



Nov. 11, 2019

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

FROM: Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary

SUBJECT: Report Church Council Responses to Synod Memorials
and Churchwide Assembly Actions (Nov. 7–10, 2019)

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I. RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

A. EARTH CHARTER

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.02.09c]

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, New England, Upstate New York and Southeastern Pennsylvania synods concerning endorsement of the “The Earth Charter”;

To endorse the Earth Charter;

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to engage in creation care through principles of sufficiency, sustainability, solidarity and participation; and

To refer to the Domestic Mission unit for implementation consistent with this memorial.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a2]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on the “Earth Charter” to the Domestic Mission unit for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2019)

The ELCA endorsed the Earth Charter on Oct. 4, 2019. Endorsement of the Earth Charter means that the ELCA will support the charter’s implementation, values, and principles and will work with others toward the same goal. Endorsers are expected to contribute to the charter initiative and to charter-inspired action projects, implement the charter in its professional work, and agree with this endorsement statement: “We, the undersigned, endorse the Earth Charter. We embrace the spirit and aims of the document. We pledge to join the global partnership for a just, sustainable, and peaceful world and to work for the realization of the values and principles of the Earth Charter.”

To raise awareness of this endorsement, the Earth Charter logo and a link will be added to the elca.org/environment webpage. In early 2020, ELCA Advocacy will convene a staff team to develop a high-level formalized plan promoting the transition to sustainable ways of living into forthcoming resource development and projects. These will center on the Earth Charter action guidelines:

1. Respect and care for the community of life
2. Ecological integrity
3. Social and economic justice
4. Democracy, nonviolence, and peace

A progress report will be brought to the Fall 2020 Church Council meeting.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on “Earth Charter” from the Domestic Mission unit;

To receive a progress report at Church Council’s Fall 2020 meeting; and

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

B. CARBON FEE AND DIVIDEND

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.02.09d]

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin concerning Carbon Fee and Dividend;

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to engage in advocacy that seeks sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all; and

To refer to the Domestic Mission unit for the development of a plan that promotes educational resources on Carbon Fee and Dividend to assist in forming the basis for any potential advocacy strategy.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a3]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on “Carbon Fee (and Dividend)” to the Domestic Mission unit for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2019)

Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into the atmosphere require multiple approaches which include carbon pricing, setting emissions performance standards, or GHG mitigation technologies.

Carbon pricing is generally believed by economists as being the best tool for having the greatest impact in the near-term to spur GHG emission reduction mitigation efforts. Carbon pricing can take many forms, with the most familiar being an emissions trading system (ETS) or a carbon fee or tax. This memorial's focus is on carbon fee with dividends.

The Domestic Mission unit through ELCA Advocacy will implement this memorial with deliverables along the following timeline:

- 11/14/2019 Develop a primer on this memorial entitled "Carbon Pricing Basics" with principles as a basis for ELCA endorsement of potential legislation.
Develop a Frequently Asked Questions Resource document for use by constituents in advocating for or against a carbon tax.
- 11/19/2019 Publish a blog post to introduce the carbon fee resources available for carbon fee and dividend.
- 12/1/2019 Develop criteria for comparison of the federal bills that address carbon pricing and post a comparison of the bills.
- 2/15/2020 Host a webinar on carbon pricing.

Church Council Action:

- To receive the response on "Carbon Fee and Dividend" from the Domestic Mission unit;**
- To affirm the proposed timeline on the deliverables and to receive a final report on the implementation of the memorial at the Church Council's Fall 2020 meeting; and**
- To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

C. ETHIOPIAN SUFFERING

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.02.09b]

- To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Northeastern Minnesota Synod concerning Ethiopian suffering;
- To encourage ELCA synods, congregations, members and the churchwide organization to advocate for robust funding of humanitarian and development assistance programs to Ethiopia and other low-income countries; and
- To direct the churchwide organization to encourage the U.S. government to support the Ethiopian government in its efforts to undertake political, economic and social improvements on behalf of its citizens.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a1.]

- To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on "Ethiopian Suffering" to the Domestic Mission unit, in consultation with the Global Mission unit, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Domestic Mission unit (November 2019)

Advocacy for robust development and humanitarian assistance to low income countries is a foreign policy priority in the ELCA public policy agenda in Washington, D.C. This funding includes U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) activities and initiatives in Ethiopia addressing agriculture, health, education, relief, community development, education and more. ELCA Advocacy influences this funding process through building relationships on Capitol Hill with members of Congress to generate understanding of and increase support for such programs. The ELCA will continue to give priority to education opportunities for women and girls thus working toward alleviating poverty in low income countries. When appropriate, ELCA Advocacy sends action alerts to ELCA members encouraging them to urge their representatives and senators to support these efforts. In 2019–2020, ELCA Advocacy staff will meet with members of the House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations Committees and other members of Congress to encourage congressional support of the Ethiopian government as it strives to implement economic, social, and political reforms. Staff will also seek meetings with USAID and the State Department to express these concerns.

Church Council Action:

- To receive the response on "Ethiopian Suffering" from the Domestic Mission unit; and**
- To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

D. 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO WORD AND SACRAMENT MINISTRY

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.05.30]

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Oregon, Southwest California, Western North Dakota, Northeastern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, Saint Paul Area, Nebraska, Central States, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Northern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Western Iowa, North/West Lower Michigan, Northeastern Ohio, New Jersey, New England, Metropolitan New York, Upstate New York, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Allegheny, and Virginia synods concerning the 50th anniversary of the ELCA's ordination of women to the ministry of Word and Sacrament;

To encourage all synods and congregations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the ELCA's ordination of women in 2020 and the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women of color in the Lutheran tradition in the United States and the 10th anniversary of the ELCA's decision to remove the barriers to ordination for people in same-gendered relationships and recognize the diversity of gifts that women's ordination brings to this church;

To call upon synods, congregations and the churchwide organization to recognize the need for repentance and continued examination regarding equity for ministerial leadership and to collaborate in systemic work to address disparities based on gender and race for people in rostered ministry;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with other churchwide units, to conduct a gap analysis of rostered women, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by rostered women of color; and

To recognize the implementing resolutions for the proposed social statement "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action" as a response to the sexism and racism concerns raised by these memorials.

Executive Committee Action [19.09.28.a14]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on "50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women" to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2019)

The Office of the Presiding Bishop has been directed, in consultation with other churchwide units, to conduct a gap analysis of rostered women, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by rostered women of color; and to recognize the implementing resolutions for the social statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* as a response to the sexism and racism concerns raised by this memorial.

A research project has been planned to survey a large sample of rostered ministers (with women of color and younger people to be oversampled) to update research conducted five years ago and to determine to what extent opportunity and pay gaps exist, based on gender and race. A report will be released in July 2020 to coincide with the planned 50th anniversary of the ordination of women events, the Women of the ELCA triennial gathering, and the Rostered Ministers Gathering.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on "50th Anniversary of Women Ordination" from the Office of the Presiding Bishop;

To request that a report on the gap analysis results with possible recommendations be provided to the Church Council's Spring 2021 meeting; and

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

E. BINARY DESIGNATIONS

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.02.09y]

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the New Jersey Synod concerning the use of nonbinary gender designations or references in ELCA constitution, other governing documents, candidacy manual and mobility documents;

To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops Domestic Mission: Leadership Committee, to update mobility documents to allow for nonbinary gender designations and/or references;

To acknowledge the recent updates to the candidacy manual and scheduled updates to candidacy forms; and

To refer to the Church Council consideration of a continuing resolution that would identify the unnamed 10% in constitutional provisions naming 45% women/45% men as "women, men and gender nonbinary."

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a15]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on “Binary Designations” to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops Domestic Mission: Leadership Committee and other appropriate churchwide organization offices and units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from Office of the Presiding Bishop, Synod Relations (November 2019)

The Synod Relations staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop have consulted with the Conference of Bishops Leadership Committee, the program director of racial justice ministries and the information technology staff in the Office of the Treasurer in order to adjust the title and gender options available within the mobility paperwork of the ELCA Community database (ECIS) to include nonbinary designations. A new “Mx.” title option and an “Other” gender option will be available for the next iteration of mobility documentation, to be implemented as soon as possible.

The candidacy manual has been reviewed and pronouns have been removed. The document is gender neutral. The hope is that it will be posted online as of Oct. 15, 2019. Domestic Mission staff will begin to edit and update the candidacy forms once ECIS has the capability to receive the new code tables or support the changes to the code tables associated with titles.

The Office of the Secretary will be reviewing the request for the continuing resolution and making a recommendation for the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee to consider and refer to the Church Council.

Church Council Action:

**To receive the response on “Binary Designations” from the Office of the Presiding Bishop;
To commend the ongoing work of updating mobility documents and candidacy forms; and
To request that the secretary inform the synod of this action.**

F. DEPORTATION

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.02.09f]

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Greater Milwaukee Synod concerning deportations;

To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees and to the policy questions involved, as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO);

To call congregations, synods and the churchwide organization to speak in opposition to the inhumane policies of harassment, detention and deportation implemented by the U.S. government; and

To request that appropriate staff in AMMPARO and the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment around deportation.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a5]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on “Deportation” to the Global Mission and Domestic Mission units, in consultation with the AMMPARO (Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) team and other appropriate churchwide organization units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the AMMPARO Team (November 2019)

After reviewing the action from the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the AMMPARO team recommended the production of a resource to help people in congregations understand deportation and removal orders, discern what steps a congregation can take to effectively assist someone with a deportation order, and provide information to a family facing the loss of a member.

The resource is expected to be available in the spring of 2020.

Church Council Action:

**To receive the response on “Deportation” from the AMMPARO (“Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities”) team;
To affirm the plan to produce a resource on deportation; and**

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

G. MIGRANTS

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.05.31]

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Delaware-Maryland Synod concerning migrants and refugees;

To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees and to the policy questions involved, as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO);

To encourage members of this church to review existing social teaching and policy and use these guides to take additional action toward addressing harmful political rhetoric against migrants and refugees; and

To request that appropriate staff in the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment specifically directed to political rhetoric and the accurate portrayal of migrants and refugees.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a7]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on “Migrants” to the Global Mission and Domestic Mission units, in consultation with the AMMPARO (Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) team and other appropriate churchwide organization units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the AMMPARO Team (November 2019)

After reviewing the decision by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and in accordance with the action to develop a plan for additional tools, the AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) staff (comprised of staff from the Domestic Mission and Global Mission units of the churchwide organization) recommends the production of two resources.

The first will be a study guide that helps members explore ELCA social teaching and policy as set forth in the social message on “Immigration” (updated in 2018) and the major social policy resolution of 2009, entitled “Toward Compassionate, Just, and Wise Immigration Reform.” Other social policy resolutions would also be considered, but these two documents provide the information needed to better address today’s context. This study guide will be a collaboration between AMMPARO and the Theological Discernment teams and could be available as early as 2021.

A second resource will be developed on responding faithfully to immigration issues in a divided political context through a deliberative model based on listening and discerning faithful responses to politicized or divisive rhetoric. This resource could be available in mid-2020 when it might be most urgently needed.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on “Migrants” from the AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) team;

To affirm the plan proposed in the response to develop two resources to guide and support this church’s members, congregations, and synods; and

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

H. SANCTUARY

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.03.11]

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Metropolitan New York Synod concerning sanctuary;

To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees and to the policy questions involved, as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy “Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities” (AMMPARO);

To recognize that the ELCA in congregations, synods and the churchwide organization are already taking the actions requested by this memorial; and

To request that appropriate staff on the AMMPARO team, LIRS, and the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units review the existing strategies and practices by the five current sanctuary synods and develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment around sanctuary;

To declare the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America a sanctuary church body; and

To request the ELCA Church Council, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide units and offices, provide guidance for the three expressions of this church about what it means to be a sanctuary church body and provide a report to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a6]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on “Sanctuary” to the Global Mission and Domestic Mission units, in consultation with the AMMPARO (Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) team, LIRS and other appropriate churchwide organization units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the AMMPARO Team (November 2019)

There are essentially three requests from the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for further action:

- 1) educational materials for congregations and synods;
- 2) guidance for the three expressions of this church on what it means to be a sanctuary church body from the Church Council in consultation with the churchwide organization; and
- 3) a report to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

In terms of educational materials, the churchwide office has already produced talking points, an overview of sanctuary, and a video answering frequently asked questions. A new congregational study entitled “Transformed Communities: Freed for Radical Welcome,” originally produced by Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, has been edited by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) with significant input by AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) staff as a Bible study for congregations to begin to discern their work with migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers. More materials will continue to be produced.

In order to provide the requested guidance for the three expressions on what sanctuary means, AMMPARO staff, as well as others at the churchwide office, have reached out to other denominations who have supported sanctuary congregations to receive any materials and resolutions that they have produced. A small group of churchwide office staff have been assembled as an advisory team to the AMMPARO Sanctuary team to oversee this process and recommends the following five-step process:

- 1) Convene the five sanctuary synods and selected sanctuary hosting congregations to receive their guidance and suggestions in January 2020. Representatives from LIRS and churchwide office staff will be included.
- 2) Get feedback, if possible, on preliminary conclusions at the March 2020 joint meeting of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops.
- 3) Present a draft of the final report to the Fall 2020 Conference of Bishops meeting for feedback.
- 4) Present the definitions and final report to the Church Council at its fall 2020 meeting.
- 5) Release the definitions, together with tools for synods and congregations, to use following Church Council’s action. These tools will be guides for those who wish to engage around sanctuary. Resources will be available shortly after the approval of the definitions by the Church Council.

A report will be presented at the Spring 2022 Church Council meeting with a final report presented to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on “Sanctuary” from the AMMPARO (“Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities”) team;

To affirm the timeline proposed in the response;

To request that the definitions and guidelines about what it means to be a sanctuary church body for the three expressions of this church be provided to the Church Council’s Fall 2020 meeting;

To request a final report be provided at Church Council’s Spring 2022 meeting in anticipation of the 2022 Churchwide Assembly; and

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

I. UNALTERED AUGSBURG CONFESSION

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.02.09q]

To receive with gratitude the memorials from Allegheny and Southeastern synods concerning renewed awareness and use of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; and

To refer the proposed actions to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with 1517 Media, Mission Advancement unit and other units, for additional analysis and planning in the churchwide organization for a report and possible recommendations to the Church Council.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a11]

To request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with 1517 Media and other appropriate churchwide organization units, provide a report or a timeline on when the Unaltered Augsburg Confession will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2019)

In relation to the churchwide organization's most immediate priorities for the coming year, the memorials concerning the Unaltered Augsburg Confession referred by the Churchwide Assembly to the Office of the Presiding Bishop are important but not urgent.

On the one hand, the Augsburg Confession is a foundational theological statement for the ELCA's life and ministry and a significant reference point for its ecumenical relationships (see 2.03 and 8.64 of the ELCA constitution). On the other hand, the 500th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession's composition and presentation to the Emperor Charles in 1530 is still a decade away.

In view of this important but not yet urgent status, appropriate first steps in the coming year could include:

- clarifying or defining the purpose of any organized action by the churchwide organization in the years leading to the 500th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession;
- assessing what resources already are or will be available and what activities will likely be planned and undertaken by other organizations (for example, resources already available or planned by the ELCA publishing house; activities that may be undertaken by theological faculties and or ecumenical groups);
- considering which, if any, of the actions requested in the memorials are appropriate for the churchwide organization to undertake itself or to coordinate with or among others, and considering what other actions related to the Augsburg Confession may be beneficial in the next decade; and
- making a report and possible recommendations for next steps to the Spring 2021 Church Council meeting.

While it may be most convenient and expedient for churchwide staff to undertake these first steps alone, it is likely wiser and more beneficial for staff members to undertake them in partnership with a consulting group or series of consultations. Those consulted could include persons from the Church Council and the ELCA publishing house, as well as those who have responsibility for teaching the Augsburg Confession, for teaching in congregations, for preparation for ministry and for ecumenical relationships, and persons with other expertise and experiences. Those with responsibility for teaching could include not only those teaching at ELCA seminaries, colleges, and universities, but also those teaching elsewhere or engaged in independent research, as well as ecumenical partners, and persons of non-European descent. Full attention to the letter and spirit of the ELCA's representational principles in the recruiting and convening of a consulting group or consultations will serve this undertaking well (see 5.01.e in the ELCA constitution).

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on "Unaltered Augsburg Confession" from the Office of the Presiding Bishop;

To request that a report with possible recommendations be provided to the Church Council's Spring 2021 meeting; and

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

J. AUGUSTA VICTORIA HOSPITAL

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.02.09i]

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Southeastern Iowa, Southeast Michigan, New England, and Lower Susquehanna synods concerning Augusta Victoria Hospital;

To request the presiding bishop, ELCA synods, and congregations to petition the U.S. president and all relevant legislators to release FY2018 funding intended by Congress to support the East Jerusalem hospitals in FY2018, and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved;

To request the presiding bishop, ELCA synods, and congregations to petition the U.S. president and all applicable legislators to restore FY 2018 funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and beyond, and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved; and

To request the presiding bishop, ELCA synods, and congregations to petition the U.S. president and all relevant legislators to amend the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 in order to remove legislative barriers to future funding of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Authority.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a9]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on “Augusta Victoria Hospital” to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization offices and units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2019)

In response to the actions requested in this memorial, ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and Bishop William O. Gafkjen, representing the Conference of Bishops as its chair, sent a letter on Oct. 1, 2019, to the U.S. president to release FY2018 funding to the East Jerusalem hospitals, which includes Augusta Victoria Hospital. The letter was copied to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and relevant legislators. A similar letter with ecumenical colleagues from The Episcopal Church and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will be sent in fall 2019. ELCA staff will follow-up with advocacy alerts on the issue.

The Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with other churchwide organization units, will continue to monitor key moments in the coming year to send additional petitions to the U.S. president and relevant legislators regarding FY 2018 funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and beyond, as well as to amend the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on “Augusta Victoria Hospital” from the Office of the Presiding Bishop;

To commend the ongoing advocacy and to encourage the continued efforts on this action; and To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.

K. CHURCH AND STATE

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.05.29]

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Minneapolis Area Synod requesting a social statement on the role of government, the nature of civic engagement, and the relationship of church and state; and

To authorize the development of an ELCA social statement on government, civic engagement and the relationship of church and state that will allow thorough attention to scriptural, historical, theological, and social issues as a means to probe shared convictions and establish this church’s comprehensive teaching in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018); and

To urgently request the ELCA Church Council to authorize a social message as a priority in the development of a social statement; this message would elaborate in one place what this church already holds regarding issues such as public church, the vocation of citizenship, the relation of church and state in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018).

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a16]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on “Church and State” to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization offices and units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2019)

ELCA social teaching and policy result from an extensive, inclusive, and accepted process of deliberation throughout this church. The development, adoption, application, and interpretation of social teaching entails a shared responsibility across all three expressions of this church in which various actors carry out specific roles as spelled out in “Policies and Procedures for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018) [www.elca.org/socialstatements].

In the development of social statements, the primary role of the Church Council is that of process oversight since statements are authorized and adopted by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA). Reports to Church Council on the process of the development of a social statement on government will be given regularly.

Church Council’s role in the development of social messages includes oversight; however, this role also is more proactive since the Church Council serves as the ELCA’s interim legislative body. Social messages are adopted by Church Council action and the council’s responsibility includes determination both of whether and when requests will be authorized. This background provides necessary information to aid the Church Council in its determination of what social message should be authorized.

As evident in the document entitled “Social Teaching Writing Projections,” there now are five standing requests for social messages from various sources, each urging the Church Council to authorize development. It also denotes the other writing projects for which the theological ethics desk has responsibility. The general capacity of the theological ethics desk for writing projects during any given year is that of work on one social statement, one social message, and one study resource.

The term “general capacity” factors in staff capacity (1.3 people) and expected budget levels for program and needed contract staff. It also implies the level of available time and energy of the review bodies, such as the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council. This understanding about capacity has been constant since about 2014.

In light of these capacity factors, the decision facing the Church Council at this juncture is to determine which one, if any, of the five social message requests should be authorized for development in the coming year.

The recommendation of the director for theological ethics calls for the authorization of a social message on the vocation of citizenship and civic engagement. This judgment follows from the plenary debate at 2019 Churchwide Assembly and discussions with various “consultants” including other churchwide office staff and the Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee of the Conference of Bishops.

The primary factors that support this recommendation include:

- The capacity level indicated above, which means only one social message—in conjunction with the social statement process on government—can be initiated next budget year.
- The overwhelming urgency expressed during the Churchwide Assembly from many speakers that ELCA members need this social message “now!”
- The relevance that 2020 is, in fact, widely agreed to be a particularly significant electoral cycle.

Church Council Action:

To authorize the development of a social message on the vocation of citizenship, civic engagement, and church and state as requested by the Churchwide Assembly 2019, in light of existing social teaching, in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018); and

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

L. GUN POLICY

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA18.02.09m]

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod concerning gun violence and gun policy;

To reaffirm the ELCA’s long-standing teaching, policy, and pastoral address to gun violence, public policy, and the complex issues of which they are a part;

To encourage synods and congregations to dedicate a time of study and exhortation to action on the issue of gun violence and public policy on guns; and

To request that the Church Council consider authorizing development of a social message on gun violence and public policy that points to human suffering, grave injustice, pending danger, public health and social perplexity.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a18]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on “Gun Policy” to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization offices and units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2019)

The 2019 Churchwide Assembly action encourages synods and congregations to dedicate a time of study and exhortation to action. From mid-June to the end of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the churchwide office offered an easy to use program entitled “A 60-Day Journey Toward Justice in a Culture of Gun Violence.” These materials remain online as simple means for synods and congregations to draw from.

The assembly action also requests the development of a social message. It is the case that there are five requests pending Church Council decision. Social messages are adopted only by Church Council action and the council’s responsibility includes determination of whether or not and when requests will be authorized, in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018).

As evident in the document entitled “Social Teaching Writing Projections,” there are now five standing requests for social messages from various sources, each urging the Church Council to authorize development. It also denotes the other writing projects for which the theological ethics desk has responsibility. The general capacity of the theological ethics desk each year for writing projects is work on one social statement, one social message, and one study resource. The term “general capacity” factors in staff capacity (1.3 people), expected budget levels for program and needed contract staff, as well as the available time and energy of review bodies such as the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council itself. For nearly six years the capacity of the ELCA as a deliberative body also has been managed at one social message per year.

The recommendation of the director for theological ethics is to authorize a social message on civic engagement, the vocation of citizenship and church and state. This judgment is consistent with the plenary debate at 2019 Churchwide Assembly and discussions with various “consultants” including other churchwide staff and the Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee of the Conference of Bishops.

Following the social message on civic engagement, the director for theological ethics will reassess each remaining issue, staff capacity, and finances and provide a recommendation to the Fall 2020 Church Council meeting.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on “Gun Policy” from the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

To defer the questions of developing a social message on U.S. National Drug Policy, aging, gender identity, or gun policy until Fall 2020 Church Council meeting when a new assessment of each issue, staff capacity, and finances will be brought to the council; and

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

M. PALESTINE (NO WAY TO TREAT A CHILD)

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.02.09h]

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Northwest Washington, Rocky Mountain, Metropolitan Chicago, Southeastern Iowa, Western Iowa, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Southeast Michigan, New England, and Delaware-Maryland synods concerning protecting the human rights of Palestinian children;

To urge ELCA members and the presiding bishop to correspond with the U.S. president, the U.S. Department of State and members of Congress, asking them to:

- a) urge the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; respect the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law; and carry out its operations and procedures, from the moment of arrest, in accordance with international juvenile justice standards; and
- b) fully implement and enforce established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, by monitoring and tracking gross human rights violations committed by Israeli armed forces and police and ensuring that the U.S. military and financial assistance is provided to the government of Israel in accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards;

To request that the “Peace Not Walls” campaign create a resource enabling congregations to learn more about the lives of Palestinian children and how Israel is spending U.S. military assistance to detain Palestinian children; and

To urge the presiding bishop and the bishops and staff of every ELCA synod to advocate with federal elected officials, encouraging them to:

- a) ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds not support military detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children, and
- b) support legislation, such as H.R. 2407 (116th Congress), that prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used in ways that violate human rights for Palestinian children.

Response from Global Mission Unit (November 2019)

Churchwide staff issued action alerts to ELCA members about child detention in Palestine in June 2018 and May 2019, the latter of which mentioned the current version of the legislation, H.R. 2407. The matters raised in the second resolve could be combined with the actions requested in the final resolve.

Before the end of this year, the Faith Forum on the Middle East, which seeks to coordinate ecumenical messaging to Congress on Israel-Palestine and other regional issues, plans to request heads of communion or organizations send a letter to Congress on this subject and follow that up with another action alert. The letter also could include the points raised in the second resolve. The request for a letter will be submitted to Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton for her consideration. The letter could be copied to the administration or a separate one could be developed. The action alert could be sent to each synod bishop with a request for similar action.

Regarding the request for a resource, staff have gathered existing resources on the matter of the military detention of Palestinian children. At present, staff are preparing a resource toolkit to be completed in 2020 that could include:

Promotional resources

1. Bulletin inserts
2. Posters
3. Social media graphics
4. Prayers

Content resources

1. Create a photo exhibit about child detention (which also explains the problem of child detention)
2. Use shorter videos prepared by Defense for Children International–Palestine (DCI-P) and discussion guide for a youth/adult study
3. Propose a screening of *Imprisoning a Generation* video, created by a YAGM alumnus, and encourage discussion
4. Encourage advocacy related to HR 2407, using action alerts and/or postcards
5. Devotional resource

Church Council Action:

- To receive the response on “Palestine (No Way to Treat a Child)” from the Global Mission unit; and**
- To affirm the work on the resource toolkit to enable congregations to learn more about the matter of military detention of Palestinian children;**
- To commend the ongoing advocacy and to encourage the continued efforts on this action; and**
- To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.**

N. GENDER IDENTITY

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.02.091]

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Sierra Pacific Synod concerning development of a social statement on gender identity and gender expression;

To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop provide materials to facilitate education among ELCA members so as to build awareness of the broad varieties of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation among God's people, as well as to provide pastoral care insights regarding concerns and issues of the transgender experience and gender nonconformity; and

To request that the Church Council consider authorizing development of a social message on gender identity and gender expression.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a17]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on “Gender Identity” to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization offices and units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2019)

Staff from the Office of the Presiding Bishop are providing this response in a good faith effort to chart a course. It must be noted, however, that additional consultation will be needed in order to adequately respond to the breadth and depth of a memorial that asks for attention to “varieties of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation among God’s people, as well as to provide pastoral care insights regarding concerns and issues of the transgender experience and gender nonconformity...” Each in this extensive list is complex and significant. This response sketches first the question of a social message and then attends to the resolve regarding materials to facilitate education.

In accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018), a social message would be framed by existing social documents as it establishes and explores what the ELCA can say about gender identity and expression. Key social documents for this message include *Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Call to Action* and *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, as well as several social policy resolutions. Social messages are adopted only by Church Council action, and the council’s responsibility includes determination of whether and when such requests will be authorized.

As evident in the document entitled “Social Teaching Writing Projections,” there are now five standing requests for social messages from various sources, each urging the Church Council to authorize development. The general capacity of the theological ethics desk each year for writing projects is work on one social statement, one social message, and one study resource. The term “general capacity” factors in staff capacity (1.3 people), expected budget levels for program, and needed contract staff. It also takes into account the time and energy available for discernment and review bodies such as the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council. For nearly six years this capacity of the ELCA as a deliberative body has been gauged at one social message per year.

The recommendation of the director for theological ethics is that Church Council authorize for fiscal year 2020 a social message requested to address topics such as public church, the vocation of Christian citizenship, and government. This judgment follows from the clear emphasis on this topic in the plenary debate at 2019 Churchwide Assembly and subsequent discussions with various “consultants” including other churchwide staff and the Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee of the Conference of Bishops.

Following completion of this social message, the director for theological ethics will provide a recommendation for action to the Church Council—likely in fall 2020—regarding the remaining requests in light of urgency, staff capacity, finances, etc. at that time. (The protocol for such recommendations presumes consultation with relevant church leaders.)

The Churchwide Assembly action also requests educational materials from the Office of the Presiding Bishop. Staff have identified some existing resources that could be drawn upon. These include the late summer 2018 Church Council primer on gender identity and gender expression with Dr. Mary E. Lowe; various elements of *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*; elements of the official study document, *Faith, Sexism, Justice: Conversations Towards a Social Statement*; and workshop materials from the spring session of the 2015 Church Council dedicated to justice for women.

Because of the intersectional nature of sexism, some of the concerns reflected in this adopted memorial fall within the commission of the desk of justice for women (Office of the Presiding Bishop), which works on gender justice broadly speaking. A discussion of additional educational resources and some thought toward timeline are on the agenda for the Justice for Women Consulting Committee at its January 2020 meeting. This conversation will consider what tools for education engagement might be possible, drawing from existing resources and the principles in existing social teaching.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on “Gender Identity” from the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

To defer the questions of developing a social message on U.S. National Drug Policy, aging, gender identity, or gun policy until the Fall 2020 Church Council meeting when a new assessment of each issue, staff capacity, and finances will be made; and

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

O. HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.06.33]

RESOLVED, that the ELCA in assembly direct the Church Council, in partnership with the Conference of Bishops and Portico Benefit Services, to review the current Church Council's recommendation for the Gold+ coverage for all rostered ministers and employees of the church and that they develop a recommendation for the whole church for health insurance coverage by the spring meeting of the Church Council in 2020 for the 2021 enrollment.

To request the churchwide organization survey employees to understand the impact on staff and identify any modifications that can be made within budgeted funds for 2020; and

To encourage Portico to continue to provide educational tools to assist employees of the churchwide organization which thoroughly explain the different plans.

Executive Committee Action [EC10.09.28.a19]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on "Health Care Benefits" to the Office of the Treasurer, in consultation with Conference of Bishops, Portico Benefit Services and other appropriate churchwide organization offices and units, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

Response from the Office of the Treasurer (November 2019)

Gold+ coverage is the current Church Council's recommendation for all rostered ministers and employees of this church. The Rev. Jeff Thiemann, president and CEO of Portico Benefit Services, gathered input from the Conference of Bishops at their September 2019 meeting on an engagement approach. Portico Benefit Services will do a comprehensive review leading up to the Spring 2020 Church Council meeting around financial implications, plan differences, compensation guidelines, industry trends, and education options. Following a review of the research, in partnership with the Conference of Bishops, the churchwide organization, and other key stakeholders, a report and recommendation will be provided for the Spring 2020 joint meeting of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops.

The survey to churchwide organization employees was completed in September 2019. The Planning, Research and Evaluation team conducted and summarized the results of the survey. The survey had a 62% response rate and based on a comparison of the respondent demographic data to the churchwide organization population demographic data, the leadership staff believe it is representative. Based on the survey, 46% of respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the Silver+ plan, 30% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 24% were dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied. The churchwide organization will continue to offer the Silver+ plan as the standard plan for 2020 but will invest \$200,000 to enhance the benefits for churchwide organization staff based on feedback from the survey. The survey responses and planned changes were shared with the churchwide organization staff and Portico Benefit Services in October 2019.

The Office of the Treasurer has shared the survey and verbatim open-ended comments with Portico Benefit Services to assist in development of educational materials to be shared with churchwide organization staff. In addition, Portico Benefit Services staff will be present in Chicago during two days of annual enrollment to answer individual questions.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on "Health Care Benefits" from the Office of the Treasurer;

To anticipate a report and recommendation for this church on health insurance coverage at the Spring 2020 Church Council meeting; and

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

II. RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

A. MOTION A: ESTABLISH JUNE 17 AS EMANUEL 9 DAY OF REPENTANCE

WHEREAS, the Lord teaches us "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."(Luke 5:31-32); and

WHEREAS, the Emanuel 9 (Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney, Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, Depayne Middleton-Doctor, Tywanza Sanders, Rev. Daniel L. Simmons, Sharonda Coleman- Singleton, and Myra Thompson) on June 17, 2015, while in prayer and bible study at the historic African- American church, Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Charleston, South Carolina were murdered by a self-professed white supremacist adult who was raised and formed in

the ELCA; and WHEREAS, that self-professed white supremacist espoused racist rhetoric and epithets before and after committing these murders; and
WHEREAS, two of his victims, Rev. Daniel Lee Simmons Sr. and Rev. Clementa Pickney, were graduates of the Lutheran Theology Southern Seminary, one of eight ELCA seminaries.; and
WHEREAS, the deep sin of white supremacy and racism continues to be a plague and hindrance in the life of the ELCA as a church called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reaffirm its commitment to repentance from racism by:

1. Commemorating June 17th as a day of repentance in the ELCA for the martyrdom of the Emanuel 9; and
2. Having the names of the Emanuel 9 (Clementa C. Pinckney, Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lee Lance, Depayne Middleton-Doctor, Tywanza Sanders, Daniel L. Simmons, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, and Myra Thompson) added to future ELCA publications to venerate their martyrdom and lead us to repentance because of the white supremacy and racism in our church; and
3. Calling for this commemoration be grounded in prayer as the Emanuel 9 were murdered while in prayer at the end of the bible study; and
4. Directing the Office of the Presiding Bishop to help develop future worship prayers and litanies around repentance from racism; and
5. To encourage giving both prayer and financial support the memorial to be built in remembrance of the Emanuel 9 (<https://www.emmanuelnine.org/>); and
6. Be in deeper conversations with the AME church on ways of reconciliation and repentance on the matters of white supremacy and racism.

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.04.17]

To adopt Motion A as amended.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a12]

To refer the 2019 Churchwide Assembly action on Motion A to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with appropriate churchwide organization units, for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2019)

As the resolves of this motion cover a variety of areas, a team including the executive for worship, the executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment, the program director for racial justice ministries, and the director for ethnic specific and multicultural ministries is coordinating action and implementation.

In early 2020, the presiding bishop will convene a consultation via video conference to include representation from churchwide staff, authors of this resolution, the African Descent Lutheran Association, the Conference of International Black Lutherans, and the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice. The purpose of this consultation will be to review and coordinate efforts in the churchwide organization and other grassroots work related to worship resource development as called for in the resolution. This work comes alongside strengthening ecumenical relations (both grassroots and church-to-church) with the African Methodist Episcopal church.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on “Motion A: Establish June 17 as Emanuel 9 Day of Repentance” from the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

To request that a report on the implementation of this resolution be provided at Church Council’s Fall 2020 meeting.

B. MOTION C: RESOLUTION ON ELCA SOCIAL STATEMENT ON ABORTION

Submitted by: Mr. Jon E. Hale [Southern Ohio Synod, 6F]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted a social statement in 1991 in which the ELCA “...opposes ending intrauterine life when a fetus is developed enough to live outside a uterus with the aid of reasonable and necessary technology. If a pregnancy needs to be interrupted after this point, every reasonable and necessary effort should be made to support this life, unless there are lethal fetal abnormalities indicating that the prospective newborn will die very soon.”; and

WHEREAS, this 1991 social statement was reaffirmed in its entirety by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 1999 Churchwide Assembly; and

WHEREAS, there has been no formal reaffirmation of either the original 1991 Social Statement on Abortion or the 1999 reaffirmation for the past 20 years by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and
WHEREAS, at least seven states currently have no prohibition against late-term abortion, and several states are currently considering or have adopted dropping all laws prohibiting late-term abortion for any reason, up to and including during the birthing process itself; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reaffirms the church's commitment to and support of the 1991 social statement on *Abortion*, especially that of Section IV.B entitled "Ending a Pregnancy" as it applies to "This church opposes ending intrauterine life when a fetus is developed enough to live outside the uterus with the aid of reasonable and necessary technology. If a pregnancy needs to be interrupted after this point, every reasonable and necessary effort should be made to support this life..." and Section V.C entitled "The Regulation of Abortion," as it applies to "... this church supports legislation that prohibits abortions that are performed after the fetus is determined to be viable, except when the mother's life is threatened...", and as reaffirmed by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly;

To commend the social statement on *Abortion* which was adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly and reaffirmed by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly, as a resource to our pastors and members dealing with this issue;

To continue to oppose legislation that permits abortions that are performed after the fetus is determined to be viable outside the uterus; and

To oppose legislation that permits willful neglect of otherwise viable babies during delivery or post-delivery.

Church Council Action:

BE IT RESOLVED to lift up to members, congregations and ministers the value of reviewing our social statements as a resource for deepening and broadening moral deliberation in personal and public life. (The social statements and messages are found at: <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements> <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages>)

To commend the social statement on *Abortion* for reading or rereading as the debate and discussion in public intensifies. (It was adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly and reaffirmed by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly as a resource to members, congregations and ministers.)

C. MOTION D: RESOLUTION TO DISREGARD VISION AND EXPECTATIONS

Submitted by: The Rev. Gretchen Rode [Minneapolis Area Synod, 3G]

WHEREAS, a new document is being drafted to replace *Vision and Expectations*; and

WHEREAS, *Vision and Expectations* has caused harm to candidates and rostered leaders, especially people of color, LGBTQIA people, people with disabilities, retired people, and single people; and

WHEREAS, while *Vision and Expectations* is in place, it will continue to be used against rostered leaders and cause additional harm; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly encourage candidacy committees and bishops to disregard *Visions and Expectations* while working with candidates and rostered leaders, as an act of true repentance of the harm done to candidates and rostered leaders, especially causing pain to people of color, LGBTQIA people, people with disabilities, retired people, and single people, who more often than not it has been used against.

Church Council Action:

To refer the resolution to the Domestic Mission unit of the churchwide organization.

D. MOTION F: ASSISTANT PROGRAM DIRECTOR, JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

WHEREAS, the ELCA has invested considerable time and resources developing the proposed social statement, "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action"; and

WHEREAS, a primary concern of the church body as expressed throughout the hearings process is that the church take action on any resulting implementing resolutions; and

WHEREAS, the office of Theological Discernment has an insufficient budget to support additional staff that would be necessary to implement the resolutions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that, should the proposed social statement pass, \$100,000 be allocated from budget line item "address social issues and work for justice" to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for Justice for Women to monitor, assess, and ensure the fulfillment of proposed commitments.

Churchwide Assembly Action [CA19.04.15]

To refer Motion F to the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

Executive Committee Action [EC19.09.28.a13]

To request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Office of the Treasurer, to provide a report or timeline on when Motion F will receive further attention.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2019)

Justice for Women is part of the Theological Discernment team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop. Staffing currently includes a director and the partial time of the theological discernment coordinator. In January 2020, the Justice for Women Consulting Committee, which serves to advise the director, will gather for its bi-annual meeting. The agenda will include the prioritization and strategy for undertaking the work of the implementing resolutions of the social statement, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*. Motion F rightly anticipates that current staff capacity presents limitations to a robust implementation plan. The executive for theological discernment, in consultation with the executive for administration and the presiding bishop, will utilize the work of the committee and the input of the director to more fully assess staff capacity and consider any necessary adjustments or requests for additions to staffing, in response to Motion F.

Church Council Action:

To receive the response on “Motion F: Assistant Program Director, Justice for Women” from the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

To affirm the approach proposed in the response.

E. MOTION F: RESOLUTION ON CALL PROCESS (2016 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY)

Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.06.35]

RESOLVED, that the assembly asks the ELCA Church Council, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to initiate a conversation including synod leadership regarding rostered minister vacancies throughout this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the assembly encourages the Conference of Bishops to continue their work of facilitating and always reforming the call process for congregations and institutions in our changing contexts; and be it further

RESOLVED, that regions, institutions, synods, and congregations be encouraged to raise up leaders in this church for rostered leadership with the encouragement and oversight of the Theological Education Advisory Committee of the Church Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Conference of Bishops communicate with the ELCA Church Council and mutually review the status of this work every year and a half for three years.

Response from the Conference of Bishops (November 2016)

The Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops has not yet had a chance to consider a response to “Resolution on Call Process” (Motion F) [CA16.06.35], which was passed at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly and for which the Conference of Bishops has been designated to take the lead. In consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Domestic Mission and the Church Council, we will establish a working group at the Spring 2017 meeting of the Conference of Bishops with the expectation of an initial report, including a plan for addressing the resolution, at the Fall 2017 Conference of Bishops meeting to be presented, in turn, to the November 2017 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action (CC16.11.46ff)

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

Response from the Conference of Bishops (November 2017)

The Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops (COB) discussed Motion F further at its meeting in the fall of 2017. Rather than establish a working group to address this motion, the Executive Committee I report recommended the following:

Resolved #1: The Conference of Bishops has regular conversations “regarding rostered minister vacancies throughout this church” as part of its work as a conference. Unless the Church Council desires to initiate a different conversation, we believe this aspect of the resolution is being addressed and will continue to be addressed in the course of Conference of Bishops meetings as well as other meetings of bishops with one another and with churchwide and synod leadership.

Resolved #2: Again, the continuation of the COB’s “work of facilitating and always reforming the call process for congregations and institutions in our changing contexts” is an on-going conversation and task of the COB. We are also working on related concerns in our intentional partnership with seminary leaders. All conversations about call processes are rooted in an understanding that local context plays a significant role in evoking different forms of reform of call processes across the synods.

Resolved #3: Members of the Conference of Bishops regularly encourage the raising up of rostered leaders. The call to prayer issued last spring is one aspect of this encouragement. Most bishops and other synod leaders encourage the raising up of rostered leaders in many other ways in their local contexts. The remainder of this aspect of the resolution seems to be directed to TEAC.

Resolved #4: The Executive Committee of the COB will welcome conversation, even guidance, from the Church Council about what communication with the ELCA Church Council and mutual review of the status of this work every year and a half for three years would look like or what form would be most helpful and fruitful.

Church Council action [CC17.11.33aa]

To receive the report from the Conference of Bishops Executive Committee regarding “Resolution on Call Process”;

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

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

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

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

Response from Conference of Bishops (2018)

The Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops believes that as we consider response to this resolution it is important to keep in mind that the forms of accountability it assumes are not the way the relationships between ELCA Church Council, Conference of Bishops, and others are actually structured. For example, the conference is not structured for the sort of mutual review that is called for every one-and-a-half years for three years. In addition, while the Church Council’s Executive Committee suggested that the report of the COB Chair to the November 2017 Church Council regarding Motion F was inadequate (viz. did not contain enough detail about activities of the COB in relation to the motion), no mechanism for the Church Council to report its work and responses to Motion F to the Conference of Bishops in a way that allows for a similar sort of accountability has been engaged.

Secondly, the Executive Committee is concerned that clarity about which entity is responsible for each aspect of this resolution has not been achieved and, consequently, mutual accountabilities between the entities regarding Motion F also remain foggy.

Response from the Conference of Bishops (November 2019)

This final report on Motion F (2016) reasserts most of what was asserted in the November 2017 report as noted above.

The Conference of Bishops continues to engage both formal and informal conversation about “rostered minister vacancies.” Much of the conversation has included the challenges faced by members of particular communities (e.g. people of color, LGBTQ, gender identity). Bishops continue to share best practices around these concerns in the context of also addressing the growing number of congregations that cannot afford a pastor on their own or who face significant challenges around missional vitality and sustainability. The newly established retreat setting in the midst of Conference of Bishops meetings is a primary place in which these conversations have been taking place. Topics related to Motion F were discussed during the spring 2019 retreat in which the focus was what five synods are doing to cultivate congregational vitality and during the fall 2019 retreat in which the focus was on the work going on in four synods to address leadership needs and concerns, including call process.

While there are some core shared practices and principles for call process across the church, the details of call processes differ in significant ways synod by synod. There has been some conversation about how the processes work variously across synods, the sharing of best practices, and exploration of ways in which more uniform practices across the church might be helpful.

The assignment consultation and process are not part of this motion. Nevertheless, the Conference of Bishops has been working through the bishops and candidacy coordinators who are part of the assignment consultation to do deep dives into the challenges that current practices with assignments present for candidates and for this church and its congregations. Working with some changes initiated by an Assignment Process Task Force, established by the Conference of Bishops three or more years ago, this group continues to work with churchwide staff to experiment with changes in the process in the hope of making it more flexible and more attentive to the particular needs of candidates while also honoring the shared commitments of being church together in connection with the significant differences across the church in the particular needs and contexts of synods and their congregations regarding leadership and ministry.

At this time, there has not been agreement between the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops regarding appropriate processes for the mutual review of the status of this work every year-and-a-half for three years. Reports from the Chair of the Conference of Bishops have not been sufficient. In fact, this may be a moot point as three years have passed since the adoption of this motion. This, of course, is unless the Church Council would like to reset the clock and start over in addressing this motion in different ways.

Church Council Action:

To receive the final report on “Motion F: Resolution on Call Process” (2016) from the Conference of Bishops;

To urge the Conference of Bishops, churchwide organization and Church Council to continue their conversation and work to address rostered minister vacancies throughout this church; and

To encourage institutions, churchwide organization, synods, and congregations to raise up leaders in this church for rostered ministry.

F. MOTION L: RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS ENDING THEIR TERMS OF SERVICE IN 2019

Church Council Action:

We, the members of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, give thanks to God for the members of the Church Council who will be concluding their six-year terms at this Assembly. We wish to thank these 22 individuals for their dedicated service to this church during their terms, and to acknowledge that their service included membership on task forces, ad hoc committees, attendance at synod assemblies, and representation of this church in global, national and local forums.

We appreciate their tireless work of renewing and growing the church’s mission. We continue to keep them and their work, which is our work, in prayer.

G. RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR CHURCHWIDE STAFF

Church Council Action:

The members of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, thank the churchwide organization and staff for their hard work and dedication to the mission of Christ in this church. We thank God for their willingness to serve as a part of the everyday lifeblood of this church both here in the United States and globally.

We thank each of the offices and units of the Churchwide organization:

- Office of the Presiding Bishop**
- Office of the Secretary**
- Office of the Treasurer**
- Mission Advancement**
- Domestic Mission**
- Global Mission**

We are church together in Christ because of this churchwide organization’s willingness to continue renewing and growing our church in both acceptance of others and what it means to truly live the Gospel.

H. RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION AND THANKSGIVING FOR HOSPITALITY

Church Council Action:

The members of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America deeply thank the City of Milwaukee and the Greater Milwaukee Synod for hosting this Assembly, for

their drinks of barley and hops, and for their cheese curds. Our host synod is truly living the Miller High Life.

As we join in fellowship together, we are reminded of the indigenous history of the land we are on, and the Algonquian name of Milwaukee as the “gathering place.” We give thanks for the Menominee, Fox, Mascouten, Sauk, Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and other American Indian tribes that called this land home.

We are appreciative to the City of Milwaukee for allowing us the ability to walk in the Word together on Wednesday to and from the ICE detention center.

We give thanks for the Wisconsin Center for their accommodations, for their assistance in helping us assemble together in prayer and business, facilitating our ability to worship boldly, for providing us with laughs in their lifelike—and creepy—police officer statue, and for serving as a focal point in the work of this church.

We give thanks for the Hyatt Regency and Hilton hotels for giving us a place to rest and reflect on our time together. We also give thanks to the hotel staff, Wisconsin Center staff, and restaurant workers of Milwaukee for their hard work.

The City of Milwaukee embodies a beautiful expression of what it means to be church, and we thank them for welcoming us into their city so warmly.