation with one another (Paragraph 9).

Responding to this commitment, LECC discussed the diaconate in the early years of the full communion relationship, and in 2003 commissioned a study document written by Madelyn Busse (ELCA) and Susanne Watson Epting (TEC), “The Diaconate and Call to Common Mission: Continuing Exploration of the Diaconate as Full Communion Partners.” Then in 2014, responding to a question referred to the Committee from an action of the Seventy-Seventh General Convention of The Episcopal Church concerning lay presidency, LECC included in its response consideration also of deacons. The response is available here:

<http://lutheran-episcopal.org/documents/response2014.pdf>.

This work has helped LECC to understand different routes by which our two traditions have come to this moment of shared new appreciation for diaconal ministry.

As the ELCA continues to make decisions concerning the ministry of deacons, including their entrance rite, LECC is committed to continuing to examine these questions, and offers its resources toward fuller discussion. LECC is convinced that Lutherans and Episcopalians have much to learn from each other: our distinctive experiences of diaconal ministry, both historical and contemporary, offer wisdom which can enrich both churches. As topics concerning the diaconal character of the church and its structures for diaconal service have become lively in many ecumenical settings, LECC is eager to be partner in this ongoing conversation. Looking beyond the 2019 Churchwide Assembly decisions, LECC see both challenges and opportunities, and invites careful and hopeful collaboration toward our common flourishing.