



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Pastoral message from ELCA Conference of Bishops

Approved by the ELCA Church Council in 1990, *Vision and Expectations* has, through several revisions, outlined this church's standards for its rostered ministers since that time. As a Conference of Bishops, we recognize and acknowledge that its application has been uneven and inequitable. We express our profound grief and deep regret for the times when *Vision and Expectations* has been misused to single out, marginalize, and block people seeking to be leaders in this church when their peers were not always held to the same vision and expectations. This has caused considerable pain that has disproportionately been borne by those who have been historically marginalized or excluded from leadership in the church because of their gender, sexuality, race, or status. We apologize to those whose treatment under this document has made them feel targeted and less than the beloved children of God that they are.

The Conference of Bishops affirms the appropriateness of expectations and standards as means of protecting the people of God and providing accountability for the power that church leaders hold. Serving as a rostered minister in the ELCA is a privilege. Those aspiring to and serving in such a public office are expected to conform to the standards set by the church for such leaders.

We aspire and pledge in the future to apply the church's standards for ministry with equity and compassion, to listen and take seriously the concerns of all our leaders—particularly those who historically have been marginalized—and to treat with dignity all those seeking to lead in our church.