

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN
AMERICA**

Church Council

MINUTES

March 5–8, 2020

**Prepared by the
Office of the Secretary**

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**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
March 5–8, 2020
Itasca, Illinois**

The 97th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was convened in the Red Oak Room at the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois.

The Executive Committee of the Church Council met on Thursday morning, Mar. 5, 2020, followed by worship with Holy Communion in the chapel of the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Illinois. The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew, bishop of the New Jersey Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, presided. The Rev. Leila M. Ortiz, bishop of the Metropolitan, D.C., Synod, preached. Mr. Ismael Castillo-Danforth served as assisting minister, and Mr. Noah F. Roux was lector. Deacon John E. Weit, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for worship, served as cantor and musician. Following the service, council members and members of the Conference of Bishops travelled to the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois, for a joint meeting and retreat.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

The following people were present for all or part of the meeting:

Voting members

Officers:

Pr. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop
Mr. William B. Horne II, vice president
Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary
Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer

Chair of the Conference of Bishops

Pr. Tracie L. Bartholomew, bishop of the New Jersey Synod

Church Council

Mr. Kevin Anderson
Ms. Tracey A. Beasley
Pr. Marcus A. Bigott
Pr. Nicholas M. Billardello III
Ms. Susan Boxberger
Ms. Lisa Burk (*excused*)
Pr. William H. Callister
Pr. Karn S. Carroll
Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman
Mr. Ismael E. Danforth
Ms. Divine
Pr. Joanne E. Engquist
Pr. Dena M. Gable
Pr. Emily C. Hartner
Pr. Pamela J. Hoh
Ms. Cherish Holland
Pr. Chad M. Huebner

Mr. James J.F. Jennings
Ms. Patricia Kluetz
Mr. David M. Lenz
Pr. Tara R. Lynn
Mr. Keoni Newman
Mr. Joseph T. Nolte
Mr. Gary A. Pederson
Pr. Kjersten L. Priddy
Pr. Ricardo Rivera
Mr. Noah F. Roux
Ms. Valerie J. Shaw (*excused*)
Mr. Loren A. Solberg
Ms. Loni Taylor
Ms. Emma K. Wagner (*excused*)
Ms. Sonja Wolfe
Ms. Merritt G. Zesinger

Representatives of the Conference of Bishops

Bp. Sue J. Briner, Region 4
Bp. H. Jeffrey A. Clements, Region 5
Bp. Barbara J. Collins, Region 8
Bp. R. Guy Erwin, Region 2

Bp. Donald M. Kreiss, Region 6
Bp. John S. Macholz, Region 7
Bp. Pedro M. Suárez, Region 9
Bp. Shelley R. Wickstrom, Region 1

Resource People

Office of the Presiding Bishop

Pr. M. Wyvetta Bullock, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for administration
Ms. Deborah Coe, executive for planning, research and evaluation
Ms. Rhondean Johnson, executive for human resources
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment
Pr. Walter S. May, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for synodical relations
Ms. Mikka McCracken, executive for innovation and director for the Innovation Lab
Pr. Christopher Otten, assistant to the presiding bishop and director for federal chaplaincies
Ms. Judith Roberts, program director for racial justice ministries
Pr. Carmelo Santos, director for theological diversity and ecumenical and inter-religious relations
Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe, natural systems coordinator
Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, assistant to the presiding bishop for governance
Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for justice for women (*excused*)
Deacon John E. Weit, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for worship
Pr. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics

Office of the Secretary

Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel
Ms. Aja M. Favors, associate general counsel
Pr. N. Keith Fry, assistant to the secretary and executive for Office of the Secretary administration
Ms. Marit E. Johnson, manager for official documentation

Unit staff

Pr. Cherlyne Beck, interim director for candidacy
Mr. Jonathan Beyer, executive for technology
Ms. Mary Campbell, program director for AMMPARO
Mr. Joseph Clairmont, technology trainer and education coordinator
Ms. Victoria Flood, director for Mission Support
Ms. Kathy Freeman Summers, executive director for the Mission Advancement unit and president, ELCA Foundation
Ms. Jocelyn Fuller, director for strategic communications
Pr. F. Javier Goitía Padilla, program director for theological formation
Pr. Philip C. Hirsch, executive director for the Domestic Mission unit
Mr. Nick Kiger, associate director for Mission Support
Pr. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director for the Global Mission unit
Mr. Dan Michel, director for digital media
Mr. Patrick Nagarro, director for information technology and project management
Ms. Evelyn B. Soto, director for operations and programs for the Domestic Mission unit
Pr. Albert Starr Jr., director for ethnic-specific and multicultural ministries

Separately incorporated ministries

Pr. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, president, Portico Benefit Services

Seminary Leaders

Pr. Kathryn A. Kleinhans, dean of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University
Pr. Mary Hinkle Shore, rector and dean of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University
Ms. Kristine Stache, interim president of Wartburg Theological Seminary
Pr. Robin J. Steinke, president of Luther Seminary
Pr. Angela Zimmann, interim president of United Lutheran Seminary

Media

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, Mission Advancement

Ethnic-Specific and Multicultural Ministries

Pr. Joan Conroy, president, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association

Ms. Jennifer DeLeon, president, Latino Ministries Association of the ELCA

Pr. Khader N. El-Yateem, representative, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage

Pr. Russell Meyer, president, European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice

Pr. Moses Penumaka, representative, Asian and Pacific Islander Lutheran Association

Pr. Lamont A. Wells, president, African Descent Lutheran Association

Guests

Sr. Liz Colver, director of vocation and education, Deaconess Community

Pr. Amanda Nelson, executive director, Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries

Ms. Aubrey Thonvold, executive director, ReconcilingWorks

Friday Morning, Mar. 6, 2020
Plenary Session I
Joint Session

MORNING DEVOTIONS

The Rev. Michael L. Rhyne, bishop of the Allegheny Synod, led the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, churchwide staff, and guests in morning devotions. Deacon John E. Weit, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for worship, served as accompanist.

CALL TO ORDER AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND WELCOME

(Agenda I.A.)

Background:

Agenda items were distributed electronically. Additional items were distributed at the meeting to Church Council members and invited resource people.

Church Council action:

The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew, bishop of the New Jersey Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, welcomed council members, Conference of Bishops members, resource people, visitors, and guests for the joint meeting of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops. She reviewed the processes for the meeting.

Mr. William B. Horne II, vice president of the ELCA and the chair of the Church Council, introduced himself to meeting participants, provided a background on the council's work, and read from the Church Council's Governance Policy Manual. He called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. (CST).

Vice President Horne drew attention to meeting resource materials and deadlines for proposing new business and for removing items from *en bloc* consideration. He reviewed various elements of the proposed agenda.

A motion was made to adopt the agenda.

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

VOTED:

CC20.03.01 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

Vice President Horne declared that the agenda was adopted.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

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

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, welcomed all participants to the first joint meeting of the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops. She explained precautions that would be taken regarding the virus COVID-19 during the meeting and worship services.

The Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director for the Global Mission unit, reported that the Global Mission unit had restricted travel for Chicago-based staff for the month of March. Chicago-based staff who were traveling had been instructed to return to Chicago. Missionaries and staff deployed abroad were instructed not to travel outside of their service country. Staff abroad were also asked to update their contingency plans to include COVID-19 precautions, which might include sheltering in place. The Global Mission unit would continue to monitor border closures, entry restrictions, quarantines, and basic services such as access to food, water, sanitation, public transit services, and health care services. The Palestinian Authority declared a moratorium on all mass gatherings for two weeks. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) suspended worship services and closed schools. Augusta Victoria Hospital remained open with limited staff. The Young Adults in Global Mission serving in the Holy Land had been relocated to Jerusalem and were self-quarantined for two weeks.

The Rev. Philip C. Hirsch, director for the Domestic Mission unit, reported that the Domestic Mission unit had not restricted domestic travel, following Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. The Domestic Mission unit was following CDC and state recommendations regarding mass gatherings. The CDC had qualified mass gatherings to be 10 or more people.

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Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe, Natural Systems coordinator, announced that the March Systems Academy session was cancelled. The group would meet in June.

The presiding bishop presented details on the Leadership Initiative, which would include a web platform called Journi that would allow individuals to explore questions and opportunities for rostered ministry leadership in the ELCA as part of their discernment process.

The Innovation Lab, formerly known as the Leadership Lab, will be led by Ms. Mikka McCracken, executive for innovation and director for the Innovation Lab, and assisted by Mr. Iain Chester, manager for innovation. The lab will aim to encourage more rapid and creative solutions within the organization. Members of the churchwide organization completed a survey which asked individuals to assess the degree of innovation within the organization. There was an 87% response rate. Details of the survey would be shared in the coming weeks.

Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced the following staff to members of the joint meeting:

- Ms. Kathy Freeman Summers, executive director for the Mission Advancement unit
- The Rev. Carmelo Santos, director for theological diversity and ecumenical and interreligious engagement
- Deacon John E. Weit, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for worship

The presiding bishop highlighted items from her written report. She noted that 26 memorials and resolutions were passed at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. She continued to reflect upon the division of work among the churchwide organization, synods, and congregations. She expressed her hope that the Innovation Lab could provide effective answers for the primary mission that God has for this church.

The Rev. Kristen E. M. Kuempel, bishop of the Northwest Intermountain Synod, encouraged the presiding bishop to speak more about the priesthood of all believers, call, and vocation with all of this church, including laity.

The Rev. Carmelo Santos, director for theological diversity and ecumenical and interreligious engagement, and Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for ecumenical and interreligious relations and executive for theological discernment, shared information on resources being developed for the 500th anniversary of Luther's treatise, *On the Freedom of a Christian*. In addition to studies and web resources, members were encouraged to download free .pdf copies of the treatise that were being made available through 1517 Media.

The Rev. Shelley M. Bryan Wee, bishop of the Northwest Washington Synod, offered resources and advice on worship for congregations during the uncertainty of COVID-19.

REPORT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

(Agenda I.B.; *Reference*: Report of the Vice President)

Vice President William B. Horne II opened his report with prayer and a meditation. He reported that he was scheduled to attend four synod assemblies: Minneapolis Area Synod, Saint Paul Area Synod, Sierra Pacific Synod, and the Northeastern Ohio Synod. The last three would be conducting elections for the office of bishop.

The vice president stated his belief that the Church Council triennial calendar of actions was an important administrative tool as the Church Council looked toward the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. He expressed hope that the calendar would allow time to develop ideas so final planning for the Churchwide Assembly would progress smoothly.

He noted how this church was seeking to engage people in novel ways, including the Innovation Lab, working toward the goal of sharing the gospel of Christ. He asked how the ELCA could engage areas of disagreement while still engaging in social justice ministry. He encouraged meeting attendees to walk with members of this church through disagreement.

A number of bishops expressed their appreciation for Vice President Horne's acknowledgment of the tension concerning how bold this church should be. Some bishops asked that innovative resources be created to aid discussions with members of this church regarding 2019 Churchwide Assembly decisions.

BREAK

The joint session of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops recessed at 10:16 a.m. and reconvened at 10:49 a.m.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

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

Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, gave thanks for the life and work of Ms. Gail Schroeder, who would have marked 32 years with the churchwide organization in March. She thanked the meetings team for their work during this time and explained that an intern would be hired this summer.

The secretary introduced the Rev. N. Keith Fry, assistant to the secretary and executive for Office of the Secretary administration. She thanked Mr. Frank F. Imhoff for his work as the interim assistant to the secretary.

Secretary Rothmeyer reported that the Office of the Secretary had distributed a memo on memorials and resolutions for synod assemblies as well as an online form for submission of synod assembly actions. A webinar on memorials and resolutions would be hosted by the Office of the Secretary on March 31.

The secretary stated that she and the Rev. Walter S. May, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for synod relations, had completed 14 of 15 conversations with synods that would be holding bishop elections this spring. She stressed the need for 60% of synod assembly attendees to be lay persons, especially in light of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly decision to make ordination the entrance rite for deacons. Secretary Rothmeyer urged that synod assembly planning staff ensure that credential reporting for elections be well done and accurate. She noted the importance of clearly stated registration deadlines.

One of the items for consideration by the Church Council was a proposed revision of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers*. Secretary Rothmeyer explained that the updates were non-substantive and editorial, bringing current any cited constitutional language, updating language concerning the rosters, and updating legal language on marriage. The document had been reviewed by the Committee on Appeals.

The secretary noted that the last page of her report listed Church Council calls issued in 2019. She hoped to re-examine the process of how these calls are reported.

Secretary Rothmeyer invited Mr. Joseph Clairemont, technology trainer and education trainer for ELCA information technology, to give updates on technology initiatives. Mr. Clairemont explained the upcoming transition to a single login system for all ELCA web and program logins. Once the new system was in place, individuals would be able to use existing Facebook, Google, or LinkedIn credentials or an email address to log in. This project was to be made public near Easter 2020.

The secretary concluded her report by thanking members for their support and care during this transitional period.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

(Agenda I.B.; *Reference*: Report of the Treasurer)

Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, reported that net revenue over expenses was \$3.2 million. She celebrated Mission Support numbers which resulted in meeting 99.6% of the budget. One-third of synods contributed more Mission Support in 2019 than in 2018. The average decline in Mission Support over four years was \$1.35 million.

Units in the churchwide organization spent between 97% and 100% of their allocated spending in 2019. Vacancies in payroll contributed to underspending, as units were asked to save that funding for end-of-year costs. Treasurer Fedyk noted that fundraising teams were prioritizing new major gifts resources in possible new funding initiatives. Other initiatives included saving money from unrestricted bequests and trusts so that those funds could be used for new initiatives. Funding for new initiatives such as the Innovation Lab was drawn from the Mission Development Fund.

Treasurer Fedyk stated that ELCA World Hunger began the year with a \$3.4 million fund balance; \$23 million was raised in 2019 with \$19.3 million coming through direct gifts. Expenditures were \$21.3 million for an ending balance of \$5.4 million. Lutheran Disaster response had an income of \$11.7 million and distributed \$14.3 million.

A council member asked how the churchwide organization was positioned with current market volatility. Treasurer Fedyk explained that adjustments had been made to the budget to prepare for a possible market downturn. She noted that the organization had invested in a low-volatility fund in 2016 which captured the favorability of the market without putting the organization at high risk in case of a downturn.

A bishop asked how the Mission Development Fund was drawn upon for organization needs. The treasurer stated that a unit must present a request to withdraw from the fund. The administrative team reviews the request which is then forwarded for Church Council consideration. The Mission Development Fund is an endowment with withdrawals approved each year.

The treasurer discussed changes made to fundraising models and explained how the Resource Development Committee would assist in new fundraising and revenue planning. Members of the committee included Church Council members, bishops, pastors, and donors.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bishop Bartholomew announced that Ms. Mary J. Streufert, director for the Justice for Women program, was unable to attend the meeting and sent a note encouraging members to continue strategic planning to implement the new social statement, *Faith, Sexism, Justice: A Call to Action*.

BREAK

The Rev. Kurt F. Kusserow, bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, led members in table grace and closing prayer. The joint session of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops recessed at 11:47 a.m. on Friday, Mar. 6, 2020.

Friday Afternoon, Mar. 6, 2020 Retreat Session I Joint Session of the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops

The council and the conference met Friday afternoon from approximately 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Red Oak Ballroom for a retreat to engage in discussion of *Vision and Expectations*, health care benefits, and the ELCA as a sanctuary denomination. Minutes of retreat sessions were not kept.

Saturday Morning, Mar. 7, 2020
Plenary Session II
Church Council Session

CALL TO ORDER

The Rev. Chad Huebner opened the meeting with prayer. Vice President Horne called the second plenary session to order at 9:02 a.m. in the Linden Room of the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Agenda II.A.)

The March 2020 meeting of the Church Council entered into executive session for a legal briefing at 9:02 a.m. Minutes for meetings held in executive session are added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary.

The council returned to open session at 9:27 a.m.

REPORT OF THE LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Agenda II.B.)

Mr. Gary A. Pederson, chair of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee, referenced items from the committee's conference call meeting. The committee reviewed non-substantive edits to the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. Edits included updating references to the entrance rite for deacons as ordination and updating constitutional references reflecting amendments that were passed at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. The committee also examined non-substantive changes to *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* as proposed and approved by the Committee on Appeals. Those edits were related to constitutional references, ordination rites, and legal language for marriage. A more substantive revision of *Definitions and Guidelines* is to be presented in spring 2021 after the Committee on Appeals completes its work. Both document updates were forwarded for *en bloc* consideration.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

(Agenda II.C.1.)

Mr. James J.F. Jennings, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, presented the recommended action. Council members discussed the proposal in the previous day's retreat session.

Moved:

Seconded;

To receive with gratitude the report and recommendation of Portico Benefit Services' board of trustees, directing Portico staff to take actions necessary to provide the church with at least two health plans of actuarially equivalent value that have 78–82% actuarial value for sponsoring organizations to offer and for members to enroll in, and consistent with the principles underlying the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits, to endorse as a benchmark beginning with the 2021 plan year those proposed plan options that have an actuarial value of at least 78 – 82%; and

To encourage congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other ELCA-related organizations to select such options.

Mr. David M. Lenz questioned whether the phrase “of actuarially equivalent value” before “78–82% actuarial value” was redundant. The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, president of Portico Benefit Services, explained that the actuarial value would be the average over the entire population of a plan. It would vary a few dollars in pricing. He agreed that the wording was redundant.

Mr. Lenz moved to amend the proposed recommendation by deletion.

Moved:

Seconded;

Carried:

To amend by deletion:

To receive with gratitude the report and recommendation of Portico Benefit Services' board of trustees, directing Portico staff to take actions necessary to provide the church with at least two health plans ~~of actuarially equivalent value~~ that have 78–82% actuarial value for sponsoring organizations to offer and for members to enroll in, and consistent with the principles underlying the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits, to endorse as a benchmark beginning with the 2021 plan year those proposed plan options that have an actuarial value of at least 78–82%; and

To encourage congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other ELCA-related organizations to select such options.

The Rev. Nicholas M. Billardello III led council members in prayer before the vote.

VOTED:

CC20.03.02

To receive with gratitude the report and recommendation of Portico Benefit Services' board of trustees, directing Portico staff to take actions necessary to provide the church with at least two health plans that have 78–82% actuarial value for sponsoring organizations to offer and for members to enroll in, and consistent with the principles underlying the ELCA Philosophy of Benefits, to endorse as a benchmark beginning with the 2021 plan year those proposed plan options that have an actuarial value of at least 78–82%; and

To encourage congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other ELCA-related organizations to select such options.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

Mr. Jennings continued his report by covering items the committee forwarded for *en bloc* consideration. Items included designated funds and medical benefits from predecessor bodies.

The Resource Development Committee will replace the Revenue Task Force. Mr. Jennings reviewed the list of current members. The Resource Development Committee will report through the Budget and Finance Committee.

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Agenda II.D.)

Mr. Joseph T. Nolte, vice chair of the Program and Services Committee, reviewed the items discussed on two committee conference calls, which included the Conference of Bishop's request for the church to focus on environmental issues, the ELCA as a sanctuary denomination, the draft social message on church and state, and *Vision and Expectations*.

VISION AND EXPECTATIONS

(Agenda II.D.1.)

Mr. Nolte moved the recommendation forwarded by the Program and Services Committee relating to the aspirational document *Vision and Expectations*.

Moved:

Seconded;

To repeal the document, *Vision and Expectations*, effective immediately and which should no longer be used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for any purpose;

To affirm that *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* remains the document which describes the grounds for which officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations may be subject to discipline according to the practice of this church;

To request the appropriate churchwide organization offices and units update all relevant documents and manuals, including candidacy and mobility documents, by June 1, 2020, to reflect the role of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* as defining the grounds for discipline;

To encourage members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to reflect on the aspirations this church has established for its members and rostered ministers, including the promises made at baptism, confirmation, and ordination;

To request the Domestic Mission unit engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops at its Fall 2020 meeting and the Church Council at its November 2020 meeting to consider the goals and purpose behind a new aspirational document;

To request the Domestic Mission unit present a draft aspirational document for review by the Conference of Bishops at its Spring 2021 meeting and for consideration by the Church Council at its Spring 2021 meeting;

To request the Domestic Mission unit provide updates to the Executive Committee of the Church Council on the new aspirational document; and

To acknowledge that the action of the Church Council regarding *Vision and Expectations* will be the response to Motion D [CC19.11.47dd].

Mr. Nolte read a message submitted by the Conference of Bishops:

As the pastors of synods, we all wrestle with the pastoral concerns of our rostered ministers of congregations as we provide oversight for the sake of the gospel. Most, but not all, of the bishops affirm the proposal with the timeline of a need for an aspirational (covenantal) document and substantive changes to *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*. We have a concern for how this is interpreted to the church. Please pay attention to how this is communicated.

The Rev. Joanne E. Engquist offered an amendment.

Moved;

Seconded:

To amend by deletion and substitution:

To repeal the document, *Vision and Expectations*, effective immediately and which should no longer be used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for any purpose; To affirm that *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* remains the document which describes the grounds for which officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations may be subject to discipline according to the practice of this church;

To request the appropriate churchwide organization offices and units update all relevant documents and manuals, including candidacy and mobility documents, by June 1, 2020, to reflect the role of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* as defining the grounds for discipline;

To encourage members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to reflect on the aspirations this church has established for its members and rostered ministers, including the promises made at baptism, confirmation, and ordination;

To request the Domestic Mission unit engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops at its Fall 2020 meeting and the Church Council at its November 2020 meeting to consider the goals and purpose behind a new aspirational document;

~~To request the Domestic Mission unit present a draft aspirational document for review by the Conference of Bishops at its Spring 2021 meeting and for consideration by the Church Council at its Spring 2021 meeting;~~

To request that the Domestic Mission unit and the Committee on Appeals engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops to seek further information and guidance regarding the needs of bishops to apply discipline as described in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, reporting that information to the Executive Committee of the Church Council at its October 2020 meeting.

~~To request the Domestic Mission unit provide updates to the Executive Committee of the Church Council on the new aspirational document on these matters; and~~

To acknowledge that the action of the Church Council regarding *Vision and Expectations* will be the response to Motion D [CC19.11.47dd].

Pr. Engquist explained that her amendment was intended to include feedback and concerns expressed by bishops while also not pre-supposing the need for an aspirational document. She expressed her belief that it was important to not pre-suppose what an aspirational document should be or what would be needed in such a document. She also believed that it was important to enter into a period without an aspirational document. She explained that her amendment sought to encompass Chapter 7 of the constitution as it relates to rostered ministers, guidelines and recommendations from the social statement on human sexuality, and information from *Future Directions 2025*.

One bishop liaison thanked Pr. Engquist for clarification of the process and felt that her amendment would be well received by the Conference of Bishops. Another bishop liaison noted his worry that this amendment might continue to draw out the process for a longer period of time. He expressed concern about the implications of the amendment for the conference's oversight role.

A council member responded that, though there might be anxiety around not having an aspirational document for a time, he did not want to rush any development process. Another council member concurred and commended the writing of the amendment. He assured bishops that council members had put much thought into a proposed process and explained that the council had met the previous evening for an hour and a half conversation to explicitly discuss *Vision and Expectations'* history and a potential new aspirational document process.

A council member questioned how the council's decision would be shared with the wider church so that a decision concerning *Vision and Expectations* and the document *Definitions and Guidelines* could be better explained. The Rev. Philip C. Hirsch, executive director for the Domestic Mission unit, reported that he and Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, public relations manager for the Mission Advancement unit, had crafted language for Twitter, other social media, and a press release that would also link to the web version of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*. Secretary Rothmeyer noted that the updates to *Definition and Guidelines* would not be voted on until Sunday afternoon. A council member stressed the importance of highlighting for the public that *Definition and Guidelines* had long been the juridical document for discipline in this church.

A question was raised as to whether the more extensive revision of *Definition and Guidelines* could be made available to the Conference of Bishops' October 2020 meeting so that the council could consider it at its November 2020 meeting. Secretary Rothmeyer explained that the Committee on Appeals would be convened after this spring joint meeting. She would update the council concerning a possible timeline.

BREAK

The March 2020 Church Council meeting recessed at 10:40 a.m. and reconvened at 10:45 a.m.

VISION AND EXPECTATIONS (CONTINUED)

Mr. Nolte moved to postpone the vote on the amendment and proposed recommendation for *Vision and Expectations* to 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 8. This would allow the vote to update *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* to take place on the same day.

Moved;

Seconded;

Carried: To postpone voting on the amendment and proposed recommendation for *Vision and Expectations* until 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 8, 2020.

BREAK

The March 2020 Church Council meeting recessed at 10:47 a.m. and reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

CONVERSATION WITH ETHNIC-SPECIFIC AND MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES

(Agenda II.E.)

The Rev. Albert Starr Jr., director for ethnic-specific and multicultural ministries, led council members in conversation with ethnic association presidents. Each leader brought a report of their work. The Rev. Joan Conroy, president of the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association, reported on behalf of her ethnic association as giving a report submitted by Ms. Jennifer DeLeon, president of the Latino Ministries Association of the ELCA. The following leaders also presented to the council: The Rev. Khader N. El-Yateem, representative of the Association

of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, the Rev. Russell Meyer, president of the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice, the Rev. Moses Penumaka, representative of the Asian and Pacific Islander Lutheran Association, and the Rev. Lamont A. Wells, president of the African Descent Lutheran Association. All of the leaders expressed their concerns and hopes for the ELCA as this church engages with the “Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity within the ELCA.”

AGENDA STRUCTURE

Mr. Nolte moved that the council’s third plenary session begin at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, Mar. 8.

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

Moved;

Seconded;

Carried: **To begin Plenary Session III of the March 2020 Church Council meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, Mar. 8, 2020.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER

Vice President Horne relayed a number of announcements. Mr. Gary A. Pederson led the council in singing a hymn he had composed, then led a table prayer.

BREAK

The second plenary session of the Church Council recessed at 12:13 p.m. on Saturday, Mar. 7, 2020.

Saturday Afternoon, March 7, 2020

Retreat Session II

Joint Session of the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops

The Church Council and the Conference of Bishops met Saturday afternoon for a second retreat session to discuss topics including Mission Support experiments, the Innovation Lab, and Congregation Vitality. Minutes of retreat sessions were not kept.

The Church Council and the Conference of Bishops met for a contemplative Service of Word and Prayer led by Deacon John E. Weit, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for worship, and Deacon Jennifer Baker-Trinity, program director for resource development, at 4:45 p.m. in the Linden Room of the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois.

Sunday Morning, Mar. 8, 2020
Worship
with Holy Communion

The members of the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops gathered at 9:00 a.m. for a service of worship with Holy Communion in the Linden Room at the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois. The Rev. Khader N. El-Yateem, representative of the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, presided, and the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, preached. Mr. William B. Horne II, vice president of the ELCA, served as assisting minister. Mr. Kevin Anderson was lector. Deacon John E. Weit, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for worship, and Deacon Jennifer Baker-Trinity, program director for resource development, served as cantor and musician. An offering of \$3,472.00 was received for International Women Leaders.

The Church Council and Conference of Bishops met for a third retreat session following the service. Discussion items included anti-racism work and authentic diversity work. The council and conference then recessed for lunch at approximately 12:00 p.m. Minutes were not kept of the retreat session.

Sunday Afternoon, Mar. 8, 2020
Plenary Session III
Church Council Session

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Keoni Newman opened with prayer. Vice President Horne called the council's third plenary session to order at 1:02 p.m. (CDT) in the Linden Room of the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca, Illinois.

CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM *EN BLOC*

(Agenda III.B.)

Vice President Horne reported that no items had been removed from *en bloc*.

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

(Agenda VI.D.)

Background:

An *en bloc* resolution was presented to the Church Council of routine or noncontroversial actions prepared by the council's committees (*En Bloc* Items). Opportunity had been provided to members of the Church Council to request removal of items from *en bloc* for separate consideration by the council, but there had been no requests.

Church Council action:

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

As the items were voted *en bloc* there was no discussion; the vice president called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC20.03.03 To take action *en bloc* on the remaining items listed in *En Bloc* Items.

A. Revisions to Resolutions Regarding Authority to Act in Financial Matters

Background:

In November 2019, the Church Council adopted CC19.11.47d regarding the Appointment of Assistant Officers. A revision is being proposed to update the appointments.

VOTED:

CC20.03.03a

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are

EN BLOC

hereby appointed as assistant vice presidents of this corporation: M. Wyvetta Bullock, Walter S. May, Kathryn M. Lohre, and Jodi L. Slattery, to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the Presiding Bishop;

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant treasurers of this corporation: Cecilia Favela, Kathy Freeman Summers, Santiago Padilla, and Annette Roman, to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the Treasurer;

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

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

B. Church Council Designated Funds

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03b1 To approve a Church Council Designated Fund in the range of \$1,800,000 to \$2,100,000 representing the remaining excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2019 to be released to fund budget shortfall in future years.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03b2 To re-designate the unused portion of the fiscal year 2018 Church Council Designated Fund (\$1,945,079), which was originally approved to be spent in fiscal year 2019, to be released to fund budget shortfall in future years.

C. Funding for Benefits Contribution Trust

Background:

In April 2018, the ELCA Church Council made the following changes to post-retirement medical benefits:

- To approve the change from self-insured medical and pharmacy plans for the retirees to fully insured medical and pharmacy plans.
- To acknowledge Portico's collection of the 0.7% surcharge from participating employers through 2019 to help fund the Trust.
- To acknowledge Portico's collection of \$7,000,000 in surcharges from participating employers from 2020–22 to help fund the Trust, with Portico to determine the rate and duration best suited to collect those surcharges.
- To authorize the ELCA to expend \$11,000,000 between 2018 and 2022 to fund the Trust, with the expectation that these amounts, together with amounts contributed from participating employers via Portico, would fully fund the Trust, but recognizing that this is a funding estimate.
- To terminate the Aide-mémoire and replace it with this understanding.

Pursuant to this action, the ELCA contributed \$2,000,000 in 2018 and \$2,000,000 in 2019, leaving \$7,000,000 to be contributed from 2020–22. Portico collected \$4,500,000 in surcharges in 2018 and \$4,500,000 in surcharges in 2019. The pro rata split between the organizations has been 68.6% by Portico Benefit Services and 31.4% by the Churchwide Organization.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03c **To receive with gratitude the report from Portico Benefit Services on the status of the Benefits Contribution Trust;**
 To approve Portico’s discontinuation of the collection of the 0.7 percent surcharge from participating employers, effective July 1, 2020;
 To reduce the ELCA’s planned contribution to the Trust for 2020–22 from \$7,000,000 to \$1,150,000, with that contribution to be made in 2020; and
 To provide that, in the event that any excess remains after satisfaction of all trust liabilities and termination of the Benefits Contribution Trust, such excess be distributed back to Portico and the Churchwide Organization pro rata, with Portico Benefit Services receiving 68.6 percent and the Churchwide Organization receiving 31.4 percent.

D. Revised Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Rosters of the ELCA

Background:

The Office of the Secretary, in consultation with other churchwide offices and units, reviewed and proposed changes for the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the ELCA*. The last revision was approved by the Church Council at its November 2018 meeting.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03d **To approve the updated *Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* for use by synod bishops, synod staff members, and others who hold responsibilities for such matters in this church; and**
 To authorize the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to provide periodic updates reflecting new or revised policies subsequently adopted by the Church Council.

E. Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Ordained Ministers

Background:

In accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 20.21, the Committee on Appeals establishes definitions and guidelines, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline of officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations. Non-substantive edits were made to reflect recent changes in the rosters of this church as well as the changes in law regarding same-sex marriage.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03e **To approve the amended *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*.**

F. Approval of the Minutes

Background:

The minutes of the November 2019 Church Council meeting and the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings on November 7–10, 2019, December 3, 2019, January 14, 2020, and February 18, 2020, were distributed electronically.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03f **To approve the minutes of the November 2019 meeting of the Church Council; and**
 To ratify actions of the council’s Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the November 7, 2019, December 3, 2019, January 14, 2020, and February 18, 2020, meetings.

G. Response to Climate Change Action

Background:

At its November 2019 meeting, Church Council referred a recommendation on climate change from the Conference of Bishops [CB19.09.26] to the Domestic Mission unit for a timeline on when the resolution would receive further attention [CC19.11.41].

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03g **To receive the response on climate change from the Domestic Mission unit;**
 To affirm the coordinated approach and proposed timeline for this church’s response to climate change; and

To anticipate progress reports at future Church Council meetings with a final report by the April 2022 Church Council meeting.

H. Trustees of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA

Background:

A trustee of the Endowment Fund resigned effective February 4, 2020. No candidate has been identified to fill this vacancy. As the Endowment Fund would like to fill this vacancy prior to its Fall 2020 board meeting, the Endowment Fund asks the Church Council to consider authorizing the Executive Committee to appoint a trustee to fill the remainder of the term caused by the vacancy on the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03h **To authorize the Executive Committee to elect trustees to fill, until the November 2020 meeting of the Church Council, vacancies on the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA.**

I. Church Council Nominations and Elections

Background:

The Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill terms on boards of Separately Incorporated Ministries, social ministry organizations, and seminaries. Bylaws 8.21.03. and 8.21.04. outline basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. Pursuant to 14.22. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the Church Council is also to elect nominees to a vacancy on a board or committee of the churchwide organization.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03i1 **To re-elect to the board of directors of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago to a four-year term expiring in 2024: Ms. Karen M. McClain and Mr. Harry C. Mueller.**

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03i2 **To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a four-year term expiring in 2024: Ms. Debra Ann Hibbard.**

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03i3 **To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University to a two-year term expiring in 2022: The Rev. Donald Rhodes Woolly; and To re-elect to the board of directors of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir Rhyne University to a four-year term expiring in 2024: Ms. Miriam Lang David.**

VOTED: *EN BLOC*
CC20.03.03i4 **To elect to the board of directors of Luther Seminary to a four-year term expiring in 2024: Ms. Ruth Kimmelshue and Sr. Cynthia Dianne Williams.**

TEMPORARY COMMITTEE

Mr. Kevin Anderson, chair of the temporary committee to assess committee structure, reported that this committee would continue work called for in the Governance Policy Manual, and would examine committee structure, number, and scope. This temporary committee included members from each of the four standing committees and the Board Development Committee, including:

- Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman, Board Development Committee
- The Rev. Karn S. Carroll, Planning and Evaluation Committee
- The Rev. Kjerstin L. Sullivan, Budget and Finance Committee
- The Rev. Nicholas M. Billardello III, Program and Services Committee

Members of the temporary committee will engage in discussions with each council member and present a more formal conversation at the Fall 2020 meeting and a recommendation at the Spring 2021 meeting. The committee may

consult with staff from the Synod Relations team and with Ms. Mikka McCracken, executive for innovation and director for the Innovation Lab.

PROCESS OBSERVATION

(Agenda III.D.)

Vice President Bill Horne reviewed process observation forms during the course of the meeting. He explained that members of the Board Development Committee had been filling out forms on a daily basis and returning them to him. The usual process of every council member filling out forms would resume at the Fall 2020 meeting.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

Mr. James J.F. Jennings offered a motion.

There being no discussion the chair called for the vote.

VOTED:

CC20.03.04 **To have a formal letter written expressing the Church Council's thanks to the Conference of Bishops for gathering with the council this weekend and sharing their knowledge, experience, and perspectives with us, with the letter to be delivered to the chair of the Conference of Bishops.**

VISION AND EXPECTATIONS (CONTINUED)

Mr. Joseph Nolte read the amendment that had been made a special order for this time.

Moved;

To amend by deletion and substitution:

Seconded:

To repeal the document, *Vision and Expectations*, effective immediately and which should no longer be used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for any purpose;

To affirm that *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* remains the document which describes the grounds for which officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations may be subject to discipline according to the practice of this church;

To request the appropriate churchwide organization offices and units update all relevant documents and manuals, including candidacy and mobility documents, by June 1, 2020, to reflect the role of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* as defining the grounds for discipline;

To encourage members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to reflect on the aspirations this church has established for its members and rostered ministers, including the promises made at baptism, confirmation, and ordination;

To request the Domestic Mission unit engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops at its Fall 2020 meeting and the Church Council at its November 2020 meeting to consider the goals and purpose behind a new aspirational document;

~~To request the Domestic Mission unit present a draft aspirational document for review by the Conference of Bishops at its Spring 2021 meeting and for consideration by the Church Council at its Spring 2021 meeting;~~

To request that the Domestic Mission unit and the Committee on Appeals engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops to seek further information and guidance regarding the needs of bishops to apply discipline as described in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, reporting that information to the Executive Committee of the Church Council at its October 2020 meeting.

To request the Domestic Mission unit provide updates to the Executive Committee of the Church Council on ~~the new aspirational document~~ on these matters; and

To acknowledge that the action of the Church Council regarding *Vision and Expectations* will be the response to Motion D [CC19.11.47dd].

A council member stated that, while he agreed with the amendment, he also hoped for a new aspirational document, and expressed concern that there might be no such document at all. Another council member expressed her

opinion that this amendment would give space for questions and input and asked whether other documents of this church might already meet the purpose of an aspirational document.

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

Moved; *To amend by deletion and substitution:*

Seconded

Carried:

To repeal the document, *Vision and Expectations*, effective immediately and which should no longer be used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for any purpose;

To affirm that *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* remains the document which describes the grounds for which officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations may be subject to discipline according to the practice of this church;

To request the appropriate churchwide organization offices and units update all relevant documents and manuals, including candidacy and mobility documents, by June 1, 2020, to reflect the role of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* as defining the grounds for discipline;

To encourage members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to reflect on the aspirations this church has established for its members and rostered ministers, including the promises made at baptism, confirmation, and ordination;

To request the Domestic Mission unit engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops at its Fall 2020 meeting and the Church Council at its November 2020 meeting to consider the goals and purpose behind a new aspirational document;

~~To request the Domestic Mission unit present a draft aspirational document for review by the Conference of Bishops at its Spring 2021 meeting and for consideration by the Church Council at its Spring 2021 meeting;~~

To request that the Domestic Mission unit and the Committee on Appeals engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops to seek further information and guidance regarding the needs of bishops to apply discipline as described in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, reporting that information to the Executive Committee of the Church Council at its October 2020 meeting.

To request the Domestic Mission unit provide updates to the Executive Committee of the Church Council on ~~the new aspirational document~~ these matters; and

To acknowledge that the action of the Church Council regarding *Vision and Expectations* will be the response to Motion D [CC19.11.47dd].

Ms. Divine prayed before the vote on the amended item.

VOTED:

CC20.03.05

To repeal the document, *Vision and Expectations*, effective immediately and which should no longer be used in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for any purpose;

To affirm that *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* remains the document which describes the grounds for which officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations may be subject to discipline according to the practice of this church;

To request the appropriate churchwide organization offices and units update all relevant documents and manuals, including candidacy and mobility documents, by June 1, 2020, to reflect the role of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* as defining the grounds for discipline;

To encourage members, congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to reflect on the aspirations this church has established for its members and rostered ministers, including the promises made at baptism, confirmation, and ordination;

To request the Domestic Mission unit engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops at its Fall 2020 meeting and the Church Council at its November 2020 meeting to consider the goals and purpose behind a new aspirational document;

To request that the Domestic Mission unit and the Committee on Appeals engage in conversation with the Conference of Bishops to seek further information and guidance regarding the needs of bishops to apply discipline as described in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, reporting that information to the Executive Committee of the Church Council at its October 2020 meeting.

To request the Domestic Mission unit provide updates to the Executive Committee of the Church Council on these matters; and

To acknowledge that the action of the Church Council regarding *Vision and Expectations* will be the response to Motion D [CC19.11.47dd].

The vice president declared the motion carried.

The council then reviewed the press release related to the action.

NEW BUSINESS

UPDATES TO THE ELCA CANDIDACY MANUAL

(Agenda III.A.)

The Rev. Joanne E. Engquist offered a motion to bring the ELCA Candidacy Manual in alignment with the council's action on *Vision and Expectations*.

Moved;

Seconded:

To direct the Domestic Mission unit to revise the ELCA Candidacy Manual to remove this language:

“Are you familiar with the document *Vision and Expectations*? Do you intend to live in accord with its standards of conduct as a candidate and as a rostered minister in the ELCA?”

And to replace with this language:

“As a candidate for rostered ministry in this church, I understand I will be held accountable to the synod's candidacy committee regarding this church's expectations for my speech and conduct as set forward in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers*. I understand that my candidacy for rostered ministry brings increased attention to my life. I am responsible for informing my bishop regarding any circumstance that might subject me to discipline according to *Definitions and Guidelines* were I a rostered minister. I understand that the candidacy committee may modify my candidacy status in response to my speech and conduct.”

Pr. Engquist explained that her motion was designed to give more positive language and help candidates better understand the guidelines. She hoped it made clear that candidates were not the same as rostered ministers. Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel for the ELCA, stated that the included language was useful, as Chapter 20 (“Consultation, Discipline, Appeals, and Adjudication”) of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* did not include a provision for the discipline of candidates. A bishop affirmed that the proposed language provided clarity and would be useful.

One concern raised by council members and staff was the lack of clarity as to when this language would become effective. Pr. Engquist offered an amendment to her motion.

Move;

Seconded;

Carried:

To direct the Domestic Mission unit to revise the ELCA Candidacy Manual to remove this language:

“Are you familiar with the document *Vision and Expectations*? Do you intend to live in accord with its standards of conduct as a candidate and as a rostered minister in the ELCA?”

And, **effective immediately**, to replace with this language:

“As a candidate for rostered ministry in this church, I understand I will be held accountable to the synod’s candidacy committee regarding this church’s expectations for my speech and conduct as set forward in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers*. I understand that my candidacy for rostered ministry brings increased attention to my life. I am responsible for informing my bishop regarding any circumstance that might subject me to discipline according to Definitions and Guidelines were I a rostered minister. I understand that the candidacy committee may modify my candidacy status in response to my speech and conduct.”

Pr. Engquist noted the importance of communicating to candidates that this policy would go into effect immediately and would relate to candidates as soon as they entered the candidacy process.

VOTED:

CC20.03.06 **To direct the Domestic Mission unit to revise the ELCA Candidacy Manual to remove this language:**

“Are you familiar with the document “Vision and Expectations”? Do you intend to live in accord with its standards of conduct as a candidate and as a rostered minister in the ELCA?”

And, effective immediately, to replace with this language:

“As a candidate for rostered ministry in this church, I understand I will be held accountable to the synod’s candidacy committee regarding this church’s expectations for my speech and conduct as set forward in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers*. I understand that my candidacy for rostered ministry brings increased attention to my life. I am responsible for informing my bishop regarding any circumstance that might subject me to discipline according to *Definitions and Guidelines* were I a rostered minister. I understand that the candidacy committee may modify my candidacy status in response to my speech and conduct.”

EVALUATION AND DEBRIEFING

(Agenda III.E.)

Vice President Horne led the council in a conversation to evaluate and debrief this church’s first joint meeting of the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President Horne asked members to complete evaluation forms and to submit other documents related to the meeting.

HYMN AND PRAYER

(Agenda III.F.)

Ms. Divine led the council in singing “The Canticle of the Turning;” Deacon John Weit and Mr. Gary A. Pederson served as accompanists. Ms. Divine closed the meeting with prayer.

ADJOURNMENT

The March 2020 meeting of the Church Council adjourned at 2:16 p.m. (CDT) on Sunday, Mar. 8, 2020.

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