



Office of the Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

November 20, 2012

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
 Regional Coordinators

FROM: David D. Swartling, secretary

SUBJECT: Report of Actions of the Church Council (November 9–11, 2012)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Lutheran Center, Chicago, Illinois, November 9–11, 2012. A variety of matters received attention. Several items were forwarded to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly for action, including proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and *Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2013 Churchwide Assembly*. Those items will be forwarded to synods and their voting members at a later date. Here is a summary of other particular actions along with background and explanatory information.

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1. SOCIAL MESSAGE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

Background:

In response to a synodical resolution, the Church Council in November 2009 authorized the staff of the Church in Society unit to initiate the development of an ELCA message on mental illness. In accordance with the *Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns*, the message was drafted, reviewed, and edited. In October 2013, the proposed message was reviewed by the Conference of Bishops.

Church Council Action:

To adopt “The Body of Christ and Mental Illness” as amended as a message of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The text of this message as adopted is available on the ELCA website at:
<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements-in-Process/Mental-Illness.aspx>

2. MISSION FUNDING TASK FORCE REPORT

Background:

In November 2009, the Church Council authorized the creation of a task force to examine the ecology of the ELCA (congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, agencies and institutions). The Living Into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the ELCA (LIFT) Task Force met from early 2010 until early 2011, and it brought a report and recommendation to the Churchwide Assembly in 2011. Among the LIFT-related resolutions adopted by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly was one calling on the Conference of Bishops, in consultation with synod leaders and the churchwide organization, to examine patterns of synodical life and to evaluate mission support and the financial resources of this whole church. Subsequently, the Conference of Bishops convened a group of nine bishops (one from each region) which engaged in discussions that identified issues critical to the future of this church, but it did not make a specific proposal regarding a pattern or set of patterns that addressed mission support and allocation of financial resources. Thereafter, the Church Council authorized the creation of a task force to address mission funding issues, as well as theological education. As requested by the Church Council, this Mission Funding Task Force brought a preliminary report and recommendations to the Conference of Bishops meeting in October 2012. Based upon feedback from the Conference of Bishops, the Mission Funding Task Force brought a revised report and recommendations to the Church Council in November 2012. In response, the Church Council adopted three actions based upon the report and recommendations of the Mission Funding Task Force.

Church Council Action:

To receive with gratitude the Mission Funding Task Force Report and to express appreciation for the diligent and thoughtful work of the members of the task force;

To thank the Conference of Bishops for careful consideration and review of the work of the Mission Funding Task Force in the fulfillment of its consultative role;

To recognize the need for and encourage ongoing discussion and analysis among synods and the churchwide organization on strengthening mission support for the benefit of this whole church;

To encourage and invite synods to partner on a regional basis or in groupings of synods to pilot ways to strengthen and build mission support, including development of approaches that emphasize stewardship, promote lateral accountability among synods and their leaders, and enhance collaboration with the churchwide organization;

To request that the Mission Investment Fund explore the development of a remittance process system that would improve the process for transmitting mission support and other funds designated for synod and churchwide ministries, strengthen financial controls, enhance financial reporting and access to timely information, and to invite and encourage synods to explore the possibility of participating in such a system; and

To request that the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council monitor the pilot programs established by synods and the development of a remittance process system for synods by the Mission Investment Fund for the purpose of making a report and possible recommendations to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council Action:

To encourage the churchwide organization and synods to continue to build on Mission Flowing from God's Abundance, the 2007 Report of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Mission Funding, and the 2011 LIFT report, recommendations, and implementing resolutions;

To request that the churchwide organization, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, continue to build the case for the support of a church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace, including creating a comprehensive strategy for growing stewardship and increasing awareness of all the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

To encourage this church in all its expressions to identify and leverage all networks within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to assist in the interpretation of and financial support for

its ministries, and to endorse the proposal to develop a major comprehensive campaign on the 25th anniversary of the ELCA, focused on giving to mission and ministry; and

To request that the churchwide organization, the Conference of Bishops, and the Church Council continue to evaluate and respond to the diverse realities of this church's communities of faith, including the following: the growing number of small-membership congregations, the financial challenges facing these congregations, and the need for releasing assets for ministry; the optimal size, number, role and function of synods and ELCA seminaries; and the role and function of the churchwide organization and its relationship to synods; and to further request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council to bring a progress report to the November 2013 meeting of the Church Council addressing these subjects.

Church Council Action:

To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in response to the recommendations of the Mission Funding Task Force relating to theological education and in recognition of the changing landscape in this church regarding leadership development, theological education, candidacy and call, and the rosters of this church, to consult with seminary presidents, the Conference of Bishops, the Word and Service Task Force, and other leaders and to bring a report and recommendations to the Church Council at its April 2013 meeting regarding next steps to address these issues in a holistic manner.

3. 25TH ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN

Background:

In addition to its recommendations on mission support and funding, the Mission Funding Task Force also recommended consideration of a capital campaign on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The concept was introduced to the Conference of Bishops and synod vice presidents at their meetings in October 2012. It met with positive affirmation and encouragement to proceed.

Church Council Action:

To receive with appreciation the report of the Mission Funding Task Force and the proposal of the Mission Advancement unit regarding a potential campaign for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the occasion of its 25th anniversary;

To thank the Conference of Bishops, the Bishop's Advisory Council, and synod vice presidents for their feedback and suggestions on the specific opportunities lifted up in the campaign and for their advice on the scope, process and possibilities for the campaign;

To endorse in concept a 25th anniversary campaign for the ELCA, subject to finalizing a proposal and budget, further consultation with the Conference of Bishops, recommendation by the Church Council, and approval of the Churchwide Assembly in 2013;

To authorize the Mission Advancement unit to continue development and finalization of a comprehensive campaign proposal and to begin work related to the campaign, specifically the preparation of resources, hiring of staff, solicitation of individual donors for leadership gifts, and collaboration with synods for anticipated fundraising engagement following the 2013 assembly;

To encourage conversations among members and in congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization regarding ways that an ELCA campaign can be developed and implemented to take advantage of synergies among all expressions of this church; and

To request that a refined proposal be brought to the Conference of Bishops at its March 2013 meeting and a final proposal be considered by the Church Council at its April 2013 meeting, in order for a recommendation to be forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly in August 2013.

4. NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Background:

In response to a presidential proclamation declaring November 2012 as Native American Heritage Month and November 23, 2012, as National Native American Heritage Day, and in light of the commitment of this church to justice and inclusion for all people, the Church Council considered and adopted the following resolution.

Church Council Action:

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has declared November to be National Native American Heritage Month, and November 23, 2012, as National Native American Heritage Day, and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a commitment to justice and inclusion for all peoples, and

WHEREAS, the ELCA maintains its commitment to American Indian and Alaska Native peoples through congregations, associations and staff, be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the Church Council at its November 2012 meeting join synods and congregations in greeting the tribes who originally inhabited the North American Continent, apologizing for injustices rendered in the past, and pledging to work together in the future; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Church Council inform the synods and congregations of the ELCA during the month of November, and issue a press release regarding this action.

5. INITIAL 2013 CURRENT FUND AND WORLD HUNGER SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS

Background:

Income estimates have been revised since the August 2011 Churchwide Assembly. Current income is projected to be \$66,291,150, an increase of \$4.4 million from the budget approved by the assembly. An additional \$2.7 million in funds released from restriction is anticipated to be available making the total current funds available of \$69,006,305. The World Hunger Appeal estimate is \$19.0 million.

Church Council Action:

To approve an initial 2013 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$69,006,305; and

To approve an initial 2013 fiscal year World Hunger spending authorization of \$19,000,000.

6. REVISIONS TO 2012 AND 2013 SYNODICAL MISSION SUPPORT PLANS

Background:

The Church Council responds to revisions in synodical mission support plans.

Church Council Action:

To affirm the revised 2012 mission support dollar estimates for the sharing of mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Pacifica; Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast; Metropolitan Chicago; Central/Southern Illinois; Greater Milwaukee; Upstate New York; Northeastern Pennsylvania; Southeastern Pennsylvania; and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., synods.

To acknowledge with sadness that circumstances in the following synods have led to decisions to seek a decrease from prior levels in the percentage of sharing of 2012 mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries; to encourage each synod to continue to work to grow mission support in the synod; and to request that each synod develop a plan, in consultation with the churchwide organization, to restore or surpass the previous level of mission support sharing: Alaska; Southern Ohio; and North Carolina synods.

To thank the bishops and synod leaders of every synod as they strive to be faithful to shared commitments within the ELCA, and to direct synod and churchwide staff, including the directors for evangelical mission, to deepen their partnership in efforts to strengthen financial support for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Church Council Action:

To affirm with sincere appreciation the increases in the percentage for the sharing of 2013 mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: South Dakota; Northeastern Ohio; Metropolitan New York; Upstate New York; and Florida-Bahamas synods;

To affirm the revised 2013 mission support dollar estimates for the sharing of mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries of the following synods: Montana; Eastern North Dakota; Northwestern Minnesota; Saint Paul Area; Metropolitan Chicago; Northern Illinois; Central/Southern Illinois; Northeastern Ohio; Southeastern Pennsylvania; Allegheny; and, Upper Susquehanna synods;

To acknowledge with sadness that circumstances in the following synods have led to decisions to seek a decrease from prior levels in the percentage of sharing of 2012 mission support contributions by congregations for synodical and churchwide ministries; to encourage each synod to continue to work to grow mission support in the synod; and to request that each synod develop a plan, in consultation with the churchwide organization, to restore or surpass the previous level of mission support sharing: Alaska; West Virginia-Western Maryland; and North Carolina synods; and

To thank the bishops and synod leaders of every synod as they strive to be faithful to shared commitments within the ELCA, and to direct synod and churchwide staff, including the directors for evangelical mission, to deepen their partnership in efforts to strengthen financial support for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7. PRE-ASSEMBLY DISCERNMENT PROCESS FOR CHURCHWIDE OFFICER ELECTIONS

Background:

At the April 2012 meeting of the Church Council, the Executive Committee (excluding the presiding bishop and secretary), together with the chair of the Conference of Bishops, was asked to bring recommendations for a potential pre-assembly discernment process for elections of churchwide officers at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council Action:

To encourage conversation and discernment throughout this church regarding the churchwide officer elections at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly;

To affirm the use of the proposed agenda found in Exhibit G, Part 2, to facilitate conversations regarding the election of churchwide officers during orientation meetings with voting members to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly and for use in other contexts as deemed appropriate;

To request the Executive for Synodical Relations to share the document in Exhibit G, Part 2, with the Conference of Bishops and synod vice presidents, and other networks as appropriate.

The proposed agenda (Exhibit G, Part 2) is attached to this report. In addition, the Church Council approved a protocol for background checks and screening and for other information in connection with officer elections at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly.

8. ELECTIONS AND THE TRANSITION TO A TRIENNIAL CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY

Background:

The transition to a triennial Churchwide Assembly required an evaluation of the elections process. In response to continuing resolution 12.31.A11., ELCA Secretary David D. Swartling prepared a memorandum that was considered by the Church Council.

Church Council Action:

To receive and approve the memorandum of ELCA Secretary David Swartling on elections and the transition to a triennial Churchwide Assembly, and to forward it to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly, in response to continuing resolution 12.31.A11.;

To endorse the recommendations in Secretary Swartling's memorandum regarding nominations for the Church Council and the boards of trustees of Portico Benefit Services, The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and to recommend to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly adoption of amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in order to implement these recommendations; and

To instruct the churchwide Nominating Committee to bring to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly nominations for 11 or 12 positions on the Church Council, in addition to positions nominated by synods, and nominations for the boards of trustees of Portico Benefit Services, The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in accordance with Secretary Swartling's memorandum.

Secretary Swartling's memorandum (Exhibit H, Part 4) is attached to this report.

9. PORTICO BENEFIT SERVICES PHILOSOPHY OF BENEFITS TASK FORCE

Background:

As part of its evaluation of the impact of potential health care reform and the changing environment for benefits, Portico Benefit Services (Portico) convened a task force to evaluate its "Philosophy of Benefits." The Philosophy of Benefits document was developed by the Board of Pensions in 2004 to articulate the underlying philosophy of the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program and to identify guiding principles. Because of the importance of this work, two Church Council members were appointed to participate in the task force, which consists of Portico staff, the ELCA Secretary and Treasurer, four bishops, and staff from the churchwide organization. The original plan was to prepare a report and recommendations for the November 2012 Church Council meeting. Portico's work with ELCA seminaries in the development of an alternative pilot health insurance plan, as well as uncertainties regarding health care reform, made the original timetable unrealistic. In addition, experience in developing the seminary pilot demonstrated the need to include other stakeholders in the task force.

Church Council Action:

To express appreciation and thanks to the staff and board of Portico Benefit Services for providing leadership, education, and advice to this church regarding the provision of benefits to plan members, especially in light of the complexities of addressing potential health care reform;

To encourage Portico to continue its leadership in providing timely and important education and advice to plan members, congregations, other employers, and those involved with preparing for and implementing health care reform;

To recognize that Portico has appointed a philosophy of benefits task force to undertake the process of revising Portico's philosophy of benefits in such a way that recognizes the historic principles of providing benefits to clergy, rostered laypersons, and church employees, the realities of societal changes, both within and outside this church, as well as pending health care reform, with the expectation that a report would be submitted to the Church Council meeting in November 2012;

To acknowledge that the Church Council appointed Marjorie Ellis and John Emery to serve on the philosophy of benefits task force;

To recognize that complexities and political uncertainties militate against revising Portico's philosophy of benefits until there is greater clarity regarding the political landscape and the form of health care reform;

To authorize deferring the submission of a report and recommendations of the philosophy of benefits task force until the Church Council meeting in April or August 2013; and

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to add additional members to the task force to include other stakeholders and to provide such other liaison and assistance as may be necessary for the Portico task force to complete its report and recommendations no later than August 2013.

10. WORD AND SERVICE TASK FORCE

Background:

In 2007, a consultation was convened on the ministries of the lay rosters of this church. Over the next three years, this Public Ministry Consultations planning team met, facilitated regional gatherings, and evaluated the future of the Word and service rosters. A report was submitted to the Church Council in November 2010. In response, the Church Council affirmed the valuable ministry of the lay rosters and called for the formation of a small task force, facilitated by the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit of the churchwide organization, to make recommendations on the possible formation of a unified Word and service roster. Subsequently, the Word and Service Task Force was organized, undertook a review of historical documents relating to Word and service ministry in the ELCA, sought to identify and clarify the challenges involved with creating a unified roster, and prepared a report for review by the Conference of Bishops and submission to the Church Council. The report recommended that the ELCA move toward the creation of one new roster and that further work be undertaken to evaluate how the members of the existing lay rosters might enter into a process of discernment and steps could be developed to facilitate the transition. The task force also recommended further study of the "Together in Ministry" report from 1993 to address issues relating to the interface between Word and Sacrament ministry and the ministries of Word and service.

Church Council Action:

To receive with gratitude and thanks the interim report of the Word and Service Task Force, convened in response to Church Council action [CC10.11.64] taken in November 2010;

To offer profound appreciation and thanks to persons who serve as associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers on the lay rosters of this church;

To affirm the preliminary conclusion of the Word and Service Task Force that this church should move toward creation of a single, unified lay roster of Word and service ministry, subject to further review and recommendation by the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council and approval of the Churchwide Assembly;

To authorize the Word and Service Task Force to continue its work in order to facilitate the creation of such a unified roster, to develop a process outlining how the existing lay rosters would be closed, and to provide a process for transition of existing associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses into such a new roster, and, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary, to consider and propose possible amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to accomplish its recommendations;

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to expand the membership of the Word and Service Task Force;

To acknowledge the recommendation to form a task force to review the study "Together in Ministry" and to recognize that the subject of this request will be addressed by the Office of the

Presiding Bishop in conjunction with the report and recommendations on theological education that respond to the report of the Mission Funding Task Force; and

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to act as necessary to facilitate the work of the Word and Service Task Force, including the authority to authorize additional expenditures.

11. LIVING INTO THE FUTURE TOGETHER (LIFT) ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT

Background:

In response to the report and recommendations of the Living into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the ELCA (LIFT) Task Force, the Churchwide Assembly in 2011 adopted a number of implementing resolutions. Among the implementing resolutions was direction to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in collaboration with the Church Council and the Conference of Bishops, to continue LIFT work. At its meeting in November 2011, the Church Council established the LIFT Advisory Committee to assist the Office of the Presiding Bishop in fulfilling the implementing resolutions of the Churchwide Assembly. The LIFT Advisory Committee brought a report and recommendations to the Church Council at its meeting in November 2012.

Church Council Action:

To receive with gratitude the progress report of the Living Into the Future Together (LIFT) Advisory Committee and to thank the members of the committee for their conscientious work in providing ongoing advice and evaluation regarding the LIFT report and recommendations and actions taken by the Churchwide Assembly in 2011 regarding LIFT;

To affirm that implementing the actions of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly regarding LIFT remains a work-in-progress and that the LIFT Advisory Committee should continue to provide important consultation and evaluation, as well as serving as a catalyst for missional planning and for conversations across all expressions of this church regarding issues raised by LIFT;

To authorize the LIFT Advisory Committee to continue to fulfill these important roles in moving forward on the LIFT report and recommendations and the implementing resolutions adopted by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly, and to refer to it hereafter as the “LIFT II Committee”;

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to adjust as necessary the size of the LIFT II Committee in order to facilitate its ongoing work; and

To request that the LIFT II Committee continue to provide periodic progress reports to the Church Council regarding the implementation of the LIFT report, recommendations, and implementing resolutions and the work of the committee.

12. ECCLESIOLOGY OF A GLOBAL CHURCH TASK FORCE

Background:

At its October 2012 meeting, the Conference of Bishops requested that the Church Council establish a task force charged with reviewing the governing documents of this church for the purpose of addressing how this church can affirm and strengthen its self-understanding as part of the Lutheran World Federation.

Church Council Action:

To receive with thanks and appreciation the recommendation of the Conference of Bishops regarding the creation of a task force to review the governing documents of this church, including but not limited to Chapter 3 of the ELCA constitution, for the purpose of addressing how this church can affirm and strengthen its self-understanding as part of the Lutheran World Federation;

To authorize the creation of a task force to review the governing documents of this church for the purpose of addressing how the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America can affirm and strengthen its ecclesiology and its self-understanding as part of the Lutheran World Federation, and to request

that the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary and the Liaison Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations of the Conference of Bishops, recommend to the Executive Committee of the Church Council persons to serve on such a task force;

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint the members of the task force, which will be known as the Ecclesiology of a Global Church Task Force, and which will undertake the responsibility of reviewing the nature and ecclesiology of this church in light of the past twenty-five years of significant developments in its ecumenical and global self-understanding and relationships; and

To request that Ecclesiology of a Global Church Task Force submit interim reports on at least a yearly basis to the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council and submit its final report and recommendations to the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council in sufficient time for possible action at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

13. ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Background:

The Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8A) nominated Mr. Nick Barber, Erie, Pennsylvania, to fill a vacancy to a term on the Church Council ending in 2015. This nomination is in keeping with the representation principles of this church in the specified category of a young adult.

Church Council Action:

To elect Mr. Nicholas Barber, Erie, Pennsylvania, to the Church Council for a term ending in 2015.

OTHER ELECTIONS

Church Council Action:

To elect to the board of directors of The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society to a three-year term that will expire in 2015: Mr. Neil L. Gulsvig;

To elect to the board of trustees of Lutheran Medical Center to three-year terms expiring in 2015: Mr. Andrew Burch, Rabbi Robert G. Kaplan and Ms. Kathleen Regan;

To elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc., to three-year terms expiring in 2015: The Rev. Keith D. Hohly and Ms. Kathy Patrick;

To elect to the board of directors of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. to four-year terms expiring in 2017: Ms. Karen Sumner and The Rev. Robert G. Wollenburg;

To re-elect to the board of directors of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. to a four-year term expiring in 2017: The Rev. Linda Boston;

To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia to a three-year term expiring in 2015: The Rev. Charles S. Miller;

To elect to the advisory council of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary as part of Lenoir-Rhyne University to one-year terms expiring in 2013: The Rev. Susan R. Briehl, Mr. Kenneth L. Childs and The Rev. Sheila L. Elliott (United Methodist Church);

To elect to the advisory council of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary as part of Lenoir-Rhyne University to two-year terms expiring in 2014: The Rev. Lowell G. Almen and Ms. Doris M. Underwood;

To elect to the advisory council of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary as part of Lenoir-Rhyne University to three-year terms expiring in 2015: Ms. Jacqueline A. Bussie, Mr. William B. Horne, II and The Rev. William B. Trexler; and

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a six-year term expiring in 2018: The Rev. Kathryn A. Kleinhans.

MEMORIALS AND REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEES

Church Council Action:

To appoint the members of the Memorials Committee for the 2013 Churchwide Assembly:

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| 1. Ms. Susan W. McArver (9C) – <i>co-chair</i> | 8. Pr. Kendra A. Mohn (4D) |
| 2. Pr. Stephen R. Herr (8D) – <i>co-chair</i> | 9. Pr. Arhiana S. Shek (5E) |
| 3. Mr. Mark E. Johnson (1B) | 10. Sister Krista M. Anderson (3D) |
| 4. Ms. Christine P. Connell (7C) | 11. Ms. Arielle Mastellar (3F) |
| 5. Bp. Elizabeth A. Eaton (6E) | 12. Mr. Anthony (Tony) Rhodes (1B) |
| 6. Bp. Ray Thiemann (4E) | 13. Mr. Charles R. Pietscher (5D) |
| 7. Pr. Jane A. Buckley-Farlee (3G) | 14. Mr. Mark L. Winzler (7B); and |

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Memorials Committee for the 2013 Churchwide Assembly as needed.

Church Council Action:

To appoint the members of the Committee of Reference and Counsel for the 2013 Churchwide Assembly:

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| 1. Mr. William B. Horne II (9E) – <i>co-chair</i> | 8. Pr. Glen A. Vanderkloot (5C) |
| 2. Ms. Louise A. Hemstead (5L) – <i>co-chair</i> | 9. Mr. Charles E. Poston (9A) |
| 3. Mr. Paul G. Archer (6A) | 10. Mr. Carl A. Teinert (4E) |
| 4. Pr. Vicki T. Garber (6C) | 11. Ms. Yolanda A. Tanner (8F) |
| 5. Bp. Martin D. Wells (1D) | 12. Ms. Susan M. Berg (1B) |
| 6. Bp. Jon V. Anderson (3F) | 13. Ms. Amanda A. Briggs (2A) |
| 7. Pr. Randy Skow-Anderson (3D) | 14. Ms. Addie J. Butler (7F); and |

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Reference and Counsel Committee for the 2013 Churchwide Assembly as needed.

14. 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EVANGELICAL (LUTHERAN) REFORMATION

Background:

The Office of the Presiding Bishop has been evaluating ways that this church can observe the 500th anniversary of the Evangelical (Lutheran) Reformation in 2017. A proposal was submitted for consideration by the Church Council at its November 2012 meeting.

Church Council Action:

To receive with appreciation the proposal from the staff of the churchwide organization to observe the 500th anniversary of the evangelical (Lutheran) Reformation;

To endorse the proposal detailed in Exhibit J, Part 8, and to authorize the Executive Committee to appoint a steering committee, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, to continue planning; and

To request that a progress report be brought to the Conference of Bishops at its March 2013 meeting and to the Church Council at its April 2013 meeting, in order for a report to be forwarded to the Churchwide Assembly in August 2013.

The proposal regarding observation of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation (Exhibit J, Part 8) is attached to this report.



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

*A Conversation Regarding the Election of Churchwide Officers
For use during Orientation meetings with voting members to the ELCA
Churchwide Assembly- August 2013*

Welcome/Purpose of Gathering

- Introductions
- Agenda and timeline for meeting
- Election of a churchwide officer as discernment and call process

Worship and Bible Study/Dwelling in the Word

- Responsive Prayer (ELW p.328); hymn
- *Always Being Made New* – the theme for the 2013 Churchwide Assembly and the 25th anniversary of the ELCA
 - Read 2 Corinthians 5:15-21
 - Discuss the following questions:
 1. What does it mean that “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”
 2. What does it mean that God has entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation?
 3. How does this text inform the ELCA and its Leadership at the time of its 25th anniversary and 2013 Churchwide Assembly?
 - Where do you see that happening?
 - Where are we falling short of God’s intention for us?

The Church We Are

- What is the ELCA?
 - background piece
 - ELCA constitutional provisions (ELCA Constitution, Chapters 3, 4, and provisions 8.11 and 8.16)
 - Research and Evaluation data
 - Plan for Mission and strategic priorities

- Discuss the following questions:
 1. What are we able to do better as congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization working together for the sake of Christ's mission than we could do separately?
 2. What difference does that make as we consider the future that God intends for us and how we will respond?
 3. What might we have done better as a church over the past six years?
 4. How can the ELCA be an effective "ambassador for Christ" in the next six years?
 5. What should be the primary priorities of this church in the next six years?

Overview of Ecclesiastical Ballot Process Officer Elections

- Explanation of ecclesiastical ballot process for officers elected by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

The Leadership We Seek

- Responsibilities of ELCA churchwide officers (ELCA Constitution, Chapter 13, constitutional provision 5.01.h.)
- Discuss the following questions:
 1. What are the spiritual gifts and leadership attributes that are the most important for a presiding bishop and a secretary of the ELCA in the next six years?
 2. What difference does that make as we consider the future that God intends for us and how we will respond?
 3. What does this conversation suggest about the gifts that we are needing for future leadership in this church?

Concluding Comments/Invitation to Further Conversations

Closing Prayer



Office of the Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

MEMORANDUM

To: Church Council
From: David Swartling
Date: November 1, 2012
Subject: Elections and the transition to a triennial Churchwide Assembly

BACKGROUND

In August 2011, the Churchwide Assembly adopted amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to provide for triennial meetings of the Churchwide Assembly rather than biennial meetings. These amendments resulted from practical and philosophical considerations and were spurred by the recommendations of the report of the *Living Into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (LIFT) Task Force*. The Churchwide Assembly overwhelmingly voted in favor of the new approach, but it also recognized that the change would mean many adaptations in traditional practices and follow-up evaluation of many issues. One such complex issue involves the election of persons to serve on boards, councils, committees, and other governing bodies elected by the Churchwide Assembly. Historically, members of the Church Council, the boards of separately incorporated ministries, and churchwide boards and committees were elected to one, non-renewable six-year term, with approximately one-third of the group elected each biennium.¹ Recognizing the need for an alternative approach as well as transition plans, the Churchwide Assembly adopted continuing resolution 12.31.A11 to address the issue of elections. This continuing resolution provides as follows:

To implement the transition to a triennial cycle, the Church Council shall make recommendations to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly regarding elections to the Church Council, boards, and committees. This continuing resolution shall expire upon adjournment of the 2013 Churchwide Assembly.

This memorandum responds to continuing resolution 12.31.A11 and provides background and recommendations for elections to the Church Council and to the boards of trustees for separately incorporated ministries that have their trustees elected by the Churchwide Assembly. (This includes

¹ The 2011 Churchwide Assembly eliminated program committees for churchwide organization units, so they need not be addressed in this memorandum.

Portico Benefit Services (“Portico”), The Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers or “AFP”), and the Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (“MIF”).

CHURCH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Currently, the composition of the Church Council, which is the board of directors and interim legislative authority of the ELCA, is provided for and described in Chapter 14 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. Constitutional provision 14.31 addresses the composition of the Church Council as follows:

The voting members of the Church Council shall consist of the four churchwide officers, the chair of the Conference of Bishops, and at least 33 and not more than 45 other persons, elected by the Churchwide Assembly.

Constitutional provision 14.32 specifies that “Church Council members shall be elected to one six-year term and shall not be eligible for consecutive reelection.”

Chapter 19 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* provides nomination criteria and information. For example, continuing resolutions 19.21.B11 and 19.21.C05 prescribe a method of obtaining nominees for Church Council positions by Synod Assemblies on a rotating basis. Under these provisions, synods are paired and 11 synods each Churchwide Assembly cycle provide pairs of nominees in designated categories for election by the assembly. For the 2013 Churchwide Assembly, these pairs of nominees already have been provided or have been promised by the designated synods.

The Churchwide Assembly in 2011 also passed amendments to ELCA constitutional provision 19.02 addressing the nomination and election of persons to the Church Council other than those nominated by synods. The amendments, in pertinent part, provide as follows:

The members of the Church Council shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly. In preparation for the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council shall determine how this church’s commitment to inclusive representation will affect the next election to the Church Council. For 33 of the council members, the Nominating Committee shall invite each eligible synod to submit suggested nominees and shall then nominate persons who fulfill the categories assigned by the Church Council. With respect to the other nominees, the Church Council shall review its size and composition and take into consideration the experience and expertise of existing members and synodical nominees as well as the needs of the council in seeking to fulfill its duties and responsibilities. Based upon this analysis, the Church Council shall instruct the Nominating Committee to provide nominations to specific categories for the remaining positions. Excluding the churchwide officers, there shall not be more than two

members of the Church Council from a synod. The Church Council shall have at least two members from each region. . . .

The analysis of the composition of the Church Council is taking place, as well as evaluation of the ways to address the transition to the triennial assembly. In this analysis, a number of underlying assumptions have been made. First, the commitment to the representational principles in Chapters 5 and 6 of the *ELCA Constitution* will be maintained. Thus, the composition of the Church Council shall consist of at least 60 percent lay persons, of whom as nearly as possible 50 percent are male and 50 percent are female. Ten percent of the council will be persons of color or whose principal language is other than English (ELCA constitutional provision 5.01.f). In addition, a goal exists to have ten percent of the Church Council be youth and young adults (ELCA continuing resolution 6.02.A09).

The second underlying assumption is to minimize the creation of special governing document amendments to implement the transition to triennial Churchwide Assemblies. To the extent possible, existing terms will be recognized, existing procedures for vacancies will be followed, and no one-time governing document amendments will be proposed.

With this background, the following approach is recommended to implement the transition to triennial Churchwide Assemblies with regard to the Church Council.

A. 2013 Churchwide Assembly

In accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 14.31, the Office of the Secretary recommends the election of 22 or 23 persons at the Churchwide Assembly in 2013 for positions on the Church Council. These will consist of 11 synod positions, for which nominations already have been or are being submitted, and an additional 11 - 12 positions, for which persons will be nominated by the Nominating Committee. These will be for six-year terms, except a proposed bylaw amendment provides that youth members will be elected for three-year terms.

These elections would provide for a Church Council of 49 - 50 persons for the two year period from 2013, following the Churchwide Assembly, until August 31, 2015. At that time, the terms of the 11 members of the class of 2015 would expire, bringing the Church Council to 38 or 39 members (approximately the current size).

Based on allocations already provided to synods, the composition of the 11 - 12 members of the Church Council nominated by the Nominating Committee would be as follows:

- Youth at least 2 positions
- Young adults at least 1 position
- Clergy up to 4 positions
- Other up to 5 positions

This group will need to include at least four persons of color, including a clergy person of color and/or whose primary language is other than English and a lay male person of color and/or whose primary language is other than English.

In addition, a preliminary evaluation of expertise and experience reflects the need to nominate persons with the following areas of expertise/experience: legal; development/fund raising; program evaluation; global mission work; congregational development; financial. It is also recommended that at least one of the clergy positions be designed for someone under the age of 30.

Because there is not a Churchwide Assembly in 2015, members of the Church Council whose six-year terms are scheduled to end that year will end their service as of August 31, 2015, in accordance with a proposed amendment to ELCA constitutional provision 19.02.

It is recommended that the Church Council be asked to examine these issues and to bring further recommendations to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly regarding the size, composition, and election of members to the Church Council. These recommendations should include assessment of whether the size of the Church Council should be altered, whether the current method of allocating positions to synods should be continued, whether the terms of members of the class of 2017 should be allowed to expire in a manner similar to the end of terms of the class of 2015, and related issues.

VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Carlos Pena was elected to a second six-year term by the Churchwide Assembly in 2009. His term is scheduled to end in 2015, a year when there will not be a Churchwide Assembly.

A recommended amendment to ELCA constitutional provision 13.32 will address the issue of the term of the vice president. The proposed amendment states: "The vice president shall be elected by the Churchwide Assembly to a six-year term and serve until a successor takes office."

The addition of the last clause to this provision means that Vice President Pena, if he is willing, would serve until the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, when he is either re-elected or until a successor is elected. The current term would end on October 31, 2016, under this provision.

SEPARATELY INCORPORATED MINISTRIES

Portico, AFP, and MIF are separately incorporated ministries governed by boards of trustees elected by the Churchwide Assembly. Provisions in the *ELCA Constitution* that address these separately incorporated ministries ("SIMs") are in Chapter 17.

Following the Churchwide Assembly in 2011, each of these separately incorporated ministries, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary, undertook an evaluation of their governance in light of the change to a triennial Churchwide Assembly cycle. After substantial work and discussion, a similar set of proposed amendments to Chapter 17 were developed and approved by the boards of these organizations. Copies of the proposals are contained in the proposed amendments which will be considered at the meeting of the Church Council in November 2012. The significant aspects of these amendments are as follows:

- Trustees will be elected by the Churchwide Assembly for three-year terms with the possibility of two consecutive re-elections. This approach recognizes the desire of some of the separately incorporated ministries to have trustees serve for more than six years because of the steep learning curves required for trustees. Although not included in the amendments to the governing documents, these proposals also presuppose a process for trustee evaluations to be conducted by each SIM at least once every three years.
- Up to two trustees may be elected from churches with which the ELCA is in a relationship of full communion, provided that they are not from the same denomination. Several of the separately incorporated ministries advocated strongly for such an amendment, both as a way to strengthen the boards and as a way to build bridges to full communion partner churches.
- The amendments clarify that the composition of the board as a whole (including full communion partners) must comply with the representational principles in the *ELCA Constitution*.
- The amendments clarify that the terms of new trustees begin at the commencement of each board's meeting following the Churchwide Assembly.
- Proposed amendments also address issues of nomination designed to improve board governance and trustee recruitment. One proposed amendment provides for nomination "of at least one" person for each position to be elected by the Churchwide Assembly, instead of a requirement for two nominees, as currently exists. This eliminates a problem that sometimes occurs when only one nominee can be identified or when one nominee declines or becomes ineligible and there is insufficient time for the Nominating Committee to identify a second nominee. Another proposal provides that for full communion partner positions and for trustees who stand for re-election, only one nomination will customarily be provided. (Of course, there is the possibility of nominations from the floor.)

These proposed amendments also will necessitate transition provisions. The following process addresses trustee transition issues for separately incorporated ministries:

- Trustees whose terms expire in 2013 will complete their service. Each board will determine if any members of the class of 2013 will be allowed to stand for election to a three-year term.
- Trustees will be elected at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly for three-year terms. Given the anticipated sequencing of amendments to governing documents and elections, it is anticipated that the elections could include up to two persons who are members of full communion partner churches.
- At the expiration of the terms of trustees whose terms expire in 2015, vacancies will be created. The separately incorporated ministries may request the Church Council to fill these vacancies for one year, until elections can be held at the Churchwide Assembly in 2016. In this scenario, trustees whose terms expire in 2015 may be eligible for election by the Church Council to these one-year terms. Alternatively, the Church Council, at the request of the SIM board, could elect someone else to serve for that year. Such new trustee would be eligible for re-election to a three-year term at the Churchwide Assembly in 2016.
- Trustees whose terms are scheduled to expire in 2017 may be approached in 2016 and given the option to resign so that they may be eligible for election to a three-year term in 2016. Trustees who do not resign will have their terms expire in 2017, as scheduled, at which time the Church Council, at the request of the board, may elect someone to fill the position until the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

- Elections will be held at the 2016 Churchwide Assembly for all trustee positions, except those positions held by trustees whose terms expire in 2017 and did not resign.

In evaluating these scenarios, it is important to point out that the ELCA governing document provisions for each of these separately incorporated ministries provide ranges for board sizes that were adopted in 2011. These provisions provide flexibility in determining whether to fill unexpired terms or to adjust their board size from time to time based on the needs of the organizations.

CONCLUSION

This memorandum provides the recommendations regarding elections called for in continuing resolution 12.31.A11, in order to implement the transition to a triennial Churchwide Assembly. Because these recommendations include proposed governing document amendments, the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee will bring a recommended action to the Church Council at this meeting to endorse the proposals, to recommend adoption by the Churchwide Assembly of the proposed amendments, and to instruct the Nominating Committee to nominate individuals to the Church Council and the boards of trustees of separately incorporated ministries as provided herein.

**A Proposal
for Observance in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
of the 500th Anniversary of the Evangelical (Lutheran) Reformation**

November 10, 2012

1. Purpose

As it observes the 500th anniversary of the evangelical (Lutheran) Reformation of Christian teaching and practice in sixteenth-century Europe, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will initiate and participate in activities that serve the ELCA's evangelical vocation — that is, both its mission and its identity — in all its relationships.

Relationships

North American. The religious and cultural experience of North America is the primary context for the ELCA's vocation. It will be the primary point of reference for thinking and planning the ELCA's observance of the 500th anniversary. The manifold relationships within the ELCA as well as relationships with other Lutherans, ecumenical partners, other religious communities and the larger American public provide abundant opportunities to make an evangelical witness that draws on the heritage and continuing vitality of the evangelical Lutheran reformation.

Global. At the same time, the ELCA has important and rich relationships with communities around the globe: the Lutheran World Federation, its member churches and other Lutheran communities; other Christian churches and communities through the World Council of Churches, in international dialogues, including those with the Catholic and Orthodox churches, and other alliances; other religious communities and their representatives; and institutions and alliances with whom the ELCA collaborates in activities that “promote justice, relieve misery, and reconcile the estranged ... further human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace in the world ... and minister to people in spiritual and temporal needs” (4.03.g, l, m). All these relationships provide opportunities to join others in observing the continuing significance of the evangelical Reformation for our shared work.

2. Goals

In all these relationships activities will be “an occasion for the joyful celebration of the power of the Lutheran witness to the gospel and at the same time a space for the self-critical acknowledgment of failures in faithfulness and of the continuing pain of division among Christians” (LWF Strategic Plan).

Within the ELCA, but also in activities with others, the ELCA will honor its stated principles of being an inclusive and interdependent church (5.01.b-c).

Specifically, the ELCA will:

- a. continue to encourage and support participation in the observances planned by the Lutheran World Federation for 2015-2017 and the EKD Luther Decade (2008-2017);

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- b. encourage and support initiatives by congregations, synods and other institutional expressions of the ELCA that observe this anniversary;
- c. collaborate with ecumenical partners and others, where and when appropriate, in activities that promote a witness of the Gospel that is both repentant and evangelical;
- d. initiate and support activities throughout the entire ELCA ecology that serve the ELCA's evangelical vocation without dictating a uniform plan or assuming responsibility for planning or approving all local, regional, or other collaborative initiatives that begin in 2013 and continue beyond 2017;
- e. plan and implement a schedule of featured events from the 2016 churchwide assembly to October 31, 2017, that allow ELCA members to participate in observance of the 500th anniversary through worship, learning, service.

3. Activities

Although the ELCA churchwide organization will not have responsibility for planning and dictating the observances of every ELCA congregation, synod, and associated institution, it will accept responsibility for the following activities.

- a. Receiving and distributing information about activities and initiatives planned throughout the ELCA and in its relationships with others, and inviting participation and support of these activities (including the Luther Decade and LWF observance).
- b. Planning and implementing a schedule of featured events from the 2016 churchwide assembly to October 31, 2017, that allow ELCA members to participate in observance of the 500th anniversary through worship, learning and service.
- c. Convening and supporting initiatives in the areas such as and convening teams to lead the work for these initiatives. (See Appendix A)

4. Planning Team

The ELCA churchwide organization will be responsible for convening a planning team and providing appropriate resources (staff and funding). This planning team will represent the diversity of ELCA membership and institutional ecosystems. It will also meet the ELCA's representational commitments. A planning team will be appointed by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Conference of Bishops. The planning team may include:

- 1-2 Church Council members
- 1-2 synod bishops (including a bishop from Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relationships liaison committee)
- Director for Theological Resources and Networks, Office of the Presiding Bishop

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a representative of Augsburg Fortress Publishers
representatives of ELCA seminaries and colleges, including a member of the Association of Teaching Theologians
representative of ELCA social ministry agencies
additional members

5. Provisional Timeline

Nov 2012	Consideration of proposal by ELCA Church Council
Dec 2012	Appointment of planning team
Jan 2013	Planning team meets Initial communications plan or principles adopted; continuing work on implementation
Spring 2013	Initiative teams convene and begin work
Spring 2013	Initial reports to COB and Church Council
Summer 2013	Report to Churchwide Assembly, beginning of communications plan (coordination with 25 th anniversary?)

Appendix A: Sample “Trajectories” or Initiatives (NOT decided; for illustrative purposes only)

1. Bible

Book of Faith project members interested in continuation convene to develop a trajectory related to broader availability and evangelical use of the Scriptures.
Possible outcome: new translation or edition with Lutheran study resources available in all electronic formats (iPad apps, etc.).
Possible target: September, 2022 (500th anniversary of Luther’s “September Testament,” a translation of the New Testament in the language of the people)

2. Catechesis

After initial consultation with bishops, Augsburg Fortress staff and others, a team convenes to develop a trajectory related to the renewal of catechesis for all ages in the spirit of Luther’s Small and Large Catechisms.
Possible outcome: multiple and diverse new approaches and resources for learning the catechism (Commandments, Creed, Lord’s Prayer). Age-specific, including adult, and inter-generational; text, visual, experiential approaches; individual, small-group, congregation-wide, secondary and college-level resources; etc.
Possible target: 2029 (500th anniversary of publication of Luther’s catechisms)

3. Vocation and Service

Focused consultation with multiple groups and initiatives moving toward an initiative to rectify one of the most prominent indictments of Luther and the Lutheran movement: “quietism” with regard to social injustices and reform.

Possible outcome: a renewed statement and expression of engagement with socio-economic life of society that draws constructively from an evangelical Lutheran theology and respects both diverse political convictions and diverse passions and gifts for engagement.

Possible target: 2025 (500th anniversary of the Peasants Revolt and Luther's marriage, a milestone in reframing Christian vocation).

4. Persons of other faiths

Consultation with Ecumenical and Inter-religious staff and networks moving toward initiatives to rectify a second prominent set of indictments of Luther and the Lutheran movement: schism in the Christian community; persecution of other Christians and Jews (and Muslims?).

Possible outcome: broadened implementation of current agreements and undertakings ("reception")

Possible target: 2021 (500th anniversary of Luther's excommunication, etc.)

5. Other possible trajectories or initiatives

Planting 500 congregations. Possible target: 2017.

Lutheran theology in conversation with other traditions: Catholic, Reformed, "Radical," etc.

Possible targets: May, 2018 (500th anniversary of Heidelberg Disputation), 2020 (500th anniversary of Luther's three reformatory treatises) or 2025 (500th anniversary of Luther's debate with Erasmus re free/bound will).

Missiology. Rectify the allegation that there is no missiology inherent in Lutheran witness of the Christian faith.