

Report of the Presiding Bishop

Since my term began just over a year ago, I have preached in fifteen congregations; visited fifteen synods, six seminaries and three colleges; installed eight bishops and one seminary president; attended five synod assemblies; met with twenty-one organizations; presented at thirty-one conferences; brought the greetings of our church to the Central Conference of Reformed Rabbis and to the Islamic Society of North America; participated as a panelist at the Conference of Interfaith Understanding/Dialogue at ELCA Colleges and Universities and preached at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Hermeneutics Consultation held at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. I have been to Canada, Switzerland and Indonesia. I have had the great—and sometimes exhausting—privilege of seeing this church in action in local communities, in synods, across the country and around the world. The ELCA shows up.

During our time at this Church Council meeting, you either have received reports or will hear about the work we do together—our work with unaccompanied refugee children coming to the U.S. from Central America; humanitarian relief in Gaza, Syria, Iraq, Liberia and Sierra Leone; the Campaign for the ELCA; the Theological Education Advisory Council; the Ecclesiology of a Global Church Task Force; LWF updates; ecumenical and interreligious developments; the 500th anniversary of the Reformation; Word and Service; the Mission Support Think Tank; Ministry to and with Same Gender Families; the officers and the general counsel. And of course we will pray, worship and deliberate.

Rather than reporting on all of the above, I want to tell you a little about what I am thinking after a year in office. The four emphases—We Are Church, We Are Lutheran, We Are Church Together, We Are Church for the Sake of the World—have resonance across this church. I want to organize my work and the work of the churchwide organization around them. A clear sense that worship is at the heart of what we do together and at the heart of our worship is the crucified and risen Christ is the essential foundation for our life and work together. Being clear about our confessional, theological Lutheran identity facilitates our witness to the gospel and makes possible authentic ecumenical, interreligious and secular engagement. Being church together is a manifestation of the unity we have in baptism as the body of Christ. It is an alternative to the cult of the individual that is prevalent in our culture. It is a source of strength. It is scriptural. Being church for the sake of the world is the natural extension of being church, Lutheran, church together. We get to participate in God's renewing and healing work in the world God so loves.

I am still developing these emphases and am very aware that one year in office is too short a time to effect change. There is major work that needs to be done in all four areas. Two of them—We Are Church and We Are Church Together—are claiming my immediate attention. Twenty-six years ago, we came together in what we hoped would be an interdependent ELCA. Some days we are. Some days we are not. There are a lot of stressors that open fissures in our interdependence—tightening finances, declining membership, encroaching secularism, social issues, even Sunday morning soccer leagues. And then there is the surrounding culture of uncivil discourse and suspicion that would sort us into opposing camps. These stressors were at work years before the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly and our decision as a church to welcome the gifts of partnered gay people into rostered ministry. And I am sensitive to many in this church who see our 2009 decisions as a reason to celebrate and not as the church's 9-11, but the years following that Churchwide Assembly saw the breakdown of our interconnectedness. Many in the Conference of Bishops felt that the churchwide organization and the Church Council did not acknowledge the pain and abuse suffered by bishops and synod staffs in their efforts to keep the church together. Many in the churchwide organization felt that the Conference of Bishops did not acknowledge the struggle of the staff to keep their part of this church's ministry going while grieving the loss of over one hundred colleagues in the reorganizations following 2009. Pastors and congregations lost thousands of members, members they had known and cared for and loved. Trust between the three expressions was badly damaged. Sadly, we turned on each other instead of turning to each other.

I have already been asked about what I want my legacy to be. After I recovered from laughing at such a ridiculous notion, I did think about it. Of course I would like us to introduce millions of people to Jesus. Sure I would like to see thousands of new ministry sites and gobs of money. But maybe the most important thing I can do, and we can do together, is to help us find our way back to each other. The Conference of Bishops gathered in retreat last March. The senior leaders of the churchwide staff will have a similar daylong retreat this December. I believe systems theory is a valuable tool in our journey back together. Reconvening the three leadership tables or some combination of Church Council, churchwide staff and the Conference of Bishops will also be helpful. A willingness to see that we are all in this together, that we all want our dear church to be an instrument of God's reconciling work, will be even more valuable.

We are church. We do many wonderful things as the church. We feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked and visit the sick. But why do we do these things and how are we able to do them? I have often said we are not the American Cancer Society. We are not an NGO. We are "living stones...built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood" (I Peter 2:5). We are *ekklesia*—an assembly called out from the world and to God.

There is nothing wrong with employing the best practices of the business world. Heaven knows we could use some rigor in our planning, executing and measuring of the work we do. But before we can do any of that, before the strategic planning, before the goal setting and the program implementation, we need to be about tending our individual and corporate spiritual life and do that by attending to God. As a church, we need to engage in basic spiritual practices—prayer, silence, corporate worship, scripture study, giving, service. These are ways God comes to us. These disciplines create a space in us, and openness, for God's spirit. They chip away at our willfulness. They make us aware of God's presence in our lives. The Church Council has already incorporated these practices into its meetings. We have all heard the sentiment of those not in church on Sunday morning, "I'm spiritual, but not religious". I used to dismiss that as lazy. But these people might be on to something. I think we can be spiritual *and* religious.

Goal one of the churchwide organization's annual plan states, "Congregations are growing, vibrant in worship life and diverse, and worshippers increase their support and engagement in God's mission locally and globally." If we measure how effective we have been by counting congregations, members and mission support, all of the trends would show decline. Maybe we are not measuring the right things. Maybe God is calling this church to deepen its relationship with the Source of our life. On All Saints Sunday, we heard the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). Jesus declares the poor, the mourning and the meek "blessed". These are people without hope, without joy and without any possibility of participating in the abundance of creation. To the dominant culture these are the marginalized. They would seem to be disgraced. They have no status. They are also utterly dependent on God. Could it be that the church is being moved out of its culturally privileged status into a new posture of dependence? Is the church being pruned? And is this pruning a kind of grace? How do we measure that?

Thank you for your service to God and this church. I am grateful that we can think together and imagine what God is calling this church to become.

Report of the Executive for Administration

Strategic Planning

Churchwide Organization 2014-16 Operational Plan Goals:

- 1. Congregations are growing, vibrant in their worship life and diverse, and worshippers increase their engagement in and support for God's mission, locally and globally.**
- 2. Members of this church are better connected with who we are as church, and relationships across this church's wider ecology are deepened and strengthened for evangelical witness and service in the world.**
- 3. Impoverished and vulnerable people, locally and globally, achieve sufficient, sustainable lives and are accompanied in addressing the challenges of poverty, injustice and emergencies in their communities.**
- 4. Lay and rostered leaders are grounded in Lutheran theology and competent to serve the church we are becoming, and the leadership profile reflects this church's aspiration for cultural, generational and socio-economic diversity.**
- 5. Leaders across this church are working together on strategies to address future sustainability of the ELCA, and the churchwide organization has a growing and sustainable base for mission.**
- 6. The churchwide organization is effective in fulfilling its roles and functions on behalf of the ELCA and further develops an organization culture characterized by strong leadership, accountability, competent and motivated staff, effective systems and learning.**

At the April 2014 ELCA Church Council meeting, you approved a new planning and reporting framework for the churchwide organization's operational plan. This framework focuses the council's attention on the strategic intent of plans (purpose, goals, objectives and important results), and the Administrative Team's (the officers, unit executive directors, and the executive for administration) oversight of the detailed annual operational plan. (See Appendix 1.)

The first cycle of the 2014-16 Churchwide Operational Plan reporting is completed. We experienced greater integration of planning and active use of the plan across the organization. The Administrative Team received the first management report for this plan in August. We identified accomplishments, setbacks, the work being done on cross-cutting commitments, and resource and risk analysis.

During this first cycle, the senior leaders (staff who are direct reports to the unit executive directors) processed the Administrative Team's feedback and discussed learnings from the planning process and implementation of the plan. In September, they along with the Administrative Team reviewed and updated our churchwide organization's Leadership Covenant in light of the Operational Plan and our ongoing strategic thinking about how we lead together. (See Appendix 2.)

The major report on progress of the operational plan for your review will be presented at the April 2015 Church Council meeting. This report will address progress towards the goals and objectives based on information on the headline result indicators and other strategic achievements/setbacks, cross-cutting commitments, relationships, risk analysis, and resource analysis.

At this meeting, the executive directors of Congregational and Synodical Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement will present oral reports to share important aspects of their work and engage in generative conversation for your input. This is a new approach for reporting on the units' work. Your feedback will be important on the critical areas presented and on how this type of reporting and engagement meets your needs and expectations.

The Planning and Evaluation Committee will review a draft Risk Management Grid that identifies key areas from the first Operational Plan Management Report sent to the Administrative Team in August. (See Appendix 3.) This is a new tool for use in the organization. The areas noted will be folded into the larger Enterprise Risk Management Grid guided by the Offices of the Secretary and Treasurer to be developed in 2015.

Last spring, you noted during a discussion time about the planning and reporting framework that you would like a dashboard or other tool to see progress on the plan. The Headline Result Indicators in our plan do not all lend themselves to a classic dashboard display. However, I have included some slides with this report to give you an update on progress towards key objectives. (See Appendix 4) These include the following:

- Goal 1 – worship attendance, race/ethnicity of active participants and new starts;
- Goal 2 – God’s Work, Our Hand’s Sunday participation and member appreciation for belonging to the ELCA;
- Goal 3 – World Hunger income;
- Goal 4 – Young Adults in Global Mission; and
- Goal 5 – [Please see the Treasurer’s Report.](#)

As we have baseline data for comparisons, we will continue to show progress visually.

We are progressing on the development of the 2015 Annual Plan. The goals and objectives remain as stated in the Strategic Intent Plan. Major programs and activities are being adjusted to reflect the changes in operations by work that has been completed and what is now expected in 2015. You will receive for your information a copy of the 2015 Annual Plan at your April meeting.

Budget

Building a sustainable resource base for the work assigned to the churchwide organization remains a challenge. It is hoped that the Mission Support Think Tank will bring proposals that will assist in our decision making for how the ministries of this church are supported, especially the work assigned to the churchwide organization. The Budget and Finance Committee will receive the 2015 Expenditure Authorization proposal at this meeting. An area of challenge is the Capital Budget. We are proposing a multi-year approach to assist in balancing the budget. Other areas of concern include rising IT maintenance and general infrastructure cost. We are working with staff to minimize these costs and purchase services where that would result in a reduction in costs.

Units have been good stewards of financial resources and are underspending to budget at this time in the year. We expect to stay in an underspending pattern through year-end. Please see the [Treasurer’s Report](#) for more detailed information regarding the budget and current financial status.

General Administration

In the Research and Evaluation area, we are doing a major review of the supply and demand for clergy in this church. We are trying to look at every synod and nearly all congregations to estimate the needs for the future, including the ability of a congregation to afford a pastor either full-time or part-time. We should have the inventory completed early in 2015.

We are pleased to bring to this meeting of the Church Council revised Personnel Policies for approval. Noted changes include, but not limited to, the following areas: avoiding conflicts of interest, employee introductory period, summer flexible schedule, social media, weapons policy, and preventing workplace violence.

We are excited about our pilot Leadership Development Program. The program was launched on September 29-30, 2014. A second session was held October 28-29, 2014. The program duration is for eight months. There is a cohort of 15 participants, representing staff across the organization. The program focus is to provide participants the understanding and tools to be effective ELCA and senior

churchwide organization leaders. Program modules include: Leading Lutheran, Effective Management, Leading Strategically, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Leading Teams, Drive for Results, Leading Change and Leading Large Projects. Participants are assigned coaches who communicate with them and provide support throughout the eight-month program.

As of September 30, 2014, the distribution of the domestic staff for the ELCA churchwide organization was 60 percent female, 40 percent male; 67 percent white, 33 percent persons of color; 31 percent clergy and rostered lay, 69 percent lay. Sixty-seven percent of the staff is Chicago-based, 33 percent are deployed. On September 30, 2014, there were 373 employees - 271 regular full-time, 12 regular part time and 90 term contract.

For the Mission Investment Fund (MIF), the Women of the ELCA (WELCA) and Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM), the separately incorporated ministries under the umbrella of the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies, the demographic distribution was:

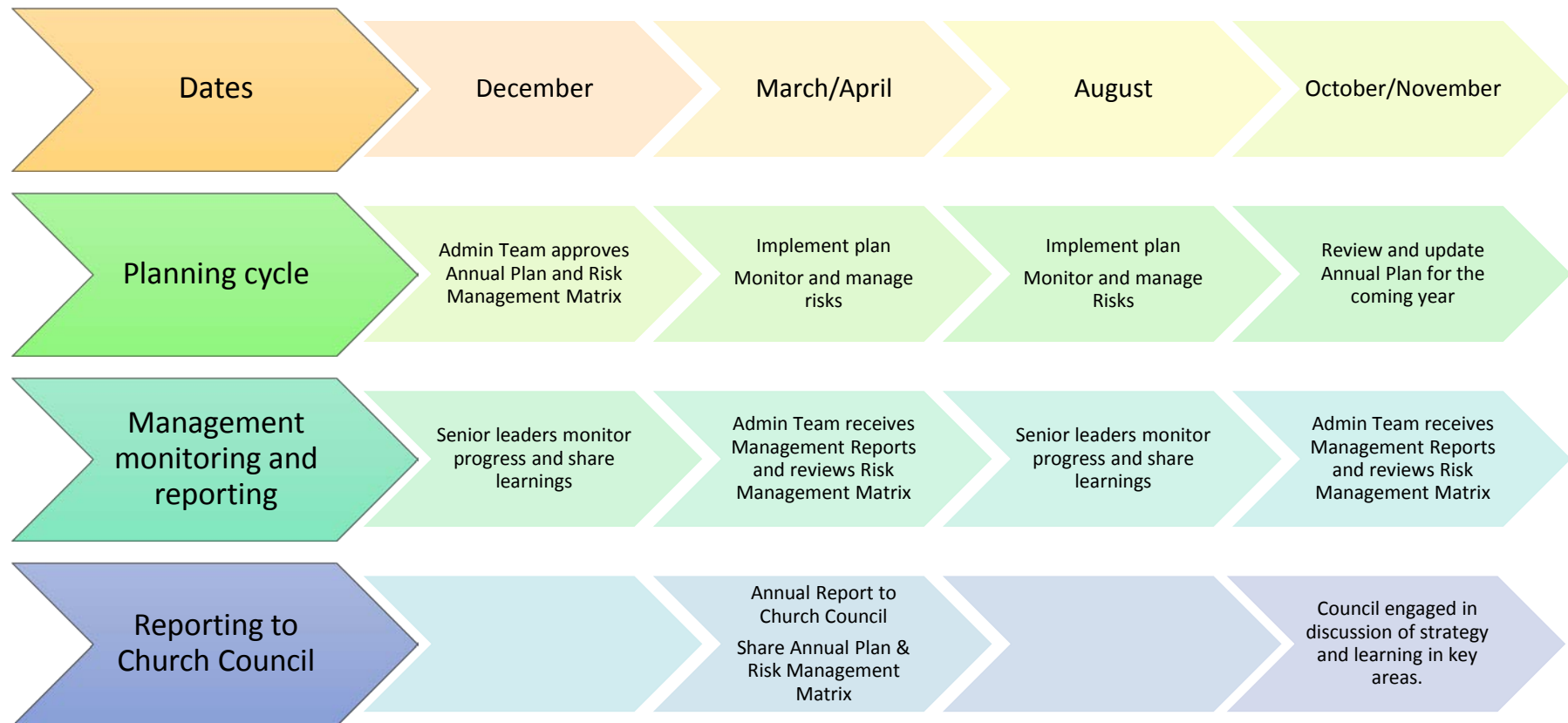
MIF: 65 percent female, 35 percent male; 69 percent white, 31 percent persons of color, 15 percent clergy and rostered lay, 85 percent lay. On September 30, 2014, there were 48 employees in the MIF.

WELCA: 100 percent female; 30 percent white, 70 percent persons of color; ten percent lay rostered lay; 100 percent Chicago-based. On September 30, 2014, there were 11 employees in WELCA.

LMM has three employees – two white, one person of color; one rostered lay, two lay; two Chicago-based, one deployed.

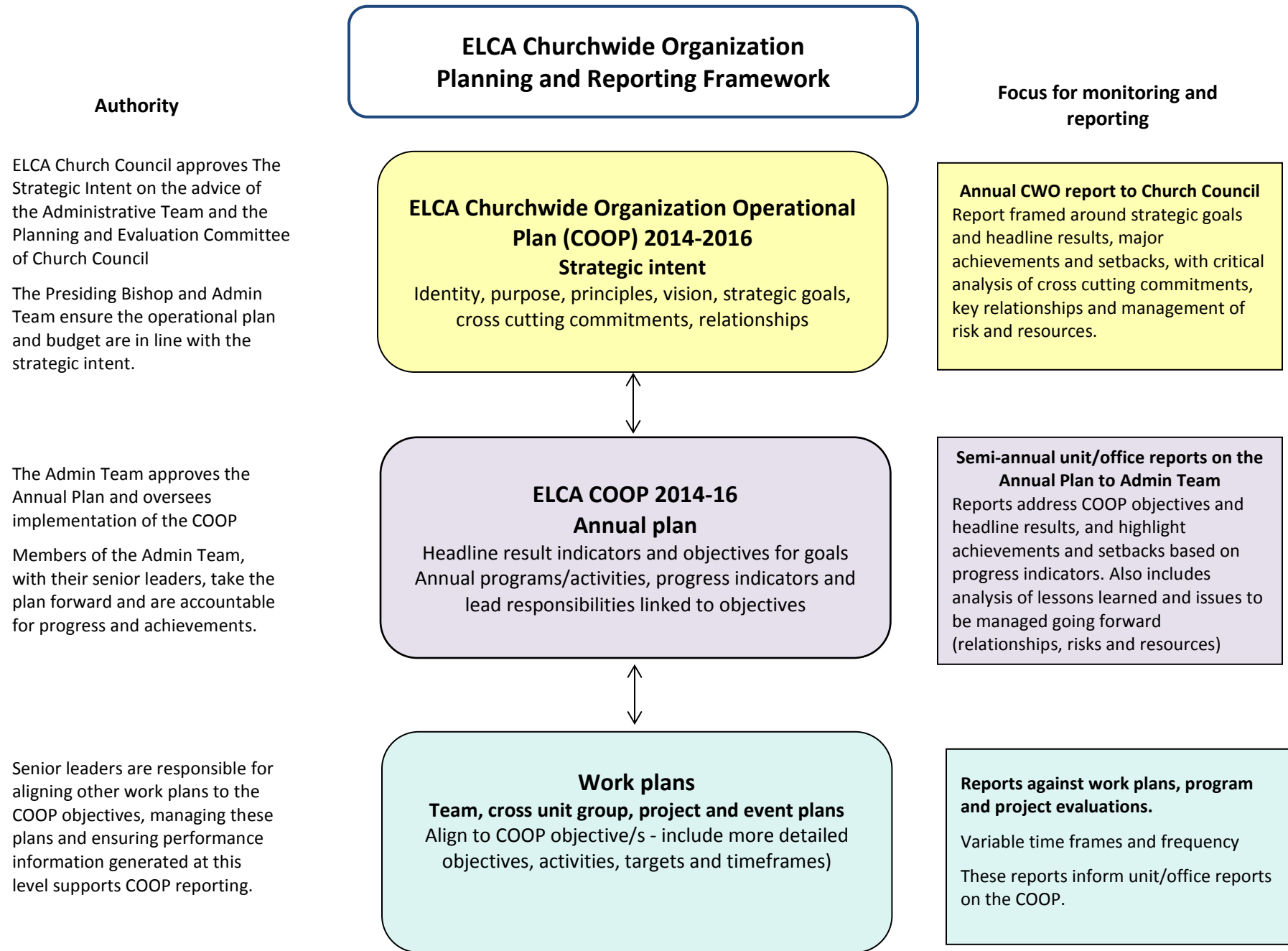
Finally, it is with deep sadness that we mourn the death of three colleagues since our last meeting: David Ullrich, Martin Smith, and Gloria Hooker. We give thanks for their life and service with us in this church. May the God of comfort look with compassion on all who mourn and grant them a sure trust in God's love.

Churchwide Operational Plan Annual Planning and Reporting Cycle



The Churchwide Operational Plan is in two parts - the Strategic Intent and the Annual Plan.

- ❖ The strategic intent covers a three year period, with a rolling annual cycle of operational planning and reporting.
- ❖ Annual reports to Church Council focus on progress toward the strategic goals and headline results, and management of risk and resources.
- ❖ The Planning and Evaluation Committee reviews reports ahead of the Church Council and brings their feedback to Council.
- ❖ Management reports focus on the Annual Plan and address progress, setbacks and learning in relation to objectives and major programs and activities. Budgets and risk management are aligned with the Annual Plans.



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
Leadership Covenant
Originated February 2011
Revised by Administrative Team & Senior Leaders September 2014

*Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed,
gathered, and sent for the sake of the world*

As leaders of the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we have been called in this church to do God's work with our hands, bringing our diverse backgrounds and talents for the proclamation of the Gospel and service to others. Consistent with the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions*, we are charged to be servant leaders in our words, life-style, and manner of leadership. We recognize our accountability to the Triune God, to the whole Church, to each other, and to the organization of this church in which we serve. (ELCA 5.01.h). Consistent with the Plan for Mission, we are committed to assist this church to bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God's mission in a pluralistic world.

We recognize and acknowledge that our responsibility as servant leaders and as stewards of the resources of this church means that we must work collaboratively and candidly in order to maximize our effectiveness. In order to facilitate our working relationships, we mutually covenant that we will treat one another as God's children and as co-workers in the ministry of this church. Specifically, we hold ourselves responsible to work together in the following ways.

We mutually covenant to:

- encourage, support, and pray for each other in our respective ministries and leadership roles
- communicate openly and candidly, as equals, on issues of mutual interest; listen actively to the opinions of others; and respect differences of opinion
- bring issues of importance to this church to the appropriate leadership tables for discussion and possible action
- make decisions collaboratively that are in the best interest of the churchwide organization and this church
- support decisions of this church once they are made to enable this church to speak with one voice on issues of mutual importance
- accept mutual accountability for matters brought for decision and acted upon by the Administrative Team
- commit our knowledge, intellect, and emotion to communal discernment and decision-making
- while being open, honest and transparent, maintain confidentiality of sensitive information
- develop and encourage the following leadership values: focus on the whole church; Lutheran orientation to grace and God's future; inclusion; relationship-building; and results-orientation
- develop and encourage the following leadership personal traits and style: imaginative and flexible; learning-oriented; high energy; stewardship; collaborative
- develop and encourage the following leadership skills and abilities: visioning; planning and leading; talent management; organizational savvy; and communication

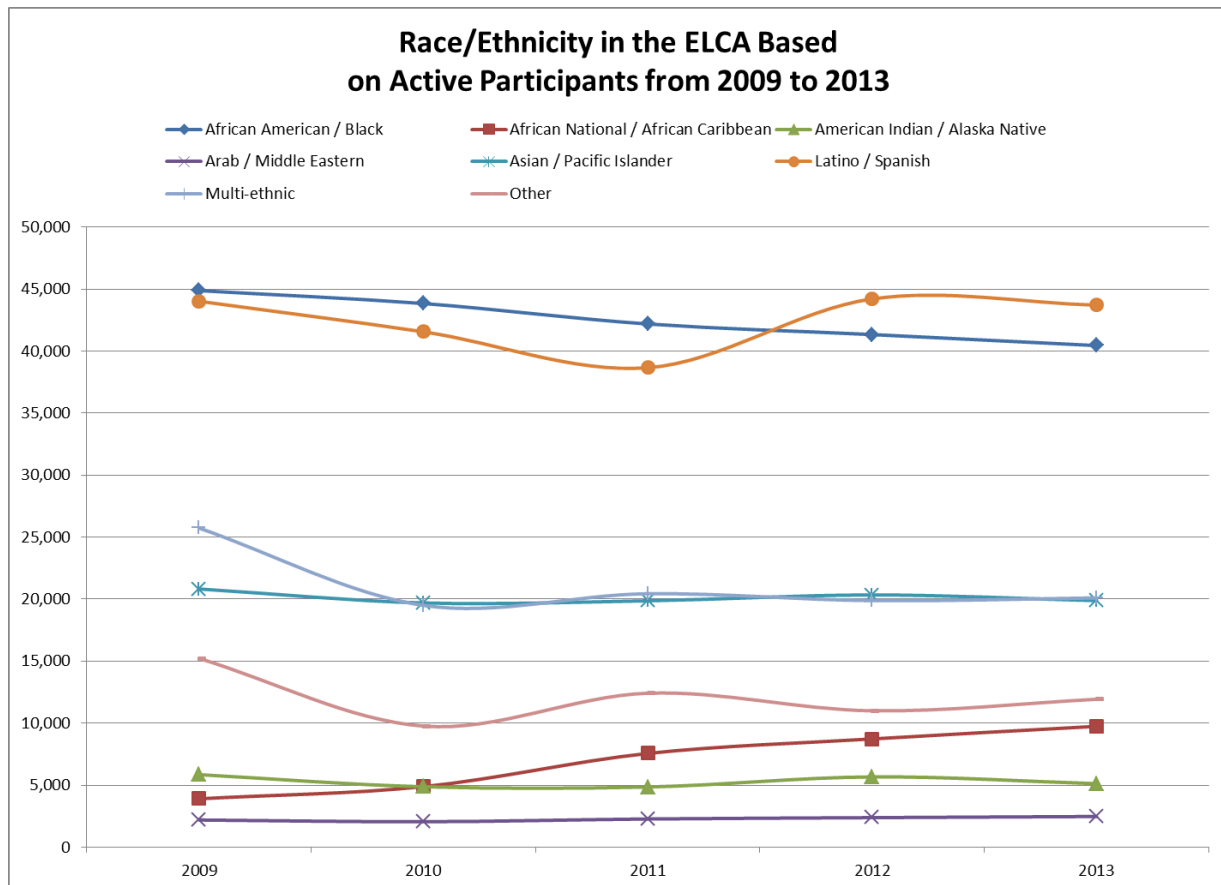
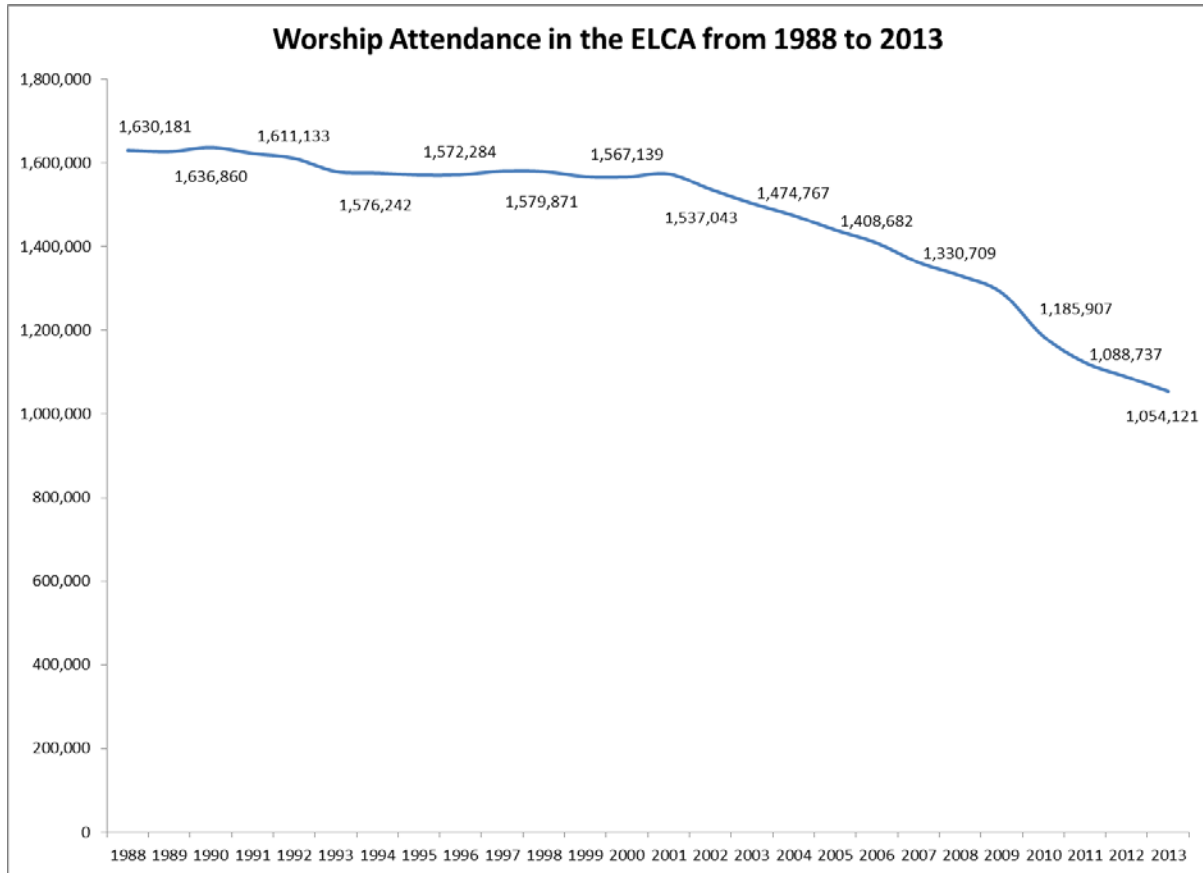


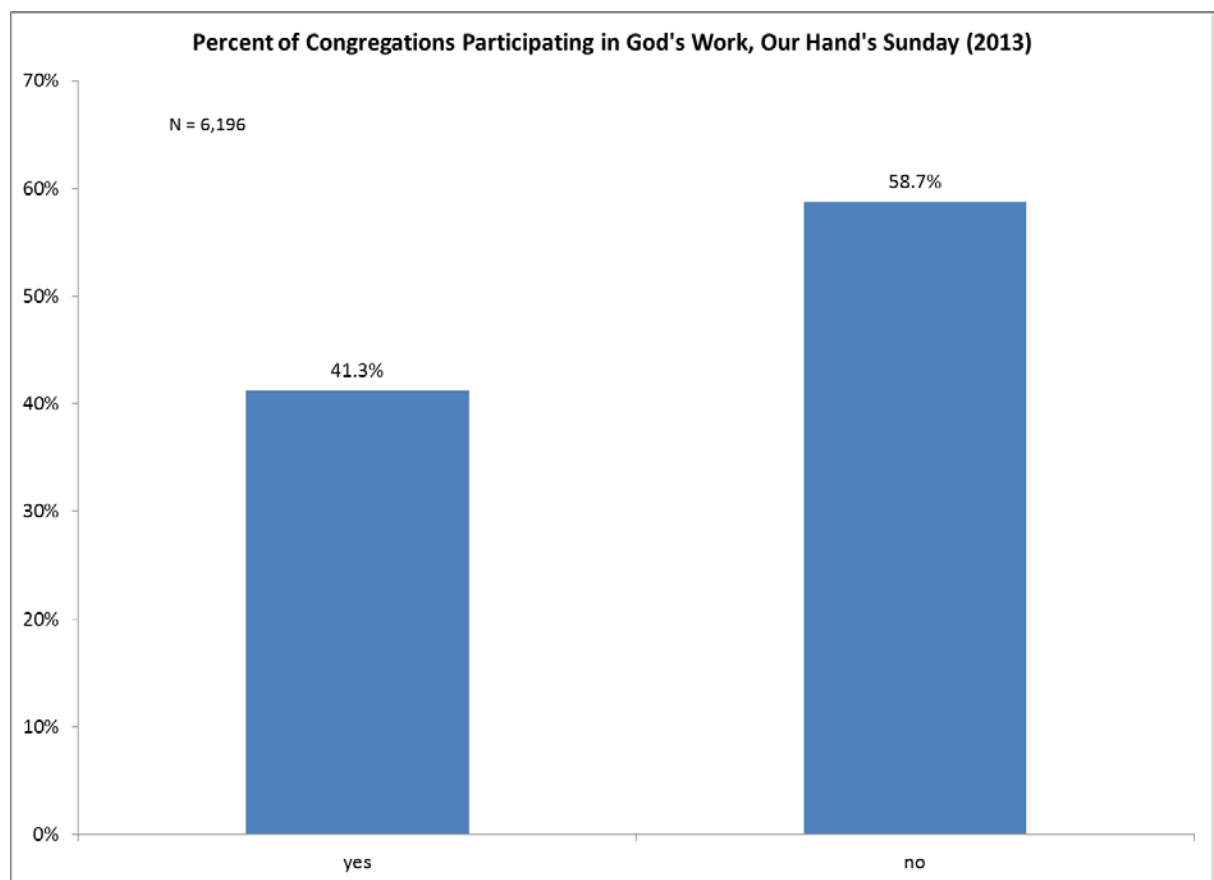
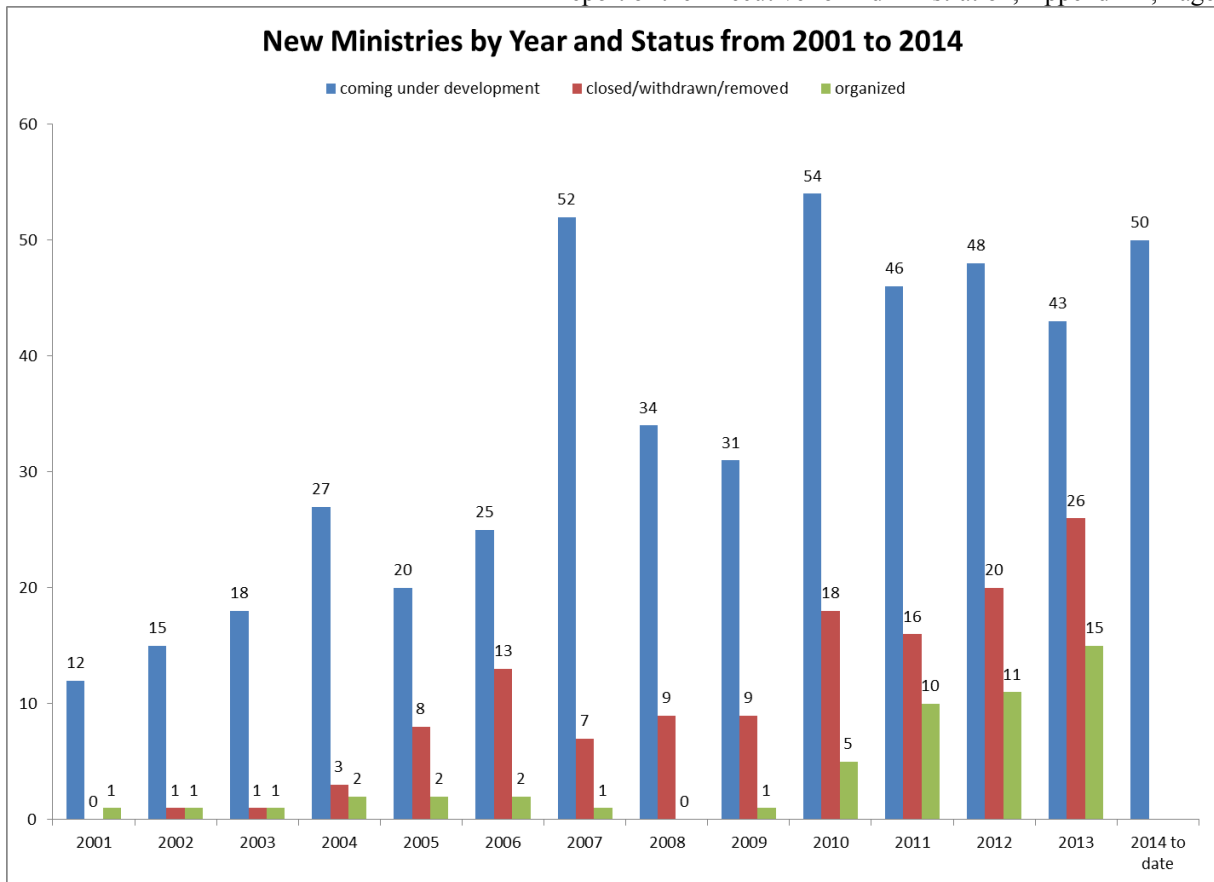
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

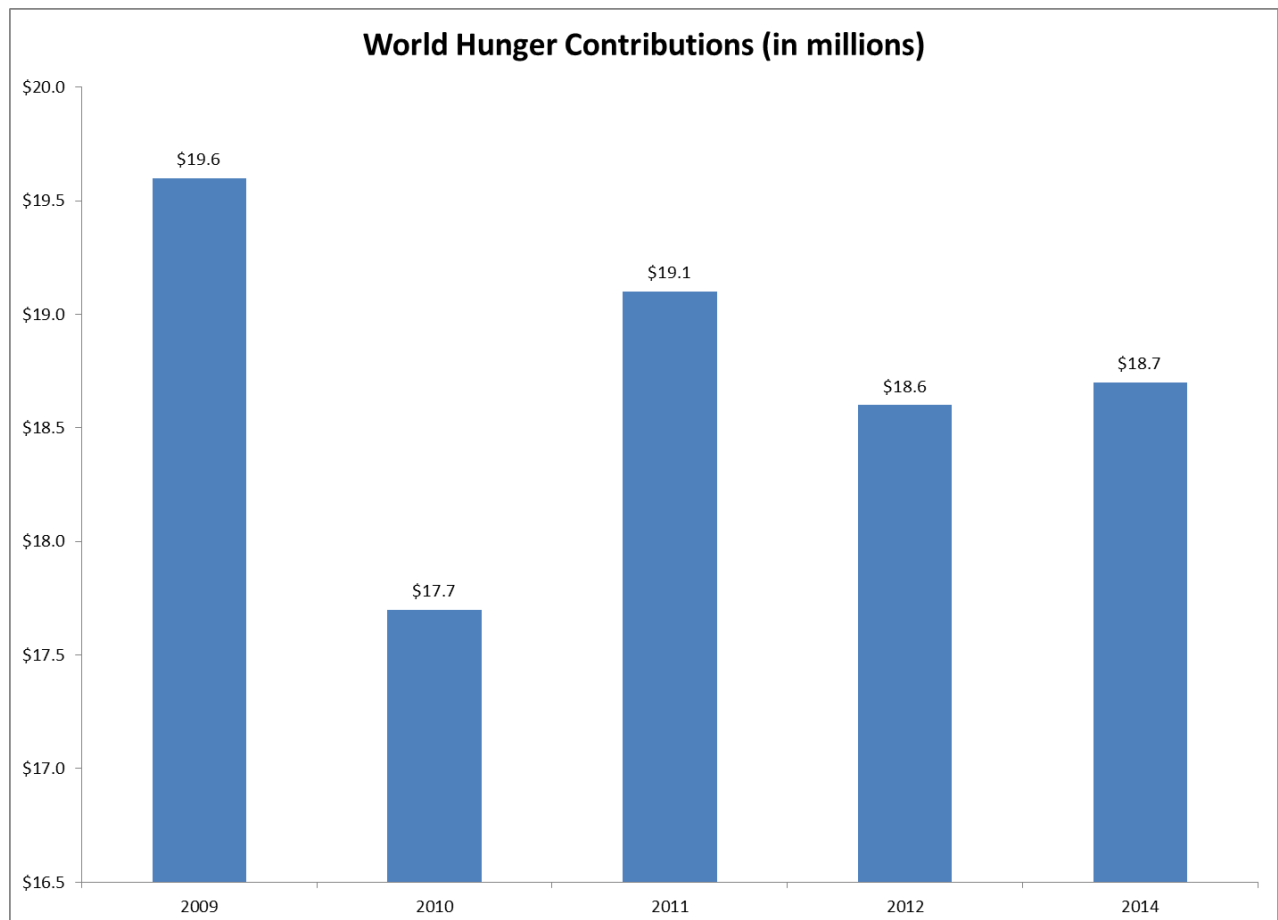
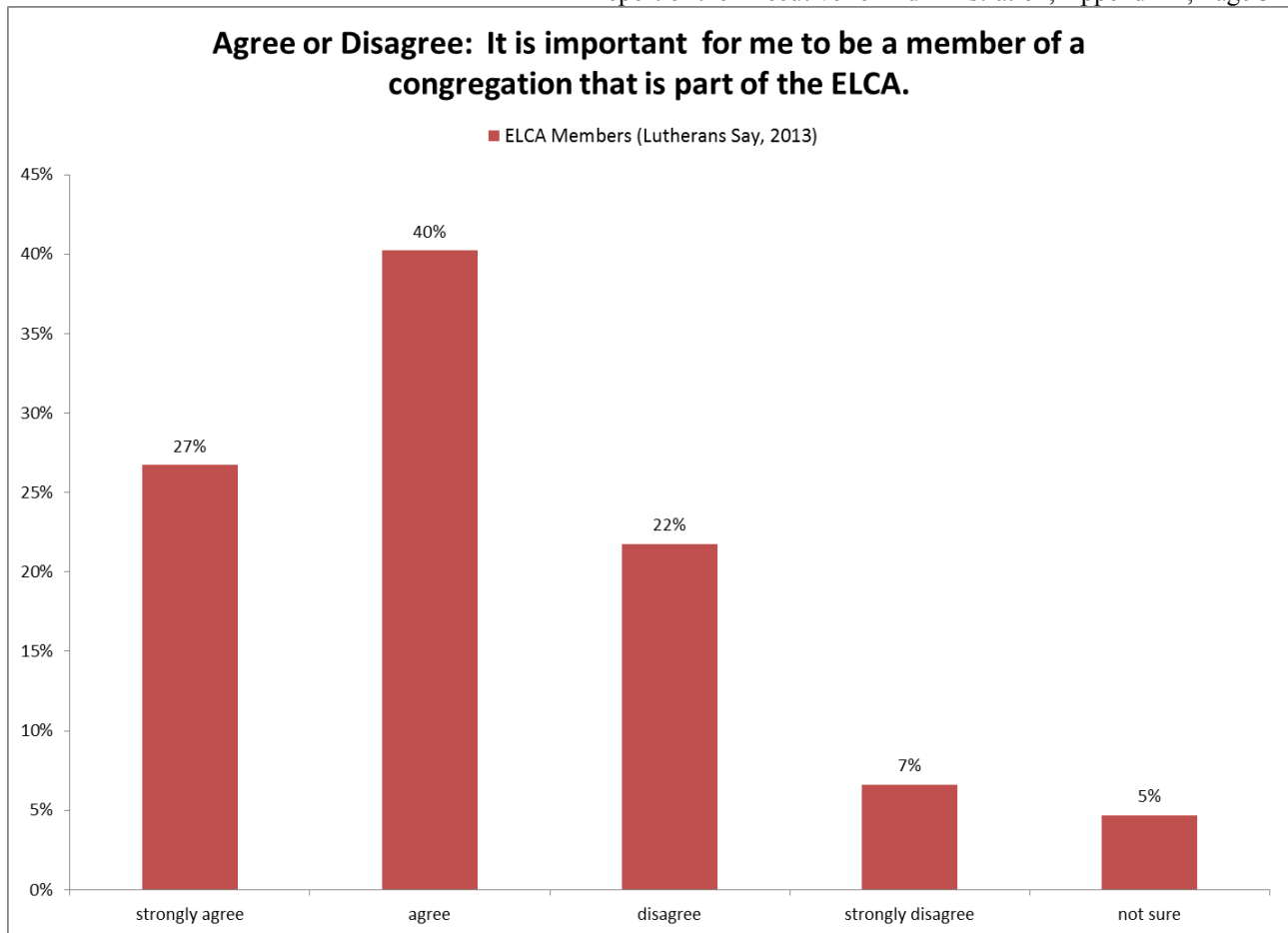
God's work. Our hands.

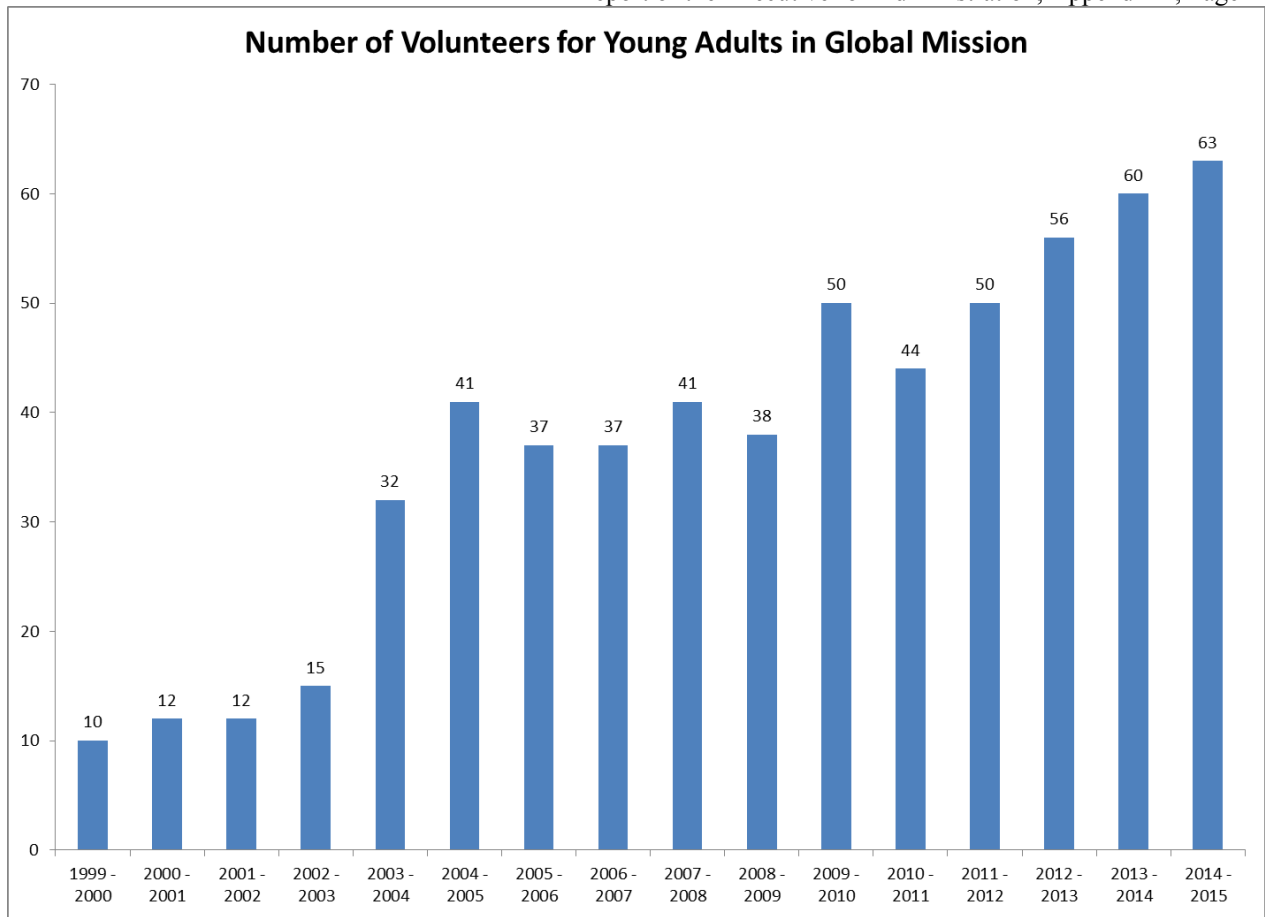
	Probability →	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely	Action	Staff Assigned	
Impact on the Churchwide Organization	Very High				decline in mission support	Mission Funding Team consults / works with synods	OB/MA (Bishop Eaton, Walter May, Margaret Payne)	
	High				increasing complexities of IT systems beyond capacity to internally manage systems	Purchase managed services and buy technology as a service	OT-IT (Linda Norman, Jon Beyer)	
			issues related to legal defense coverage due to the bankruptcy of Atlantic Mutual				monitor	OS (Rob Thoma and Phil Harris)
		confidential constituent data not adequately safeguarded once shared with synod and partners					make sure data shared restricts access to confidential information	MA-ECIS (Ala Rasoul)
	Moderate					rising IT maintenance and other infrastructure costs	work with units to maximize efficiencies and monitor costs	OB, OT (Wyvetta Bullock and Linda Norman)
					challenge of retaining qualified development staff		identify and apply best practices for retention	MA/HR (Christina Jackson/Rhondean Johnson)
					inadequate capital budget		remove selected IT items and use multi-year project approach; expect balance by 2016	OB, OT (Wyvetta Bullock and Linda Norman)
					impact of response to major disasters on other income streams		monitor income closely in 4 th qtr. Prepare contingencies as needed	MA (Christina Jackson)
			declining income for charitable gift annuity program				consult with gift planning and investment management company for recommendations to strengthen program	MA (Christina Jackson), OT (Linda Norman)
			not filling in a timely manner significant positions				work with recruiting firms	OB /HR(Rhondean Johnson)
	Low					lack of successful transition to new charitable trust program management	manage donor communication and successful implementation	MA and OT
					congregations' in communities with unaccompanied minors unprepared to engage		work with LIRS	CSM/GM (Stephen Bouman/Rafael Malpica)
			escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine jeopardizing the YAGM program			Ebola outbreak impact on Global personnel and the YAGM program	contingency planning	GM (Rafael Malpica)

Headline Indicators: 2014-2016 Churchwide Operational Plan









**ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
2014 OPERATING RESULTS SUMMARY
FOR THE EIGHT MONTHS ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2014**

The churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had net revenue and support under expenses of \$0.4 million in current operating funds for the eight-month period ended September 30, 2014. This is favorable to the period budget by \$4.6 million, but unfavorable by \$2.5 million compared to the eight months ending September 30, 2013.

Revenue totaled \$41.2 million for the eight-month period compared with \$44.9 million the previous year, a decrease of \$3.7 million or 8.2 percent. In addition, \$2.7 million in support was released from restriction or designation during the period. Revenue and support was favorable to the budget by \$1.0 million or 2.3 percent. Total revenue and support for the period was \$43.9 million, a decrease of \$2.5 million or 5.4 percent from the previous year. Expenses related to the current operating fund amounted to \$44.3 million, equal to the previous year. Expenses were below the authorized unit spending plans by \$3.6 million or 7.5 percent.

Income from congregations through synods in the form of Mission Support income for the eight months was \$29.8 million, a decrease of \$0.4 million or 1.3 percent compared to same period last year. Mission Support income was equal to the revised budget. The revised annual Mission Support budget for 2014 of \$48.0 million is \$0.8 million or 1.5 percent lower than the amount received in 2013.

Other unrestricted and temporarily restricted revenue and support available for budgeted operations of the church amounted to \$14.1 million compared with \$16.2 million in the previous year. Investment income of \$1.9 million and endowment distributions of \$1.9 million resulted in favorable variances to the year-to-date budget and to the prior year. Other income of \$2.8 million resulted in a favorable variance to the year-to-date budget but is unfavorable compared to the prior year. Income from Bequests and Trusts of \$1.3 million is unfavorable to the budget and prior year. Income from Vision for Mission was \$0.6 million and Global Church Sponsorship (including missionary sponsorship) was \$1.7 million for the eight-month period. Income from the Mission Investment Fund of \$1.2 million exceeded budget.

Total contributions to ELCA World Hunger for the eight months were \$8.7 million - favorable to the same eight-month period in 2013 by \$0.4 million. The ELCA Malaria Campaign received gifts of \$1.9 million and has raised \$12.9 million campaign-to-date. ELCA members and partners contributed \$3.3 million for Lutheran Disaster Response in the eight-month period, primarily in support of general undesignated programs. This compares to \$4.9 million in revenue for the same period in 2013, which included \$1.8 for response to domestic tornadoes and \$0.4 million for Hurricane Sandy.

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA has raised \$27 million to date in its five-year, comprehensive campaign, representing 16 percent of the total goal of \$198 million by January 31, 2019. In addition to results reported above, strong response to date has been in the areas of New Congregations, Fund for Leaders and Global Ministries.

Report of the Secretary

One year into this call, I am starting to feel some sense of being a part of the good work done by the staff of the churchwide organization and related organizations. This church is actively involved in many ways with issues confronting the church and the world. From responses to the Ebola crisis to the support of those working with unaccompanied migrant children, we are addressing the realities of the world in which we live. Within the church, we are an important voice in ecumenical and inter-religious dialogues.

Closer to the activities to which I have been called, we are regularly working with synods and bishops' staffs to address issues related to the roster of ordained ministers, lay rosters and roster of congregations. I remember standing before you last year and saying that we would have a revision of the Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Management of the Roster for you to approve at this meeting. That reflected my naiveté at the time. Further review of the manual suggests that a full revision of the document is required and will take longer to accomplish. Add to this the issues that will come from the 2016 Churchwide Assembly action on the Word and Service roster proposals, I suspect that this revision will not be ready for your action until after that assembly.

Congregational Annual Reports

Perhaps the simplest way to report the information from the 2014 Annual Reports of congregations is to say the trends of the past essentially continued in 2013. A trend that my predecessor noted is that the number of congregations filing reports has gone down to 7020 or 74.2 percent of our 9464 congregations. In 2012, we had 77 percent of our congregations reporting. I continue to hope that we could get that number over 80 percent. We will be working on form design and with you on how to encourage annual reporting of this information.

I want to especially thank the Southeastern Minnesota, Northern Great Lakes and La Crosse Area synods for achieving a 100 percent response rate from their congregations. The Grand Canyon, Central/Southern Illinois, Northeastern Iowa and Greater Milwaukee synods had over 90 percent of their congregations respond. Thank you to the bishops and leaders of these synods.

The 2013 reports show that we are a church with 3,863,133 baptized members. This is a decline of 87,791, or 2.2 percent, from 2012. There were 69 fewer congregations in 2012. One change this year is that only 16 were from disaffiliation. The remaining were either closures or mergers. There will continue to be a few disaffiliations, but the primary loss of congregations now occurs because of diminished size or vitality of congregations.

We reported for a couple of years that congregational expenses were higher than congregational income. In 2013, congregational income exceeded congregational expenses due primarily to a reduction in debt and payments on debt. Savings and endowments increased by \$37.5 million and \$90 million respectively. The value of congregational real estate was reported at \$18 billion, an increase of \$804 million in one year. From a financial perspective, our congregations are healthier. From a membership perspective, we see fewer members giving larger amounts to maintain the current system. The question of sustainability needs to be asked.

One other observation from this year's report is that mission support to synods and churchwide is down \$2.1 million. Giving to benevolences other than mission support is up \$2.1 million. Our congregations and members are maintaining their benevolence levels. They are changing where they are sharing these dollars, and the synods and churchwide expressions are not the recipients of these benevolences as in the past.

One final observation is the number of "statistical adjustments" show a loss of 152,366 baptized members. We might argue that these "back door" losses might be an area where greater attention could be given. At the time of pastoral change it is not unusual to count the numbers from a different perspective and give them a reality check. If these members who are leaving our congregations could be

given some attention, we could have a health checkup on the life of the congregation and the church. This would seem to be an area where some follow-up work might give us a better picture of what is going on around and among us.

2016 Churchwide Assembly Voting Member Allocation

We amended Bylaw 12.41.11 of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly. The result of this amendment is reflected in [Church Council Election Grid](#) document in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee section of ELCA Community. The bylaw also permits the Church Council to allocate up to 10 additional voting members. In the past, this was done to insure the multicultural representation of the assembly and to encourage lay members to be elected from some of our smaller synods. I am proposing that the council allocate seven additional voting members for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. This would mean that each synod would have at least six voting members. To accomplish this, the following synods would receive additional member/s:

- Alaska – 1
- Arkansas Oklahoma – 1
- West Virginia Western Maryland – 1
- Slovak Zion – 2
- Caribbean – 2

I am proposing that these members be treated as “formula” members and that synods should apply the representational principles to electing these members. This allocation of additional members will come as an action from the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee.

Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline

With the adoption of Provision *C15.03 of the *Model Constitution for Congregations*, we moved the issue of congregational member discipline into the discipline processes of this church. [Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline](#) currently identify the conduct and behaviors of congregations and rostered leaders that might call for a disciplinary response. Adding congregational members to the process of the church requires that the nature of offenses that might result in member discipline be identified. The “redlined” and “clean” versions of the proposal from the Committee on Appeals is in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee section of ELCA Community. Part of this review by the committee raised the issue of whether Chapter 3 of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* should be identified as part of the faith confessed by this church, so you will find proposed amendments to the current language deleting references to Chapter 3.

I would offer the observation that there has been reluctance on the part of some congregations to adopt this amendment. It should be noted that the previous process allowed the appeal of the congregational decision to the Synod Council. The authorization for the Synod Council to receive this appeal was removed from Chapter 20 of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*. Congregations that have not adopted this amendment are left with the final decision without a venue for appeal.

The discipline hearing committee recently impaneled in the Northwestern Ohio Synod requested through their hearing officer, Pastor Lowell Almen, that we further define the terms “sexual misconduct” and “publically accountable” in Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline. This request is being shared with the Committee on Appeals for further consideration. This is to let you know that the Committee on Appeals could have additional change recommendations for the April 2015 Church Council meeting.

Responses to referrals from the Churchwide Assembly

Two resolutions were referred to the Office of the Secretary by the 2013 Churchwide Assembly. The first requested that the constitution be changed to refer to either the state or commonwealth. Currently all references are to “the state of ...” and four of the states refer to themselves as “commonwealths”. This resolution was presented by a pastor from Pennsylvania. It is the opinion of the secretary that this change does not need to be made at this time. The constitution of the United States refers only to states and not to states and commonwealths. The website for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (pa.gov) self-identifies as the “Keystone State”. While it is appropriate to refer to the Commonwealths of Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky, it is not standard practice to do so when referring to them along with states that are not commonwealths. All commonwealths are states.

The second referral related to establishing a two-term limit for the officers of this church. In surveying synod bishops, vice presidents and secretaries, I learned that 18 synods have term limits for bishops, 37 have term limits for vice presidents, 30 have term limits for secretary and 27 have term limits for treasurer.

In response to the question, “Do you believe your synod would favor or oppose a two-term limit for churchwide officers?” the response was 33 percent in favor, 22 percent oppose and 45 percent not sure. The comments section noted the strength of having new ideas and new perspectives as a reason for term limits. Loss of experience and corporate memory were the most common negatives noted. Several comments were made about an election as a form of term limits.

While there was some enthusiasm expressed for this concept, there was also some strong opposition. This issue has also been the subject of synod memorials three times in the life of this church. On all three occasions, the request to establish term limits was declined by the Churchwide Assembly.

I am therefore not recommending that we amend the constitution to establish two-term limits for the officers of this church. I will be working with a group from the Executive Committee to look at churchwide officer election processes. I am not anticipating that term limits will be part of that discussion.

Timeline for Referrals from Synod Council Resolutions

The Executive Committee has referred two Synod Council resolutions to the Office of the Secretary. The first is from the Grand Canyon Synod and requests that a provision be added to the ELCA constitution to allow associate members to have the privilege of voting in congregational meetings where they hold associate membership with certain limitations. This proposal will be part of the review of the constitutions in anticipation of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. Early conversation would not see this provision added as written to the ELCA constitution. A provision could be considered in the Model Constitution for Congregations. The time line for this would have a proposal ready for the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee to review at its April 2015 meeting. A proposal could be recommended to the Churchwide Assembly at the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council.

The Metropolitan New York Synod has asked that language requiring a report of the financial status of a congregation be part of the annual report to the annual meeting. This also will be reviewed as part of the overall review of the constitutions in preparation for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. The timeline would call for review by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee at its April 2015 meeting. Any proposal for amendment would be part of the proposed amendments acted on at the November 2015 Church Council meeting.

Conclusion

It is always important to note that the work of the Office of the Secretary is accomplished by a very good, hardworking staff. They, like the rest of the staff of the churchwide organization, are committed to the work of this church. It has not been an easy year for the Office of Secretary staff. On July 1, 2014,

David Ullrich died after battling cancer. His loss has been felt in the whole organization and especially in the legal department. We have a new Associate General Counsel who has accepted the position. As he brings his current legal practice to a close, we are respecting his request to not announce his name until he has had opportunity to inform those with whom he currently works. Phil Harris may be able to share this information at this coming meeting. We will keep you informed.

As you will be in the building on Friday and Monday this time, I hope you will have the opportunity to introduce yourselves to the Office of the Secretary staff. You will obviously be in contact with the event planning staff. Please come down to the other end of the 11th floor and meet this good group of dedicated people.

This first year has been a very good year from my perspective. We have some significant challenges facing this church. I look forward to working with Bishop Eaton, the members of the Church Council, staff of the churchwide organization and the Conference of Bishops in responding to God's call to face these challenges. Thank you for your important role in leading this church.

Report of the Vice President

David said further to his son Solomon, "Be strong and of good courage, and act. Do not be afraid or dismayed; for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished. Here are the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God; and with you in all the work will be every volunteer who has skill for any kind of service; also the officers and all the people will be wholly at your command." I Chronicles 28: 20-21

Have you ever been given a task and said to yourself, "You've got to be kidding." Maybe it sounded good to begin with, but upon further examination, you began to think it was way beyond your knowledge and expertise.

I remember feeling that way in 2003 when I was first elected to the position of Vice President of the ELCA. I mean, after all, what did I know about national churchwide stuff other than my term on the ELCA Church Council? Once the election was over and reality set in, I was pretty scared about what I had just committed myself to do.

There was a learning curve, for sure, but I gathered up my faith and courage, and through many prayers, I started getting the hang of things and the years ahead of me did not seem so intimidating. I cannot imagine how Solomon felt with the task of building God's temple before him – and this task was going to take a lot longer than a six-year term to complete! But like Solomon, the truth that kept me going, and still does, is that God is with me. If I am doing God's work, I know He will be with me and not let me fail.

Solomon took up the challenge, and the temple was built. Surely, in the twenty years of building, there were times when Solomon wanted to push the task aside when other problems demanded his attention. After all, Solomon had a kingdom to run, just like we *all* have our demands and distractions, like, say, maybe a business to run.... He probably wondered at times if he would live to see its completion. Through faith, Solomon had the courage to persevere.

We have been charged to build God's temple – a place of safety where all of his children can be fed and nurtured. This temple is the world God gave us. We are its builders and keepers, not only of the environment, but of its inhabitants as well. The opportunities abound. We must meet the challenge of building God's temple with strength and courage, knowing that God is with us along the way. Everywhere I go on behalf of the church, I see examples of people rising to the task of building this temple. They are ordinary everyday folks like me, but they are doing extraordinary things. As you read my report, I am sure you will see what I mean.

In April, the week following our council meeting, I returned to Chicago to attend a meeting of the National Leadership Team for the ELCA Malaria Campaign. As part of this team, I am privileged to see how our members crossed the globe to offer help to people living in dire situations. I am grateful for the work individuals, congregations and synods have achieved, the leadership that has arisen in our synods, and the stand our church has taken against a serious disease that is not only treatable, but also preventable. I see that real progress has been made not only in reducing the cases of malaria but also giving hope through medication and services to those who are afflicted by it. We also continue to celebrate Lutheran generosity throughout our church as the campaign has raised \$12.6 million of a goal of \$15 million. Thanks to all who have made approaching this goal possible. The team continues its good works and my wife, Diane, and I are proud to be a part of the national team.

Spring brings synod assemblies of which I attended three: the Northeastern Minnesota, the La Crosse Area and the Metropolitan New York Synod assemblies. I am always honored to attend assemblies as a representative of the ELCA. I love hearing what people in different parts

of the country are doing to act on our calling, tackling tough issues to make the world a better place for all God's children. I presided over the bishop elections in all three of the assemblies I attended. All three elections called for different versions of the ecclesiastical ballot, and all three presented challenges. I was quite impressed with how serious our members are in electing our church leaders. I am even more impressed at the number of folks who are willing to take up the challenge of such a leadership position. We are blessed to have a choice among so many different servants of God who have many different gifts. That is indeed something to be thankful for!

At the end of June, I traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, to attend the Central Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The WCC is an organization of Christian leaders from 110 countries and territories, representing over 500 million Christians through its 345 member churches and organizations. Dr. Ulysses Burley from Chicago and I were elected to serve seven-year terms on the Central Committee last November when we both attended the WCC's 10th Assembly in Busan, Republic of South Korea. The Central Committee of the WCC is made up of 150 members from all regions of the globe. The focus of our meetings remains the renewal of our churches' commitments toward Christian unity, as well as solidarity with churches in conflict situations. Countries where churches' work for justice and peace is being prioritized include the following: Israel, Palestine, Syria, Nigeria, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Strategies were also developed to promote churches' work for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula. The need for stronger engagement from young adults in the ecumenical movement was also stressed. The Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC General Secretary, highlighted the significance of ecumenical, inter-religious and ecclesiological dialogue, as well as Christian mission. He cited the need to enhance support for refugees and displaced people, as well as efforts from the churches in addressing issues related to HIV and AIDS.

A number of statements were also adopted by the Central Committee. One statement focused on promoting a nuclear-free world. Another statement addressed the current situation in Mosul, Iraq, urging the international community and United Nations agencies to ensure humanitarian assistance to all vulnerable communities. The third statement addressed continuing with expressions of solidarity with those working for peace in Israel and Palestine. You can read the statements in their entirety at www.oikoumene.org.

I was particularly proud of my colleague, Dr. Burley, who was asked to serve as a vice moderator during one of the sessions. Dr. Burley is incredibly eloquent and was very impressive in this honorable role.

In July, I enjoyed time with the Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) Gathering in Nashville, Tennessee. How could I resist an invitation to a gathering under the theme "Guys, Guts & God's Glory"? It was "Great!" How uplifting it was to hear "Guys" talk about the impact LMM ministries have had on their lives and the "Guts" that it takes for a man to share his personal life story and relationship with God in front of over 500 other men. It is to "God's Glory" that these men feel called to take the lead in developing ways for the church culture to adapt to the needs of men. The powerful informative speakers included Tim Wright, Stephen Handy, Jay Gamelin and Lawrence Clark. It was also my pleasure to address the gathering and offer a workshop to the attendees regarding faith in the workplace and how men can set examples of a Christian life through their actions at work. It was quite an experience meeting with several generations of men from diverse backgrounds across the ELCA. I admire the group and what they are doing for men in our church. Thank you, Doug Haugen, Executive Director, for the invitation to attend.

Also in July, we as the ELCA Church Council participated in a retreat led by Dr. John Scherer, co-founder of Scherer Leadership International. One of the purposes of the retreat was to make us more aware and more engaged in our work so that we can become more productive in

expanding our leadership capacity as a board. Another purpose of the retreat was to build camaraderie among council members and to assist in creating a climate of high trust as decision makers. We were honored to have John's son, David aka AGAPE, also presenting at the retreat. Dave is a band leader/musician, Hip Hop, and Rap artist and like wow man, did he have us grooving to the beat! It seems to me we all left better informed, inspired and motivated on doing better in our work together.

On August 28th, I was notified by Linda Hartke, President and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), that she and her colleagues would be visiting Texas to meet with partner agencies dealing with the reunification services for unaccompanied refugee children. They had also planned to meet with Lutheran pastors interested in developing houses of welcome to receive mothers and kids released from detention. In addition, there would be an opportunity to tour a newly opened detention facility in McAllen, Texas, a city near the border of the United States and Mexico. Being an issue especially close to my home and heart, I was glad to accept the offer. The Department of State estimated an anticipated number of 60,000 to 69,000 unaccompanied children would arrive in the US in 2014. As you probably have read or heard, the trend was an increasing concern. The vast majority of children fled from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Many of these children were often orphaned or torn from their parents as a result of conflict or persecution. Many made the harrowing journey across inhospitable land to escape the violence or poverty and to search for safety and protection.

We began our day in Houston visiting with the Immigration Legal Services of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. We were also joined by Bishop Mike Reinhart of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod. Catholic Charities (CC) partners with LIRS to provide expert and timely legal services to immigrants, unaccompanied minors, refugees, victims of human trafficking, those seeking asylum, and those seeking citizenship to name a few. Between LIRS and CC, over 25,000 refugees a year have been resettled.

That evening, Michael Mitchell, LIRS Vice President for Programs and Protection, and I flew to McAllen, Texas. Our mission there was to see a detention facility.

The next morning, we met Linda Hartke and Evan Moilan, Chief Mission Officer of Lutheran Social Services of the South (LSS), and toured the facility. It was an incredible morning. My first look at a detention facility was a little startling. So many fences, gates, cameras and check points, as if there would be real danger ahead. Instead, we walked into a large, empty warehouse-like building only to see two young boys sitting forlornly and no doubt feeling very small. The detention center was built to process 1000 children a day. Now, as the number of unaccompanied children decreased, the numbers were down to only a handful in a vast, frigid, cavernous warehouse outlined by rows of cyclone fenced cages.

That afternoon, we drove to Corpus Christi, Texas, about a two-hour drive up the coast. In Corpus Christi, we met with others including Dr. Kurt Senske, CEO of LSS. We visited two LSS community-based social service agencies that possess expertise in professional child and family services. These agencies promote an environment of welcome and assist the unaccompanied children in becoming part of their local communities. They are valiantly attempting to make this extraordinary situation more humane, but it is a very difficult task. Our agencies are trying to treat these young people in as caring a way possible. For this I am very thankful.

As with my visits to Palestine and Zambia, there is no substitute for seeing firsthand what a situation is really like. News accounts and videos do not give the clear, unvarnished picture. Being present with all your senses working is a very different experience. As always, I walk away from such a visit feeling so inadequate to help in any way, but also realizing that, with the hands of the ELCA, we can at least attempt to do the work of God with our hands. And with God's help, we will be successful.

It is very discouraging to hear of communities who wish to turn their backs on these young people, profiling them as undesirable. How treacherous must the futures of these young immigrants be if their parents or legal guardians are willing to have them endure so much, risking their lives and leaving behind their homelands, trying to start new lives for themselves with literally nothing to build on but the kindness of strangers? Would any of us want our children to go through that?

I have mentioned before that as a Texan with an immigrant heritage, a businessman, and a Christian, the reasons why America needs fair and humane immigration reform only becomes clearer to me each day. First, my wife and I are both second-generation citizens. We both have strong feelings about assuring that future generations are afforded the same welcome our grandparents received. Second, as a businessman, the current system is broken; it does not make economic sense for employees, employers or entrepreneurs. The tangled mess of laws makes it difficult for anyone to succeed. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has found that immigrants create jobs and drive economic growth. They need to be allowed to continue to do this. And, finally, most importantly as a Christian, I believe God calls us to love our neighbor. It is through this Biblical call that we must be hospitable and embrace and welcome those who are aspiring to become new citizens.

Lastly, in September, I had the opportunity to visit with Mark Van Scharrel, Vice President for Advancement, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and later, Dick Moeller, Chair of the Water to Thrive organization based in Austin, Texas. Mark Van Scharrel was visiting Texas and wanted an opportunity to visit with me regarding the approach LSTC is taking on building understanding and support for funding theological education in the ELCA. I was happy to meet with him to discuss this very important part of our church. I was also happy to meet in Austin, Texas, with Dick Moeller of Water to Thrive (W2T). This is an organization that was founded in 2007 as a result of a summer Bible study group that studied world hunger and poverty at Triumphant Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas. The group was moved to fund a couple of water projects in Ethiopia. As a result, within the year, twelve wells were constructed. Today, more than 440 well projects are ongoing in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda.

In all expressions of the church, from individual congregations to synods to churchwide, we are given the directive to build God's temple. Like Solomon, it might take us out of our comfort zone, and we may feel inadequate. So whether it is questioning the way we have always done things, providing welcome to children, or building wells in Africa, it is important to remember God is with us. What we do in good faith and in honor of God's commandments is God's work.

God's work. Our hands. Thanks be to God!

Report of the Conference of Bishops

The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America met in Chicago, October 2-7, 2014. During our meeting we were joined by synodical Vice Presidents (Friday-Sunday), seminary presidents, and to our delight, two additional members of the Church Council—Susan McArver and Paul Archer. For some time, Liaison Bishops have been attending Church Council meetings to observe and bring a different perspective. In the spirit of reciprocity, we invited Church Council members to attend the Conference of Bishops meeting. It was good to be able to implement this at our meeting. When asked for reflections on visiting a Conference of Bishops meeting, one guest noted that while the bishops get to talk issues over a great deal but rarely vote, the Council gets to vote a great deal and talk issues over very little. That was a telling insight about the difference between these two leadership bodies. The Church Council is constitutionally charged with making a number of decisions—that is why Church Council meetings are so packed. The Conference of Bishops is not a decision-making body, but serves an advisory role.

In an advisory capacity, therefore, the Conference of Bishops listened to and commented on numerous reports, including: reports of the officers; report on the campaign; report from Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC); report on the status of the Word and Service task force work; report on the 500th anniversary observances and plans; report on the Women and Justice task force and the draft of the social message on Gender-Based Violence. We also heard updates on and invitations to the ELCA Youth Gathering and the Worship Jubilee. And we had a brief conversation on the 2013 Churchwide Assembly-generated request to be in conversation across the church about communion practices. Many of these are the same reports you will be reading and hearing at the Church Council.

In addition, the Conference of Bishops had a presentation on the Voting Rights Act (as requested by the 2013 Churchwide Assembly); a conversation to give feedback to the Ministry to and with Same-Gender Families working group; some “appreciative inquiry” time with Vice Presidents on the things the church does really well; a dinner honoring the newest ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarship recipients and donors.

Regarding the ELCA Fund for Leaders, a year ago the Conference of Bishops invited the Church Council to join us in honoring former Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson by establishing a Fund for Leaders Scholarship in his name. Thank you for this involvement. Together we raised enough money to make the scholarship a reality.

Bishops also had the opportunity to meet Bishop John Henderson, National Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Australia; hear a report on a peace initiative among representatives of the Abrahamic faiths; and hear an update on the child refugees coming across the border and the Lutheran response.

Regarding Conference of Bishops business, the Conference listened to Conference committee reports and updates, examined the current Ready Bench advocacy system, and voted on recommendations from the roster committee, one of the very few actions the Conference of Bishops is tasked with constitutionally. A group of bishops, dubbed “The Think Tank,” reported on their efforts to find new and creative ways to sustain mission support.

A highlight of the Conference was participating in a revival and rally against gun violence with congregations and pastors in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod and the ELCA’s Revival Team. Bishops

had the opportunity to hear testimony and to pray with local residents at the “Striving for Justice and Peace Through Community Revival.”

Finally, the Conference of Bishops welcomed six new bishops into our midst: Terry Brandt from Eastern North Dakota Synod; Patricia Lull from St. Paul Area Synod; Gerald Mansholt from East-Central Synod of Wisconsin; Abraham Allende from Northeastern Ohio Synod; Michael Rhyne from Allegheny Synod; and John Macholz from Upstate New York Synod.

On behalf of the Conference of Bishops and the Liaison Bishops,

Bishop Jessica Crist, Chair
Conference of Bishops

ELCA Campus Ministry Annual Report Fall 2014

Contents

Background

Highlights

1. Worship
2. Evangelism and Outreach
3. Christian Education and Faith Development
4. Hospitality and Community Building
5. Community Service
6. Justice and Advocacy
7. Pastoral Care
8. Leadership Development
9. Stewardship and Fundraising
10. Vision and Planning
11. Ecumenical and Interfaith Cooperation
12. Building Relationships
13. Demographic and Site Information

Closing Comments

Background

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

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

Highlights

The annual report asks the Lutheran Campus Ministry sites to summarize their yearly activities in twelve categories. This summary is intended to highlight both strengths and areas of potential growth of each program as a way of providing feedback to the churchwide and synod offices. The format of the 2014 annual report was nearly identical to those from 2010-2013 in order to clarify observable trends and statistical patterns. Data was collected from 102 campus ministries that submitted information using the electronic Annual Report form.

1. Worship

- a. Worship remains at the heart of Lutheran Campus Ministry. Nearly all sites (90%) reported that Holy Communion was provided for students one or more times per week. Over half (51%) report providing one to five worship services per month, while 41.1 percent provided six to ten services. These patterns of a strong worship life have held steady over the last several years.
- b. The ELW remains the most popular choice of worship material (70.6%). Site-created liturgies are also in widespread use (55%), as well as Holden Evening Prayer and Taizé, among others. While traditional liturgies continue to be popular, Lutheran Campus Ministry staff have also been very responsive to student interest in non-traditional and creative forms of worship.
- c. Student attendance at worship has trended slightly upward. Almost half of the sites (48.5%) report 11 to 25 students on average per week. Over 17 percent of the sites report 26 to 50 students per week, and almost 10 percent report over 50 students on average per week. Over 40 percent of the sites report 50 or more students worshipping at least once per semester.

- d. The presence of a lively worshipping community on campus continues to be a key element of Lutheran Campus Ministry, and it serves as a gift to college and university students across the country.

2. Evangelism and Outreach

- a. Lutheran Campus Ministry sites reported initial contacts with 9,485 new students last year, representing a slight decrease over the previous year. This averages approximately 106 contacts per reporting site.
- b. Personal invitation from other students remains the most popular way to make the ministry known to the campus community (87%). Electronic communication is also a widely used method for outreach and evangelism, with almost all ministries using social networking sites, their own websites, and email announcements to connect with students. A large majority of sites (82%) also have an active presence at student orientation and activity fairs at the beginning of each semester. Traditional media, such as print mailings, phone calls and newspaper ads have declined in use primarily because of the “social media culture” that exists among students.
- c. Peer ministers continue to be an important outreach tool for a majority of sites (53%).
- d. Ministries reported 12 baptisms of adults over the age of 18.

3. Christian Education and Faith Development

- a. Lutheran Campus Ministries utilized a wide variety of materials for Christian education and faith development. Biblical texts and Lutheran writings were used alongside works by contemporary authors, including Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, Diana Butler Bass and Shane Claiborne. Resources such as the “Animate” series from Sparkhouse Publishing were used extensively to engage students in discussions about the Bible, faith and the Christian life.
- b. Campus pastors and student leaders continue to be creative in selecting materials for education and faith development. Sites have utilized materials that focus on challenging questions about vocation, grace, doubt, ecumenism, interfaith relationships, pluralism and other critically relevant topics.
- c. Nearly all sites (82%) report offering Bible studies for students. Many sites also offer retreats (62%), spiritual direction (41%) and lecture series (34%) for the purposes of Christian education and faith formation.

4. Hospitality and Community Building

- a. Almost all ministries offer weekly meals for hospitality and community building (89%). Many offer an informal gathering space on a daily basis (68%) or weekly basis (21%). The frequency of annual or semi-annual retreats and trips has continued to decrease slightly, which many sites have attributed in part to the decreased availability of funding.
- b. Interfaith dialogue (69%) continues to increase in popularity as a component of community building in Lutheran Campus Ministry. Designations of Reconciling In Christ (48%) or as safe zones (50%) have continued to increase each year as well. Many sites, particularly those with a Reconciling In Christ designation, report that they are one of only a few religious organizations on their campuses that extend a gracious welcome and open hospitality to students regardless of sexual orientation.
- c. Providing hospitality and community building programs on campus are important tools for demonstrating the wonder of God’s grace. These spaces of hospitality continue to attract a wide range of students and help ministries reach out to underserved and marginalized populations on campus.

5. Community Service

- a. Campus ministries continue to undertake a broad range of community service programs and projects. Participation has increased slightly over previous years, with 24 percent drawing six to

15 students at least once, 54 percent drawing 16 to 50 students, and 13 percent drawing over 50 students. Seven sites (6.5%) reported the participation of over 100 students.

- b. The most popular kinds of service projects were those remaining close to the campus community, including working at food kitchens/shelters/pantries, and participating in programs with the elderly. Many sites also participated in the construction and rehab of homes, working with children and youth in afterschool programs and environmental cleanup projects.
- c. Over half of sites reported offering a service-learning opportunity involving travel (52%). Of those offering such opportunities, trips averaged between 11 and 25 students, and included a variety of domestic locations, Mexico, and Central and South America.
- d. Service-learning trips frequently involved group reflection during the trip, pre-departure education sessions, post-return discussion, time for individual reflection, community-building, group Bible studies and group activities to thank those who donated time or money to the trip.

6. Justice and Advocacy

- a. Over the past year, ministries have participated primarily in discussion (69%), direct action (60%) and educational programs (55%) with respect to justice and advocacy efforts. Other activities include bringing in speakers with specialized knowledge, coalition-building and hosting forums.
- b. Programs related to hunger issues have continued to be strong (69%), as well as issues surrounding homelessness (59%). Remaining significant are poverty issues (59%), sexuality and gender issues (58%) and care of the environment (36%). Activities related to immigration have become more prominent (26%).
- c. Many ministries report that their justice and advocacy efforts are directly connected to the kinds of educational opportunities they offer. A number of ministries have utilized resources and curriculum from the ELCA Malaria Campaign and ELCA World Hunger.
- d. Campus pastors and ministry staff have observed that efforts at hospitality and community building, particularly to those who are underserved, marginalized or unpopular, are inseparable from justice and advocacy.

7. Pastoral Care

- a. Nearly all ministries report that pastoral conversation was a means of care (91%), as well as counseling via electronic communication (84%). Most campus pastors and ministers also offer regular office hours (77%).
- b. The amount of time per week dedicated to pastoral care conversations has held steady at an average of approximately 7 hours per week.
- c. Training peer ministers with basic support, listening, and referral skills continues to be an effective method of pastoral care (47%), especially in situations where the campus pastor is present only part-time.
- d. Many campus pastors also serve on university care or emergency response teams (31%).

8. Leadership Development

- a. Lutheran Campus Ministry sites continue to provide many opportunities for the development of student leadership. Most sites report students assisting in worship (84%), coordinating events (81%), and planning programs (78%), while many others also have students that represent the ministry at university-sponsored events (74%) and on local boards (63%). The university events often include panels on religion and society or interfaith dialogue.
- b. One-to-one mentoring and peer ministry continue to be strong, while participation in special retreats is a popular method for cultivating leadership skills among students.
- c. Enrollment in seminary has held steady among campus ministry-involved students who have graduated within the past five years (95). The ministry sites also reported 81 recent graduates in the candidacy process.

- d. ELCA-related service programs continue to be popular (Young Adults in Global Mission, Lutheran Volunteer Corps), as well as non-ELCA programs (Peace Corps, AmeriCorps), with 85 recent graduates currently involved in those programs. Sites also reported 253 recent graduates involved in congregational or synodical leadership roles.

9. Stewardship and Fundraising

- a. Approximately 45 percent of the campus ministry sites reported having a strategic plan for fundraising.
- b. The most popular strategies for raising support continue to be fundraising letters (67%), e-mails (57%), print newsletters (49%), face-to-face solicitation (44%), and electronic newsletters (39%).
- c. Continuing a trend over the last several years, grants have increased in popularity as a source of funds (65%). Funds have also been raised through congregations and congregation-based Women of the ELCA groups (71%), while annual appeals (66%) and special events (56%) are also popular. Thirty-six percent of the reporting sites also have funds available from an endowment, while planned giving is now a source of funds at one quarter of the sites. Twelve percent of the campus ministries are involved in some type of capital campaign.
- d. Ministries that encourage student giving do so primarily through worship offerings (58%).
- e. Trends show an increase with respect to staff time devoted to stewardship and fundraising: 36 percent of the sites devote up to ten percent of their staff time to those activities, 37 percent devote eleven to twenty percent of their time to it, and an increasing number give more than twenty percent of their time to fundraising efforts (27%).

10. Vision and Planning

- a. Most Lutheran Campus Ministry sites continue to participate in annual goal-setting processes (75%). For those that do, students are typically involved (70%), as well as local board members (61%) and site staff (68%). Area clergy and university faculty/staff are also brought into the conversation in a number of the sites.
- b. In order to accomplish evaluation and planning, the ministries have reported that monthly reviews, student and board input into the Campus Ministry Annual Report, leadership team reviews and annual board retreats are in wide use.
- c. Most ministry sites report having a mission or vision statement (78%).

11. Ecumenical and Interfaith Cooperation

- a. Ecumenism and interfaith issues continue to increase in importance on college campuses across the country. Lutherans continue to cooperate closely with Episcopal ministries and regularly coordinate events among other Protestant groups. Many Lutheran Campus Ministry staff serve in ecumenical groups or interfaith panels at their respective universities (75%).
- b. There has been increased interest in interfaith educational events on the part of many campus administrators, and a significant number of Lutheran Campus Ministry sites have reported helping organize or participating in these events.
- c. Joint service projects (59%) and shared meals (56%) continue to be popular as important components of ecumenical and interfaith work. Many ministries have also engaged in joint worship (52%) and joint sponsorship of speakers (50%). Over one quarter of the sites were involved in planning and co-sponsoring a campus-wide interfaith week or event.

12. Building Relationships

- a. Lutheran Campus Ministry sites continue to develop rich cooperative networks on their campuses, within the church and in their broader communities. On the campus, many sites build relationships through participation in summer orientation programs (42%), while some campus ministry staff serve as adjunct faculty and guest lecturers in the classroom (29%), participate on

university boards and committees (37%), serve on campus crisis teams (24%) and present educational programs across the campus including the residence halls (23%).

- b. About 80 percent of the campus ministries maintain a presence or set up displays at synod assemblies as a way of communicating the ministry to synods and congregations. Other popular methods include leading worship or youth ministry in local congregations (59%), writing articles for congregational or synodical newsletters (59% and 50%), working locally on service projects (44%), serving on synodical boards and committees (41%) and assisting with outdoor ministries (31%).
- c. Lutheran Student Movement continues to operate on a limited basis in some areas and serves to build relationships on a variety of levels.

13. Demographic and Site Information

- a. *Site*: Forty-two percent of the sites reported being ELCA center-based, 27 percent report being ELCA congregation-based, and 28 percent report being ecumenical center-based.
- b. *Ethnic and Racial Background*: Ninety percent of ministries reported working with Caucasian/white students, 50 percent with African-Americans/black students, 41 percent with Hispanic/Latinos, 38 percent with Asian/Pacific Islanders, 26 percent with Middle Eastern/Arab-Americans and 16 percent with American Indian or Alaska Natives.
- c. *Religious Background*: Eighty-nine percent of the sites reported working with Lutheran students, 85 percent with non-Lutheran Protestants, 51 percent with Roman Catholics, 25 percent with Muslims and 23 percent with Jewish students. This represents an increase in engagement with Muslim and Jewish students over previous years. Sixty-nine percent of the sites report working with students who have no religious affiliation. These students are often referred to as the “Nones”, and they are a critical population of students with whom to connect.
- d. *Sexual Orientation*: Seventy-six percent of the sites reported working with students who identify as gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender.
- e. *Disability*: Twenty-six percent reported working with disabled/differently-abled students.

Closing Comments

1. The 2014 annual reports indicate that Lutheran Campus Ministry continues to thrive as the most significant and comprehensive mission field among young adults within the ELCA. Each week, thousands of college and university students gather under the banner of Lutheran Campus Ministry in worshipping, learning, serving and welcoming communities of faith. Lutheran Campus Ministry invites students from diverse backgrounds to explore their vocations as baptized Christians in the context of a gracious community and to respond to that vocational call in their daily lives and future careers.
2. In addition, the comments in these annual reports make it clear that Lutheran Campus Ministry staff also recognize their call to do more than just develop and maintain a student community. They also see campus ministry as a call to accompany and serve the broader campus community of staff, faculty, alumni, and neighbors as well as students. They understand campus ministry to be the very real presence of Christ across the campus, calling them to God’s work as they represent the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As one staff person said, “We view the campus as our cathedral!”
3. One of the important goals of Lutheran Campus Ministry is to build relationships with people across the campus who have no interest in the church, who feel that the church is irrelevant, and who even hold feelings of hostility for the church. Lutheran Campus Ministry seeks to provide a fresh perspective on the church as a community characterized by grace, integrity, openness, inclusiveness and compassion. This approach takes the campus ministry staff to the far reaches of the university to interact with individuals and groups who have little if any connection to a religious community. This encounter may provide one of the few opportunities for them to experience the true wonder of a God whose love is rich and full.

4. The stories that emerge from ELCA campus ministry sites show the creativity and vitality of this work. A few examples are these:
 - the campus ministry in Chicago’s South Loop includes a Friday worship attended mostly by unchurched students, and a “Theology On Tap” discussion group held in a local pub;
 - the campus ministry facility at the University of Wisconsin, Madison has become a gathering place for increased numbers of students across the campus, and they have even hired a professional baker to work with students in preparing baked goods made available as a gift of hospitality for everyone;
 - the campus ministry in Fresno, California sponsors a student-operated food pantry serving 200 low-income families every Saturday;
 - the ministry at the University of New Mexico provided an event for area Lutheran congregations on “Ministry Among the Millennials”;
 - the “Campus Kitchen Project” at the Mankato, Minnesota campus ministry recovers and packages leftover food for use by community members in need;
 - the Ohio State University ministry has developed a series of “Covenant Houses” where students live in intentional communities of worship, learning and service to the church and community;
 - the Lutheran Campus Pastor in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania sets up a table in a busy commuter campus with a sign that reads, “The Pastor Is In”, and engages students in conversations about life, faith, ethics, social issues, and more;
 - and the stories of lives being touched and changed go on and on!
5. Comments from the annual reports make it clear that campus ministry staff are excited about the development of the new Lutheran Campus Ministry Network (LCMNet). LCMNet has been designed as “an association to sustain and strengthen Campus Ministry in the ELCA by forming collegial relationships, training professional campus ministry leaders and advocating for the church’s ministry on college and university campuses.” This network of Lutheran Campus Ministry professionals will help provide direction, resources, and support for campus ministry in the ELCA.
6. The development of a “National Student Referral System” (www.elcacampusministry.org) is viewed as a major step forward in connecting young adults to Lutheran Campus Ministry programs across the country. It is expected that several thousand referrals will be made next summer as Lutheran Campus Ministry sponsors the “Habitat Builds Project” at the 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering.
7. Campus ministry remains a vital and critically important field of mission within the ELCA. Students, pastors, ministers, board members, congregations and synods continue to shape the work of campus ministry in adaptive, thoughtful and creative ways, while asking difficult but important questions about the nature of ministry support in the future.

Reports of the Regional Coordinators for Missional Leadership

Region 1

Submitted by Mark Nelson

With two relatively new bishops, three new assistants/associates, and one synod completely changing their established staffing pattern in response to the LIFT report, connections among bishops, their staffs, and lay leaders in the synods of Region 1 have been particularly important. To that end Region 1 planned and accomplished the following:

- An all-staff retreat including bishops, assistants/associates, all synod office support staff and Region 1 staff including our Financial Services Office staff. (The synods of Region 1 do all their financial work in a regional partnership.) This is the first such gathering in the Region in more than eleven years.
- A day-long conversation (bishops and others who work with the call process) on the changing patterns of pastoral transition in congregations and the efficacy of interim ministry in its current practice. A second conversation is scheduled for November 2014.
- A retreat for the new assistants/associates for support, training and best practices led by a seasoned assistant colleague and the coordinator.
- A day-long conversation among the candidacy committee chairs and those synod staff who work with candidacy on possible changes to the Candidacy Manual and feedback on various candidacy proposals. A second candidacy conversation is planned for November 22. All of these conversations will be continued at each of the synods' candidacy committee meetings.
- A third year of an expanded First Call Theological Education (FCTE) program which includes five of the six synods. These now four-day retreats are getting strong reviews from our recently rostered leaders. The Montana Synod continues their program of exceptional FCTE retreats as well.
- A series of boundary training events in various synods led by a Region 1 team of experts. This follows a churchwide gathering in this field led by Barbara Keller.
- Quarterly meetings for mobility and call process work among the six bishops of the region. These are conducted by teleconference.
- An annual bishops and spouses retreat.

Region 1 is well-connected, and there is a desire to come together more often for various topics and programmatic offerings. Last summer the Northwest Washington Synod hosted a very well-attended "African Summit." This year we chose not to continue the pattern of a region-wide global mission consultation with our churchwide partners. The global mission chairs of Region 1, along with Churchwide Organization Global Mission (GM) staff, will plan an alternative type of consultation that will connect with even more GM leaders in the Region. It is good to see renewed grassroots energy in Global Mission.

Region 2

Submitted by Margy Schmitt Ajer

The five synods of Region 2 (Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, Pacifica, Grand Canyon and Rocky Mountain) continue their work of collaboration and connection. The work of the regional relationship is twofold:

1. Serving as a connecting point for churchwide ministries such as candidacy, first call assignment and campus ministry.
2. Working together on joint ministry projects like First Call Theological Education, mobility conferences and archives.

The following have been this year's foci:

1. Working on common policies and strategies for interim ministry
2. Development of an archives task force
3. Consultation around changes to the churchwide candidacy process
4. Welcome and support for new bishops and synod staff
5. Continuation of joint First Call Theological Education core events
6. Continuation of joint semiannual mobility conferences
7. Support and development of campus ministries and staff
8. Annual Global Gathering with churchwide partners

Most of this work is ongoing from year to year. That being said, we continue to reflect together on best practices in order to improve our mission. Currently, we are reimagining our collaboration as we move forward as Region 2.

It is indeed a privilege to serve these five synods, the bishops and staff and all the people of the region in this work.

Thanks for the partnership!

Region 3

Submitted by Paul Baglyos

Region 3 includes the nine synods in the three states of North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. As for all the regional coordinators, candidacy is job #1 in the work I am called to do. I work closely as a Churchwide Organization partner with the nine candidacy committees of the region. This work entails:

- participating in candidacy meetings and retreats,
- serving on interview panels,
- assisting bishops' associates and synod support staff in candidacy matters,
- convening Theological Review Panels (TRPs) and Competencies Assessment Panels (CAPs),
- training candidacy staff and candidacy committees, and
- advising candidates and nurturing partnerships between candidacy committees and seminaries.

I also work closely with the other regional coordinators and with Churchwide candidacy staff in common matters, such as administrative assignments, assignment consultations and the current revision of the ELCA Candidacy Manual.

Among the myriad other duties to which I attend, some of the most important emerge from my relationships with the bishops and their associates in Region 3. In the past two years, I have arranged an annual round of one-to-one conversations primarily with the bishops to identify priorities for our collective attention as a region and for my work within the region. From such conversations, the following key initiatives have arisen:

- I am currently developing a regional program of theological education for Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs) and other lay leaders who serve recurrently as congregational preachers and worship leaders.
- I am seeking to build new partnerships for the multiplication of seminary internships in rural congregations. This will increase the number of candidates who will have gained experience in rural ministry and might thereby identify a desire to serve in rural ministry in their assignment preferences. Currently, many candidates indicate preferences to serve in multi-staff suburban congregations in our metro synods. In Region 3 we are seeking ways to help candidates envision themselves serving well in multi-point (and other) rural congregations outside the metro area.

Other matters to which I attend are not less important, but they are more occasional and incidental. For example:

- Two years ago I helped to design a program of periodic ministry reviews for Lutheran Campus Ministry of Minnesota (LCMM). This was to be overseen by the LCMM board in the waning of Churchwide expectations for quadrennial campus ministry reviews connected to funding eligibility. Now I have been asked by one of the Region 3 bishops to participate in such a review on the territory of the synod that he serves.
- Another bishop in Region 3 has asked me to help design and participate in a synod ministry review.

Everything I do is in some way related to the focus inherent in my position title, "Coordinator for Missional Leadership," and I am grateful for the call to serve as that coordinator in Region 3.

Region 4

Submitted by Herb Palmer

Challenges facing the larger society are also present in the synods of Region 4. Conversations among our leaders continue to be how to serve well and to approach those challenges as opportunities.

Economically, families and individuals are still recovering from the Great Recession. This has affected mission support and other ministries of the church. With less resources, synods and congregations are making choices about what is important for their work.

The economic situation has also impacted preparation of candidates for ministry. Many applicants into candidacy have debt at a level for concern. A significant number of applicants are making the choice of seminary education that is available to them without moving to one of our ELCA seminary campuses. The candidates are choosing non-Lutheran seminaries nearby or an online cohort through our ELCA seminary. Region 4 candidacy committees, as is true for the whole church, are having conversations about these changes, much of which are driven by economics. We continue to attempt to talk through the issues with our ministry candidates.

How candidates are theologically educated, formed for ministry, and prepared to serve this church is taking on its own shape. Our challenge is how we will be intentional in that formation and education for the sake of the vitality of the ministry leadership we hope for the church. Many people who are part of theological formation in Region 4, particularly in Texas, feel it is time to recommit to a full Lutheran seminary program in Texas. This will not only be responsive to the needs of applicants and candidates, but it certainly will serve the goals of the church for the formation of our leaders.

Populations are changing. Immigration continues to transform communities in Region 4. The challenge to the church is how we will prepare leaders for these changing communities and how our congregations will become welcoming communities. Synod staff are identifying new leaders for the church whose language experiences and faith are needed by the church. We are challenged with how to provide theological education and concepts in their first language, while helping to prepare them in the dominant language. How can we form leaders who will work with faith communities of first generation immigrants and also serve second and third generations of those who have more fully assimilated into the larger community? Immigrant faith communities often find it difficult to be self-sustaining. We wonder how we will support these young faith communities. What is an effective strategy for the whole body of the church supporting younger, growing parts of the church?

Leadership development of lay and rostered persons is a priority throughout the synods of Region 4. For the leadership of the church, both lay and rostered, to be equipped to serve in our changing world, we must provide continuing learning opportunities to develop skills, to deepen discipleship and to stir passion.

These are exciting and challenging times to be the church that seeks to be responsive to God's call upon us to engage our world with the gospel of hope. The challenges shape our questions. The faith we share shapes our passion. The God we serve shapes us for God's work in the world. For all of this, we are grateful that we get to serve and that God is committed to transforming people in the gospel.

Region 5

Submitted by Ramie Bakken

Twelve synods in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Upper Michigan are gathered to form Region 5 of the ELCA.

One of the goals for Region 5 is to work in partnership to raise up and accompany leaders being formed for rostered ministry. We accomplish this work through:

- synodical candidacy committee meetings,
- candidacy training for synod staff and committee members,
- visits to ELCA seminaries, especially those in Region 5—Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and Wartburg Theological Seminary, and
- assignment of future rostered leaders to synods.

Region 5 also provides support for networking and collaborative efforts. This includes:

- a regional mobility conference,
- an annual bishop retreat,
- an assistants to bishops gathering, and
- a regional Directors for Evangelical Mission Gathering.

Region 5 works to engage/connect ministry in the region with the wider church to both inform and support our work across the ELCA.

- Participation in synod assemblies, conferences and meetings throughout the region,
- Candidacy manual revision consultations,
- Regional Global Gathering, and
- Covenant Cluster networking.

Region 6

Submitted by Marilyn McCann Smith

Region 6 of the ELCA serves synods and congregations of Southeast Michigan, North/West Lower Michigan, Indiana-Kentucky, Northwestern Ohio, Northeastern Ohio and Southern Ohio. The primary mission in Region 6 is to connect, resource, support and network those serving in leadership in our synods and congregations. The following examples represent the work of the region.

Candidacy and Assignment of First Call Candidates

This is the primary area of responsibility for me as regional coordinator. To embody the principle that Candidacy and First Call are churchwide processes, I attend all synod candidacy committee meetings as an advisor, convene Theological Review Panels and Competency Assessment Panels and liaison with seminary faculties. I orient synod staff and candidacy committee members to the process and provide regular updates and reports so they are equipped to carry out their responsibilities. Additionally, I meet with seminary seniors and Region 6 bishops to prepare for and carry out the biannual assignment of first call candidates, as well as the monthly administrative assignment of appropriate first call candidates.

First Call Theological Education (FCTE)

FCTE is a natural extension of candidacy's preparation of rostered leaders and first call assignment's work to match candidates' gifts with congregations' missional needs. Working regionally to provide opportunities for learning, nurture and fellowship for newly rostered leaders has enhanced the synods' first call programs. I serve as an advisor to the first call leaders and synod staff who plan for the annual regional gathering.

Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry remains a significant opportunity for the ELCA to be engaged in intentional ministry with young adults. This takes place not only on our campuses, but also in congregations located near a variety of educational institutions. I meet with staff, and as needed and appropriate, boards and committees in order to provide ministry reviews, support, leadership development, call process advice, and strategic planning in these settings.

Missional Leadership Conversations and Networking

This is a way for the regional coordinator to support the synods of regions in their ministry with congregations. The coordinator facilitates conversations and meetings of the Region 6 Directors for Evangelical Mission and other partners as we seek to identify appropriate opportunities for mission and ways to prepare leaders for new and renewing ministries. Plans are currently underway for a regional consultation on Immigration and Refugees and another for Region 6 Leaders of Color. In addition, Region 6 served as a pilot region to host the churchwide Region 6 Missional Leaders Networks Gathering.

The Covenant Cluster of ELCA Seminaries

An annual gathering of leaders connected with a variety of entities that in some way provide theological education for the baptized is convened for Regions 4, 5 and 6. The goal is to provide a point of connection and conversation among those engaged in outdoor ministries, campus ministries, youth and young adult ministries, lay schools of theology and rostered leaders serving in educational settings and in congregations. This year I serve as convener and chair of the planning group.

It remains a privilege to serve in a call that encompasses the breadth and depth of regional work.

Region 7

Submitted by Peggy M. Wuertele

Like all of the regional coordinators, my work in 2014 has been heavily focused on the changes to the ELCA Candidacy Manual. I worked with two colleagues to rewrite the Entrance section, and we continue to fine tune that as we look to the end of the year. In addition to the work of developing and writing, I have spent many hours communicating the suggested changes throughout the region. This has happened in synod candidacy committee meetings, in the annual regional candidacy consultation and at the faculty meeting at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP) in June 2014. The conversations have been rewarding, whether with my regional colleagues and our supervisor in Chicago, or at the synod tables or seminary. These conversations have underscored the care and concern the partners have for this precious process that forms new leaders for our church. I have been deeply honored to be a part of this work.

I have also worked with the LTSP community (the dean, student services coordinator, president and faculty) to convene Theological Review Panels and Competency Assessment Panels in order to prepare people who have already demonstrated leadership to serve on the roster of the ELCA. In Region 7, we have welcomed some congregations and their pastors to the ranks of our tradition following the churchwide decisions around welcoming more of God's children into our communities of faith. In addition, my role at the seminary is to help interpret the ELCA candidacy and assignment process for students.

My work for the region includes directing the First Call Theological Education program, which we refer to as a "Leadership Guild." Over the past several years, we have worked to change this from a top down model, where experts share their wisdom with first call leaders, to an interactive event that focuses on the skills needed for adaptive leadership in today's and tomorrow's church. We have engaged more young/new leaders in the planning and leadership of the event and have begun to witness a ripple effect as they take what they are learning and share it with other colleagues. That is gratifying and exciting!

I also work closely with the bishops of the region, in the areas of candidacy, assignment and helping the seven of them connect with one another as needed. This is interesting, sometimes fun, and very humbling, as I recognize the trust that they place in me. This year, we had three elections of bishops in our region, resulting in one transition. I helped organize the farewell to the outgoing bishop and am working with the newly elected bishop as he assumes his new responsibilities.

In closing my report, I wish to say thank you for the nine plus years that I have been allowed (and even paid) to do this work. I often say that I have the best call in the church, and as I reflect again for this report, I feel that.

Region 8

Submitted by Nancy E. Gable

The primary mission of a region is to connect, resource, support and network those serving in leadership in our synods and congregations. The following examples represent the work of Region 8.

Global Gathering efforts

- A 36-hour event (held in the fall) where invited synod leaders from global mission committees, companion church groups, world hunger committees, malaria task forces, synod staff and directors for evangelical mission gather to meet with churchwide staff and global guests who are connected to these areas of ministry.
- In addition to the annual fall gathering, we anticipate the possibility of a larger 'Super Regional Gathering' in 2015.

Candidacy and Assignment of First Call Candidates

This is, perhaps, the primary area of responsibility in my portfolio.

- In addition to my service at every synod's candidacy committee meeting, I serve as the 'go to' person for all things candidacy. This varies from month to month but includes arranging Theological Review Panels and Competency Assessment Panels (as well as the follow-up report writing) and responding to the particular questions that often stymie synod staff people.
- Each year, we hold at least one region-wide candidacy gathering for each synod's candidacy staff and committee chair; also invited are any number of colleagues in ministry from across the region. In 2014, we utilized the skill of several Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (LTSG) colleagues to discuss the implications for the candidacy of the changed Association of Theological Schools' guidelines for Masters of Divinity degrees and ongoing work in the development of a competency-based MDiv program at LTSG.

First Call Theological Education (FCTE)

FCTE is a natural extension of candidacy's preparation of rostered leaders and first call assignment's work to match candidates' gifts with congregations' missional needs.

- While not all regions operate in this manner, Region 8 finds value in cooperating on some key aspects of the First Call Theological Education (FCTE) program. Primarily, this means the planning and implementing of a Region 8 FCTE Annual Conference; the office works with a region-wide advisory council in planning.
- With all of the changes in theological education and candidacy, Region 8 partners have taken the opportunity to review and restructure our approach to the annual FCTE Conference and that structure debuts in the November 2014 Conference; the program components were identified by the region's bishops and the structure developed as a result of the collaboration between the bishops and the FCTE advisory council.
- In addition to the conference, each synod also provides more contextual opportunity.

Support of newly called synod staff

Supporting newly called staff to the synods of Region 8 is yet another aspect of my service. This year's work included the election of Bishop Michael Rhyne and the appointment of synod staff.

- Following the committed service and retirement of Bishop Gregory Pile, my effort to support this emerging synod staff in the Allegheny Synod began over the summer and continues in the coming year.

Region 9

Submitted by Harvey Huntley Jr.

The following are summary highlights of the mission and ministry occurring in Region 9 of the ELCA during 2014.

- A major portion of the coordinator's time is devoted to candidacy work, especially during this period of revising the ELCA Candidacy Manual. There have been fall consultations regarding new candidacy procedures in October 2013 and October 2014 for candidacy leaders and seminary faculty. In addition, there have been special sessions with each synod Candidacy Committee during their regular meetings for feedback and orientation to upcoming changes in the candidacy process. Significant time has been allocated for work on the revisions to the candidacy process with the churchwide staff team for leadership.
- Campus ministry continues to be a priority in Region 9 for the work of the coordinator in the perspective of both the bishops serving in the region and the Region 9 Council. Accordingly, there are still regular quadrennial reviews of campus ministry sites, an annual campus ministry staff retreat and active synod Campus Ministry Committees.
- For the past three years, there has been a developing partnership between the Southeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church and Region 9 of the ELCA for mission with Native American peoples in the region. During 2014, the partnership contracted with two part-time staff persons – both Native American clergy – to guide the partnership. The staff are the Rev. Jesse David Hill (ELCA) of North Carolina and the Rev. Cheryl Toothe (UMC) of South Carolina. To date, the partnership has received generous funding from the Peeler/Casey Fund of the North Carolina Synod.
- At the end of August, Jeanette Bergeron, the long-time archivist with the James R. Crumley Jr. Archives, retired from a distinguished tenure as regional archivist. As a result, the Archives is in a time of transition seeking long-term financial stability and discerning an appropriate staffing pattern for the future.
- The Region 9/Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Council for Stewardship Education, in partnership with coordinators for First Call Theological Education in five synods of the region is sponsoring a retreat for first call leaders February 9-11, 2015, in Rincon, Georgia. Such a retreat, with a focus on holistic stewardship and the competencies of a well-formed steward leader, occurs on a triennial basis.

Background Information on the title Bishop Emeritus

By the Rev. Donald McCoid, director, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations

International LWF Usage of the Title Bishop Emeritus

The use of the title Bishop Emeritus has wide usage in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches. There are some churches that use the title of President for the chief executive of their churches and for synods/dioceses.

The use of bishop emeritus is a title that is used, but does not continue the person's service or function within the diocese or synod where he or she served.

- Some bishops are regarded as bishops for life. For example, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada holds this position. When a bishop leaves service, he or she is regarded as a bishop.
- In Nordic churches, there is often a three-fold understanding of ministry (bishops, pastors, and deacons). The title bishop continues with a person who has served as a diocesan or synodical bishop. Bishop Ero Houvinen served as the bishop of Helsinki. He was also Vice-President of the LWF. When he retired, he continues to be regarded as a bishop. He does use the title bishop emeritus to distinguish himself from the active Helsinki bishop.
 - In international dialogues, Bishop Houvinen continues to serve as the co-chair of the LWF-Catholic dialogue. The Catholics and LWF policy is to have a bishop serve as co-chair of their dialogue.
 - This is also the same with the Orthodox-LWF dialogue. After retiring as the synod bishop of the Bishop Emeritus of the SW PA Synod, I continued to serve as the LWF-Orthodox co-chair. I shared with the LWF and Orthodox Church that I was no longer a bishop but only had the title of bishop emeritus. The LWF and Orthodox leadership continued to use the title bishop in all correspondences and publicity.
- Bishop Kametta from Namibia – is a bishop for life but uses the title bishop emeritus. He is regarded as a bishop within the LWF. He is an international spokesperson and is a LWF Council member. He wears a purple shirt (as does Bishop Houvinen).
- Bishop Christoph Klein – is a bishop emeritus of the Romanian Lutheran Church. He is active in his region and within the LWF.

Practices Throughout the ELCA by Secretary Chris Boerger and the Rev. Don McCoid

- Within the ELCA, some synods have conferred the title of bishop emeritus on an outgoing bishop. Some synods do not. Where the title is conferred, there is a clear understanding that the person does not continue to have synodical functions. The continued use of a pectoral cross is often used by those who have been designated as bishop emeritus.
- Within the ELCA, we have an understanding that there is one order for ordained pastors of Word and Sacrament. When a bishop is elected by a synod, she or he continues to be understood as serving within the one order of pastoral ministry.

- There is often a critique that is given about how our bishops are regarded or perceived. The Episcopal Church, for example, regard our bishops as being consecrated when installed, while the ELCA understands this as an installation service.
- Within the ELCA, there have been questions about bishops who sign correspondences with a + before their name. This is an Anglican practice and is regarded as separate order from ordained clergy. Whether it should be used, this would be particularly sensitive if a retired bishop with the title bishop emeritus would use a + before their name.
- In the United Methodist Church, a retired bishop continues to be regarded as a bishop. Their ecumenical officer is always a retired bishop. Of course, The Episcopal Church's bishops are bishops for life.

Below are the synodical responses collected by the Office of the Secretary answering the question, "Has your synod ever granted the title?"

	Synod	Yes	No	No response
1A	Alaska		1	
1B	NW WA	1		
1C	SW WA			1
1D	EW/ID		1	
1E	Oregon			1
1F	Montana		1	
2A	Sierra Pacific	1		
2B	SW California	1		
2C	Pacifica			1
2D	Grand Canyon	1		
2E	Rocky Mountain	1		
3A	W North Dakota		1	
3B	E North Dakota			1
3C	South Dakota	1		
3D	NW Minnesota			1
3E	NE Minnesota			1
3F	SW Minnesota			1
3G	Minneapolis			1
3H	St. Paul			1
3I	SE Minnesota	1		
4A	Nebraska	1		
4B	Central States	1		
4C	A/OK			1
4D	N Texas/N LA	1		
4E	SW Texas		1	
4F	Gulf Coast	1		
5A	Chicago		1	

5B	N. Illinois			1
5C	C/S Illinois		1	
5D	SE Iowa	1		
5E	W Iowa			1
5F	NE Iowa		1	
5G	N Great Lakes	1		
5H	NW Wisconsin			1
5I	EC Wisconsin		1	
5J	Milwaukee			1
5K	SC Wisconsin			1
5L	La Crosse	1		
6A	SE Michigan	1		
6B	NW Lower Michigan	1		
6C	Indiana/Kentucky			1
6D	NW Ohio			1
6E	NE Ohio	1		
6F	S Ohio	1		
7A	New Jersey		1	
7B	New England		1	
7C	Metro New York		1	
7D	Upstate New York		1	
7E	NE PA			1
7F	SE PA			1
7G	Slovak Zion			1
8A	NW PA			1
8B	SW PA	1		
8C	Allegheny	1		
8D	Lower Susquehanna	1		
8E	Upper Susquehanna	1		
8F	Del/Maryland	1		
8G	Metro Washington	1		
8H	WV/WM	1		
9A	Virginia	1		
9B	North Carolina	1		
9C	South Carolina	1		
9D	Southeastern	1		
9E	Florida/Bahamas	1		
9F	Caribbean			1
	Total	30	13	22

Theological Education Advisory Council Progress Report

Work To Date

When the ELCA Church Council authorized the formation of the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC) in April 2013 and tasked it with bringing a final report and possible recommendations in fall 2015, the Church Council called on TEAC to consult broadly [CC13.04.12]:

to consider how our interdependent network of theological education providers can best serve the church as it seeks to address in a holistic manner issues in leadership development, theological education, candidacy and call, and the rosters of the church.

As part of this work, the ELCA Church Council specifically directed TEAC to convene seminary leaders (presidents, board chairs, and synod bishops serving on seminary boards) to share counsel on strategic plans, possible new collaborations, degree program innovations, and what all this means for our patterns of identifying and preparing leaders. In short, the ELCA Church Council called for attention to the ELCA's theological education network in its full breadth and in all its connections with the life and work of the ELCA while at the same time calling for focused engagement with and attention to the work and circumstances of our seminaries.

TEAC has spent the last year consulting broadly both by gathering a range of leaders at its own six meetings to date and by having TEAC members travel to meet face to face with a number of ELCA leadership groups. TEAC has also engaged the church through surveys and an initial set of congregational visits. In addition, it has reviewed basic data related to the ELCA and its theological education network and has identified additional types of information it seeks to gather.

This work of consulting broadly and of gathering and analyzing key information is far from over. It will necessarily intensify in the coming months as TEAC prepares to bring its final report and possible recommendations to the November 2015 meeting of the ELCA Church Council. In order to provide additional focus for this second year's efforts, TEAC members worked in three groups (*Lay Schools & Vocational Discernment*, *Emerging & Adaptive Practices* and *Financial Sustainability*) over the summer to reflect on the implications of what they were learning and to produce an initial set of draft recommendations related to the concerns each group had been assigned to address.

TEAC met August 12-13, 2014 and the three groups shared their recommendations. At this meeting, it was clear that each group was especially (though not exclusively) concerned with one of three overarching imperatives that have sounded repeatedly in TEAC's conversations concerning what our theological education network needs to become if the ELCA is to serve God's mission well in the present and the future:

- 1. The ELCA needs a theological education network that is *more far-reaching*.**
- 2. The ELCA needs a theological education network that is *more connected and flexible*.**
- 3. The ELCA needs a theological education network that is *more sustainable*.**

These three imperatives could seem to be in significant tension (even contradiction) with each other. The continued slowness of the economic recovery after a historic recession, demographic shifts, and changes in patterns of church participation and giving could make *contraction* seem to be the only route to sustainability. The members of TEAC are convinced that this is not the case. We believe it is essential to respond to all three imperatives simultaneously and that our efforts in these three directions can be complementary and mutually reinforcing.

During a set of overlapping meetings in Chicago during the first week in October (Conference of Bishops; Seminary Presidents; Seminary Board Chairs; Seminary Deans; Synod Vice-Presidents), the members of TEAC were able to consult with seminary, synodical and churchwide leaders concerning these three imperatives and how they are addressed in TEAC's preliminary findings and draft recommendations (presented below in summary form). TEAC sought their counsel especially concerning these questions:

- **As TEAC sharpens its findings, what further consultation and research work will be important to deepen understanding of our theological education network's challenges and opportunities?**
- **What recommendations here seem most important and promising? Are there some that should be acted on before 2015? How can they be improved? What additional (or substitute) recommendations should be developed?**

Those gathered in Chicago to review TEAC's work to date provided excellent feedback at this mid-point check-in, affirming a great deal of the work, offering counsel concerning how to improve the recommendations, raising important concerns about specific pieces and pointing to areas that need additional attention. Based on this feedback, TEAC members have already identified additional work it needs to do (summarized in the final section of this update).

TEAC's Mid-point Proposals Concerning the First Imperative: Toward a Theological Education Network That is More Far-reaching

Preliminary Findings

Through consultations, survey work and ongoing efforts to map the ecology of theological education efforts in the ELCA, TEAC has identified several ways that the reach of the ELCA's theological education network needs to grow. Most fundamentally, the general understanding of what theological education is and who participates in it needs to be greatly expanded. The general understanding of theological education is that it is the process of preparation for rostered leadership—period. We need instead to think of theological education as lifelong learning for the whole people of God, fostering faith's wisdom, enabling ongoing vocational discernment and equipping for ministry.

This is not at all to say that preparation for rostered ministry is unimportant. Rather, it is to affirm:

- that the ongoing theological education of rostered persons while in service is essential in a rapidly changing culture;
- that deepening the theological wisdom of laity has become increasingly crucial as they live on the front lines of mission in an increasingly multicultural, inter-religious and sometimes non-religious environment; and
- that for the most part we have underestimated both the importance of engaging young adults in vocational discernment and their readiness for this.

Draft Recommendations

Overall Vision: Renewing Across the ELCA the Significance of Vocational Discernment for God's Mission in the World

A. Engage Young Adults in Vocational Discernment based on learnings from Project Connect

TEAC went on to propose a specific programmatic model for scaling up the sorts of work that have been done in the Eastern Cluster's Lilly-funded Project Connect. This new, wider project would employ three "Young Adult Discernment Coordinators" to work across the ELCA along with three "Discernment Advocates" in each synod to coordinate networks among colleges/universities, campus and outdoor ministries, Young Adults in Global Mission, Lutheran Volunteer Corps and young adult networks to build and share theological education opportunities that foster vocational discernment.

B. Empower all the baptized to live out their faith every day, utilizing the model being developed in the Covenant Cluster

TEAC went on to propose coordination and expansion of teaching and learning communities through lay schools, campus ministries, camps, congregations, social ministry organizations, service learning opportunities, colleges and seminaries, to strengthen a lay school network, to provide a web-based clearinghouse of free core resources, to encourage fruitful teaching/learning models and to intensify the church's focus on mission as service to neighbors and the world.

C. Develop a "Being Neighbor to our Neighbor Initiative" focused on giving and receiving hospitality in the name of Jesus

TEAC went on to propose the offering of online seminars and resources that help lay and clergy to see new opportunities and have leadership resources for being engaged in interfaith dialogue, racial and cross-cultural ministries (including, working with people in poverty).

D. Strengthen the lifelong learning of rostered leaders

TEAC when on to propose developing a leadership network of resources, particularly for equipping rostered leaders in building missional communities, helping to change culture in congregations, and equipping lay leadership for God's mission. TEAC also called for lifting up the teaching office of pastors and to increase expectations for continuing education as part of the call process.

E. Expand lay training for specialized mission needs.

TEAC went on to call for ELCA seminaries to work together with colleges, teaching theologians and synods to develop a number of certification training online opportunities around specific needs such as the following: lay catechist, lay evangelist, community-based organizing, parish administrators, leadership for changing congregational cultures, music and worship leaders and lay bible study leaders.

TEAC's Mid-Point Proposals Concerning the Second Imperative: Toward a Theological Education Network That is More Connected and Flexible

Preliminary Findings

TEAC members met in June 2014 with the ELCA seminary deans for extended conversation about the expanding array of degree models and curricula they are experimenting with in order to:

1. deepen the contextual character of theological education;
2. expand access and lower the total cost of seminary degrees for rostered leaders (net tuition plus living costs); and
3. increase attention to educational outcomes.

TEAC also met with Daniel Aleshire, the Executive Director for the Association of Theological Schools, to learn about trends and developments in seminary education and to hear his view of the ELCA theological education network. He noted the unusually close relationship our schools have with each other and with the rest of the church and offered his view that (a) our schools should find ways to bring more variety (both in educational offerings and institutional forms) into our system, and (b) seminaries need to draw even closer to the church—especially congregations, and (c) the church needs to renew its value of education for its congregants.

Through these and other conversations, TEAC is convinced that a more connected theological education network that includes seminaries, colleges, congregations, synod lay schools, ecumenical and global partners is both possible and essential for the ELCA. For example, we have a strong array of teaching faculty at our seminaries who share common commitments. However, while cross-institutional collaborations have increased over the last twenty-five years, they are still too limited to take full advantage of that available teaching resource. Considering our seminary system as a whole, we currently have excess capacity to teach our currently enrolled students in our currently existing programs. Through more flexible arrangements in deploying our seminary faculty and linking them to teaching theologians in other settings, the ELCA theological network could become much more robust and fruitful, preparing and supporting more leaders of more kinds serving in more ways in more kinds of settings.

Draft Recommendations

A. Vision

Create a coordinated network of theological education for the sake of offering the most robust, expansive collection of courses, programs, experiences, and events that would be available in a forum for the spectrum of leadership in communities across the church. This coordinated network of theological education fosters faith formation moving towards discipleship—for the whole of the person – and demonstrates being church together in relationship: interpersonal, inter-congregational, church-wide and global.

B. Operational Principle

Encourage multiple experiments in areas where diversification is productive and move to consolidate work in areas where streamlining is effective.

TEAC went on to expand on this theme, recommending that we streamline efforts in areas where economies of scale and standard practice free up resources for expansion of educational work and that we encourage and incentivize innovation and diversification in our experimental work in

theological education with collaboration between diverse efforts. If we do both, it will facilitate collaboration and ease of access across the church and will foster inter-contextual learning for both students and faculty. TEAC also identified some examples where consolidation may be promising: Admissions/enrollment, financial administration/infrastructure, IT infrastructure, course selection infrastructure, online presence infrastructure, and (perhaps) Development/Fundraising.

C. Concrete Possibilities for Increasing Connection and Flexibility:

- Move toward more flexible sharing of faculty (in order to make better use of their gifts and to create systemwide capacity to do crucial work, such as education for Hispanic ministry).
- Enhance collaboration by incentivizing collaborative work that crosses cluster boundaries. *TEAC went on to affirm that clusters do not exhaust opportunities for collaboration. Churchwide funding distribution could be changed from the current entirely cluster-based system.*
- Develop a system-wide articulation agreement between colleges and seminaries.
- Build a shared online platform.
- Move toward common learning portfolios (among seminaries and between seminaries and candidacy) as a way to make it easier for seminaries to recognize each other's courses and for seminary graduates to plan for lifelong learning.

D. Resourcing these new ideas

- Allocate churchwide funds to support a one-time offset to schools that have done research, development and implementation of any of the above mentioned ideas (e.g., learning portfolios or online programs).
- Perhaps have a high level consultation with significant donors who have capacity and interest in reshaping theological education.

**TEAC's Mid-Point Proposals Concerning the Third Imperative:
Toward a Theological Education Network That is More Sustainable**

Introduction to Preliminary Findings

TEAC reviewed basic indicators of the financial health of our ELCA seminaries utilizing data gathered in "comparative audit" conducted every year by the public accounting firm, Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP (Baker Tilly). In addition, TEAC reviewed the most current information gathered as part of the research conducted through the ELCA's Stewards of Abundance project on trends in the student debt of ELCA MDiv graduates.

Concerning seminary finances, attention was focused especially on recent trends in the schools' financial reserves, liquidity, ability to borrow, capital resources, operating results and cost-per-student. Concerning student finances, attention was focused on recent trends in the percentage of ELCA MDiv graduates with no debt, average theological school debt per borrower, average total student debt per borrower, average grant and scholarship aid per recipient, the relationship between levels of debt and likely first call salaries, and the number of graduates.

Systemwide Preliminary Findings

All ELCA seminaries have been finding it persistently difficult to achieve and maintain financial ratios and enrollment levels that point to long-term sustainability. All but one seminary experienced at least a third of its financial indices below industry standard in 2013. The economic downturn placed considerable strain on already challenged levels of financial reserves and our patterns of funding

theological education. At the same time, the downturn made student loans more clearly a burden and higher education in general less readily accessible. Nearly all of our seminaries have experienced significant reductions in the number of graduates and new enrollees. And this has happened at a time when it is crucial to be preparing a new generation of leaders (most especially for new congregations among persons of color) serving in a wider variety of ways while at the same time providing more kinds of continuing education for current leaders serving in rapidly changing contexts.

This is not the first time that the church has needed to renew its work in theological education. Indeed, Lutherans in North America have time and again significantly reshaped their structures and patterns of providing theological education as the church, society and education have changed. As each new period of challenge arose, Lutheran churches and their seminaries have sought faithful new ways of organizing and doing their work. In the last half century:

- Mergers afforded several seminaries the opportunity to forge a modified, or, in some cases, a new functioning platform from which to deliver theological education. The primary reason these mergers occurred was not economic, but rather churchly (so that as Lutheran church bodies moved toward and into mergers, work in theological education would be shared) and educational (so that a wider range of excellent offerings might be available to a wider range of students preparing for more kinds of service). But at the same time, some economies of scale were achieved.
- The possibilities for the way in which seminary education can happen have also expanded in the last 20 years. The rapid development of digital technology has enabled the emergence and continuing evolution of virtual class instruction, asynchronous distance learning and innovative classroom pedagogies. New resources and modes of delivery for lifelong education have been created.
- Changes in theological/educational program design, with new options including an online year, adjusted time in residency, and other alterations from the traditional four-year program along with the growth of the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program have all helped to improve access for students whose life circumstances would otherwise make theological education impractical or simply impossible.

Our seminaries continue to explore new approaches to organizing and providing theological education. In the last few years, two of the eight seminaries (Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary/Lenoir-Rhyne University and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary/California Lutheran University) embarked on the path of merger with ELCA universities supported by new ELCA constitutional language opening the door to this possibility. Other forms of institutional collaboration have also been emerging between our seminaries and colleges, schools of ecumenical partners, social ministries organizations and other institutions.

This renewal of theological education needs not only to continue but also to deepen and accelerate. The recommendations of the *Emerging & Adaptive Practices Workgroup* and the *Lay Schools & Vocational Discernment Workgroup* outlined in the previous pages of this report point to important steps and strategies the ELCA and its seminaries can take that, by making our theological education network more far-reaching, more flexible and connected, have good promise to result in its becoming also more sustainable. At the same time, the successful pursuit of these efforts in network expansion and connection will require direct, clear-eyed, disciplined attention to issues of financial sustainability all along the way. The following draft recommendations seek to serve that end.

Draft Recommendations

A. System Infrastructure Redesign

The total property, plant, and faculty/staff capacity currently in existence at the eight seminaries exceeds the current system-wide level of enrollment. Therefore, schools should take steps to improve effective and efficient use of resources.

TEAC went on to encourage (1) exploration by the schools of merger or other forms of conjoined operation with ELCA seminaries, colleges and universities and/or ecumenical partners to reduce overhead; (2) liquidation of assets not necessary for education; (3) increased inter-agency collaboration to expand educational offerings and to make them more widely available

B. System Coordination

Geographic proximity and cluster partnerships should not be the only criteria for collaboration. Collaboration should be based on comparable programming and/or opportunities for synergy.

TEAC went on to underline the promise of the “Concrete Possibilities for Increasing Connection and Flexibility” (see page 5 above) for improving the sustainability of our seminaries.

C. Direct Attention to Financial Sustainability

Each of the seminaries has found it increasingly challenging to achieve for more than a year or two at a time the industry financial ratios that demonstrate “financial sustainability.” Most have indices that register below the industry benchmarks of acceptability, requiring careful attention and measured change.

TEAC went on to recommend that plans should be developed by the individual seminaries and the theological education network considered as a whole to achieve financial sustainability through improved liquidity, operating results and the student debt levels of graduates. The plans should be based on standards overseen and approved by the ELCA Church Council. Creating and monitoring these plans should become a condition for continuing to receive churchwide and synodical financial support.

D. Benchmarks and Best Practices

ELCA churchwide and synodical support to seminaries should carry with it a clear set of expectations for improvements in financial results where that is necessary; such improvements should be financially encouraged.

TEAC went on to recommend that in developing the benchmarks mentioned in the recommendation immediately above, the ELCA use industry standards in cases where they are well established and to develop ELCA-specific standards where the overall economic realities of the ELCA point to what is and is not sustainable (e.g., student debt levels relative to likely salaries). TEAC also recommended that the ELCA should identify and financially encourage “best practice” approaches that make for improved financial results.

E. Bold Change on an Aggressive Timeline

The continued integrity and mission effectiveness of our network seminaries requires bold change that is carefully measured while moving forward quickly.

TEAC went on to recommend both the establishment of a timeframe for change and the establishment of one or more demonstration projects that test measures aiming to improve sustainability.

Responses to TEAC's Mid-point Materials During the October 1-3, 2014 Meetings

In the conversations TEAC had with seminary presidents, board chairs, deans, and the synod bishops serving on seminary boards, **there was strong and broad support for a number of the themes and recommendations in TEAC's interim report, especially concerning:**

- Stepping up the church's work in fostering vocational discernment (especially though not exclusively with young adults)
- Expanding our work in theological education for all the baptized through the collaborative efforts of the theological education network
- Moving toward a new culture of continuing education for rostered leaders in which lifelong learning is the norm
- Lifting up the teaching office in pastoral ministry
- Cooperative online delivery of theological education (perhaps including a common platform)
- Putting our faculty resources together to do what no seminary can do by itself (the most common example raised was education for Hispanic ministry)
- Reviewing how clusters are functioning and exploring ways to collaborate both within and beyond clusters

Some concerns about TEAC's interim report were also shared by a majority of participants:

- Some of the recommendations are too specific (and especially too programmatically specific). TEAC should focus on desired outcomes and leave the shaping of specific activities to the people who need to do them.
- TEAC's research and recommendations do not take into sufficient account our ecumenical and global partnerships (both formal and informal) in theological education.
- Some of TEAC's recommendations seem to indicate insufficient knowledge of what is already being done by seminaries and their network partners to answer TEAC's three identified imperatives. TEAC needs to pay more attention to mapping existing assets.
- The TEAC benchmarks all relate to finances and enrollment. There is nothing about the identification and assessment of educational outcomes (which has been a major focus of work at seminaries for a number of years)
- TEAC may be making too many recommendations. More focus and clearer prioritization are needed. It is not clear that a "big enough idea" has yet been identified

Some additional concerns were also raised by a substantial minority of participants:

- While increased flexibility in the utilization of faculty is necessary, attention also needs to be paid to the vitality and integrity of faculties as communities of teaching, learning and research.
- TEAC's review of seminary finances does not take into account the very different way finances work when seminaries are part of universities.

- In this set of findings and recommendations concerning the ELCA’s theological education network, TEAC’s focus is almost entirely on the last word: network. TEAC needs to make explicit both the theological foundations and the understanding of education/formation that underlie its analysis, identified imperatives and recommendations.
- TEAC needs to find more ways to listen to seminary faculty, students, candidates, rostered leaders, lay school participants and other congregants

TEAC’S Next Steps

TEAC members met immediately following their October 2, 2014 meeting with seminary presidents, board chairs and the synod bishops serving on seminary boards to consider what they had heard and to plan next steps. In preparation for TEAC’s next meeting in mid-January, TEAC will accelerate the asset-mapping work already underway with attention to how the work of the various partners is related to desired systemwide outcomes. TEAC also sees the need to “deprogramize” its recommendations, keeping the focus on desired outcomes. Concerning whether a “big enough idea” has yet emerged, TEAC members noted that a number of consultation participants had raised up the possibility of moving toward “one seminary in many locations” or “one seminary network with many access points.” TEAC members are interested in exploring this in more depth. TEAC will also explore the possibility of organizing a second seminary consultation, very likely longer and with more participants.

Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC) Membership and Staff Advisors

<i>Co-Chairs</i> ~ Bishop Herman Yoos and Rev. Dr. Robin Steinke		
<i>Lay Schools & Vocational Discernment Workgroup</i>	<i>Emerging & Adaptive Practices Workgroup</i>	<i>Financial Sustainability Workgroup</i>
Dr. Jacqueline Bussie Rev. Kristen Capel Dr. Andrea Green Dr. Paul Pribbenow Rev. Nancy Winder Bishop Herman Yoos Staff Advisor: Rev. Gordon Straw	Maren Hulden Rev. Leila Ortiz Rev. Sarah Rohde Rev. Robin Steinke Sr. Noreen Stevens Staff Advisors: Rev. Stephen Bouman Rev. Greg Villalon	Randall Foster Bishop James Hazelwood William B. Horne II Staff Advisors: Rev. Wyvetta Bullock Dr. Kenneth Inskeep Rev. Jonathan Strandjord <i>Special Review and Guidance from Karen Angell, Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP</i>
<i>Executive Administrative Assistant</i> ~ Sonia Hayden		

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

At the **June 4, 2014** audit committee meeting, management presented a preliminary draft of the financial statements of the ELCA for the year ended January 31, 2014. It was noted that the financial statements will include an “unmodified” opinion from Crowe Horwath that the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the ELCA as of January 31, 2014, and the changes in its net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States.

A new engagement partner, who has experience with the ELCA audits as Senior Manager, led the discussion by Crowe Horwath. There is new paragraph in the Auditor’s Opinion that describes the specific entity for which the financial statements are being presented. In its report to the audit committee in accordance with Statement of Auditing Standards 114, Crowe also reported that there were no audit adjustments or waived audit adjustments, no difficulties were encountered during the audit, and there were no disagreements with management. A formal management recommendation letter was not required as there were no material weaknesses noted – two updates relative to previous findings were discussed.

The committee recommended approval by the Budget and Finance Committee of the draft audited financial statements of the ELCA, as presented, for the year ended January 31, 2014.

A report was received by the committee on the recent IT Security Assessment performed by CDW in response to a request by the Audit Committee in 2012 to update previous security assessments. Overall, systems security at the ELCA was assessed to be above average and improvement opportunities have been prioritized for study and implementation.

The committee also received, reviewed, and accepted the report of the internal auditor which outlined the audits performed, issues raised, and managements’ responses.

The committee performed all other duties and responsibilities in compliance with its Charter and Checklist. No exceptions were noted.

At the **November 6, 2014** audit committee meeting, management reviewed current activities relative to financial processes and the interim financial results through September 30, 2014. Management responses to the external audit recommendations were also reviewed.

Crowe Horwath presented the Audit Service Plan for the year ending January 31, 2015 with an audit scope, audit approach, and audit activities essentially the same as last year, with no increase in fees. The committee recommends approval by the Budget and Finance Committee of the Crowe Horwath audit service plan and fees for the year ending January 31, 2015.

The committee also received, reviewed, and accepted the report of CapinCrouse (the accounting firm that is providing internal audit services) which outlined the internal audits performed, issues raised and managements’ responses, assessment of audit risk, and the 2015 internal audit plan. The internal audit plan for 2014 will be completed as scheduled. The committee approved the 2015 internal audit plan.

The committee reviewed changes to the Internal Audit Charter and Audit Committee Charter that basically reflected the change from having an internal Director of Internal Audit to outsourcing the internal audit function.

The committee approved the changes to the Internal Audit Charter and recommends approval by the Budget and Finance Committee of the revised Audit Committee Charter.

The committee also recommends approval by the Budget and Finance Committee of the appointment of James Zils and Richard Wehrheim to the ELCA Audit Committee for two year terms.

The committee performed all other duties and responsibilities in compliance with its Charter and Checklist. No exceptions were found.

2015 Synod Mission Support Plans**With 2013 Actual and 2014 Plans**

SYNOD NAME	#	2013		2014		2015	
		SYNOD ACTUAL		SYNOD PLANS		SYNOD PLANS	
ALASKA	1A	155,430	39.50%	161,950	39.50%	170,000	40.00%
N.W. WASH	1B	600,632	46.00%	725,165	46.50%	685,025	47.00%
S.W. WASH	1C	366,894	40.00%	376,000	40.00%	376,000	40.00%
E.WASH/ID	1D	266,034	33.00%	268,600	34.00%	316,050	35.00%
OREGON	1E	363,096	40.00%	356,000	40.00%	368,000	40.00%
MONTANA	1F	400,568	40.50%	434,600	41.00%	415,000	41.50%
SIERRA-PACIFIC	2A	947,153	52.50%	1,040,000	52.00%		
SW CALIFORNIA	2B	546,410	50.00%	541,940	49.00%	625,000	50.00%
PACIFICA	2C	718,422	51.00%	794,003	51.00%		
GRAND CANYON	2D	894,305	50.00%	825,000	50.00%	825,000	50.00%
ROCKY MTN	2E	1,181,886	50.00%	1,212,500	50.00%	1,200,000	50.00%
W. NO.DAK	3A	407,000	44.00%	418,500	45.00%	437,000	46.00%
E. NO.DAK	3B	400,685	40.00%	428,823	40.50%	421,200	41.00%
SO. DAK.	3C	736,688	45.00%	773,236	45.50%	779,242	45.50%
NW. MINN.	3D	702,756	50.00%	704,718	49.00%	707,234	48.00%
NE. MINN.	3E	571,765	49.00%	616,420	49.00%	612,500	49.00%
SW. MINN.	3F	1,038,934	52.50%	1,085,967	52.50%	1,070,335	52.50%
MINPLS. AREA	3G	1,587,946	50.00%	1,613,500	50.00%	1,605,000	50.00%
ST PAUL (M)	3H	1,030,716	50.00%	950,000	47.50%	997,500	47.50%
SE. MINN.	3I	968,432	52.50%	1,020,250	53.00%	980,500	53.00%
NEBRASKA	4A	1,870,724	54.50%	1,900,000	54.50%	1,907,500	54.50%
CENTRAL STATES	4B	890,006	48.76%	917,500	50.00%		
ARK/OK	4C	206,785	40.70%	242,352	40.80%	216,480	41.00%
N.TEX/N.LOU	4D	557,045	48.00%	581,916	48.00%	599,373	48.00%
S.W.TEXAS	4E	723,681	51.00%	746,750	51.50%	754,000	52.00%
GULF COAST	4F	654,888	50.00%	630,000	50.00%		
METRO CHGO	5A	1,573,784	53.00%	1,676,324	53.25%	1,685,378	53.50%
NO. ILL	5B	1,237,349	55.00%	1,243,902	55.00%	1,261,205	55.00%
CEN.SO. ILL	5C	796,977	56.00%	840,000	56.00%	826,000	56.00%
SE IOWA	5D	1,365,473	53.50%	1,399,025	53.50%	1,399,025	53.50%
WEST IOWA	5E	335,883	38.10%	353,070	39.10%	358,895	40.10%
NE IOWA	5F	601,910	40.00%	600,000	40.00%	610,000	40.00%
N GRT LKES	5G	415,655	50.50%	425,850	51.00%	430,000	51.50%
NW.SYN (W)	5H	621,497	55.00%	770,000	55.00%	693,900	50.00%
EC WISC	5I	876,559	55.00%	962,500	55.00%	935,000	55.00%
GRTR MILWKEE	5J	1,168,185	55.00%	1,155,000	55.00%	1,182,500	55.00%
SO.-CENT (W)	5K	841,308	55.00%	869,000	55.00%	869,000	55.00%
LACROSSE (W)	5L	430,669	55.00%	455,000	55.00%	455,000	55.00%

2015 Synod Mission Support Plans**With 2013 Actual and 2014 Plans**

SYNOD NAME	#	2013		2014		2015	
		SYNOD ACTUAL		SYNOD PLANS		SYNOD PLANS	
SE. MICH	6A	502,537	42.00%	504,000	42.00%	504,000	42.00%
N/W LOWER MICH	6B	684,012	50.00%	687,500	50.00%	658,500	50.00%
IND/KY	6C	913,577	52.00%	988,000	52.00%	936,000	52.00%
NW OHIO	6D	827,187	51.00%	867,395	51.00%	851,700	51.00%
NE OHIO	6E	767,578	49.00%	784,000	49.00%	750,000	50.00%
S. OHIO	6F	592,267	40.00%	705,200	40.00%	684,000	40.00%
NEW JERSEY	7A	1,076,153	50.00%	1,120,000	50.00%	1,050,000	50.00%
NEW ENGLAND	7B	1,068,135	54.40%	1,100,142	54.00%	994,500	51.00%
METRO NY	7C	593,674	49.50%	625,000	50.00%	625,000	50.00%
UPSTATE NY	7D	509,381	40.89%	513,000	42.00%	500,000	42.00%
NE PENN	7E	1,145,511	46.00%	1,104,000	46.00%	1,175,000	47.00%
SE PENN	7F	535,376	25.49%	1,050,000	50.00%	1,050,000	50.00%
SLOVAK ZION	7G	20,338	30.25%	19,200	30.40%	20,700	30.50%
NW PENN	8A	356,886	50.00%	420,124	50.00%	396,300	50.00%
SW PENN	8B	774,266	47.50%	785,650	47.50%	785,650	47.50%
ALLEGHENY	8C	376,580	50.00%	345,000	50.00%	358,750	50.00%
LOW SUSQ	8D	1,269,006	46.50%	1,218,000	43.53%		
UPP SUSQ	8E	475,897	50.00%	488,500	50.00%	900,000	50.00%
DEL-MRYLND	8F	1,105,893	54.50%	1,103,625	54.50%	1,155,000	55.00%
METRO DC	8G	846,355	50.00%	850,000	50.00%	825,000	50.00%
W. VA/W.MYLD	8H	129,832	25.43%	191,507	37.50%	135,000	33.00%
VIRGINIA	9A	626,261	39.00%	627,064	38.20%	651,000	38.30%
NO. CAROLINA	9B	998,836	36.78%	1,000,000	36.59%	1,000,000	36.00%
SO. CAROLINA	9C	952,273	41.75%	988,222	41.75%	993,000	41.38%
SOUTHEASTERN	9D	1,068,279	50.00%	1,108,650	50.00%	1,108,650	50.00%
FLORIDA-BAHAMAS	9E	1,010,134	47.00%	1,060,800	48.00%	1,031,625	48.00%
CARIBBEAN	9F	40,000	17.22%	40,000	18.00%	42,000	17.20%
TOTAL REMITTANCES		\$48,320,354	47.91%	\$50,409,940	48.93%	\$45,955,217	48.54%

**ELCA CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION
2014 OPERATING RESULTS SUMMARY
FOR THE EIGHT MONTHS ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2014**

The churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had net revenue and support under expenses of \$0.4 million in current operating funds for the eight-month period ended September 30, 2014. This is favorable to the period budget by \$4.6 million, but unfavorable by \$2.5 million compared to the eight months ending September 30, 2013.

Revenue totaled \$41.2 million for the eight-month period compared with \$44.9 million the previous year, a decrease of \$3.7 million or 8.2 percent. In addition, \$2.7 million in support was released from restriction or designation during the period. Revenue and support was favorable to the budget by \$1.0 million or 2.3 percent. Total revenue and support for the period was \$43.9 million, a decrease of \$2.5 million or 5.4 percent from the previous year. Expenses related to the current operating fund amounted to \$44.3 million, equal to the previous year. Expenses were below the authorized unit spending plans by \$3.6 million or 7.5 percent.

Income from congregations through synods in the form of Mission Support income for the eight months was \$29.8 million, a decrease of \$0.4 million or 1.3 percent compared to same period last year. Mission Support income was equal to the revised budget. The revised annual Mission Support budget for 2014 of \$48.0 million is \$0.8 million or 1.5 percent lower than the amount received in 2013.

Other unrestricted and temporarily restricted revenue and support available for budgeted operations of the church amounted to \$14.1 million compared with \$16.2 million in the previous year. Investment income of \$1.9 million and endowment distributions of \$1.9 million resulted in favorable variances to the year-to-date budget and to the prior year. Other income of \$2.8 million resulted in a favorable variance to the year-to-date budget but is unfavorable compared to the prior year. Income from Bequests and Trusts of \$1.3 million is unfavorable to the budget and prior year. Income from Vision for Mission was \$0.6 million and Global Church Sponsorship (including missionary sponsorship) was \$1.7 million for the eight-month period. Income from the Mission Investment Fund of \$1.2 million exceeded budget.

Total contributions to ELCA World Hunger for the eight months were \$8.7 million - favorable to the same eight-month period in 2013 by \$0.4 million. The ELCA Malaria Campaign received gifts of \$1.9 million and has raised \$12.9 million campaign-to-date. ELCA members and partners contributed \$3.3 million for Lutheran Disaster Response in the eight-month period, primarily in support of general undesignated programs. This compares to \$4.9 million in revenue for the same period in 2013, which included \$1.8 for response to domestic tornadoes and \$0.4 million for Hurricane Sandy.

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA has raised \$27 million to date in its five-year, comprehensive campaign, representing 16 percent of the total goal of \$198 million by January 31, 2019. In addition to results reported above, strong response to date has been in the areas of New Congregations, Fund for Leaders and Global Ministries.

ELCA AUDIT COMMITTEE CHARTER

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Audit Committee is to assist the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council in fulfilling its general oversight of the churchwide organization's accounting and financial reporting, internal control systems and audit functions.

Authority

Subject to the approval of the ELCA Budget and Finance Committee, the Audit Committee shall have the authority to retain special legal, accounting or other consultants to advise the committee. The Audit Committee shall have the authority to request any officer or employee of the churchwide organization, its outside counsel or independent auditor to attend a meeting of the committee, or to meet with members of the committee.

Responsibility

Church management is responsible for preparing financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (US GAAP), maintaining a system of internal controls and complying with appropriate laws and regulations. Internal audit is responsible for evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal controls. The independent auditor is responsible for performing an independent audit as a basis for providing an opinion that the Church's financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with US GAAP.

The Audit Committee is responsible for reviewing significant accounting and reporting issues and judgments made in connection with the preparation of the financial statements, including analyses of the effects of alternative GAAP methods on the financial statements.

The ELCA Audit Committee performs its functions in relation to the ELCA Churchwide Administrative Offices and the ELCA Endowment Fund Pooled Trust (collectively, the church). Portico Benefit Services, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, the Mission Investment Fund (MIF), Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) and the Women of the ELCA (W/ELCA) are separately incorporated ministries of the ELCA. The ELCA Audit Committee has no responsibilities with respect to these or other related organizations (including congregations, synods, agencies, institutions and other partners of the ELCA).

Membership

The Audit Committee shall consist of six members. A minimum of 2 members should be Church Council Budget and Finance Committee members. Members of the committee shall be appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and forwarded to the Church Council for approval. Budget and Finance Committee members should be appointed for a 2-year term with the possibility of reappointment up to their Church Council term. Non-Church Council members should be appointed for a 2-year term, renewable for 2 additional terms. Terms need to be staggered in recognition of the need for continuity of committee membership from year to year.

The chair of the committee shall be a member of the Budget and Finance Committee and shall be appointed by the chair of the Budget and Finance Committee. Members of the committee will have no relationship to the church that may interfere with the exercise of the member's independence and must be financially literate. At least one member shall have accounting or related financial management experience.

In order to provide for an effective committee, attendance at the Audit Committee meeting is required of all members. Upon two successive absences that have not been approved by the committee, the member's position shall be declared vacant by the chair.

Meetings

The Audit Committee will meet at least two times per year or more frequently as circumstances require. Meeting agendas will be cleared by the committee chair in advance of the meeting. Minutes will be prepared by one of the churchwide staff, approved by the committee and maintained in the permanent records of the church.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Audit Committee shall have the following duties and responsibilities with respect to:

Financial Statements

Inquire of the independent auditors and churchwide organization management as to the acceptability and appropriateness of financial accounting practices and disclosures used or proposed.

Annually, review the church's audited financial statements and related footnote disclosures and consider whether they are complete and consistent based on information known to committee members.

Discuss with the independent auditors, the effect of regulatory and accounting initiatives on the ELCA's financial statements.

Review with the independent auditors any matters related to the conduct of the audit which are required to be communicated to the committee under generally accepted auditing standards, including, but not limited to, any significant changes required in the original audit plan or any serious difficulties or disputes with management during the course of the audit.

External Audit

Recommend to the Budget and Finance Committee the engagement, retention or discharge of the independent auditors and consider the appropriateness of rotating independent auditors on a regular basis.

Evaluate the performance of the independent auditors.

Review and approve the independent auditors' audit fees and the proposed audit plan.

Review and confirm the independence of the external auditors by monitoring fees paid to the auditor for consulting or other non-audit services and reviewing any relationships that may impact the objectivity or independence of the auditor.

Internal Audit

Review and approve the appointment or dismissal of the internal audit service provider in consultation with the Executive for Administration.

Review with the internal audit service provider the charter, staffing and organization of the internal audit function.

Review the effectiveness of the internal audit function by obtaining assurance that internal audit is not prohibited from carrying out its responsibilities.

Review and approve the annual internal audit plan and schedule based on a mutually acceptable risk assessment. As part of this responsibility, review the fraud risk assessment with management and internal audit, providing guidance and input as appropriate.

Evaluate and investigate, as appropriate, all whistleblower complaints communicated to the committee by the internal audit service provider.

Internal Control

Review any internal control comments and recommendations in the independent auditor's management letter that are classified as material weaknesses or reportable conditions as well as management's response to these comments and recommendations.

Review internal audit's report to the committee, including significant comments and recommendations to management and management's responses to these comments and recommendations.

On an annual basis, review the Board and Committee Operational Ethics Policy, the Employee Operational Ethics Policy and a summary of any reported conflicts of interest.

Communication and Reporting

Meet, in separate executive sessions, as necessary, with the independent auditor, the internal audit service provider or churchwide staff to discuss any matters that the Audit Committee believes should be discussed privately.

Provide for an open avenue of communications between the independent auditor or internal audit service provider and the committee chair.

Review and assess the adequacy of this Charter annually and submit proposed changes to the Budget and Finance Committee for their review and submission to the Church Council for approval.

Report the committee's performance of the duties and responsibilities defined in this charter, including any recommendations the Committee deems appropriate, to the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council.

Develop a calendar of anticipated work for the triennium at the committee's first meeting following each churchwide assembly.

Other Tasks

The Audit Committee shall accomplish other tasks that may be assigned by the Church Council.

The effective date of this Charter is November 8, 2002.

Last Revised: November 12, 2010

Last Reviewed by Audit Committee: November 8, 2012

Last Revised: November 6, 2014

ELCA AUDIT COMMITTEE CHARTER

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Church management is responsible for preparing financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (US GAAP), maintaining a system of internal controls and complying with appropriate laws and regulations. ~~The director of i~~Internal audit is responsible for evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal controls. The independent auditor is responsible for performing an independent audit as a basis for providing an opinion that the Church's financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with US GAAP.

The Audit Committee is responsible for reviewing significant accounting and reporting issues and judgments made in connection with the preparation of the financial statements, including analyses of the effects of alternative GAAP methods on the financial statements.

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Discuss with the independent auditors, the effect of regulatory and accounting initiatives on the ELCA's financial statements.

Review with the independent auditors any matters related to the conduct of the audit which are required to be communicated to the committee under generally accepted auditing standards, including, but not limited to, any significant changes required in the original audit plan or any serious difficulties or disputes with management during the course of the audit.

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Review and confirm the independence of the external auditors by monitoring fees paid to the auditor for consulting or other non-audit services and reviewing any relationships that may impact the objectivity or independence of the auditor.

Internal Audit

Review and approve the appointment or dismissal of the ~~director of~~ internal audit [service provider](#) in consultation with the Executive for Administration.

Review with the ~~director of~~ internal audit [service provider](#) the charter, staffing and organizational ~~structure~~ of the internal audit function.

Review the effectiveness of the internal audit function by obtaining assurance that internal audit is not prohibited from carrying out its responsibilities.

Review and approve the annual internal audit plan and schedule based on a mutually acceptable risk assessment. As part of this responsibility, review the fraud risk assessment with management and internal audit, providing guidance and input as appropriate.

Evaluate and investigate, as appropriate, all whistleblower complaints communicated to the committee by the ~~director of~~ internal audit [service provider](#).

Internal Control

Review any internal control comments and recommendations in the independent auditor's management letter that are classified as material weaknesses or reportable conditions as well as management's response to these comments and recommendations.

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Review and assess the adequacy of this Charter annually and submit proposed changes to the Budget and Finance Committee for their review and submission to the Church Council for approval.

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Last Reviewed by Audit Committee: November 8, 2012

Last Revised: November 6, 2014

Think Tank on Mission Support
Interim Report to the ELCA Church Council

The Bishops Think Tank on Mission Support was appointed by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton. While the Think Tank consists of one bishop per region, Bp. Eaton's expectation is that it be a broadly collaborative group that engages many stakeholders. Specifically, the Think Tank is tasked with preparing a report with recommendations for the spring 2015 meetings of the COB and the Church Council.

The following bishops are serving on the Think Tank: Shelley Wickstrom, Steve Talmage, Larry Wohlrabe, Mike Rinehart, Tom Skrenes, Marcus Lohrmann, Jim Hazelwood, Dick Graham, and Julian Gordy (who serves as convener of the group). The task force has had two face-to-face meetings (in April and September of 2014) and engaged one another via a Google Group, where ideas were generated and discussed online. In addition to Bishop Eaton, the group has welcomed Pr. Margaret Payne, ELCA Director for Mission Support, as an adviser. Kenn Inskeep, ELCA Executive for Research and Evaluation, has also been generous in sharing his time, insights and expertise with the Think Tank.

The Think Tank invited responses from the Churchwide organization's administrative team. Several of those responses are included in this interim report.

Initial challenges

From the start, Think Tankers were keenly aware of the many challenges we face in addressing such an enormous, neuralgic topic. Ours is the latest in a long line of similar groups (Blue Ribbon Committee, LIFT Task Force, Group of Nine Bishops, Mission Funding Task Force, etc.) Addressing the issue of mission support brings with it a number of hurdles: widespread anxiety about money, considering changes to a system that we're all part of, building consensus among key stakeholders, cultivating trust within our church body, etc. Think Tankers realize it's impossible to ponder changes in mission funding without also addressing our identity as a church and the ways we organize ourselves and our work to serve God's mission. Due to the scope of our task, we have done our best to focus on mission funding, realizing that this conversation takes place in the context of larger conversations or mission and identity which are taking place in this church.

In our work, we have encountered both the gift and the burden of our ELCA governing documents—aware that testing new models for mission support must take place within the parameters of our constitution, bylaws and continuing resolutions.

Naming these challenges has encouraged Think Tankers to embrace our work in a spirit of humility—while at the same time boldly considering ideas for moving our church beyond technical change into the arena of adaptive change.

Shared learnings and points of consensus

Thus far the Think Tank members have read and discussed a number of documents and reports pertaining to our task. We have, in a preliminary way, come to identify some shared learnings and points of consensus, such as:

- Church and society have changed dramatically since 1988, especially with respect to giving practices. Older generations of loyal givers are passing away; younger generations have shifted from giving to institutions to supporting causes that matter to them.
- The people of our church have already restructured ELCA mission support, by reducing shared giving from 17.7 percent of congregational receipts in 1965 in predecessor church bodies down to less than 5 percent of receipts in 2013. In their 2013 reports, ELCA congregations showed they are not giving less beyond themselves, but are giving differently. For example, designated giving is going up to other organizations and also to the ELCA designated funds.
- The guidance of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, that mission support dollars be shared on a 55/45 percent basis, has become an anachronism. Our church needs to revisit the question of sharing mission support dollars on a fixed percentage basis. Whether a new formula is agreed upon or the percentage question is determined on a synod-by-synod basis, mutual accountability must be into the process.

- Our church needs to cease putting all its eggs in the basket of a “single stream” of income, in order to embrace “multiple stream” approaches to mission funding. In fact, we have observed that this is already happening, i.e. ELCA Campaign, individual bequests, and other direct support from individuals.
- Increasing the number of gift planners and giving more attention to planned giving could make the ELCA Foundation a promising income stream.
- It is time to re-evaluate the ways in which mission support dollars flow from congregations through synods to churchwide—and then back to congregations and synods in the form of grants from the churchwide organization. At the same time, we must insure that this church’s resources are distributed in a manner that is just and in keeping to the church’s commitments to inclusion and accompaniment.
- We need to recover an awareness that money is a spiritual issue, and that in the area of financial stewardship the leadership of parish pastors is crucial.
- The governing documents of the ELCA need to be re-examined and revised to foster flexibility—both in how mission is funded and how mission support dollars are invested.
- Having ramped up a number of efforts to help disciples grow in the faith practice of generosity in service to God’s mission (e.g. the mission support responsibilities of Directors of Evangelical Mission, the Macedonia Project, Ventures in Growing Stewards), we need to identify the fruit that has been harvested along with places where we have fallen short. We are no longer in a position to have programs that do not yield fruitfulness.
- We need to name the reality that many of the assets of our church are tied up in buildings and real estate, which are requiring more and more upkeep. A related issue is the fact that a disappointing number of congregations that close fail to bequeath a legacy of support to new opportunities for future Word and Sacrament ministry.
- To prepare this church for the broad, deep changes that are needed, we must move quickly into a time of experimenting with new models for enhancing mission support.
- We should explore areas in which synods and regions might work together to share work and expenses. The Region 1 financial cooperative is one example that has created an “economy of scale” for the participating synods.

Experiments worth exploring

Rather than producing a grand, over-arching plan or program, the Think Tank believes now is the time to venture out with some imaginative experiments spearheaded by synods that are ready, willing and able to take risks on behalf of the whole church for the sake of the mission of the gospel. Thus far we have surfaced several types of possible pilot projects. Among them:

1. Several synods that are willing to try (a) reducing a portion of their income shared with churchwide organization in order to (b) fund directly some of the ministries for which synods currently receive grants from the churchwide organization, e.g. the Director of Evangelical Mission, grants for mission starts and redevelopments, grants for campus ministries.
2. Some synods may be willing to see how mission support is affected when their congregations are invited to make separate annual commitments, one to the churchwide organization and one to the synod.
3. Several synods that are already experimenting with (or are willing to experiment with) cultivating “multiple income stream” approaches to mission support, e.g. annual appeals to individuals, using endowment income to fund certain ministries, fostering targeted offerings for synod/churchwide (in addition to mission funding as part of the congregational budget), “fees for services,” capital

campaigns and other fund-raising approaches, etc. In addition, some of these synods are experimenting with annual appeals and with programs aimed at expanding the awareness of how we are “church together” among congregations and members.

We recognize that synods vary dramatically in resources and circumstances and that no experiment will work in all synods. As our church moves into a time of imaginative experimentation, the Think Tank will be clear about the hypotheses that are being tested and outcomes that are achieved by individual pilot projects. We may not recommend all these experiments and we may recommend others, based on the input from constituents and stakeholders.

Broadening the conversation

Members of the Think Tank believe that one way earlier mission funding study groups were hampered was due to the inability of key stakeholders to come together to recognize the need for new approaches and to get behind proposed changes. The Think Tank is committed to fostering a generative conversation about mission support that opens up our church to adaptive changes that are “past due.” As such, members of the Think Tank are engaging with and drawing upon the wisdom of key stakeholders including the churchwide staff, the Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, synods and congregations.

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Core Investment Policy**

Applicability

The investments subject to this policy are those related to funds administered by the Office of the Treasurer in excess of short-term operating needs of the churchwide organization and defined as “core” investments. Core investments are defined as those generally not subject to the seasonality of receipts and that represent a level below which the balance of restricted and designated funds are not expected to decrease (approximately \$50 million on a long-term basis). This policy does not apply to the investments of the ELCA Foundation.

Investment Objectives

To outperform a benchmark index (“the Index”) consisting of 50% Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-5 Year US Corporate & Government Index (BBB rated and above) and 50% Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-3 Year US Corporate & Government Index (BBB rated and above) over an average market cycle giving consideration to both income and capital appreciation, subject to the following guidelines and consistent with the safety of principal.

Investment Managers

At least two investment managers and custodians shall be appointed to manage the portfolio in accordance with this Investment Policy when the total value of the investment portfolio is expected to be more than \$50 million over an extended period of time. At least one investment manager and custodian are required when the portfolio averages less than \$50 million.

Investment Guidelines

I. Duration and Maturity:

- A. The core investment account will have a weighted average duration that normally ranges between 75% and 120% of the average duration of the Index, over an average market cycle, as calculated by the investment manager.
- B. Maximum maturity of any specific holding will not exceed 10 years from the date of purchase (i.e., trade date) to put date, maturity, or average life.
 - i. For purposes of calculating the maturity of a floating rate instrument, the maturity will be measured to the next reset date, if the underlying index resets on a regular predetermined interval.

- ii. For purposes of the above, securities with put rights exercisable within 10 years will be deemed to have a maturity equal to the put date.

II. Quality:

- A. Bonds and other fixed-income obligations will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to investment grade “Baa3/BBB rating category” or higher by at least one of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- B. Commercial paper and other short-term securities will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to second tier (A2,P2,F2) or higher by at least one of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- C. The average credit quality of the core investment account on a weighted value basis will be equivalent to “AA rating category” or higher based on the rating assigned to each security in the account at the time of purchase.
- D. The aggregate of second tier commercial paper and investment grade “Baa3/BBB rating category” securities will not exceed 20% of the total market value of the portfolio at the time of purchase.

III. Sector and Security Diversification:

- A. Except for the securities described in Sections IV A and IV I, which may be purchased without limits, no more than 5% of the portfolio market value (10% for mutual funds due to their inherent diversification) at the time of purchase, will be invested in any specific issue.
- B. No more than 65% of the portfolio value, at the time of purchase, will be invested in the aggregate value of security types listed in the eligible security section below, other than those described in Sections IV B, D and I.
- C. Repurchase agreements with any one counterparty may not exceed 20% of the portfolio value.

IV. Eligible Securities:

Subject to any applicable restrictions set forth above, eligible securities will include:

- A. Any security that, at the time of purchase, is a component of the Merrill Lynch 1-5 Government/Corporate (BBB rated and above) Index or the

Merrill Lynch 1-3 Year US Corporate & Government Index (BBB rated and above).

- B. Direct obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government, its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises and repurchase agreements collateralized by such obligations.
- C. Domestic corporate obligations and dollar denominated foreign corporate, foreign government and supranational obligations.
- D. Short-term instruments, including but not limited to adjustable rate preferreds, time deposits, commercial paper, certificates of deposit, bankers acceptances and floating rate notes, provided they meet the above restrictions.
- E. Mortgage-backed securities, (including CMO's – Collateralized Mortgage Obligations – and CMBS – Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities) issued by agencies or sponsored enterprises of the U.S. Government.
- F. Mortgage-backed securities (including CMO's and CMBS) issued by non-agency, private label entities.
- G. Asset-backed securities.
- H. Taxable municipal bonds
- I. Money market funds with daily liquidity

Investments may be in the form of individual securities, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, or separately managed accounts.

V. Constraints and Prohibited Investments.

- A. Socially Responsible Investing
The core investment account is required to pursue its investment objectives subject to criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values of the ELCA. Each year the social criteria list will be provided to the investment manager for screening. The manager will be required to divest as soon as practical, consistent with prudent investment management, any portfolio securities issued by companies on the social criteria lists.

Investments in commingled funds/Exchange Traded Funds/mutual funds are not subject to socially responsible investing.

B. Prohibited Investments

The core investment account may not: invest in non-U.S. dollar denominated securities; invest in commodities or commodity contracts; invest in sell or put options or uncovered call options; purchase derivatives for speculative purposes - no margin or any speculative devise; sell securities short; or invest directly in real estate.

VI. Liquidity:

Liquidity requirements for the core investment account will be communicated to the investment managers in writing from time to time by the ELCA.

Approved: November 10, 2006

Reviewed: December, 2010

Reviewed: December, 2011

Reviewed: November 7, 2014

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To outperform a benchmark index (“the Index”) consisting of 50% Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-5 Year US Corporate & Government Index (BBB rated and above) and 50% Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-3 Year US Corporate & Government Index (BBB rated and above)~~The funds will be invested in a core investment account with the objective to outperform the Merrill Lynch 1-5 Government/Credit (BBB rated and above) Index (the “Index”);~~ over an average market cycle giving consideration to both income and capital appreciation, subject to the following guidelines and consistent with the safety of principal.

Investment Managers

At least two investment managers and custodians shall be appointed to manage the portfolio in accordance with this Investment Policy when the total value of the investment portfolio is expected to be more than \$50 million over an extended period of time. At least one investment manager and custodian are required when the portfolio averages less than \$50 million. ~~One or more investment managers and custodians may be appointed to manage the portfolio in accordance with this Core Investment Policy.~~

Investment Guidelines

I. Duration and Maturity:

- A. The core investment account will have a weighted average duration that normally ranges between 75% and 120%~~+/- 20%~~ of the average duration of the Index, over an average market cycle, as calculated by the investment manager.
- B. Maximum maturity of any specific holding will not exceed 10 years from the date of purchase (i.e., trade date) to put date, maturity, or average life.

- i. For purposes of calculating the maturity of a floating rate instrument, the maturity will be measured to the next reset date, if the underlying index resets on a regular predetermined interval.
- ii. For purposes of the above, securities with put rights exercisable within 10 years will be deemed to have a maturity equal to the put date.

II. Quality:

- A. Bonds and other fixed-income obligations will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to investment grade “Baa3/BBB rating category” or higher by at least ~~two one two~~ of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- B. Commercial paper and other short-term securities will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to second tier (A2,P2,F2) or higher by at least ~~two one two~~ of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- C. The average credit quality of the core investment account on a weighted value basis will be equivalent to “AA rating category” or higher based on the rating assigned to each security in the account at the time of purchase.
- D. The aggregate of second tier commercial paper and investment grade “Baa3/BBB rating category” securities will not exceed 20% of the total market value of the portfolio at the time of purchase.

III. Sector and Security Diversification:

- A. Except for the securities described in Sections IV A and IV ~~IG~~, which may be purchased without limits, no more than 5% of the portfolio market value (10% for mutual funds due to their inherent diversification) at the time of purchase, will be invested in any specific issue.
- B. No more than 65% of the portfolio value, at the time of purchase, will be invested in the aggregate value of security types listed in the eligible security section below, other than those described in Sections IV ~~BA~~, ~~DC~~ and ~~IG~~.
- C. Repurchase agreements with any one counterparty may not exceed 20% of the portfolio value.

IV. Eligible Securities:

Subject to any applicable restrictions set forth above, eligible securities will include:

- A. Any security that, at the time of purchase, is a component of the Merrill Lynch 1-5 Government/Corporate (BBB rated and above) Index or the Merrill Lynch 1-3 Year US Corporate & Government Index (BBB rated and above).
 - B. Direct obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government, its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises and repurchase agreements collateralized by such obligations.
 - C. Domestic corporate obligations and dollar denominated foreign corporate, foreign government and supranational obligations.
 - D. Short-term instruments, including but not limited to adjustable rate preferreds, time deposits, commercial paper, certificates of deposit, bankers acceptances and floating rate notes, provided they meet the above restrictions.
 - E. Mortgage-backed securities, (including CMO's – Collateralized Mortgage Obligations – and CMBS – Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities) issued by agencies or sponsored enterprises of the U.S. Government.
~~including collateralized mortgage obligations.~~
 - ~~E.~~F. Mortgage-backed securities (including CMO's and CMBS) issued by non-agency, private label entities.
 - ~~E.~~G. Asset-backed securities.
 - ~~G.~~ ~~Eligible investments will also include other types of financial instruments, however designated, whose investment and credit quality characteristics are determined by the investment managers to be substantially similar to those of any other investment otherwise permitted by these guidelines.~~
 - H. Taxable municipal bonds
 - ~~H.~~I. Money market funds with daily liquidity
- Investments may be in the form of individual securities, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, or separately managed accounts.

V. Constraints and Prohibited Investments.

A. Socially Responsible Investing

The core investment account is required to pursue its investment objectives subject to criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values of the ELCA. Each year the social criteria list will be provided to the investment manager for screening. The manager will be required to divest as soon as practical, consistent with prudent investment management, any portfolio securities issued by companies on the social criteria lists.

[Investments in commingled funds/Exchange Traded Funds/mutual funds are not subject to socially responsible investing.](#)

B. Prohibited Investments

The core investment account may not: invest in non-U.S. dollar denominated foreign securities ~~except U.S. dollar denominated foreign securities~~; invest in commodities or commodity contracts; invest in sell or put options or uncovered call options; purchase derivatives for speculative purposes - no margin or any speculative devise; sell securities short; or invest directly in real estate.

VI. Liquidity:

Liquidity requirements for the core investment account will be communicated to the investment managers in writing from time to time by the ELCA.

Approved: November 10, 2006
Reviewed: December, 2010
Reviewed: December, 2011
[Reviewed: November 7, 2014](#)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Operating Investment Policy

Applicability

The investments subject to this policy are those related to funds administered by the Office of the Treasurer in excess of ongoing daily operating needs of the churchwide organization and those defined as “core” investments under the Core Investment Policy. Such funds generally accumulate due to the seasonality of receipts as well as a portion of restricted and designated funds that are received and distributed over an extended period of time. This policy does not apply to the investments of the ELCA Foundation.

Investment Objectives

The funds will be invested in an operating investment account with the objective to outperform the STATIC Benchmark Index (the “Index”) over an average market cycle giving consideration to both income and capital appreciation, subject to the following guidelines and consistent with the safety of principal. The STATIC benchmark is a custom benchmark made up of 25% each of Bank of America Merrill Lynch 3-month Treasury Bill Index, Bank of America Merrill Lynch 6-month Treasury Bill Index, Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-year Treasury Note Index and Bank of America Merrill Lynch 1-3 year Treasury Index. This benchmark can be changed as dictated by changing liquidity needs.

Investment Managers

This investment account cannot be internally managed.

Investment Guidelines

I. Duration and Maturity:

- A. The operating investment account will have a weighted average duration that ranges between 75% and 120% of the average duration of the Index, over an average market cycle, as calculated by the investment manager.
- B. The maximum maturity of any specific holding is 3 years from the date of purchase (i.e., trade date) to put date, maturity, or average life.
 - i. For purposes of calculating the maturity of a floating rate instrument, the maturity will be measured to the next reset date, if the underlying index resets on a regular predetermined interval.
 - ii. For purposes of the above, securities with put rights exercisable within 3 years will be deemed to have a maturity equal to the put date.

II. Quality:

- A. Bonds and other fixed-income obligations will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to investment grade “Baa3/BBB rating category” or higher by at least two of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- B. Commercial paper and other short-term securities will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to second tier (A2,P2,F2) or higher by at least two of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- C. The average credit quality of the operating investment account on a weighted value basis will be equivalent to “AA” or higher based on the rating assigned to each security in the account at the time of purchase.
- D. The aggregate of second tier commercial paper and investment grade “Baa3/BBB rating category” securities will not exceed 20% of the total market value of the portfolio at the time of purchase.

III. Sector and Security Diversification:

- A. Except for the securities described in Sections IV A and IV H, which may be purchased without limits, no more than 5% of the portfolio market value, (10% for mutual funds due to their inherent diversification) at the time of purchase, will be invested in any specific issue.
- B. No more than 65% of the portfolio value, at the time of purchase, will be invested in the aggregate value of security types listed in the eligible security section below, other than those described in Sections IV A, C and H.
- C. Repurchase agreements with any one counterparty may not exceed 20% of the portfolio value.

IV. Eligible Securities:

Subject to any applicable restrictions set forth above, eligible securities will include:

- A. Direct obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government, its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises and repurchase agreements collateralized by such obligations.

- B. Domestic corporate obligations and dollar denominated foreign corporate, foreign government and supranational obligations.
- C. Short-term instruments, including but not limited to adjustable rate preferreds, time deposits, commercial paper, certificates of deposit, bankers acceptances and floating rate notes, provided they meet the above restrictions.
- D. Mortgage-backed securities, (including CMO's – Collateralized Mortgage Obligations – and CMBS – Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities) issued by agencies or sponsored enterprises of the U.S. Government. .
- E. Mortgage-backed securities (including CMO's and CMBS) issued by non-agency, private label entities.
- F. Asset-backed securities.
- G. Taxable municipal bonds.
- H. Money market funds with daily liquidity

Investments may be in the form of individual securities, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, or separately managed accounts.

V. **Constraints and Prohibited Investments.**

- A. Socially Responsible Investing
The operating investment account is required to pursue its investment objectives subject to criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values of the ELCA. Each year the social criteria list will be provided to the investment manager for screening. The manager will be required to divest as soon as practical, consistent with prudent investment management, any portfolio securities issued by companies on the social criteria lists. Investments in commingled funds/Exchange Traded Funds/mutual funds are not subject to socially responsible investing.
- B. Prohibited Investments
The operating investment account may not: invest in non- U.S. dollar-denominated securities; invest in commodities or commodity contracts; invest in sell or put options or uncovered call options; purchase derivatives for speculative purposes - no margin or any speculative devise; sell securities short; or invest directly in real estate.

VI. **Liquidity:**

Liquidity requirements for the operating investment account will be communicated to the investment managers in writing from time to time by the ELCA.

Approved: November 10, 2006

Reviewed December, 2010

Reviewed December, 2011 Reviewed: November, 2014

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Operating Investment Policy

Applicability

The investments subject to this policy are those related to funds administered by the Office of the Treasurer in excess of ongoing daily operating needs of the churchwide organization and those defined as “core” investments under the Core Investment Policy. Such funds generally accumulate due to the seasonality of receipts as well as a portion of restricted and designated funds that are received and distributed over an extended period of time. This policy does not apply to the investments of the ELCA Foundation.

Investment Objectives

The funds will be invested in an operating investment account with the objective to outperform the STATIC Benchmark Index (the “Index”) over an average market cycle giving consideration to both income and capital appreciation, subject to the following guidelines and consistent with the safety of principal. The STATIC benchmark is a custom benchmark made up of 25% each of [Bank of America](#) Merrill Lynch 3-month Treasury Bill Index, [Bank of America](#) Merrill Lynch 6-month Treasury Bill Index, [Bank of America](#) Merrill Lynch 1-year Treasury Note Index and [Bank of America](#) Merrill Lynch 1-3 year Treasury Index. This benchmark can be changed as dictated by changing liquidity needs.

Investment Managers

[This investment account cannot be internally managed. One or more investment managers and custodians may be appointed to manage the portfolio in accordance with this Operating Investment Policy.](#)

Investment Guidelines

I. **Duration and Maturity:**

- A. The operating investment account will have a weighted average duration that ranges [between 75% and 120%](#)~~+/- 25%~~ of the average duration of the Index, over an average market cycle, as calculated by the investment manager.
- B. The maximum maturity of any specific holding is 3 years from the date of purchase (i.e., trade date) to put date, maturity, or average life.
 - i. For purposes of calculating the maturity of a floating rate instrument, the maturity will be measured to the next reset date, if the underlying index resets on a regular predetermined interval.

- ii. For purposes of the above, securities with put rights exercisable within 3 years will be deemed to have a maturity equal to the put date.

II. Quality:

- A. Bonds and other fixed-income obligations will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to [investment grade](#) “[Baa3/BBB rating category](#)” or higher by at least ~~one~~[two](#) of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- B. Commercial paper and other short-term securities will be limited to obligations rated, at the time of purchase, equivalent to second tier (A2,P2,F2) or higher by at least ~~one~~[two](#) of the nationally recognized statistical rating organizations.
- C. The average credit quality of the operating investment account on a weighted value basis will be equivalent to “AA” or higher based on the rating assigned to each security in the account at the time of purchase.
- D. The aggregate of second tier commercial paper and [investment grade](#) “[Baa3/BBB rating category](#)” securities will not exceed 20% of the total market value of the portfolio at the time of purchase.

III. Sector and Security Diversification:

- A. Except for the securities described in Sections IV A and IV [HG](#), which may be purchased without limits, no more than 5% of the portfolio [market](#) value, ([10% for mutual funds due to their inherent diversification](#)) at the time of purchase, will be invested in any specific issue.
- B. No more than 65% of the portfolio value, at the time of purchase, will be invested in the aggregate value of security types listed in the eligible security section below, other than those described in Sections IV A, C and [HG](#).
- C. Repurchase agreements with any one counterparty may not exceed 20% of the portfolio value.

IV. Eligible Securities:

Subject to any applicable restrictions set forth above, eligible securities will include:

- A. Direct obligations issued or guaranteed by the U.S. Government, its agencies, instrumentalities or sponsored enterprises and repurchase agreements collateralized by such obligations.
 - B. Domestic corporate obligations and dollar denominated foreign corporate, foreign government and supranational obligations.
 - C. Short-term instruments, including but not limited to adjustable rate preferreds, time deposits, commercial paper, certificates of deposit, bankers acceptances and floating rate notes, provided they meet the above restrictions.
 - D. Mortgage-backed securities, (including CMO's – Collateralized Mortgage Obligations – and CMBS – Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities) issued by agencies or sponsored enterprises of the U.S. Government, including collateralized mortgage obligations.
 - E. Mortgage-backed securities (including CMO's and CMBS) issued by non-agency, private label entities.
 - ~~E.F.~~ Asset-backed securities.
 - ~~F.~~ ~~Eligible investments will also include other types of financial instruments, however designated, whose investment and credit quality characteristics are determined by the investment managers to be substantially similar to those of any other investment otherwise permitted by these guidelines.~~
 - G. Taxable municipal bonds.
 - ~~G.H.~~ Money market funds with daily liquidity
- Investments may be in the form of individual securities, mutual funds, exchange traded funds, or separately managed accounts.

V. **Constraints and Prohibited Investments.**

- A. Socially Responsible Investing
The operating investment account is required to pursue its investment objectives subject to criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values of the ELCA. Each year the social criteria list will be provided to the investment manager for screening. The manager will be required to divest as soon as practical, consistent with prudent investment management, any portfolio securities issued by companies on the social criteria lists.
Investments in commingled funds/Exchange Traded Funds/mutual funds are not subject to socially responsible investing.

B. Prohibited Investments

The operating investment account may not: invest in ~~non-foreign securities,~~ ~~except~~ U.S. dollar-denominated ~~foreign~~ securities; invest in commodities or commodity contracts; invest in sell or put options or uncovered call options; purchase derivatives for speculative purposes - no margin or any speculative devise; sell securities short; or invest directly in real estate.

VI. Liquidity:

Liquidity requirements for the operating investment account will be communicated to the investment managers in writing from time to time by the ELCA.

Approved: November 10, 2006
Reviewed December, 2010
Reviewed December, 2011
[Reviewed: November, 2014](#)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Cash Management Policy

Applicability

This policy is applicable to cash administered by the Office of the Treasurer, including that in excess of ongoing daily operating needs of the churchwide organization. Such cash generally fluctuates due to the seasonality of receipts as well as the level of restricted and designated funds that are received and distributed over an extended period of time. This policy does not apply to the investments of the ELCA Foundation.

Investing of cash managed under this policy is subject to the Operating and Core Investment Policies.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to provide the philosophy and general operating procedures necessary for the churchwide office to meet its cash disbursement and liquidity needs.

Monitoring cash flow

The Office of the Treasurer is responsible for monitoring cash balances and needs on a daily, weekly, monthly and as-needed basis. Liquidity requirements will be communicated to the investment managers in writing from time to time by the ELCA.

The monthly calendarization of the annual operating and capital budgets prepared for the churchwide organization, as well as quarterly forecasts of spending for disaster relief, World Hunger, and other programs with variable spending schedules, provide input to the cash monitoring process.

Liquidity

Cash and investments to approximate the balance of restricted and designated funds, plus an amount to support the average monthly (over previous 12 months) operating needs of the churchwide organization should be maintained. However, to avoid the costs of outside borrowing, the temporary operating cash needs for approved churchwide office program and administrative activities may be met by allowing the level of cash and investments to decrease below the above target.

A balance of up to approximately 5% of the portfolio market value will be maintained as readily available cash in a demand account. Excess cash on a daily basis will be transferred to an operating investment account, as defined in the Operating Investment Policy. The amount in this operating investment account will vary based upon expected cash needs and the overall interest rate environment, but should generally not exceed a peak level of

expected monthly disbursements over an annual period. Additional excess cash will be transferred to a core investment account, as defined in the Core Investment Policy.

The sum of available committed lines of credit and cash subject to this policy will not decrease below two month's average (over previous 12 months) cash disbursements.

Cash Reserves

Segregated cash reserves will not be maintained for specific purposes. The need for such reserves may be satisfied by creating designated funds that will be subject to the liquidity policy above.

Lines of Credit

Lines of credit equal to at least \$10 million will be maintained and may be used to meet temporary cash flow needs.

Investment Income

Under the unified budget concept practiced by the churchwide organization, income received in the investment portfolios is recorded as unrestricted revenue of the churchwide organization and is used to support the programs and structure of the churchwide organization. Costs and fees related to cash and investment management and gains and losses from the portfolios are likewise absorbed and recorded in the general treasury of the ELCA churchwide organization.

Approved: March 24, 2009
Reviewed December, 2010
Reviewed December, 2011
Reviewed November, 2014

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Cash Management Policy

Applicability

This policy is applicable to cash administered by the Office of the Treasurer, including that in excess of ongoing daily operating needs of the churchwide organization. Such cash generally fluctuates due to the seasonality of receipts as well as the level of restricted and designated funds that are received and distributed over an extended period of time. This policy does not apply to the investments of the ELCA Foundation.

Investing of cash managed under this policy is subject to the [Operating and Core Investment Policies](#).

Objective

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Monitoring cash flow

The Office of the Treasurer is responsible for monitoring cash balances and needs on a daily, weekly, monthly and as-needed basis. Liquidity requirements will be communicated to the investment managers in writing from time to time by the ELCA.

The monthly calendarization of the annual operating and capital budgets prepared for the churchwide organization, as well as quarterly forecasts of spending for disaster relief, World Hunger, and other programs with variable spending schedules, provide input to the cash monitoring process.

Liquidity

Cash and investments to approximate the balance of restricted and designated funds, plus an amount to support the average monthly (over previous 12 months) operating needs of the churchwide organization should be maintained. However, to avoid the costs of outside borrowing, the temporary operating cash needs for approved churchwide office program and administrative activities may be met by allowing the level of cash and investments to decrease below the above target.

A balance of up to approximately ~~\$1.4 million~~ [5% of the portfolio market value](#) will be maintained as readily available cash in a demand account. Excess cash on a daily basis will be transferred to an operating investment account, as defined in the Operating Investment Policy. The amount in this [operating](#) investment account will vary based upon expected cash needs and the overall interest rate environment, but should generally not exceed a peak level

of expected monthly disbursements over an annual period. Additional excess cash will be transferred to a core investment account, as defined in the Core Investment Policy.

The sum of available committed lines of credit and cash subject to this policy will not decrease below two month's average (over previous 12 months) cash disbursements.

Cash Reserves

Segregated cash reserves will not be maintained for specific purposes. The need for such reserves may be satisfied by creating designated funds that will be subject to the liquidity policy above.

Lines of Credit

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Investment Income

Under the unified budget concept practiced by the churchwide organization, income received in the investment portfolios is recorded as unrestricted revenue of the churchwide organization and is used to support the programs and structure of the churchwide organization. Costs and fees related to cash and investment management and gains and losses from the portfolios are likewise absorbed and recorded in the general treasury of the ELCA churchwide organization.

Approved: March 24, 2009
Reviewed December, 2010
Reviewed December, 2011
[Reviewed November, 2014](#)

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY PROGRAM
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
INVESTMENT PHILOSOPHY AND POLICY STATEMENT

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Investment Philosophy and Policy Statement is to assist the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in effectively supervising, monitoring and evaluating the investment management of its Charitable Gift Annuity Program.

2. DEFINITIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

(A) Definitions

Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) – private contract between a donor and a charitable institution. The donor transfers cash or other assets to the institution in exchange for lifetime annuity payments, preserving an estimated future value to be used for charitable purposes. The amount of each annuity payment is determined by the age(s) of the annuitant(s) and the annuity rate(s) at the date of contract. The annuity payment remains fixed for the lifetime of the annuitant(s) and is backed by the full faith and credit of the ELCA.

American Council on Gift Annuities (ACGA) – nonprofit organization which publishes suggested charitable gift annuity rates for use by charitable institutions and their donors. The suggested rates generally assume that, upon maturity of a contract, the charity will receive a future value of approximately half of the original gift. The ELCA follows the gift annuity rates suggested by the ACGA.

Required Reserve – the amount maintained as segregated assets of the ELCA according to requirements set forth in statutes and regulations of certain states. The Required Reserve amount is actuarially determined to approximate the present value of future annuity payments plus surplus amounts per the requirements of certain states. Upon maturity of a contract, any remainder in the reserve for that contract is removed from the reserve and used for the purpose intended by the donor.

Excess Reserve – the amount maintained as segregated assets of the ELCA in excess of the Required Reserve defined above. The Excess Reserve is held for future use in support of ministry. Upon maturity of a contract, any remainder in the reserve for that contract is removed from the reserve and used for the purpose intended by the donor.

(B) Investment Philosophy and Principles

1. Invest the entire gift, not just the required reserve, for the life of the contract.
2. Invest the Required Reserve according to an asset-liability matching strategy, utilizing fixed income securities to generate sufficient cash flow to service annuity payments.
3. Invest the Excess Reserve in order to maintain its purchasing power and achieve future value targets in line with growth expectations (as presupposed by the terms of the underlying gifts).
4. Maximize investment return within reasonable and prudent levels of risk.
5. Invest assets in accordance with socially responsible investing criteria of the ELCA.

3. INVESTMENT STRUCTURE

CGA investments are segregated from all other assets of the ELCA. There are two separate pools: California and Non-California. Within each pool, a portion is allocated as Required Reserve and a portion as Excess Reserve. The Excess Reserve portfolio is held in the same segregated pool accounts as the Required Reserve portfolio for purposes of efficiency and protection.

4. RISK TOLERANCES

The ELCA recognizes that some risk must be assumed in order to achieve long-term investment objectives, and that there are uncertainties and complexities associated with investment markets. In establishing risk tolerances, the ability of the CGA Program to withstand short- and intermediate-term volatility (through the Required Reserve Fund portfolio) is considered. Interim fluctuations in market value and rates of return are expected within the Excess Reserve Fund portfolio in order to achieve long-term objectives.

5. REQUIRED RESERVE FUND

(A) Investment Objectives

1. Ensure that the Required Reserve balances are calculated based on expected annuity payments and mortality, and that investments are permissible according to state statutes and regulations.
2. Provide for some growth in the principal of the reserves, yet ensure that the required annuity payments are funded.

(B) Investment Policy

The Required Reserve will be invested in fixed income investments, with residual amounts held in cash. Annuity payments are made on a monthly basis from the Required Reserve Fund. The Required Reserve Fund will be managed to meet short-term liquidity requirements.

A portion of the fixed income portfolio may be invested in short-term securities. Specific investments will be determined by the structure of the liabilities. Quality and sectors will be determined by investment managers according to applicable ELCA investment guidelines developed as separate documents. Real estate and real estate securities may not be held as part of the Required Reserve Fund.

The Required Reserve and Excess Reserve will be calculated on the actuarial table provided by Foundation staff, on at least an annual basis.

(C) Performance Objective

The performance objective of the Required Reserve Fund is to ensure that cash flows are sufficient to match the liabilities of the underlying annuities.

6. EXCESS RESERVE FUND

(A) Investment Objective

The investment objective of the Excess Reserve Fund is to maintain its purchasing power

and achieve a future value for underlying annuity contracts in line with expectations at the original time of the gift.

(B) Investment Policy

The Excess Reserve balance may be invested in up to 100% equities, mutual funds or other permissible products as determined by state statutes and regulations.

The asset allocation for the Excess Reserve Fund will be:

	<u>Target Allocation</u>	<u>Allocation Range</u>
US stocks	17.5%	12.5% to 22.5%
Non-US stocks	17.5%	12.5% to 22.5%
Alternative equities	5%	0% to 10%
Core fixed income	30%	25% to 35%
High yield	10%	5% to 15%
Real Assets	10%	5% to 15%
Inflation indexed bonds	10%	5% to 15%

(C) Performance

The benchmark shall be 20 percent of the Russell 3000 Index, 20 percent of the MSCI All Country World ex-U.S. Investable Market Index (U.S. dollars, with net dividends), 30 percent of the Citigroup Custom Bond Index, 10 percent of the Citigroup High-Yield BB/B Cash-Pay Capped Index, 10 percent of (60% Dow Jones Wilshire Real Estate Securities Index/40% Dow Jones Wilshire ex U.S. Real Estate Securities Index), and 10 percent of the Citigroup U.S. Inflation-Linked Securities Index.

Investment performance goals should incorporate both active risk maximum and value-added objectives. These parameters should, whenever possible, be compared to a benchmark based on an investable, low-cost, passive investment approach (e.g., for an actively managed portfolio, the benchmark should avoid unnecessary misfit levels with the portfolio manager's style).

Evaluations of investment results compared with performance goals should be conducted over relevant and appropriate time horizons. For example, investment strategy decisions may be evaluated over 10 year or longer periods, and evaluations of implementation results may be conducted over five year periods. An undue focus on evaluating results over short time periods (e.g., rolling 1 year periods) may lead to investment program changes and result in unnecessary costs.

The fund is only to use active management when expectations and confidence levels in the added value (after all expenses) are sufficiently attractive on a risk-adjusted basis. Use passive management as a default.

7. SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING

Investment objectives should be pursued, to the extent practicable, pursuant to criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values and programs of the ELCA.

- Investment managers should avoid investing in companies with business practices that conflict with socially responsible investing criteria of the ELCA.

Investment managers should also seek, to the extent practicable, investments that benefit community economic development or the environment.

8. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

ELCA staff shall monitor statutory and regulatory requirements on an ongoing basis to ensure that the investment policy and guidelines of the CGA program are in compliance. In conjunction with investment managers and governing bodies, the ELCA staff shall review the investment philosophy, objectives and guidelines of the CGA Program at least every three years.

9. PORTFOLIO REPORTING

ELCA staff will report investment results, portfolio mix, and growth in the CGA program to the Budget and Finance Committee of the ELCA Church Council at least annually.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – Statutory Investment Requirements

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY PROGRAM
INVESTMENT PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES STATEMENT

ATTACHMENT I

State and Regulatory Requirements

State statutes and regulations pertaining to charitable gift annuity reserve calculation and investment requirements may change from time to time. Besides staff review of statutes and regulations, among the ways the ELCA keeps abreast of current requirements is through sponsorship of the American Council on Gift Annuities (ACGA) and by reviewing information from planned giving software vendors Crescendo and PG Calc.

As of October 2014, states that have statutes or regulations requiring that charities maintain gift annuity reserve funds include Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington. Of these states, the following either require or provide the option for investment in accordance with a “prudent investor” standard: Arkansas, Hawaii, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington.

The states with specific statutory investment restrictions, which are delineated as to types of assets that can or cannot be held in a gift annuity reserve pool, are California and Florida. Therefore, the requirements of these two states are the ones followed closely by the ELCA in making investment allocation decisions, within the overall context of the “prudent investor” standard. The ELCA follows California requirements for its statutorily-required separate California reserve pool, and Florida’s requirements are followed for the multi-state pool that holds all of the rest of the ELCA’s gift annuity reserve assets. In addition to the state requirements described above, investment of the ELCA’s gift annuity reserves, including the portion of the reserves beyond calculated reserves plus surplus (i.e., what ELCA has termed “excess reserves”) should be invested prudently, in accordance with the investment provisions of the Illinois Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.

The statutory investment requirements for California and Florida are highly detailed, but for illustrative purposes the following table summarizes a few key investment categories.

	California	Florida
U.S./State Bonds	Unlimited	Unlimited
Corporate Bonds	Permitted as part of limit for publicly traded securities (or subject to written consent)	Bonds of medium to lower quality limited to 13%, in addition to other limitations, e.g., no more than 10% in any one industry.
Common Stock	50% limit	Combination of common & preferred stock – and stock mutual funds – limited to 50%, plus no more than 10% in stock of any one company or fund.
Preferred Stock	Permitted only as part of limit for publicly traded securities	
Mutual Funds	Permitted as part of limit for publicly traded securities	See above plus no limit for bond funds, aside from no more than 10% in any one fund.
Real Estate	Subject to written consent.	5% limit with no more than 1% in any one property. Only first liens on mortgage loans.
Foreign Investments	Subject to written consent.	5% limit, following certain provisions.

Changes to the ELCA’s investment allocations should only be made in conjunction with an examination of the statutes of California and Florida, and in the future, perhaps those of other states.

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY PROGRAM OF THE EVANGELICAL LUHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

INVESTMENT PHILOSOPHY AND POLICY -STATEMENT

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Investment Philosophy and Policy Statement is to assist the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in effectively supervising, monitoring and evaluating the investment management of its Charitable Gift Annuity Program.

2. DEFINITIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

(A) Definitions

Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) – private contract between a donor and a charitable institution. The donor transfers cash or other assets to the institution in exchange for lifetime annuity payments, preserving an estimated future value to be used for charitable purposes. The amount of each annuity payment is determined by the age(s) of the annuitant(s) and the annuity rate(s) at the date of contract. The annuity payment remains fixed for the lifetime of the annuitant(s) and is backed by the full faith and credit of the ELCA.

American Council on Gift Annuities (ACGA) – nonprofit organization which publishes suggested charitable gift annuity rates for use by charitable institutions and their donors. The suggested rates generally assume that, upon maturity of a contract, the charity will receive a future value of approximately half of the original gift. The ELCA follows the gift annuity rates suggested by the ACGA.

Required Reserve – the amount maintained as segregated assets of the ELCA according to requirements set forth in statutes and regulations of certain states. The Required Reserve amount is actuarially determined to approximate the present value of future annuity payments plus surplus amounts per the requirements of certain states. Upon maturity of a contract, any remainder in the reserve for that contract is removed from the reserve and used for the purpose intended by the donor.

Excess Reserve – the amount maintained as segregated assets of the ELCA in excess of the Required Reserve defined above. The Excess Reserve is held for future use in support of ministry. Upon maturity of a contract, any remainder in the reserve for that contract is removed from the reserve and used for the purpose intended by the donor.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
November 7-10, 2014
CGA Philosophy and Policy Statement – Tracked changes
Page 2

(B) Investment Philosophy and Principles

1. Invest the entire gift, not just the required reserve, for the life of the contract.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
November 7-10, 2014
CGA Philosophy and Policy Statement – Tracked changes
Page 3

2. Invest the Required Reserve according to an asset-liability matching strategy, utilizing fixed income securities to generate sufficient cash flow to service annuity payments.
3. Invest the Excess Reserve in order to maintain its purchasing power and achieve future value targets in line with growth expectations (as presupposed by the terms of the underlying gifts).
4. Maximize investment return within reasonable and prudent levels of risk.
5. Invest assets in accordance with socially responsible investing criteria of the ELCA.

3. INVESTMENT STRUCTURE

CGA investments are segregated from all other assets of the ELCA. There are two separate pools: California and Non-California. Within each pool, a portion is allocated as Required Reserve and a portion as Excess Reserve. The Excess Reserve portfolio is held in the same segregated pool accounts as the Required Reserve portfolio for purposes of efficiency and protection.

4. RISK TOLERANCES

The ELCA recognizes that some risk must be assumed in order to achieve long-term investment objectives, and that there are uncertainties and complexities associated with investment markets. In establishing risk tolerances, the ability of the CGA Program to withstand short- and intermediate-term volatility (through the Required Reserve Fund portfolio) is considered. Interim fluctuations in market value and rates of return are expected within the Excess Reserve Fund portfolio in order to achieve long-term objectives.

5. REQUIRED RESERVE FUND

(A) Investment Objectives

1. Ensure that the Required Reserve balances are calculated based on expected annuity payments and mortality, and that investments are permissible according to state statutes and regulations.
2. Provide for some growth in the principal of the reserves, yet ensure that the required annuity payments are funded.

(B) Investment Policy

The Required Reserve will be invested in fixed income investments, with residual amounts held in cash. Annuity payments are made on a monthly basis from the Required Reserve Fund. The Required Reserve Fund will be managed to meet short-term liquidity requirements.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
CHURCH COUNCIL
November 7-10, 2014
CGA Philosophy and Policy Statement – Tracked changes
Page 4

A portion of the fixed income portfolio may be invested in short-term securities. Specific investments will be determined by the structure of the liabilities. Quality and sectors will be determined by investment managers according to applicable ELCA investment guidelines

developed as separate documents. Real estate and real estate securities may not be held as part of the Required Reserve Fund.

The Required Reserve and Excess Reserve will be calculated on the actuarial table provided by Foundation staff, on at least an annual basis.

(C) Performance Objective

The performance objective of the Required Reserve Fund is to ensure that cash flows are sufficient to match the liabilities of the underlying annuities.

6. EXCESS RESERVE FUND

(A) Investment Objective

The investment objective of the Excess Reserve Fund is to maintain its purchasing power and achieve a future value for underlying annuity contracts in line with expectations at the original time of the gift.

(B) Investment Policy

The Excess Reserve balance may be invested in up to 100% equities, mutual funds or other permissible products as determined by state statutes and regulations.

The asset allocation for the Excess Reserve Fund will be:

	<u>Target Allocation</u>	<u>Allocation Range</u>
US stocks 20 12.5% to 30 22.5%		25 17.5%
Non-US stocks to 15 22.5%	10 17.5%	5 12.5%
Alternative equities	5%	0% to 10%
Core fixed income 40 35%	30%	20 25% to
High yield	10%	5% to 15%
Real Assets	10%	5% to 15%
Inflation indexed bonds	10%	5% to 15%

(C) Performance ~~Objective~~

~~The value added objective shall be to exceed the total return of the benchmark by 55 basis points annually, net of investment management expenses, over rolling five year time periods.~~

The benchmark shall be ~~30~~20 percent of the ~~Dow Jones Wilshire 5000 Stock~~Russell 3000 Index, ~~12~~20 percent of the MSCI All Country World ex-U.S. Investable Market Index (U.S. dollars, with net dividends), 30 percent of the Citigroup Custom Bond Index, 10 percent of

the Citigroup High-Yield BB/B Cash-Pay Capped Index, 10 percent of (60% ~~Dow Jones~~ Wilshire Real Estate Securities Index/40% Dow Jones Wilshire ex U.S. Real Estate Securities Index), and 10 percent of the Citigroup U.S. Inflation-Linked Securities Index.

Investment performance goals should incorporate both active risk maximum and value-added objectives. These parameters should, whenever possible, be compared to a benchmark based on an investable, low-cost, passive investment approach (e.g., for an actively managed portfolio, the benchmark should avoid unnecessary misfit levels with the portfolio manager's style).

Evaluations of investment results compared with performance goals should be conducted over relevant and appropriate time horizons. For example, investment strategy decisions may be evaluated over 10 year or longer periods, and evaluations of implementation results may be conducted over five year periods. An undue focus on evaluating results over short time periods (e.g., rolling 1 year periods) may lead to investment program changes and result in unnecessary costs.

~~Active risk maximum is the expected annual standard deviation of value added due to active portfolio management. The fund's active risk maximum is 180 basis points, measured over rolling one-year periods.~~

The fund is only to use active management when expectations and confidence levels in the added value (after all expenses) are sufficiently attractive on a risk-adjusted basis. Use passive management as a default.

7. SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING

Investment objectives should be pursued, to the extent practicable, pursuant to criteria of social responsibility that are consistent with the values and programs of the ELCA.

- Investment managers should avoid investing in companies with business practices that conflict with socially responsible investing criteria of the ELCA.

Investment managers should also seek, to the extent practicable, investments that benefit community economic development or the environment.

8. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

ELCA ~~Foundation~~ staff shall monitor statutory and regulatory requirements on an ongoing basis to ensure that the investment policy and guidelines of the CGA program are in compliance. In conjunction with investment managers and governing bodies, the ELCA ~~Foundation staff~~ shall review the investment philosophy, objectives and guidelines of the CGA Program at least every ~~two~~ three years.

9. PORTFOLIO REPORTING

ELCA ~~Foundation~~ staff will report investment results, portfolio mix, and growth in the CGA program to the Budget and Finance Committee of the ELCA Church Council at least annually.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I – Statutory Investment Requirements

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY PROGRAM
INVESTMENT PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES STATEMENT

ATTACHMENT I

State and Regulatory Requirements

State statutes and regulations pertaining to charitable gift annuity reserve calculation and investment requirements ~~may change from time to time~~ ~~evolve and change~~. Besides staff review of statutes and regulations, ~~among one of~~ the ways the ELCA ~~Foundation on behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America~~ keeps abreast of current requirements is through ~~active participation sponsorship of~~ in the American Council on Gift Annuities (ACGA), ~~including membership on the ACGA's statutes and regulations committee. Also, the ELCA Foundation receives update~~ ~~and by reviewing~~ information from planned giving software vendors Crescendo and PG Calc.

As of October ~~2009~~2014, ~~sixteen~~ ~~states~~ ~~that~~ have statutes or regulations that requiringe that charities maintain gift annuity reserve funds ~~include:~~ Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, ~~and~~ Washington ~~and Wisconsin~~. ~~Nine o~~Of these states, ~~the following~~ either require or provide the option for investment in accordance with ~~the a~~ "prudent investor" standard: Arkansas, Hawaii, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, ~~Oregon~~, Tennessee, ~~and~~ Washington, ~~and Wisconsin~~.

The states with specific statutory investment restrictions, which are delineated as to types of assets that can or cannot be held in a gift annuity reserve pool, are California and Florida. Therefore, the requirements of these two states are the ones followed closely by the ELCA in making investment allocation decisions, within the overall context of the "prudent investor" standard. The ELCA follows California requirements for its statutorily-required separate California reserve pool, and Florida's requirements are followed for the multi-state pool that holds all of the rest of the ELCA's gift annuity reserve assets. ~~In addition, Florida has investment requirements for the~~ In addition to the state requirements described above, investment of the ELCA's gift annuity reserves, including the portion of the reserves beyond calculated reserves plus surplus (i.e., what ELCA has termed "excess reserves"), should be invested prudently, in accordance with the investment provisions of the Illinois Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act.

The statutory investment requirements for California and Florida are highly detailed, but for illustrative purposes the following table summarizes a few key investment categories.

	California	Florida
U.S./State Bonds	Unlimited	Unlimited
Corporate Bonds	Permitted as part of limit for publicly traded securities (or subject to written consent)	Unlimited overall, but b Bonds of medium to lower quality limited to 13%, <u>in addition to other limitations, e.g., no more than 10% in any one industry.</u>
Common Stock	50% limit	Combination of common & preferred stock – and stock mutual funds – limited to 50%, plus no more than 10% in stock of any one company or fund
Preferred Stock	Permitted only as part of limit for publicly traded securities	
Mutual Funds	Permitted as part of limit for publicly traded securities	See above plus no limit for bond funds, aside from no more than 10% in any one fund

Real Estate	Not permitted <u>Subject to written consent.</u>	5% limit with no more than 1% in any one property. <u>Only first liens on mortgage loans.</u>
Foreign Investments	Not permitted <u>Subject to written consent.</u>	5% in general, plus additional amounts in stock under certain circumstances <u>limit, following certain provisions.</u>

Changes to the ELCA's investment allocations should only be made in conjunction with an examination of the statutes of California and Florida, and in the future, perhaps those of other states.

DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS OF CONGREGATIONS

- A. Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith by a member of a congregation of this church** is grounds for disciplinary action against the member. The Christian faith as confessed by this church is expressed in Chapter 2 of the constitution for congregations. A congregation member who persists in denial of this faith and seeks to convince others to do so, may be is-subject to discipline. In order to warrant discipline, such behavior must be more than occasional expressions of doubt or private comments and conduct contrary to the Christian faith; the behavior must be seen to bring harm to the faith of others, and detract from the mission and ministry of the congregation.
- B. Willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ** is grounds for disciplinary action against a congregation member. ~~When committed intentionally and when this conduct is seen to diminish and discredit respect for the church, public sanctions must be imposed.~~ Commission of murder, attempted murder, rape, sex crimes or hate crimes, child abuse, spousal and elder abuse, public and profane obscenity and vulgarity, and similar conduct seen as reprehensible to the Christian community may ~~constitute grounds for warrant~~ discipline. Persons deemed guilty of such behavior remain in need of pastoral care and compassion.
- C. Continual and intentional interference with the ministry of the congregation** is grounds for discipline of a member engaging in such behavior. A congregation member who repeatedly interrupts the congregation's gatherings, worship services, fellowship and educational activities, congregational and council meetings, or disparages the congregation or its ministry to others in ways that damage or destroy the ability of other members to carry out the church's mission may be disciplined by the church. In order to warrant discipline, such conduct must be more serious than a member merely expressing disagreement, being impolite, or even exhibiting anger. The member must have engaged in a course of conduct and communication so persistent, inappropriate and objectionable, that the congregation's ability to perform ministry is being impaired.
- D. Willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of the congregation** are grounds for discipline of a member. If the treatment of another by a member of the congregation repeatedly devolves into slanderous, vicious, or intentionally hurtful communications, no matter the means of such communications, the behavior ~~in is~~ unacceptable and may warrant subject to disciplinary action. Similarly, if any members are being constantly harassed by another member for any reason, whether such harassment is based upon gender, race, sexual orientation, or any other reason, perceived or real, the behavior may warrant is grounds for discipline without regard to the nature of the harassment. The use of phone, email, text messages, or other means of communication, and behaviors including anything from shouting and gestures to actual stalking, may all be means of unacceptable defamatory or harassing behavior between members.

DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE OF ORDAINED MINISTERS

As an expression of its life in the gospel of Jesus Christ, this church embraces disciplinary processes of counseling, admonition, and correction, with the objective of forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing.

Simultaneously, out of deep concern for effective extension of the gospel, this church remains alert to the high calling of discipleship in Jesus Christ. The ordained ministers of this church, as persons charged with special responsibility for the proclamation of the Gospel, are to seek to reflect the new life in Christ, avoiding that which would make them stumbling blocks to others. To that end, this church recognizes that there is behavior that is deemed to be incompatible with ordained ministry, and that calls for disciplinary action.

The following definitions and guidelines do not set forth the high expectations this church has of its ordained ministers. [“Vision and Expectations: Ordained Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”](#) has been developed for that purpose. ~~(A document of such expectations has been developed by the Vocation and Education program unit for this church.)~~ The normative expectations of this church for its ordained ministers focus upon faithful and effective exercise of ministerial leadership. In all matters of morality and personal ethics, this church expects its ordained ministers to be exemplary in conduct.

These definitions and guidelines describe the grounds for which ordained ministers may be subject to discipline according to the practice of this church. Their purpose is juridical: to assist in the processes of consultation, discipline, and appeals.

Grounds for discipline of ordained ministers are as follows:

- A. Preaching or teaching in conflict with the faith confessed by this church** is grounds for discipline of ordained ministers. A summary of the faith confessed by this church is found in Chapters ~~2 and 3~~ of this church’s constitution.
- B. Conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office** is grounds for discipline of ordained ministers. These guidelines define and describe kinds of behavior which are incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.
 - 1. Confidential Communications:** Ordained ministers must respect privileged and confidential communication and may not disclose such communication, except with the express permission of the person who has confided it or if the person is perceived to intend great harm to self or others.
 - 2. Integrity:** Ordained ministers must be honest and forthright in their dealings with others while protecting privileged and confidential communications. Dishonesty, deception,

duplicity, or the manipulation of others for personal benefit or gain is incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.

3. **Professional Attention to Duties:** An ordained minister of this church has made commitments through ordination and through acceptance of a letter of call. Continued neglect of or indifference toward such duties constitutes conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.
4. **Relationship to Family:** This church is committed to the sanctity of marriage and the enhancement of family life. Ordained ministers of this church are expected to uphold this church's ideals of marriage, family, and relationship in their public ministry as well as in private life. Spouse or same-gender partner and children, if any, are to be regarded with love, respect, and commitment. Departure from this standard may be considered conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office. Such departure might include any of the following:
 - a. Separation, divorce, or termination of same-gender relationship that occurs without consultation with the synodical bishop's office and appropriate implementation of such consultation;
 - b. Desertion or abandonment of spouse, same-gender partner, or children;
 - c. Abuse of spouse, same-gender partner, or children;
 - d. Repeated failure to meet legally determined family support obligations.
5. **Sexual Matters:** The expectation of this church is that an ordained minister is to lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed. In keeping with this expectation, chastity and abstinence are required outside of marriage or outside publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, and chastity and fidelity are required within marriage or within such same-gender relationships. Adultery, infidelity, casual sexual relationships, promiscuity, the sexual abuse of another, or the misuse of the pastoral relationship for sexual activity constitute conduct that is incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.
6. **Addiction and Substance Abuse:** Any addictive behavior that impairs the ability of an ordained minister to perform effectively the duties of the office or the misuse of alcohol, drugs, medications, sex, gambling, or pornography is incompatible with the office of pastoral ministry. The approach of this church to such a problem may be to insist upon effective treatment or to initiate immediate discipline. Refusal to accept treatment or failure to abide by the terms of such treatment is conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office.
7. **Fiscal Responsibilities:** Ordained ministers of this church are expected to conduct their fiscal affairs in accordance with ethical and legal requirements. Among those fiscal activities which may be considered conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office are:
 - a. Indifference to or avoidance of legitimate and neglected personal debts;

- b. Embezzlement of money or improper appropriation of the property of others;
 - c. Using the ministerial office improperly for personal financial advantage.
- 8. Membership in Certain Organizations:** This church has specifically declared in 7.47.01. that discipline may be administered to any of its ordained ministers who belong to any organization other than the Church which claims to possess in its teaching and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church.
- 9. Conviction of a Felony:** The society in which this church ministers has placed a high premium upon the role of law in regulating the rights and duties of individuals to promote the common good. This includes laws which define certain conduct as felonies. Pleading guilty to, or being convicted of, a felony is grounds for discipline as conduct incompatible with the character of the ministerial office but may not be grounds for discipline in those instances where the violation of law was to protest or to test a perceived unjust law or as an expression of civil disobedience.
- C. Willfully disregarding or violating the functions and standards established by this church for the office of Word and Sacrament** is grounds for discipline of ordained ministers. Such functions and standards established by this church are found in Section 7.20. through 7.47.01. of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- D. Willful disregard of the constitution or bylaws of this church** is grounds for discipline of ordained ministers.

DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE OF ASSOCIATES IN MINISTRY, MEMBERS OF THE DEACONESS COMMUNITY, AND DIACONAL MINISTERS

As an expression of its life in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, this church embraces disciplinary processes of counseling, admonition, and correction, with the objective of forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing.

Simultaneously, out of deep concern for effective extension of the Gospel, this church remains alert to the high calling of discipleship in Jesus Christ. The individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church, as persons charged with special responsibility for the Gospel in the ministries to which they are called, are to seek to reflect the new life in Christ, avoiding that which would make them stumbling blocks to others. To that end, this church recognizes that there is behavior that is deemed to be incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church and that calls for disciplinary action.

The following definitions and guidelines do not set forth the high expectations this church has of individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church. [“Vision and Expectations: Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses and Diaconal Ministers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America”](#) has been developed for that purpose. ~~(A document of such expectations has been developed by the Vocation and Education program unit for this church.)~~ The normative expectations of this church for individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church focus upon faithful and effective exercise of their leadership. In all matters of morality and personal ethics, this church expects individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church to be exemplary in conduct.

These definitions and guidelines describe the grounds for which individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church may be subject to discipline according to the practice of this church. Their purpose is juridical: to assist in the processes of consultation, discipline, and appeals.

Grounds for discipline of individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church (commissioned associates in ministry, consecrated deaconesses, and consecrated diaconal ministers) are as follows:

- A. Confessing or teaching in conflict with the faith confessed by this church** is grounds for discipline of individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church. A summary of the faith confessed by this church is found in Chapters 2 ~~and 3~~ of this church’s constitution.
- B. Conduct incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church** is grounds for discipline of individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church.

These guidelines define and describe kinds of behavior which are incompatible with the standards for these rostered ministries.

- 1. Professional Attention to Duties:** An individual on the official rosters of laypersons of this church has made commitments through the appropriate liturgical rite and through acceptance of a letter of call. Continued neglect of or indifference toward such duties constitutes conduct incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church.
- 2. Integrity:** Individuals on the official rosters of laypersons must be honest and forthright in their dealings with others. Dishonesty, deception, duplicity, or the manipulation of others for personal benefit or gain is incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church.
- 3. Relationship to Family:** This church is committed to the sanctity of marriage and the enhancement of family life. Individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church are expected to uphold this church's ideals of marriage, family, and relationship in their public ministry as well as in private life. Spouse or same-gender partner and children, if any, are to be regarded with love, respect, and commitment. Departure from this standard may be considered conduct incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church. Such departure might include any of the following:
 - a. Separation, divorce, or termination of same-gender relationship that occurs without consultation with the synodical bishop's office and appropriate implementation of such consultation;
 - b. Desertion or abandonment of spouse, same-gender partner, or children;
 - c. Abuse of spouse, same-gender partner, or children;
 - d. Repeated failure to meet legally determined family support obligations.
- 4. Sexual Matters:** The expectation of this church is that an individual on an official roster of laypersons is to lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed. In keeping with this expectation, chastity and abstinence are required outside of marriage or outside publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships, and chastity and fidelity are required within marriage or within such same-gender relationships. Adultery, infidelity, casual sexual relationships, promiscuity, the sexual abuse of another, or the misuse of ministry relationships for sexual activity constitutes conduct that is incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church.
- 5. Addiction and Substance Abuse:** Any addictive behavior that impairs the ability of an individual on an official roster of laypersons of this church to perform effectively the duties of the office or the misuse of alcohol, drugs, medications, sex, gambling, or pornography is incompatible with the office of lay ministry. The approach of this church to such a problem may be to insist upon effective treatment or to initiate immediate discipline. Refusal to accept treatment or failure to abide by the terms of such treatment is conduct incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church.

- 6. Fiscal Responsibilities:** Individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church are expected to conduct their fiscal affairs in accordance with ethical and legal requirements. Among those fiscal activities which may be considered conduct incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries of this church are:
- a. Indifference to or avoidance of legitimate and neglected personal debts;
 - b. Embezzlement of money or improper appropriation of the property of others;
 - c. Using one's position improperly for personal financial advantage.
- 7. Conviction of a Felony:** The society in which this church ministers has placed a high premium upon the role of law in regulating the rights and duties of individuals to promote the common good. This includes laws which define certain conduct as felonies. Pleading guilty to, or being convicted of, a felony is grounds for discipline as conduct incompatible with the standards for the rostered ministries but may not be grounds for discipline in those instances where the violation of law was to protest or to test a perceived unjust law or as an expression of civil disobedience.
- C. Willfully disregarding or violating the functions and standards established by this church for the rostered ministries of this church** is grounds for discipline of individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church. Such functions and standards established by this church are found in Section 7.52. through 7.53. of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- D. Willful disregard of the constitution or bylaws of this church** is grounds for discipline of individuals on the official rosters of laypersons of this church.
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DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE OF CONGREGATIONS

- A. **Departing from the faith confessed by this church** is grounds for discipline of a congregation of this church. A summary of the faith confessed by this church is found in Chapters 2 ~~and 3~~ of this church's constitution.
- B. **Willfully disregarding or violating any of the criteria for recognition as congregations of this church** is grounds for discipline of a congregation of this church. These criteria are set forth in 9.21. and 9.22. of this church's constitution.
- C. **Willfully disregarding or violating the provisions of the constitution or bylaws of this church** is grounds for discipline of a congregation of this church.

DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS OF CONGREGATIONS

- A. Persistent and public denial of the Christian faith by a member of a congregation of this church** is grounds for disciplinary action against the member. The Christian faith as confessed by this church is expressed in Chapter 2 of the constitution for congregations. A congregation member who persists in denial of this faith and seeks to convince others to do so, is subject to discipline. In order to warrant discipline, such behavior must be more than occasional expressions of doubt or private comments and conduct contrary to the Christian faith; the behavior must be seen to bring harm to the faith of others, and detract from the mission and ministry of the congregation.
- B. Willful or criminal conduct grossly unbecoming a member of the Church of Christ** is grounds for disciplinary action against a congregation member. When committed intentionally and when this conduct is seen to diminish and discredit respect for the church, public sanctions must be imposed. Commission of murder, attempted murder, rape, sex crimes or hate crimes, child abuse, spousal and elder abuse, public and profane obscenity and vulgarity, and similar conduct seen as reprehensible to the Christian community may constitute grounds for discipline. Persons deemed guilty of such behavior remain in need of pastoral care and compassion.
- C. Continual and intentional interference with the ministry of the congregation** is grounds for discipline of a member engaging in such behavior. A congregation member who repeatedly interrupts the congregation's gatherings, worship services, fellowship and educational activities, congregational and council meetings, or disparages the congregation or its ministry to others in ways that damage or destroy the ability of other members to carry out the church's mission may be disciplined by the church. In order to warrant discipline, such conduct must be more serious than a member merely expressing disagreement, being impolite, or even exhibiting anger. The member must have engaged in a course of conduct and communication so persistent, inappropriate and objectionable, that the congregation's ability to perform ministry is being impaired.
- D. Willful and repeated harassment or defamation of member(s) of the congregation** are grounds for discipline of a member. If the treatment of another by a member of the congregation repeatedly devolves into slanderous, vicious, or intentionally hurtful communications, no matter the means of such communications, the behavior is unacceptable and subject to disciplinary action. Similarly, if any members are being constantly harassed by another member for any reason, whether such harassment is based upon gender, race, sexual orientation, or any other reason, perceived or real, the behavior is grounds for discipline without regard to the nature of the harassment. The use of phone, email, text messages, or other means of communication, and behaviors including anything from shouting and gestures to actual stalking, may all be means of unacceptable defamatory or harassing behavior between members.

2016 Churchwide Assembly Members

		Formula	Youth/Young Adult	Person of Color	Total
1A	Alaska Synod	3	1	1	6*
1B	Northwest Washington Synod	8	1	1	10
1C	Southwestern Washington Synod	7	1	1	9
1D	Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod	6	1	1	8
1E	Oregon Synod	8	1	1	10
1F	Montana Synod	9	1	1	11
2A	Sierra Pacific Synod	11	1	1	13
2B	Southwest California Synod	7	1	1	9
2C	Pacifica Synod	7	1	1	9
2D	Grand Canyon Synod	10	1	1	12
2E	Rocky Mountain Synod	14	1	1	16
3A	Western North Dakota Synod	14	1	1	16
3B	Eastern North Dakota Synod	20	1	1	22
3C	South Dakota Synod	22	1	1	24
3D	Northwestern Minnesota Synod	20	1	1	22
3E	Northeastern Minnesota Synod	14	1	1	16
3F	Southwestern Minnesota Synod	25	1	1	27
3G	Minneapolis Area Synod	34	1	1	36
3H	Saint Paul Area Synod	23	1	1	25
3I	Southeastern Minnesota Synod	24	1	1	26
4A	Nebraska Synod	23	1	1	25
4B	Central States Synod	13	1	1	15
4C	Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod	3	1	1	6*
4D	Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod	6	1	1	8
4E	Southwestern Texas Synod	10	1	1	12
4F	Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod	8	1	1	10
5A	Metropolitan Chicago Synod	19	1	1	21
5B	Northern Illinois Synod	16	1	1	18
5C	Central/Southern Illinois Synod	10	1	1	12
5D	Southeastern Iowa Synod	18	1	1	20
5E	Western Iowa Synod	12	1	1	14
5F	Northeastern Iowa Synod	15	1	1	17
5G	Northern Great Lakes Synod	7	1	1	9
5H	Northwest Synod of Wisconsin	19	1	1	21
5I	East-Central Synod of Wisconsin	16	1	1	18
5J	Greater Milwaukee Synod	16	1	1	18
5K	South-Central Synod of Wisconsin	19	1	1	21
5L	LaCrosse Area Synod	7	1	1	9
6A	Southeast Michigan Synod	9	1	1	11
6B	North/West Lower Michigan Synod	8	1	1	10
6C	Indiana-Kentucky Synod	13	1	1	15
6D	Northwestern Ohio Synod	15	1	1	17
6E	Northeastern Ohio Synod	14	1	1	16
6F	Southern Ohio Synod	15	1	1	17
7A	New Jersey Synod	14	1	1	16
7B	New England Synod	13	1	1	15
7C	Metropolitan New York Synod	15	1	1	17
7D	Upstate New York Synod	13	1	1	15

7E	Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod	28	1	1	30
7F	Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod	16	1	1	18
7G	Slovak Zion Synod	2	1	1	6*
8A	Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod	5	1	1	7
8B	Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod	14	1	1	16
8C	Allegheny Synod	8	1	1	10
8D	Lower Susquehanna Synod	21	1	1	23
8E	Upper Susquehanna Synod	9	1	1	11
8F	Delaware-Maryland Synod	14	1	1	16
8G	Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod	7	1	1	9
8H	West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod	3	1	1	6*
9A	Virginia Synod	9	1	1	11
9B	North Carolina Synod	14	1	1	16
9C	South Carolina Synod	11	1	1	13
9D	Southeastern Synod	10	1	1	12
9E	Florida-Bahamas Synod	14	1	1	16
9F	Caribbean Synod	2	1	1	6*
		839	65	65	976

* Additional members added by Church Council as authorized by 12.41.11 Council will consider this proposal at its November meeting. If there are changes to this allocation, affected synods will be notified no later than December 1, 2014.

November 2014

To: ELCA Church Council
From: Managing Committee of the ELCA Special Needs Retirement Fund
Topic: Request to change the 1993 stated purpose of the Special Needs Retirement Fund to further support those receiving minimum annuity payments.

Request

The purpose of this document is to address a decision made by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 1993 (CA93.08.100) regarding the purpose of the ELCA Special Needs Retirement Fund (Fund).

The Fund was originally established to provide: 1) additional pension contributions for pastors in situations of low compensation, and 2) financial support for annuitants who are receiving at or near the minimum pension.

Considering the challenges involved with the Fund providing support for pastors with low compensation, we recommend that synods honor their guidelines to help these pastors. Then we can focus our efforts on providing Fund support to retirees with the greatest need — those receiving minimum annuity payments. Therefore, we respectfully request that the ELCA Church Council change the stated purpose of the Fund to further support those receiving minimum annuity payments.

Rationale

- **A special task force report presented to the ELCA Church Council in 2003 agreed that the mandate to use Fund assets to help pastors receiving lower contributions is not workable.** The Observations section of the task force report included the following: “The cost to provide a minimum contribution equal to 10% of the applicable synod guideline for all rostered leaders in congregations is very high — an estimated \$4.4 million per year or 0.7 percent of total defined compensation for all sponsored members.” The report’s Conclusion section stated: “Given our analysis, the issue of pension equity would be best addressed by ensuring compensation for rostered leaders at least meets minimum synod compensation guidelines.”
- **Due to IRS and Treasury regulations, the church can’t make contributions from the Fund into the retirement accounts of active pastors.** The ELCA Retirement Plan, with its 20 funds, is a defined contribution plan. According to IRS and Treasury regulations, contributions to such plans can only be made by the sponsoring employer or the member via pretax contributions.

About the Special Needs Retirement Fund

The Fund was established in 1993 by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, and monthly supplemental payments began in 1997. As Fund assets have grown over the years, increases in monthly supplemental payments have been made. The Fund now provides additional income to retired pastors, rostered laypersons, lay employees, and surviving spouses/partners who are living with the greatest need and who meet eligibility requirements. Additionally, for those who qualify for Fund benefits, some receive partial subsidy payments for ELCA supplement to Medicare health coverage.

It is important to note that while the ELCA and the Special Needs Retirement Fund Managing Committee (referenced below) seek to provide extra income through the Special Needs Retirement

Fund for those with the greatest need, there is no guarantee that such benefits will continue throughout a recipient's lifetime or that benefit payments will not be subject to decreases.

Administration and Oversight

Fund assets are owned by the ELCA. The Fund is co-administered by Portico Benefit Services (formerly called the ELCA Board of Pensions) and the ELCA Churchwide Organization. Transactional services are provided by Portico. Fund oversight is provided by a Managing Committee consisting of:

ELCA Churchwide Organization

The Rev. Linda O. Norman, ELCA Treasurer
 The Rev. Walter S. May, Executive for Synodical Relations;

Portico Benefit Services

The Rev. Harold L. Usgaard, Assistant to the President for Church Relations;
 Christina Von Bank, Director, Customer Outreach

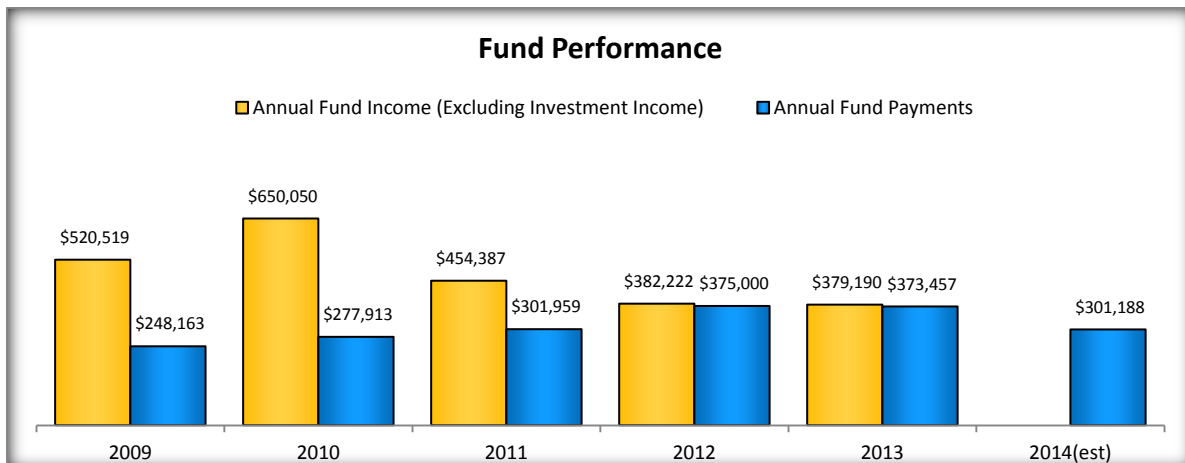
Conference of Bishops

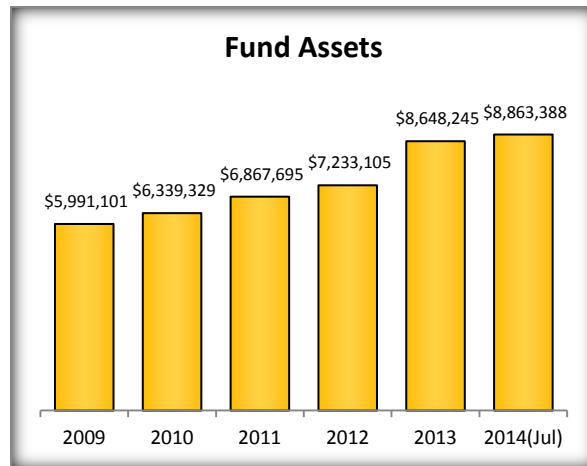
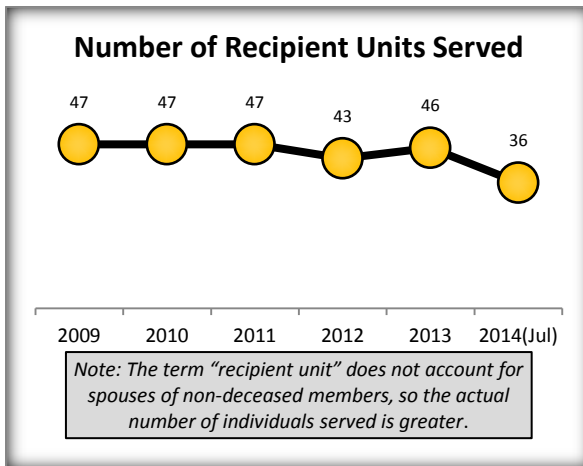
Bishop James F. Mauney, Virginia Synod

Sources of Income

- Undesignated gifts through Portico: oil and gas leases, trusts, estates, Portico trustee donations, honorariums, fund raisers, and other donations given directly to Portico.
- Special gifts and donations received by the Churchwide Organization designated for the Fund.
- Check off donations from ELCA Participating Annuity payments to retired members/spouses.
- Investment returns on Fund assets which are a part of the ELCA Pooled Trust, invested in a balanced fund managed by Portico.

Statistics





Eligibility (for member and spouse/partner, and surviving spouse/partner)

- Has reached full Social Security retirement age (the age at which you're first eligible to receive full, unreduced Social Security retirement benefits).
- Has retired with at least 10 years of ELCA or predecessor church retirement plan participation (unless participation was prevented due to disability).
- Was sponsored in the ELCA or predecessor church retirement plan on the date of retirement.
- 2014 monthly income levels from all sources is less than \$2,050 if single, and \$2,300 if married or partnered.
- The value of assets is less than \$150,000 (of which no more than \$50,000 may be cash or investments).
- An additional benefit to a member/surviving spouse/surviving partner if they qualify for assistance from the Special Needs Retirement Fund is that the Fund takes over health plan contributions, if the member is covered under the health plan. Many recipients have part of their health costs subsidized already (subsidy is based on years of service and predecessor church plan participation), but if there is any part of the contribution that is not subsidized, the Fund assumes responsibility for it. If the recipient is married/partnered and has health coverage for their spouse/partner, the Fund also pays the contributions for the spouse/partner.
- Those persons living in a nursing home **AND** receiving Medicaid are not eligible for income from the Fund. Those receiving government housing assistance should contact Portico Benefit Services before applying.

Ecclesiology of a Global Church Task Force Progress Report

The first report of the Ecclesiology of a Global Church Task Force was submitted to the Church Council at its November 8-10, 2013 meeting and can be found in its [official minutes](#). The report included the Church Council action that established the task force, identified the task force members as well as its churchwide staff and resource persons and summarized its initial meeting held on September 13, 2013 at the Lutheran Center.

Since the Church Council's November 2013 meeting, the task force has convened for in-person meetings on January 26-27, 2014 and May 27-28, 2014 at the Lutheran Center. In addition, one telephone conference call took place on April 24, 2014 to discuss and prepare a written response to a World Council of Churches' document, "*The Church: Towards a Common Vision*."

At the January meeting, following significant and extended discussion, the task force drafted and gave preliminary approval to a proposed revision to chapter 3 of the ELCA Constitution and agreed to seek reaction to it from both the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council. In addition, the task force spent considerable time deliberating what is at stake in an exploration of ecclesiology in the life of the ELCA and whether the issues involved suggested that a wider discussion be encouraged. Several other matters were also addressed, including plans for sponsoring a pre-session on the work of the task force at the August 2014 convocation of the Association of Teaching Theologians.

At the May meeting, the task force received reports on assignments made at the January meeting. Among a variety of things, it gave approval to the constitutional proposal (see proposal below) and directed that it be forwarded to the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council for comment. In conversation with Bishop Eaton and grounded in her emphases about the ELCA as church, the task force decided to encourage a wider conversation on ecclesiology in the ELCA. The task force also reviewed materials that could be used to develop a 2015 resource that could be used during Lent or at other times.

Beyond the May meeting, a small group of task force members conducted a pre-session on ecclesiology at the early August Convocation of Teaching Theologians gathering at Luther Seminary. At that time, feedback from the group suggested that the task force review its proposal with all members of the task force participating. As a result, a telephone conference call was held on October 22nd to consider the task force proposal in light of the feedback received at the Convocation of Teaching Theologians gathering.

In its October 22nd telephone conference call, the task force took account of the feedback received from the teaching theologians and decided to hold another in-person meeting December 18-19, 2014 in Chicago. At that time, it will consider a couple of alternate proposals for chapter 3 of the ELCA Constitution and their potential implications for chapters 4 and 8 of the constitution.

May 2014 Proposal (new language underlined)

3.01. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this church are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

3.02. In accord with this church's Confession of Faith, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America rejoices in being part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, as confessed in the Nicene Creed.

3.03. The Church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In

length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

3.04. This church, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, embraces its membership in the Lutheran World Federation as a global communion of churches, participating in faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in service for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council
Legal and Constitutional Review Committee Charter
Approved by Church Council, November 2014~~3~~

Organization and Purposes

The organization and purposes of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee are described in ELCA continuing resolution 14.41.B05:

A Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council, shall include the secretary of this church as an ex officio member of the committee, and shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Secretary. This committee shall provide ongoing review of legal and constitutional matters. It shall review all proposed amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

In fulfilling its purposes, the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee also shall facilitate the implementation of the Plan for Mission, including the following strategic directions of the churchwide organization:

- Support congregations in their call to be faithful, welcoming, and generous, sharing the mind of Christ.
- Assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions, and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach.
- Step forward as a public church that witnesses boldly to God's love for all that God has created.
- Deepen and expand our global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships for the sake of God's mission.
- Assist this church to bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God's mission in a pluralistic world.

Responsibilities

- A. The responsibilities of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee include:
1. Review of all proposed amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions;
 2. Review of proposed rules and policies and amendments to existing rules and policies to assure conformity with the *Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*;
 3. Review all proposed policies and amendments to existing policies related to the maintenance of the rosters of this church;
 4. Review amendments to the governing documents of the synods and seminaries of this church;
 5. Review amendments to the governing documents of affiliated agencies and other related entities as required;
 6. Review other legal documents and amendments to legal documents including churchwide organization personnel policies, pension and benefits, which require approval by the Church Council;
 7. Review requests for acknowledgement of independent Lutheran organizations prior to their consideration by the Church Council;
 8. Receive periodic updates on litigation involving this church;
 9. Assist, when requested by the secretary of this church, in preparing interpretive rulings on disputes involving the constitutions, bylaws, or continuing resolutions;
 10. Review and analyze other legal or constitutional issues as requested by the secretary of this church or the Church Council; and
 11. Provide recommendations for action by the Church Council.

- B. The committee shall provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among interested members of the Church Council, churchwide officers and staff, advisors, and bishops of this church related to legal, governance, and oversight matters.
- C. The committee shall conduct consultations, when appropriate or requested, for the purpose of examining and describing in-depth legal matters facing this church or complex amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, or continuing resolutions, when such information sharing outside the regular plenary sessions of the Church Council would facilitate the deliberations of the council.
- D. The committee shall prepare and distribute among its members meeting minutes and other appropriate material as needed.
- E. The committee has no authority to act independently beyond this charter except for other purposes specifically assigned it by Council action, and in all things remains accountable to the Church Council. No actions or recommendations by the committee shall conflict with the governing documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- F. Members of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee are expected to prepare for meetings by reviewing the agenda, minutes, and meeting materials in advance of meetings, to participate actively in meetings, and to complete timely responsibilities assigned by the committee.

Composition and Membership

- A. The Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall be composed of:
 - 1. Voting members of the Church Council, elected by the council, who shall have voice and vote on the committee;
 - 2. The secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who shall have voice and vote on the committee;
 - 3. ELCA general counsel and associate general counsel, who shall have voice but not vote on the committee;
 - 4. At least one liaison bishop to the Church Council, who shall have voice but not vote on the committee;
 - 5. Staff members of the Office of the Secretary as deemed necessary, who shall have voice but not vote on the committee; and
 - 6. Such other advisory or liaison members as may be invited to participate from time to time by the committee or the Church Council, who shall have voice but not vote on the committee.
- B. Members of the committee will have, or will develop, thorough knowledge of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the polity and governance of this church, and this church's standards for rostered ministry and discipline.
- C. Except for the secretary of this church, voting members of the committee shall be elected by the Church Council to a three-year term which begins at the first meeting following a Churchwide Assembly. No term limits shall restrict membership on this committee.
- D. Members of the committee shall respect the confidential nature of committee deliberations and legal updates provided by the general counsel, and shall not disclose or discuss the content of such confidential matters outside a committee meeting except as appropriate in a plenary or executive session of the Church Council.

Chair

- A. Voting members of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall elect a chair at the spring meeting preceding a Churchwide Assembly by means of an ecclesiastical ballot (as defined in the ELCA constitution), or by unanimous consent, as determined by committee members. Only voting members of the Church Council shall be eligible to serve as chair or cast ballots for the chair.

- B. The chair shall act as communication liaison between the committee and the Church Council, and shall report the recommendations of the committee during plenary sessions of the Church Council.
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- D. The chair shall develop, in consultation with the secretary of this church and appropriate staff members, an agenda for meetings and provide for minutes of meetings.
- E. The chair shall ensure the effectiveness of meetings by directing discussion to meet mission objectives.
- F. The chair shall serve on the Executive Committee of the Church Council.

Meetings

- A. The Legal and Constitutional Review Committee will meet in conjunction with regular meetings of the Church Council. Other meetings may be held for special or emergency purposes, ordinarily by conference call, at the request of the chair or a majority of committee members.
- B. Meeting agendas shall be provided to members prior to meetings, along with materials for discussion.

Decision Making Process

- A. All decisions of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee shall be reached by consensus or, when this is not possible, by simple majority of the voting members present and voting. Proxy and absentee voting shall not be permitted.
- B. A simple majority of the voting membership of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

Amendment of Charter

The Legal and Constitutional Review Committee will review this charter at the first meeting of the committee following a Churchwide Assembly. Amendments to this charter may be recommended, at any meeting, subject to approval by the Church Council.

Evaluation

The Legal and Constitutional Review Committee will evaluate its meetings. In addition to reviewing and evaluating its meetings, the committee will work with Research and Evaluation to develop a process for evaluating its work each triennium. These processes will include evaluation of the committee's commitment to racial and gender equity.

| This charter was approved by the Church Council at the November 201~~4~~³ Church Council meeting.

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council
Legal and Constitutional Review Committee Charter
Approved by Church Council, November 2014**

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The Legal and Constitutional Review Committee will review this charter at the first meeting of the committee following a Churchwide Assembly. Amendments to this charter may be recommended, at any meeting, subject to approval by the Church Council.

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This charter was approved by the Church Council at the November 2014 Church Council meeting.



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

MEMORANDUM

To: Church Council
From: Rhondean Johnson
Date: October 3, 2014
Subject: Personnel Policies

Please find attached the 2014 Recommended Personnel Policies for the Churchwide Organization. The Personnel Policies will be reviewed in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee and forwarded to the full Church Council for consideration.

Noted changes in the Personnel Policies include:

- 2.10.2: Avoiding Conflicts of Interest
- 2.11: Introductory Period
- 2.13.3: Accuracy of Information
- 4.4: Summer Flexible Schedule
 - Eligibility
- 7.3: Personal Appearance, Grooming, and Fragrances
- 7.6: Inclement Weather or Emergency
- 7.8.4: Reporting Harassment or Other Inappropriate Behavior
- 7.12: Social Media
- 7.15: Preventing Workplace Violence
- 7.16: Weapons Policy
- 7.17: Vehicle Use and Insurance

Enclosures

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

By signing this form, I acknowledge that on the date of my signature as shown below I have received a copy of the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies dated November 2014 and as updated from time to time, from my employer, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (referred to for convenience below as the "ELCA"). I understand the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies describes important information about working for the ELCA and that it is my responsibility to read and become familiar with the contents of the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies and to comply with the policies it contains. I also understand that the ELCA may change or add to these policies or adopt or change other policies as it deems appropriate, with or without advance notice, and it is my responsibility to become familiar with such revisions. I further understand that I should ask my supervisor or Human Resources any questions not answered in the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies.

I acknowledge that I have entered into my employment relationship with the ELCA voluntarily and that, I am an employee at will. I understand that, subject to applicable law, the employment relationship of an employee at will can be terminated at any time for any legal reason, with or without cause or notice. I understand that no manager or supervisor has any authority to change this employment-at-will relationship.

If I am on an ELCA roster and I receive a call from the Church Council for churchwide employment, I understand that the Church Council has the right to terminate my Comment Roster status call and that it will terminate in any case whenever this employment terminates.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies are not a contract of employment and I understand that the ELCA has the right and will exercise the right to take necessary action, including discharge, for conduct that requires such action, whether or not such conduct is referred to in this document.

Employee's Signature

Date Signed



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION PERSONNEL POLICIES

Recommended to the
ELCA Church Council
November 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	6
1.1.	Welcome	6
1.2.	Nature and Purpose of this Church	6
1.3.	About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	6
1.4.	Important Notice About This Handbook	6
2.	RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT	8
2.1.	Nature of Employment	8
2.2.	Application Form	8
2.3.	Management Philosophy	8
2.4.	Equal Employment Opportunity	9
2.5.	Disability Accommodations	9
2.6.	Hiring Procedures	9
2.6.1.	Role of Human Resources	9
2.6.2.	Letters of Call	10
2.6.3.	Restrictions Applicable to Certain Positions	10
2.7.	Job Posting	10
2.8.	Personal Relationships in the Workplace	10
2.9.	Allegations of Sexual Misconduct	11
2.10.	Ethical Conduct	11
2.10.1.	Duties of Loyalty and Due Care	11
2.10.2.	Avoiding Conflicts of Interest	12
2.10.3.	Gifts	12
2.10.4.	Confidentiality	13
2.10.5.	Transactions and Reporting	13
2.11.	Introductory Period	13
2.12.	Performance Reviews	14
2.13.	Personnel Records	14
2.13.1.	Access to Personnel Documents	14
2.13.2.	Personal Data Changes	14
2.13.3.	Accuracy of Information	14
2.14.	Reimbursable Expenses	15
2.15.	Children in the Workplace	15

3.	EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS	15
4.	WORKING HOURS	16
4.1.	Core Hours	16
4.2.	Overtime	16
4.3.	Attendance and Overtime Records	17
4.4.	Summer Flexible Schedule	17
4.5.	Telecommuting	18
4.5.1.	Eligibility	18
4.5.2.	Process to Be Followed	18
4.5.3.	Equipment and Supplies	18
4.5.4.	Working Environment	18
4.5.5.	Working Hours	19
5.	COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS	19
5.1.	Compensation Philosophy	19
5.2.	Pay Adjustments and Merit Pay	20
5.3.	Pay Periods	20
5.4.	Fees for Services and Honorariums	20
5.5.	Garnishments and Wage Assignments	21
5.6.	Housing Allowance	21
5.7.	Employee Benefits—in General	21
5.8.	Health Coverage	21
5.9.	Retirement Contributions	21
5.10.	Survivor Death Benefit	22
5.11.	Relocation Reimbursement	22
5.12.	Training and Educational Opportunities	22
5.13.	Social Security	22
5.14.	Workers' Compensation	22
5.15.	Unemployment Insurance	23
6.	TIME AWAY FROM WORK	23
6.1.	Prompt Notification of Absence Required	23
6.2.	Absence Due to Illness	23
6.2.1.	Sick Leave	23
6.2.2.	Family Illness	23
6.3.	Paid Vacation	24
6.4.	Paid Personal Days	25

6.5.	Paid Holidays	25
6.6.	Compassionate Leave	26
6.7.	Jury Duty	26
6.8.	Maternity/Paternity and Adoptive Leave	26
6.9.	Parental Leave	26
6.10.	Leave Under the Family and Medical Leave Act	27
6.11.	Personal Leave	27
6.12.	Sabbatical Leave	27
6.13.	Leave to Attend Synod Assembly	28
6.14.	Military Leave	28
6.15.	Victims' Economic Safety and Security Act Leave	28
6.16.	Community Service Day	29
6.17.	Other Paid Leave	29
6.18.	Time Off for Voting	29

7. PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS 29

7.1	Safety	29
7.2.	Attendance and Punctuality	30
7.3.	Personal Appearance, Grooming, and Fragrances	30
7.4.	No Use of Tobacco Products in the Workplace	31
7.5.	Safeguarding Property	31
7.6.	Inclement Weather or Emergency	31
	7.6.1. Inclement Weather	31
	7.6.2 Other Emergencies	31
7.7.	Dealing with the News Media	32
7.8.	Sexual Harassment and Other Inappropriate Behavior	32
	7.8.1. Harassment	32
	7.8.2. Sexual Harassment	32
	7.8.3. Examples of Prohibited Conduct	33
	7.8.4. Reporting Harassment or Other Inappropriate Behavior	33
	7.8.5. Investigation and Follow-Up	34
	7.8.6. Retaliation Forbidden	34
	7.8.7. Employee Responsibilities	34
7.9.	Use of Telephone and Mail Systems	34
7.10.	Safe Use of Cell Phones, Computers, and Other Electronic Devices	35
7.11.	Electronic Communications Policy	35
	7.11.1. Policy Overview	35
	7.11.2. Acquiring Technical Resource	36

7.11.3.	No Expectation of Privacy	36
7.11.4.	Prohibited Activities	36
7.11.5.	Avoiding Harassing Behavior	37
7.11.6.	Speaking on Behalf of the Organization	37
7.11.7.	Posting Recommendations for Colleagues	37
7.11.8.	Safety and Mission	37
7.11.9.	Reporting Violations	37
7.12.	Social Media Policy	38
7.13.	Use of Facilities and Property	39
7.14.	Security Inspections	39
7.15.	Preventing Workplace Violence	39
7.16.	Weapons Policy	40
7.17.	Vehicle Use and Insurance	40
7.18.	Drug and Alcohol Use	40
7.19.	Additional Employment	41
7.20.	Solicitation Prohibited	41
8.	DISCIPLINE AND DISCHARGE	41
8.1.	Progressive Discipline	41
8.2.	Grounds for Discipline or Discharge	42
9.	PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCEDURE	43
10.	ENDING THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP	44
10.1.	Resignation or Retirement	44
10.2.	Completion of a Specific Term	44
10.3.	Discharge Based on Performance or Behavior	44
10.4.	Termination for Other Reasons	45
10.5.	Job Abandonment	45
10.6.	Rehire	45

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Welcome

Welcome to the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are pleased that you have joined our staff. We hope you will find your job challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding, and we wish you success. We believe each employee contributes to this church's ministry and mission, and we hope you will take pride in being a member of the churchwide organization.

Please read these policies carefully. We have tried to anticipate questions you may have about your benefits and opportunities as well as our policies and procedures. Do not hesitate to raise any questions you may have.

1.2. Nature and Purpose of this Church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is part of the universal Church of Christ. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world. All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of the Church are to be carried out under His rule and authority.

1.3. About the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a nationwide church dedicated to the propagation of the Christian faith in the Lutheran tradition. It began its existence on January 1, 1988, following the merger of three predecessor Lutheran bodies. The name "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" refers, in general references, to this whole church, including its three expressions: congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization. The name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is also the name of the corporation of the churchwide organization, which is the employer. The churchwide organization is a Minnesota nonprofit corporation headquartered at 8765 West Higgins Rd, Chicago, Illinois. The 65 separately incorporated synods of the church constitute the second expression. The thousands of congregations which are separately incorporated constitute the third expression of this church.

The relationships between the three expressions of the ELCA are ecclesiastical in nature. Under the civil law, the churchwide organization, each synod, and each congregation are separate and distinct from one another. Their separate legal status allows each entity to function in the secular world by engaging in activities like making contracts, hiring employees, and owning property. While legally separate, the three expressions together constitute this church.

1.4. Important Notice About The Personnel Policies of the Churchwide Organization

These policies have been approved by the ELCA Church Council, the board of directors of the churchwide organization. Included here are significant policies, practices, and procedures followed by the churchwide organization with regard to the organization's employees. Additional specific policies and practices are provided to employees on the ELCA intranet. Employees who have questions that are not answered in this document or on the intranet should address those questions to their supervisor or Human Resources. Different policies may apply to some employees serving as missionaries or certain deployed staff. These policies do not apply to employees of any of the ELCA's synods or congregations, nor to other agencies or affiliated organizations.

This document is designed to provide employees with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and important policies affecting employment. These policies are published to provide a convenient resource for all employees, to assist in the orientation of new employees, and to promote consistency in the administration of the services provided by the ELCA. Employees are expected to read, understand, and comply with all provisions in this document.

No set of personnel policies can anticipate every circumstance or question or summarize every policy. Therefore, these policies are not intended to create, nor do they create, contract rights. Notwithstanding any provision of these policies, the churchwide organization has the right to make employment-related decisions on a case-by-case and at-will basis. Similarly, this church has the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policy or portion of these policies from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole discretion and without advance notice. Any such changes shall apply to both current and future employees. The ELCA will seek to make sure that a current copy of the Personnel Policies is available to all employees. If any provision of these policies is inconsistent with a third-party benefit plan, such as those of Portico Benefits Services, or an ELCA governing document, the applicable benefit plan, or ELCA governing document will ordinarily be controlling.

As a religious institution, the ELCA has religious freedom protections under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and similar provisions of state constitutions. Additional rights are granted religious organizations by certain federal and state statutes.

The rights inherent in the concept of religious freedom are a key element of American democracy and nothing in these policies constitutes a waiver of any of those rights.

The applicability of these policies to ordained ministers, lay leaders rostered by the ELCA or another church body depends on the particular circumstances. Churchwide employees, whether they are ordained, lay rostered or lay staff, whose duties are deemed primarily ministerial in nature are not covered by employment discrimination laws or related regulations. The same is true for applicants for employment in such ministerial positions. Further, depending on the particular circumstances, such ministerial employees and applicants for employment are not entitled to assert other employment-related claims against the church.

In addition, a minister or other rostered person is subject to the standards established and administered by the ELCA and the appropriate synod in their respective governing documents. Because of the nature of the ministerial office, the application of these policies to ministers generally is subject to the following guidelines:

To the extent a minister functions as a supervisor of other employees, he or she is expected to follow the guidelines of the Personnel Policies relating to supervision.

This document describes certain benefits and practices—for example, paid vacation, leave benefits, and holidays—available to all employees of the ELCA, and those benefits will generally be available to ordained ministers as well.

This document also describes certain policies—for example, no-smoking policies, policies relating to computer and email usage and other electronic communications, and policies describing on-the-job behavior and conduct—that are considered applicable to all employees regardless of the ministerial nature of their work.

Nothing in these Personnel Policies, however, is intended to detract from a person's obligations and responsibilities as a called and ordained minister, or a rostered lay leader of the ELCA (or a related church body), including, but not necessarily limited to, rights and responsibilities under a letter of call or imposed by reason of the governing documents of the ELCA.

2. RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

2.1. Nature of Employment

Employment with the ELCA is voluntarily entered into and, unless a specific written contract containing different terms has been agreed upon, the employment relationship is "at will." This means that subject to applicable legal provisions and governing document requirements, the employment relationship can be terminated at any time by either party for any reason, with or without cause or notice. The employee is free to resign at any time. Similarly, the church may terminate the employment relationship at any time.

Nothing in these Personnel Policies creates contractual obligations or rights on the part of the churchwide organization. By way of illustration, the churchwide organization retains the following rights:

- To determine the necessary qualifications for employment, and to recruit, select, and hire employees;

- To determine both the extent and the type of work to be performed by all employees and to establish and maintain efficient procedures, standards, and methods necessary to achieve the work;

- To determine the design and size of the work force, to assign work, and to transfer employees from job to job;

- To classify, promote, and assign employees;

- To take disciplinary action when necessary or appropriate, which may include termination of employment; and

- To determine work schedules, to implement layoffs, and to make all other management decisions.

2.2. Application Form

All applicants for employment with the ELCA must complete the application procedure as specified by Human Resources as well as all forms necessary to complete background checks.

An applicant who is rostered must provide his or her current Rostered Leader Profile to the Office of the Presiding Bishop/Human Resources.

2.3. Management Philosophy

Experience has shown that dealing openly and directly with employees enhances the work

environment. This church values and respects integrity, excellence, and interdependence, and believes these values give a sense of shared purpose and help everyone focus on the needs of the people and institutions we serve. Employees are encouraged to ask questions about their jobs and to express any concerns about job-related issues directly to their supervisor.

2.4. Equal Employment Opportunity

The ELCA is an equal opportunity employer committed to employing individuals who are qualified to meet the responsibilities of their jobs. In addition, as discussed in Section 1.4, under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and similar provisions in state constitutions, the churchwide organization is exempt, therefore, the church's policy is to employ, retain, promote, and terminate employees and applicants for employment on the basis of merit, qualifications, and competence. Subject to Section 1.4 above, this policy of non-discrimination governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training. At the same time, certain positions require ordination, Lutheran theological training or experience, or membership in an ELCA congregation. In addition, as discussed in Section 1.4, the churchwide organization, under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and similar provisions in state constitutions, is exempt from federal, state, and municipal anti-discrimination laws and regulations, as well as other employment laws as applied to rostered and non-rostered employees in positions of ministry. Therefore, this equal opportunity policy will be interpreted and applied in accordance with those constitutional and statutory provisions applicable to churches and other religious organizations. Nothing in these Personnel Policies waives any of this church's constitutional or statutory rights.

Any employees with questions or concerns about discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor, any other supervisor, or any Human Resources employee. Employees can raise concerns and make good faith reports without fear of reprisal.

2.5. Disability Accommodations

The ELCA recognizes that disabled individuals have gifts to give and challenges to overcome. To help overcome these challenges, this church's goal is to make reasonable accommodations for known disabilities of applicants or employees. Generally, any such accommodation must permit applicants or employees to perform the jobs held or applied for without causing an undue hardship for the church. All accommodation decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account applicable legal and constitutional requirements, the qualifications and the particular circumstances of the individual in relation to job-related criteria, and this church's resources.

2.6. Hiring Procedures

2.6.1. Role of Human Resources

Human Resources must be notified in advance of all vacancies, transfers, promotions, demotions, or terminations.

All discussions with prospective or current employees regarding pay, relocation, or benefits require advance consultation with Human Resources. Human Resources makes all offers of employment.

No commitments or representations that are inconsistent with these hiring procedures may be made without the advance written approval of the Executive for Human Resources. In the absence

of such advance written approval, any offer, commitment, or representation that is inconsistent with these hiring procedures is null and void.

2.6.2. Letters of Call

Letters of call will be prepared and sent by the Office of the Secretary to ordained ministers and rostered lay leaders called to serve in positions in the churchwide organization. Such letters will be prepared by the Office of the Secretary in conjunction with offer letters prepared by Human Resources.

2.6.3. Restrictions Applicable to Certain Positions

The churchwide organization will not hire a person for a position with financial oversight responsibility if, during the previous three years, the person was directly or indirectly involved in an independent audit of the organization or an affiliated entity or had a financial interest in the firm performing the audit.

Members of the Church Council and members of a board or advisory committee will be required to resign from such membership prior to accepting a position with the churchwide organization.

Vacancies in certain executive positions are filled in accordance with applicable governing documents.

2.7. Job Posting

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks to provide current and prospective employees an opportunity to indicate their interest in open positions. While job openings are normally posted, the Executive for Human Resources may, with approval of the Executive for Administration, decide that a particular opening will not be posted. Posted job openings will normally remain open for at least ten days. Each job posting notice will normally include the dates of the posting period, job title, essential duties, and required qualifications and skills.

Job posting is only one way to inform current and prospective employees of openings and to identify qualified and interested applicants who might not otherwise be known. Other recruiting sources may also be used to fill open positions.

2.8. Personal Relationships in the Workplace

The employment of relatives or individuals in a family, partnership, or dating relationship may cause conflicts and problems with favoritism—real or imagined—and employee morale. In addition to claims of partiality in treatment at work, personal conflicts from outside the work environment can be carried over into day-to-day working relationships.

Relatives of current employees may not occupy a position in which they will directly supervise, or be supervised by, their relative(s). Individuals involved in a dating relationship with a current employee will not be permitted to supervise or be supervised by that employee. The church also reserves the right to take appropriate action if an actual or potential conflict of interest arises involving relatives or individuals in a dating relationship.

If a relative relationship or dating relationship exists between employees who are in a supervisory situation as described above, the supervisor and the supervised employee involved in the relationship must disclose the existence of the relationship to Human Resources.

If a conflict or potential conflict arises because of a relationship between employees, even if there is no supervisory relationship, the employees may be separated by reassignment or terminated from employment.

2.9. Allegations of Misconduct

Whenever there is any indication that a candidate being seriously considered for employment has been the subject of allegations including criminal conduct, substance abuse, financial misconduct, sexual misconduct or sexual harassment, the Executive for Administration and the General Counsel will be notified before any offer of employment is extended to the candidate. This requirement is in addition to, and not in lieu of, any other procedures applicable to the hiring of an individual for the position to be filled. Being “seriously considered for employment” means that the candidate is the only individual or one of the finalists being considered for the position.

The notice required under the previous paragraph must be given in all cases where the candidate, if hired, will be an employee of the churchwide organization, whether within the Lutheran Center or deployed, and without regard to the office or unit involved, the full-time or part-time nature of the position, and the persons involved in the decision-making process. The procedure will also be followed if the particular individual would be an independent contractor rather than an employee.

If the candidate is or was rostered, additional requirements apply:

- (i) A currently rostered candidate’s Rostered Leader Profile, will be requested from the appropriate synodical bishop for dissemination in accordance with established procedures to the head of the office or unit for which the candidate applied.
- (ii) If the candidate experienced a break in service—any extended period of time where the candidate was without a call or was not on the roster—all of the relevant facts and circumstances must be reviewed and a satisfactory explanation must be provided if the candidate is to be further considered.

2.10. Ethical Conduct

The ELCA’s reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of applicable laws and regulations, as well as due regard for ethical behavior, standards of conduct, and personal integrity. The church expects its employees to conduct themselves in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of relevant laws, regulations, and ELCA procedures and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct.

The mission and ministry of the ELCA also depend on the trust and confidence of synods and congregations. Employees are expected to act in a way that will merit the continuation of this trust and confidence. All funds and property received and administered by the churchwide organization are entrusted to the organization by God through the faithful financial support of ELCA members and friends. All employees are held to high standards of stewardship and fiduciary responsibility with regard to the receipt, reporting, and use of funds, property, and time.

All employees must sign an employee ethics policy form covering the matters detailed below.

2.10.1. Duties of Loyalty and Due Care

Each employee is responsible for acting in the best interests of the churchwide organization. All employees are expected to make reasonable efforts to inform themselves of the mission and ministry of the ELCA and to act as a reasonable employee would act under the same or similar circumstances.

2.10.2. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

Employees are expected to perform their duties in a way that avoids actual or potential conflicts of interest as well as the appearance of conflicts of interest. A “conflict of interest” means any situation in which the employee may be influenced or appear to be influenced in decision-making or business dealings by any motive or desire for personal advantage other than the success and well-being of the churchwide organization. “Personal advantage” means a financial interest or some other personal interest, whether present or potential or direct or indirect. This standard applies to both actual and contemplated transactions.

All present and potential conflicts of interest issues must be disclosed.

Employees are required to disclose, in writing, matters and relationships that might appear to be a conflict in business dealings with the churchwide organization. Examples include, but are not limited to, financial interests or leadership roles with vendors and other organizations doing business with the organization. The head of the employee’s office or unit will evaluate disclosures and determine the appropriate action to be taken.

Business dealings with friends and family are particularly sensitive and are to be disclosed and carefully evaluated because of the potential for inferences of tangible or intangible personal advantage and the appearance of impropriety. The mere existence of a family relationship or a friendship does not violate this policy if an employee promptly discloses to their supervisor the existence of any family relationship or friendship that may be considered an actual or potential conflict of interest and appropriate safeguards are followed. Any doubts should be resolved in favor of disclosure.

If the conflict of interest is known in advance of any meeting, business transaction, contract, or other activity at which issues may be discussed or on which the issues may have a bearing on the employee’s approach, whether directly or indirectly, the conflict must be disclosed prior to the meeting. Normally disclosure is to be made in writing to the employee’s supervisor.

If the conflict is not known in advance, it must be disclosed as soon as the actual or potential conflict becomes apparent.

When conflict-of-interest issues relate to a meeting, disclosure should be made to the person in charge of the meeting and, at the discretion of the person in charge, to the full meeting. The employee must leave the meeting room to avoid all discussion, voting, and deliberation on the issue. Following full disclosure, the other persons attending the meeting may decide that no conflict of interest exists and invite the participation of the employee. All actions relating to the disclosure and action taken must be recorded in the meeting minutes.

2.10.3. Gifts

To avoid the appearance of impropriety, any gifts, gratuities, and hospitality offered to an employee—such as goods, free travel, or lodging—may be accepted and used only for the benefit of the organization. All gifts must be reported to a supervisor. Occasional, non-repetitive, minimal gifts—having a value of less than \$75 and given as part of a special event or seasonal holiday—are exempt from this reporting requirement. Gifts that primarily benefit the churchwide organization and not an individual, such as gifts of hospitality given to the churchwide organization by hotels, conventions, and conferences in relation to official churchwide organization business, are also exempt. Employees may also participate in reasonable, normal relationship-building activities, such as meals, entertainment events, and similar activities. Such participation must be reported to the employee’s supervisor.

Employees may not accept gifts from outside vendors or members of ELCA congregations. A gift from a vendor is defined as anything offered directly by or on behalf of a vendor to any employee, other than the purchase of a business-related meal and advertising materials of little value such as pens, pencils, calendars, and similar items intended for wide distribution and that bear the donor company's name or advertising slogan. A gift from a congregational member is anything of value other than a personal trinket or food item. Questions arising about the propriety or appearance of impropriety of receiving a gift should be directed to Human Resources.

2.10.4. Confidentiality

Subject to applicable legal requirements, certain information must be held in confidence by all employees, including allegations of misconduct under investigation; financial matters; medical, psychological, and family matters pertaining to rostered leaders; and other sensitive information. All such confidential information is not to be discussed or divulged to anyone, within or outside of the churchwide organization, unless disclosure is required by law or limited disclosure is made for a compelling reason.

2.10.5. Transactions and Reporting

Each employee is required to prepare, process, maintain, and report complete, accurate, and timely records pertaining to his or her duties, including, but not limited to, journal entries, expense reports, disbursement requests, and payroll transactions. All employees required to record their working time must do so accurately, and all employees are required to report all absences properly, regardless of the reason for the absence. All physical, financial, informational, and other churchwide organization assets are to be safeguarded. In addition, no undisclosed or unrecorded fund or asset will be established, and no artificial or false entries will be made in the financial or other records of the ELCA. The use of the ELCA's funds for any unauthorized or unlawful purpose is prohibited.

Employees are required to report all violations of this policy including misconduct, fraudulent transactions, errors related to overpayments, or any other impropriety, whether by themselves or by others. Likewise, concerns about the appearance or the possibility of violation of this policy should be reported factually and objectively. There will be no adverse action for reports made in good faith or for an employee's participation in a follow-up investigation.

Required reports may be made to the employee's supervisor, the Executive for Human Resources, the Internal Audit, the General Counsel, or an officer of the ELCA. All reports relating to accounting, internal accounting controls, or auditing matters should also be forwarded to the Internal Audit for further action and reporting to the Audit Committee.

2.11. Introductory Period

Most employees work on an introductory basis during their initial employment with the churchwide organization. The introductory period is 90 days.

The introductory period is intended to give employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether their position meets their expectations. The organization uses this period to evaluate employees' work habits and overall performance. During the introductory period, an employee is expected to discuss his or her progress with the appropriate supervisor and to ask questions about the duties he or she is performing. Either the employee or the organization may end the employment relationship at any time during the introductory period without regard to other provisions of the policies that may apply once the introductory period has been successfully completed.

If the designated introductory period does not allow sufficient time to evaluate the employee's performance, the introductory period may be extended with approval of the Executive for Human Resources. Any absence will automatically extend an introductory period by the length of the absence. Employees who are promoted or transferred within the organization may be required to complete an additional introductory period.

2.12. Performance Reviews

Each employee should receive a performance review near the end of the introductory period. At the discretion of the supervisor, a second review may be conducted upon the completion of an additional 90 days of employment.

After the initial review(s) referred to above, employees generally have their performance appraised on an annual basis. Performance appraisals are used in all aspects of the employment relationship, including promotions, training or retraining, reassignments, pay adjustments, and disciplinary and discharge decisions. Supervisors are therefore required to use the performance appraisal forms provided by Human Resources. There are no requirements as to the distribution of ratings that would prevent a fair appraisal of performance in relation to established standards.

2.13. Personnel Records

2.13.1. Access to Personnel Documents

Human Resources maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file includes information such as the employee's job application, résumé, records of training, hours worked and pay information, and other pertinent employment records. Offices and units within the churchwide organization are required to forward all original employment records to Human Resources. Some documents may be stored electronically separate from the personnel file.

Personnel records are the property of the churchwide organization and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only appropriate supervisory and Human Resources personnel who have a legitimate reason to review information in a personnel file are allowed to do so.

Employees may review and obtain copies of their own personnel documents in accordance with applicable legal requirements. Original records may not be removed from Human Resources.

2.13.2. Personal Data Changes

Employees must promptly enter into the current Human Resource Information System any changes in their personal home mailing addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, names and number of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments, and similar data.

2.13.3. Accuracy of Information

The churchwide organization relies on the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, including the Rostered Leader Profile when applicable, and additional information provided by the employee as part of the hiring process or during the employment relationship. Any individual who falsifies, misrepresents, or omits material information may be rejected from hiring consideration or, if already hired, terminated from employment.

2.14. Reimbursable Expenses

Employees of the churchwide organization who are required to travel or expend funds in connection with the performance of their work will be reimbursed for approved expenses, including transportation, food, and lodging in accordance with the ELCA Corporate Travel Policy (available on the churchwide organization's intranet).

2.15. Children in the Workplace

Children are welcome to visit employees at the office for such purposes as lunch, a brief visit to a workstation, or for special occasions when they are specifically invited. The hosting employee is responsible for the children during such visits and should remain with them at all times. Children should not be brought to the work site as a substitute for childcare arrangements. Temporary emergency situations may be addressed by supervisors on a case-by-case basis.

3. EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS

The churchwide organization defines employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Unless otherwise required by law, these classifications are subject to change at the discretion of the organization.

As required by the Fair Labor Standards Act, all employees will be designated as either **non-exempt** or **exempt** for purposes of overtime pay. Non-exempt employees will receive overtime pay at the rate of one-and-one-half times their regular rate for hours worked in excess of 40 during a single workweek. The workweek begins on Sunday at 12:01 a.m. and ends the following Saturday at midnight. Exempt employees are not entitled to overtime pay.

All employees will also be classified in the other employment categories described below:

Full-time regular employees are those who are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work at least 40 hours per week. Generally, they are eligible to participate in the church's benefit programs, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each program.

Part-time regular employees are those who are regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week. Part-time regular employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week are eligible for paid vacation on a prorated basis and certain additional benefits. Other part-time regular employees are not eligible for vacation but are eligible for certain other benefits, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

Specified-term employees are those who are employed by the church for a specified time under terms and conditions set forth in a written agreement. The agreement normally covers the beginning and ending dates of the employment term, the services to be performed, reporting relationships, compensation, benefits (if any), expense reimbursement, exempt or non-exempt status, and arrangements for performance review. Social Security withholding applies to specified-term employees.

Temporary employees are individuals hired for temporary work. They may be full-time or part-time; exempt or non-exempt. They are not eligible for any of the benefits summarized in this document.

However, the pay of temporary employees is subject to Social Security contributions. All arrangements for the retention of temporary employees must be approved in advance by the Executive for Human Resources.

Independent contractors are not employees of the ELCA. Their compensation is not subject to Social Security withholding and they are not entitled to workers' compensation or other benefits. As is the case with specified-term employees, all of the arrangements made with an independent contractor must be set out in a written agreement.

4. WORKING HOURS

4.1. Core Hours

Employees are to organize their work schedules within the limits of specified hours, subject to the approval of their office or unit. Full-time non-exempt employees in the Lutheran Center will normally work an eight-hour period between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Central time Monday through Friday. The hours of operation may change. Also, an employee's hours may vary depending on particular assigned duties during any given day.

The needs of the job must be given appropriate priority. Staff members are expected to be flexible in the accommodation of workplace needs and to come in early or stay late when necessary. Non-exempt employees working outside their normal hours must have their time approved in advance by the appropriate supervisor. Non-exempt employees will be paid for all hours worked.

Employees are entitled to an unpaid lunch period of 30 minutes. The lunch break is not work time and is therefore not part of the eight-hour workday.

Non-exempt employees may also take a paid, 15-minute rest break each morning and afternoon. These paid breaks are part of the eight-hour day. They may not be taken at the beginning or end of the day but may be added to the lunch period. Each office or unit should establish a schedule for lunch breaks and rest breaks providing for the effective operation of the office or unit. Non-exempt employees must review any deviation from the approved schedule with the appropriate supervisor.

All employees required to record their working time must do so accurately, and all employees are required to report all absences properly, regardless of the reason for the absence.

4.2. Overtime

At times, certain jobs require extra time and effort. There will be times when a staff member will need to come in early or stay late because of workloads or the demand of a particular project. Employees whose job responsibilities require them to work additional hours should accept this as part of the job. Non-exempt employees may not work beyond their normally scheduled hours without advance permission from their supervisor.

Non-exempt employees who are required or permitted to work overtime will receive overtime pay in accordance with the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act and applicable state law. Overtime pay is based on one and one-half of the employee's regular rate for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in each workweek. "Hours worked" means time actually spent on the job, and therefore do not include vacation time, holiday time, sick time, or any other time spent on leave, whether paid or unpaid.

A supervisor may grant a non-exempt employee time off in lieu of overtime pay on an hour-per-hour basis, but only if the time off is taken during the same work week. For example, if a non-exempt employee worked 40 hours from Monday through Thursday, the employee may be authorized to take off on Friday of the same week.

The churchwide organization intends to follow all applicable requirements of federal and state law concerning overtime pay. Supervisors and employees are encouraged to bring all questions relating to hours worked to the attention of Human Resources.

4.3. Attendance and Overtime Records

All employees who are required to record time worked must do so accurately. Proper recording of hours worked is especially important when working hours may vary from day to day or week to week. The church is committed to paying employees properly and will promptly correct any errors in paychecks and reimburse employees as required. An employee who believes there has been an improper deduction or other pay error should promptly notify the appropriate supervisor or Human Resources.

Human Resources is responsible for maintaining attendance records suitable for payroll purposes and wage-and-hour requirements, including all overtime worked by each non-exempt employee.

4.4. Summer Flexible Schedule

Summer hours may enable eligible employees to enjoy additional personal time away from the office during the summer months by working additional hours on four days of the regular work week. Depending on the number of hours worked during the four-day period, the summer schedule may allow the employee to free up a full day or a half day every week. The hours worked during the summer flexible schedule must fall between 6:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Only full-time regular employees are eligible for a summer flexible schedule. To participate in a particular year, the employee must obtain written approval of the supervisor in the applicable office or unit and submit the completed approval form to Human Resources no later than one week prior to the first full week of June. Employees who do not obtain the necessary approval will remain on their regular work schedules.

The examples below illustrate potential summer schedules. The first two schedules allow for a half day off each week; the other two allow for a full day off.

Working Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (30-minute lunch) and Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Working Monday, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Tuesday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (30-minute lunch).

Working Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (30-minute lunch) with every Friday off.

Every Monday off and working Tuesday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (30-minute lunch).

Employees on a summer flexible schedule will work a regular eight-hour day and five-day week during any week that includes a paid holiday or approved vacation time.

The summer flexible schedule is generally available between the first full week in June the last full week

in August. Each office and unit will manage the workweek in that office or unit. The summer flexible schedule is not guaranteed, and is subject to amendment or termination at any time.

4.5. Telecommuting

The churchwide organization may consider telecommuting as a viable alternative for some employees and some jobs. Telecommuting is defined as working from home or from an approved remote location for all or part of the normal work week, during normal working hours, for a specified period of time. Telecommuting is a privilege, not an entitlement or a benefit. Except for the location of their work site, employees who are allowed to telecommute are subject to the same terms and conditions of all other similarly situated ELCA employees. Any telecommuting arrangement may be canceled at any time by either the churchwide organization or the affected employee.

4.5.1. Eligibility

Not every employee is eligible for telecommuting. Some jobs cannot be performed remotely, and some individuals find it difficult to work away from an office environment. Individuals best suited to telecommuting arrangements are those who are organized, self-motivated, and flexible, and who can work productively on their own. Eligible employees must have a record of satisfactory performance.

4.5.2. Process to Be Followed

An employee who is interested in telecommuting should notify the appropriate office or unit. All telecommuting arrangements require the advance written approval of the head of the office or unit and of the Executive for Human Resources. All telecommuting arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis, focusing on the needs of the organization first and paying particular attention to the factors mentioned in Section 4.5.1 and to the nature of the position involved.

Jobs best suited for telecommuting are those that require independent work, concentration, and result in a specific work product that is readily measurable. The position should also involve limited face-to-face interaction with fellow employees.

If the arrangement is approved, the employee is solely responsible for fulfilling all tax and legal restrictions associated with the business use of the employee's home.

4.5.3. Equipment and Supplies

The office or unit, in consultation with Human Resources, Information Technology, and the affected employee, will determine the appropriate equipment needs for each telecommuting arrangement on a case-by-case basis.

The churchwide organization will arrange for maintenance of the equipment it provides. Such equipment is to be used for business purposes only. The employee is responsible for safeguarding the equipment and for returning it upon termination of the employment relationship.

4.5.4. Working Environment

Employees working at home are subject to the same expectations for preserving the security of information as employees working at the Lutheran Center. Telecommuters are expected to use locks on desks and file cabinets, update their passwords regularly, and take all other required actions to protect organizational information.

The telecommuting employee must establish an appropriate work environment within the home or remote work location and may be offered appropriate assistance. However, the ELCA is not obligated to be responsible for any costs associated with initial setup of the employee's home office or for any subsequent repairs or modifications.

Any injuries sustained by the employee while working at home or another remote work location in conjunction with regular work duties are normally covered by workers' compensation. The employee must promptly notify his or her supervisor or Human Resources of any such injury. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to the work site.

4.5.5. Working Hours

The office or unit will determine the number of days of telecommuting allowed each week, the work schedule the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication. Telecommuting employees are required to be accessible by telephone and email during the specified work schedule and to arrange to attend staff meetings—whether by telephone or in person—as specified by the office or unit.

As is the case for all non-exempt employees—see Sections 3 and 4.2—non-exempt employees who telecommute are expected to obtain advance approval for overtime work and to record all working hours accurately.

5. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

5.1. Compensation Philosophy

The ELCA believes it is in the best interest of both the organization and its employees to compensate employees adequately for the value of their work. To the extent permitted by budgetary and funding constraints, the churchwide organization uses a compensation system that determines the current market value of a position based on the skills, knowledge, and behaviors required of a fully competent employee. All compensation decisions require the approval of the Executive for Human Resources.

The system incorporates the following criteria:

Local and industry-specific survey market data where such data is available, focusing primarily on not-for-profit organizations and addressing specialized job differences and market differences due to geographical location.

An evaluation of external equity, which is the relative worth of jobs directly comparable to similar jobs in the local economic marketplace or in other employment by entities affiliated with the ELCA. An evaluation of internal equity, which is the relative worth of each job when comparing the required level of competencies, formal training and experience, responsibility, and accountability of one job to others within the churchwide organization.

Sufficient flexibility to permit the organization to recruit and retain a qualified workforce while providing the structure necessary to manage the overall compensation program.

5.2. Pay Adjustments and Merit Pay

The churchwide organization evaluates employees' pay annually. Annual pay increases are not guaranteed. Any pay adjustment will be based on the individual's annual performance review (see Section 2.12) and the organization's financial resources. All adjustments require the approval of the Executive for Human Resources.

Merit pay allows an individual to influence his or her earnings through on-the-job performance based on the most recent annual performance appraisal. Increases may be granted based upon improved or sustained performance. Generally, an employee must have completed at least nine months of satisfactory service before being eligible for a merit increase.

5.3. Pay Periods

The churchwide organization has 24 pay periods per calendar year. The workweek begins on Sunday at 12:01 a.m. and ends the following Saturday at midnight. Employees are paid twice per month, on the 15th and 30th of each month except February, when the second payment will be on the 28th. If a scheduled payday falls on a non-working day, employees will normally be paid on the last working day preceding the scheduled payday.

Direct deposit of pay is encouraged for all employees.

There will be no pay advances to any employee for any reason.

5.4. Fees for Services and Honorariums

Full-time non-exempt employees will be paid for part-time work performed in their off hours for another office or unit within the churchwide organization. If the nature of the part-time work performed for the second office or unit is similar to or an extension of the employee's regular job, the payment must be at one and one-half times the employee's regular hourly rate for all hours worked in excess of 40 during the work week. If the part-time work is totally different than the employee's regular job responsibilities, then the employee and the second office or unit, upon approval of the Executive for Human Resources, may negotiate a fee for the part-time services.

Exempt employees will not be paid for part-time work performed for another office or unit within the churchwide organization if (i) the part-time work is similar to or an extension of the employee's regular job responsibilities, (ii) the part-time work is to be performed when the employee is carrying out his or her regular job responsibilities, or (iii) the part-time work becomes part of the performance expectations in the employee's work plan and performance review. If the part-time work is totally different than the exempt employee's regular job responsibilities, is carried out apart from the employee's regular work setting, and is outside of the normal expectations for the employee's position, then the employee and the second office or unit, upon approval of the Executive for Human Resources, may negotiate a fee for the part-time services.

An employee is not to expect additional income for performing the normal duties and responsibilities of his or her position. Any employee who receives an honorarium for performing such duties and responsibilities or for representing the churchwide organization is required to remit the honorarium to the Office of the Treasurer for crediting to the employee's office or unit.

5.5. Garnishments and Wage Assignments

The churchwide organization must honor garnishments and wage assignments. A garnishment is a court order to withhold and pay out a specified amount from the employees' earnings. A wage assignment is a direction by the employee to the same effect. In either case the organization will comply with applicable legal requirements. The affected employee is responsible for seeking to obtain any desired release or adjustment and providing the churchwide organization with required legal documentation.

5.6. Housing Allowance

An ordained employee of the churchwide organization may request that a portion of his or her annual salary be designated as a housing allowance, in accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations. The employee assumes full responsibility for compliance with IRS definitions of "costs to provide a home." Requests for housing allowances, on the form provided, must be forwarded to Human Resources annually for the ensuing year, with sufficient time allowed for the request to be approved and recorded in the official files.

5.7. Employee Benefits—in General

Several of the ELCA's benefit programs are described below. Benefits involving time away from work are described in Section 6.

The church provides a comprehensive benefit program, administered by Portico Benefit Services, for its full-time employees and other employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week (15 hours per week for rostered employees) for six months or more per year. The program includes health coverage, the ELCA Retirement Plan, a life insurance benefit, long-term disability benefits, and a flexible spending plan. Benefits eligibility depends on a variety of factors, including employee classification. Further information is available directly from Portico Benefit Services (www.porticobenefits.org and 800-352-2876).

The ELCA has the right to change benefit programs or to modify eligibility requirements or coverage at any time. Further, as stated in Section 5.15, the churchwide organization is not required to participate in unemployment compensation insurance. Therefore, employees separated from employment with the churchwide organization are not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits. Any benefits offered to an employee outside of the normal hiring and employment practices of the churchwide organization or the summaries in these policies must be in a written document approved in advance by the Executive for Human Resources.

5.8. Health Coverage

Through Portico Benefit Services, the ELCA offers health coverage, including hospital and medical, dental, prescription, vision, behavioral health, and an employee assistance program. Separate plan documents explain each benefit in detail, and the benefits are controlled by the language of the plan documents and summary plan descriptions. The same is true for the ELCA's long-term disability and flexible spending plans.

5.9. Retirement Contributions

The churchwide organization provides a retirement benefit for eligible employees through Portico Benefit Services. Detailed information is contained in brochures published by Portico Benefit Services and available to all employees.

5.10. Death Benefit

If an employee dies, four additional weeks of his or her salary will be added to the employee's final paycheck.

5.11. Relocation Reimbursement

An employee who accepts employment with the churchwide organization will be eligible for reimbursement of permitted relocation expenses if his or her home is more than 50 miles from the office where assigned. A chart containing current eligible relocation allowances is available from Human Resources. The relocation moving expenses must be incurred within a "reasonable time" of the start of a new job, generally construed to be no more than one year after the employee's start date.

5.12. Training and Educational Opportunities

Heads of offices and units are encouraged to promote opportunities for growth, both personal and professional, for ELCA employees. Discussion of ongoing educational needs and support should be part of employee performance appraisals. Educational opportunities are based on the need to enhance the work of the churchwide organization, the needs of the employee's office or unit, and the aptitude and skills of the employee. Necessary licensing, certification or re-certification requirements for certain employees and continuing education requirements for rostered leaders should also be considered. Special training opportunities within an office or unit may be offered at the discretion of the head of the office or unit.

Employees may contact Human Resources about taking a limited number of days off each year for continuing education if approved by their supervisor. Matching funds for approved continuing education, up to an annual limit, may also be available from Human Resources.

5.13. Social Security

Consistent with the Social Security Act, the churchwide organization makes contributions based on the earnings of non-ordained employees. No contributions are made for ordained employees, nor are ordained employees reimbursed for their own contributions.

5.14. Workers' Compensation

The churchwide organization provides workers' compensation insurance coverage for all employees. Workers' compensation laws are designed to protect employees and their families from the financial consequences of accidental injury, disease, or death arising out of and in the course of employment. Workers' compensation laws vary from state to state, but, in general, they pay for medical expenses and a percentage of lost income while the employee is disabled as well as death benefits and rehabilitation benefits. A waiting period will apply before income benefits are paid. The length of the waiting period depends on the state.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses, no matter how minor, must inform their supervisor promptly. If necessary, an employee reporting an injury will be sent for medical treatment. The supervisor or the employee must promptly notify Management Services to complete the necessary documentation, which is also to be sent promptly to Risk Management and Human Resources.

The employee is responsible for providing the workers' compensation insurer with the treating physician's name and contact information and other information requested, such as medical bills and related information. The employee must also keep the supervisor and Human Resources informed of any temporary work restrictions and current medical status.

5.15. Unemployment Insurance

As a religious, not-for-profit organization, the churchwide organization is not required to participate in unemployment compensation insurance. Therefore, employees separated from employment with the churchwide organization are not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

6. TIME AWAY FROM WORK

6.1. Prompt Notification of Absence Required

An employee who expects to be absent from work for any reason must inform his or her supervisor as soon as possible of the nature and expected duration of the absence. As specified in Section 10.5, an absence of three consecutive days without notification from the employee may be considered job abandonment.

6.2. Absence Due to Illness

6.2.1. Sick Leave

Pay continuation when an employee is ill is a privilege and not a right. Consequently, all employees are expected to be at work except when actually ill or when their absence is specifically approved for some other valid reason.

Employees eligible to receive benefits will begin to accrue paid sick leave at the rate of one day per month, commencing on the first day of employment. Sick leave may accrue up to a maximum of 45 working days. Sick leave may be carried over from year to year, up to a 45-day maximum. Employees will not be paid for accrued sick leave upon termination of employment.

An employee who is absent five or more successive business days due to an illness or injury must furnish a physician's statement confirming the illness or injury to Human Resources on the day he or she plans to return to work. Failure to provide such a statement may result in the employee being sent home.

6.2.2. Family Illness

An employee may use accrued sick leave due to the illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family, but only if the employee's absence is due to the necessity of providing care (including emotional support) to the family member who is ill or injured. Immediate family members are the employee's spouse, partner, children, parents and parents-in-law, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, and minors for whom the employee is the legal guardian. The employee's children include not only the employee's biological, adopted, or foster children, but also, legal wards, and children and stepchildren for whom the employee provides care and financial support on a daily basis.

6.3. Paid Vacation

The churchwide organization recognizes the need for time away from work for rest and relaxation. Paid vacation will accrue from the first day on the job.

Except for the heads of offices and units and certain professional employees, full-time regular employees accrue vacation according to the following schedule:

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Annual Vacation</u>	<u>Accrual</u>
First through second year	10 workdays/80 hours	0.83 days per month/3.33 hours per pay period
Third through fifth year	15 workdays/120 hours	1.25 days per month/5.0 hours per pay period
Sixth year and beyond	20 workdays/160 hours	1.67 days per month/6.67 hours per pay period

When an employee reaches the anniversary of his or her hire date and completes his or her second or fifth year of service, as the case may be, the employee will begin to accrue vacation at the next higher level. Thus, beginning with the third year of service, the employee will move from 10 to 15 workdays of annual vacation. Beginning with the sixth year of service, the employee will move from 15 to 20 workdays of annual vacation.

The amount of pay for a non-exempt employee on vacation is based on the employee's regular rate of pay exclusive of overtime.

The foregoing vacation allotments and accruals will be prorated for part-time regular employees based on the ratio of their regularly scheduled hours to a 40-hour week. For example, a non-exempt employee with four years of service who regularly works 20 hours per week would be entitled to 7.5 days of annual paid vacation, which would accrue at the rate of 0.625 days per month.

Individuals who were employed by a region, synod, congregation, or institution officially affiliated with the ELCA within the five-year period preceding the commencement of their employment with the ELCA will have all of such prior service counted for purposes of their vacation accrual with the churchwide organization. Except as described in the preceding sentence, no accrual of vacation time will be based on prior service to another organization.

The heads of offices and units and certain professional employees accrue four weeks of paid vacation (20 workdays) per calendar year from the commencement of employment. Their vacation accrues at the rate of 1.67 days per full calendar month.

Holidays observed by the churchwide organization occurring during an employee's vacation time do not count against the employee's vacation allotment.

All staff members should schedule vacation as far in advance as possible and obtain their supervisor's permission for vacation absences. The supervisor has the right to deny a request for vacation based on its business needs.

In the absence of special arrangements agreed to in advance and in writing, (i) up to a maximum of ten days of vacation not taken by the end of each calendar year will be carried forward to the following calendar year, and (ii) the maximum amount of vacation taken in any calendar year may not exceed six weeks (30 workdays).

Employees are responsible for having their work in a satisfactory condition before leaving on vacation and for coordinating with other employees regarding coverage during their absence.

Employees who leave employment with the ELCA will normally be paid for accrued and unused vacation up to the maximum accrual specified above.

6.4. Paid Personal Days

Three paid personal days are allowed on an annual basis. Persons employed on January 1 or who begin employment with the churchwide organization during January, February, March, or April will be eligible for three personal days for that year. Persons who begin employment during May, June, July, or August will be eligible for two personal days for that year. Persons who begin employment during September, October, or November will be eligible for one personal day that year. All personal days must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. Unused personal days do not accrue and may not be carried forward to the following year. Employees will not be paid for unused personal days upon termination of employment.

6.5. Paid Holidays

The Lutheran Center will be closed on the days listed below:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day

Full-time regular employees will receive their regular rate of pay for eight hours for each paid holiday. Part-time regular employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week will receive holiday pay based on the ratio of their regularly scheduled hours to a 40-hour week, but only if a particular paid holiday falls on a scheduled workday. No holiday pay will be paid to a part-time employee who would not normally have worked on the day the holiday is observed.

A holiday falling on Saturday will normally be observed on the preceding Friday. A holiday falling on Sunday will normally be observed on the following Monday.

If an employee's religion requires the observance of a holiday other than those listed above and the employee is scheduled to work on that day, appropriate arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis to accommodate the situation.

6.6. Compassionate Leave

An employee who must be absent because of the death of a member of the employee's immediate family may be allowed a paid absence of up to five working days. The definitions of "immediate family" and "children" in Section 6.2.2 apply for purposes of this Section 6.6. The length of the paid leave will be determined by the Executive for Human Resources in consultation with the head of the employee's office or unit and will be based on the overall circumstances.

6.7. Jury Duty

An employee who is required to serve on a jury will continue to receive his or her normal pay during the period of such service and may retain payments made by the court associated with such service.

6.8. Maternity/Paternity and Adoptive Leave

The churchwide organization provides paid maternity/paternity and adoptive leave as set forth below. Such paid leave must be substituted for unpaid leave available under the Family and Medical Leave Act to the extent the employee is eligible for FMLA leave. The purpose of the leave must relate to the parenting of a newly-born or newly-adopted child and leave may be taken only by an employee who has completed at least six months of full-time or part-time employment. Leave benefits for part-time employees are based on the ratio of their regularly schedule hours to a 40-hour week. Employees requesting leave under this Section 6.8 must provide their supervisors as much advance notice as possible.

Four consecutive weeks of paid maternity leave is available to a new mother and four consecutive weeks of paid paternity leave is available to a new father following the birth of her or his child. If the expectant mother's physician determines it is medically necessary for her to stop working prior to the anticipated delivery date, she will be permitted to use accrued sick leave or accrued vacation time to cover the absence.

A new mother may also use accrued sick leave during the recovery period following the birth of her child (usually from four to six weeks) before using the four consecutive weeks of maternity leave. Consistent with Section 6.2.2, a new father may use accrued sick leave following the birth of his child only if the mother or child require his care.

Four consecutive weeks of paid adoptive leave is available to a new mother and four consecutive weeks of paid adoptive leave is available to a new father. The leave begins on the date of the child's adoptive placement.

6.9. Parental Leave

The churchwide organization will grant eligible non-exempt employees up to eight hours of unpaid leave per school year to attend primary or secondary school conferences or classroom activities related to the employee's children where such conferences and activities cannot be scheduled during non-working hours. To be eligible, an employee must have worked at least 20 hours per week during the six-month period preceding the requested leave and the employee must have used all accrued vacation and personal days. An employee may take no more than four of the eight hours on any one day, and will be required to provide verification of the school visit upon his or her return to work. The head of the employee's office or unit may to allow a non-exempt employee to make up the leave time taken.

6.10. Leave Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

The Family and Medical Leave Act (“FMLA”) provides an eligible employee with unpaid leave:

Because of the birth of the employee’s child;

Because of the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care;

Because the employee needs to care for his or her spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;

Because the employee is not able to perform job duties due to his or her own serious health condition;

Because the employee needs to deal with certain exigencies associated with the employee’s spouse, child, or parent on active duty or called to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation; and

Because the employee needs to provide care for the employee’s spouse, child, parent, or next of kin who has an injury or illness incurred on active duty in the armed forces.

The FMLA sets forth detailed provisions relating to eligibility for leave, the definition of important terms, the necessity of obtaining the certification of a health care provider, the scheduling of leave, the substitution of accrued paid leave, the continuation of benefits during leave, and reinstatement upon the conclusion of leave. These provisions are summarized in a separate policy posted on the ELCA’s Intranet and also available from Human Resources.

6.11. Personal Leave

An employee who has exhausted all types of paid leave available may be considered for personal leave. All personal leaves are unpaid. Whether such a leave is granted depends on the overall circumstances, including the work requirements of the employee’s office or unit. While the normal length of a personal leave is from one to three months, a leave of up to one year may be granted in extraordinary circumstances.

If the employee has been on a personal leave for medical reasons, the employee’s treating physician must provide Human Resources a medical release confirming the employee’s fitness to return to work.

An employee returning from an approved personal leave on a timely basis may be reinstated to the same or an equivalent position. All decisions regarding a personal leave require the concurrence of the head of the employee’s office or unit and the Executive for Human Resources.

6.12. Sabbatical Leave

The churchwide organization recognizes that employees have a need to increase and extend their knowledge and competency in their fields of specialization. This may be accomplished through a sabbatical leave, normally a period of one to three months, during which full salary and benefits would be continued.

Sabbatical leaves are restricted and are intended for use only by those employees (without regard to ordained status) whose sabbatical leave will increase their value to the organization. An employee

is eligible to request a sabbatical leave after six years of full-time employment with the churchwide organization. Subsequent requests may be considered at six-year intervals.

Requests for sabbatical leave, including the proposed program of study, must be submitted, in writing, to the head of the employee's office or unit. If approved, the request will be forwarded to the Executive for Human Resources at least one month before the proposed beginning of the sabbatical leave. Both the head of the employee's office or unit and the Executive for Human Resources must approve the proposed sabbatical leave. As an exception to the preceding sentence, a request for a sabbatical leave by a full-time officer of the ELCA must be submitted to and approved by the Church Council's Executive Committee, whose action will be forwarded to the Executive for Human Resources.

Except for the Presiding Bishop, no employee may take a sabbatical leave at the completion of his or her service. The granting of a sabbatical leave to all other employees will normally be contingent upon the employee's commitment to a minimum of six months of service to the churchwide organization following the conclusion of the leave. Any exceptions must be approved by the Executive for Human Resources.

Sabbatical leave does not accrue. An employee whose employment terminates without the employee's having taken sabbatical leave is not entitled to any sabbatical payment.

6.13. Leave to Attend Synod Assembly

An ELCA-rostered employee of the churchwide organization is granted paid leave time to permit attendance on normal work days at the synod assembly of the synod in which his or her membership is maintained. A non-rostered employee who is elected by an ELCA congregation to serve as a lay voting member of a synod assembly will be granted paid leave time to attend the synod assembly on normal work days. In both cases, approval of the employee's supervisor must be granted prior to attendance at the synod assembly.

6.14. Military Leave

The churchwide organization grants military leave to employees who perform military service on a part-time and regularly occurring basis or who perform military service on a full-time but temporary basis. An employee with a military obligation should notify Human Resources and submit copies of military orders as soon as practical.

The churchwide organization complies with the requirements of the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, as applied to churches and religious organizations, and with applicable provisions of state law, as well as regulations adopted pursuant to the applicable federal and state laws.

6.15. Victims' Economic Safety and Security Act Leave

The ELCA complies with all applicable requirements of the Illinois Victims' Economic Safety and Security Act ("VESSA"). An employee may be eligible for leave under VESSA if he or she is a victim of domestic or sexual violence or has a family or household member who has been victimized by domestic or sexual violence. VESSA may provide eligible employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid job-protected leave in a 12-month period to seek medical attention or counseling, obtain assistance from service agencies, seek legal counsel, and participate in civil or criminal legal proceedings. Further information is available from Human Resources.

6.16. Community Service Day

Employees of the churchwide organization are encouraged to share their time, talents, and gifts by taking an active, visible role in volunteer activities. To that end, all full-time regular employees may take one day (8 hours) of paid leave each calendar year to use for volunteer activities. Part-time regular employees may take such leave on a prorated basis. No one may use more than one community service day in a calendar year. A community service day not used cannot be carried forward to the next calendar year.

An employee who wants to use community service leave must apply in advance and in writing to his or her supervisor and provide an explanation of the proposed activity, including the time, place, and sponsor. The supervisor has discretion to grant or deny the request.

6.17. Other Paid Leave

There may be circumstances where it is in the best interest of the churchwide organization to place an employee on paid administrative leave for a limited period of time. Such a decision can be made only by a churchwide officer or the Executive for Administration, at the request of the head of the employee's office or unit and the Executive for Human Resources.

6.18. Time Off for Voting

Work schedules normally permit adequate time for an employee to vote either before or after normal working hours. In unusual circumstances, however, an employee's work schedule or work commitments may make voting during non-working hours difficult or impossible. In such cases, the employee's supervisor may approve up to two consecutive hours of paid time off for the purpose of voting in a national, state, or local election. The supervisor may specify the hours during which the employee will be absent in order to vote.

The employee must notify the appropriate supervisor before Election Day of the intended absence and provide a signed statement describing the specific circumstances that require time off. This statement is to be retained with the employee's time records for the applicable month. The employee may also consider asking the appropriate governmental office about the possibility of voting early or by absentee ballot.

7. PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

The policies set forth below apply to all ELCA employees and supplement, but do not supplant the policies set forth elsewhere in these policies. Because these Personnel Policies cannot anticipate every circumstance or question that may arise or summarize every policy that might be necessary, the churchwide organization has the right to revise or add to these policies and adopt additional policies at any time.

7.1. Safety

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules, to exercise caution in all work activities, and to report promptly any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor.

7.2. Attendance and Punctuality

Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees. The ELCA expects employees to be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled work and, except for prior authorization or a legitimate reason, to remain throughout the scheduled shift. Employees who cannot avoid being late to work or who are unable to work as scheduled must notify their supervisor promptly, normally before their scheduled starting time.

Acceptable attendance is an essential requirement of every job, and absenteeism and tardiness problems are performance issues. All employees must establish and maintain acceptable attendance and punctuality standards. Depending on the circumstances, an employee who is absent five or more consecutive workdays may be required to present a statement from a health care provider before returning to work.

Employees are not permitted to work at home or away from the office without approval of the appropriate supervisor.

7.3. Personal Appearance, Grooming, and Fragrances

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the image the ELCA presents to the public. During business hours or when representing the church, employees are expected to present a professional appearance and to dress according to the requirements of their positions and accepted social standards.

If a supervisor determines an employee's personal appearance is inappropriate, that employee may be asked to leave the workplace until they are properly dressed or groomed. Consult the Employee Handbook if there are questions as to what constitutes appropriate appearance.

Employees should also be aware that other individuals may be chemically sensitive in the sense that they suffer reactions to fragrances found in cologne, after-shave lotion, perfume, perfumed hand lotion, fragranced hair products, air fresheners and similar items. Therefore, employees are expected to be considerate and to refrain from using any particular products that are irritating to other employees or visitors.

The following clothing items are not permitted during business hours:

- Sexually provocative, imprudent, vulgar, or revealing clothing;
- Clothing with alcohol, drugs, tobacco, obscene or other inappropriate language or offensive graphics or logos;
- Athletic tank tops, halter-tops, or other tops baring the midriff; and
- Spandex or leggings unless the top covers to mid-thigh

The churchwide organization has designated Friday as a casual dress day in the Lutheran Center. Employees should wear appropriate casual clothing that is reflective of a business environment. Participation in Casual Dress Friday is a personal decision. Those who choose to participate should use good judgment to ensure their attire is appropriate for activities during Church Council meetings and the individual staff person's meetings and guest contacts for that day.

Appropriate casual dress Friday attire may include:

- Jeans, without holes or frays
- Casual footwear, athletic shoes, sandals

Inappropriate attire includes:

- Flip Flops
- Tank Tops
- Shorts

If you have questions regarding casual dress, please contact Human Resources or your supervisor.

7.4. No Use of Tobacco Products in the Workplace

Smoking or the use of tobacco products is not allowed in the workplace.

7.5. Safeguarding Property

Employees are responsible for safeguarding all property issued or otherwise made available to them by the churchwide organization during their employment, including computer hardware, software, and manuals; cell phones; and keys and access cards.

All incidents of theft or damage involving organizational or personal property should immediately be reported to a supervisor. All purses and valuables should be secured in a file or desk drawer during working hours.

On or before their last day of work, employees must return all property belong to the organization. The organization may take all legally appropriate steps to recover or protect its property.

7.6. Inclement Weather or Emergency

7.6.1. Inclement Weather

Weather conditions such as snow, ice, and extreme cold are part of winter. Employees should make every reasonable effort to report to work unless weather and road conditions indicate otherwise.

To determine if the Lutheran Center will be open or closed due to inclement weather, an employee may call 773-380-2660 or 866-735-3522 after 6:30 a.m. A recorded message will provide information regarding the status of the office. Employees who have indicated their Business Continuity Alert preference will also be notified by telephone or text message, depending on their preference, should the Lutheran Center be closed.

When the Lutheran Center is closed for part or all of a day due to weather conditions, all staff scheduled to work during that time will be paid for the time they would normally have worked.

A non-exempt employee who makes a personal judgment not to come to work due to weather on a day the office is open may use paid personal time or accrued vacation time to cover the hours missed, or may be allowed to make up the hours missed under arrangements approved by Human Resources.

7.6.2. Other Emergencies

If some other emergency occurs, employees may call 773-380-2660 or 866-735-3522 at any time to check on whether or when to report to work. Employees may also be notified by telephone, email, text message, or through www.elcawebstatus.org concerning developments. Should these contact points not be functional, employees may also call Archives at 847-690-9410 for information during a declared emergency. Each employee is responsible for keeping up to date on developments during an emergency.

7.7. Dealing with the News Media

Only an authorized representative may speak to reporters on behalf of the ELCA. Reporters seeking a church representative must be referred to News and Media Relations. Employees should attempt to alert News and Media Relations in advance that a reporter or media outlet is or may be seeking to contact them concerning a particular matter or issue.

7.8. Sexual Harassment and Other Inappropriate Behavior

A fundamental policy of the churchwide organization is that the workplace is for work. Our goal is to provide a workplace where employees behave courteously, professionally, and feel safe at all times. Tension created by conduct not related to work—including ethnic, racial, or sexual remarks, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, loud swearing or yelling, or similar conduct—does not belong in our workplace. Similarly, inappropriate displays of affection or sexually related conduct, even if welcome, are inappropriate at work and will not be tolerated.

7.8.1. Harassment

Harassment of employees or applicants for employment is prohibited. Harassment is defined as persistently bothering, disturbing, or tormenting another person. Harassment may be based on a variety of factors, such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or personal dislike. The reason for the harassment does not matter. The ELCA prohibits all forms of harassment, including, but not limited to:

Verbal and electronic communication harassment, such as making derogatory statements, epithets, or slurs to or about another person or group;

Visual harassment, such as displaying offensive posters, cartoons, or drawings; and,

Physical harassment, such as threatening, assaulting, or physically interfering with another person or making other inappropriate or unwelcomed physical contact.

7.8.2. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment;

Submission or refusal to submit to such conduct is used as the basis for a tangible employment action; or

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or work environment.

Sexual harassment is prohibited. Individuals cannot be forced to submit to sexual harassment as a basis for any employment decision. In addition, the ELCA attempts to prevent and promptly eliminate any conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment for our employees.

7.8.3. Examples of Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct, when occurring in the workplace or when it may adversely affect the work environment, will be considered to be harassment or inappropriate behavior:

Sexually suggestive or off-color comments or jokes;

Sexual flirtation, innuendo, advances, propositions, or other sexual activities;

Unprofessional touching, such as massages, or inappropriately putting an arm around another employee;

Repeated and unwelcome invitations for social interactions outside of the workplace;

Sexual or racial slurs, derogatory remarks, or offensive gestures;

Swearing or loud yelling;

Displaying or distributing sexually explicit or otherwise off-color materials, including books, magazines, articles, pictures, greeting cards, photographs, drawings, cartoons, and email messages; and

Including or excluding any individuals from workplace activities, assignments, or responsibilities based on their refusal to participate in or tolerate sexual or other forms of harassment or based on other factors not related to job performance or legitimate reasons.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

A consensual relationship does not justify inappropriate displays of affection or other sexual statements or activities during working hours or at work-related functions.

Any questions about whether particular conduct is prohibited under this policy should be discussed with the appropriate supervisor or Human Resources.

7.8.4. Reporting Harassment or Other Inappropriate Behavior

If an employee believes that any sort of sexual or other harassment or other inappropriate conduct is interfering with their work or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, they are urged to contact any supervisor or any Human Resources staff member and make a report. The employee may be asked to sign a written complaint or other summary of the information reported.

Employees receiving a threatening telephone call or voicemail at work should attempt to get a caller ID number and as much information as possible about the caller, and promptly notify their supervisor. Employees receiving threatening emails, text messages, or letters should promptly notify their supervisor and save copies of all such communications. Whenever threats are received by any means, reports may be made to law enforcement authorities.

7.8.5. Investigation and Follow-Up

Complaints of harassment will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and the reporting employee will be advised of the results of the investigation. The churchwide organization understands these matters are sensitive and will therefore attempt to keep all employee complaints and communications, such as interviews and witness statements, in confidence.

The organization may take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including discharge, against any employee who engages in sexual or other harassment or who otherwise violates this policy. Further, the organization may correct any adverse employment action any employee experienced due to conduct forbidden by this policy.

If an individual involved in harassing or inappropriate conduct is not employed by the ELCA, the individual will be informed of our policy and appropriate action will be taken in an attempt to prevent further misconduct. In all cases, the churchwide organization will make follow-up inquiries to make sure the inappropriate behavior has stopped. If an employee is not satisfied with the results of the investigation or follow-up action, or if further harassment or other unacceptable conduct occurs, they should contact any supervisor or any Human Resources staff member.

7.8.6. Retaliation

The churchwide organization will not tolerate retaliation against any employee who in good faith complains of sexual or other harassment or who provides information in connection with any such complaint. If an employee believes that they have been retaliated against for bringing a complaint or providing information related to a complaint, the employee should report to any supervisor or any Human Resources staff member.

7.8.7. Employee Responsibilities

Employees of the ELCA are responsible for:

Behaving courteously and professionally toward fellow employees;

Reading this policy and understanding fully its requirements;

Refraining from conduct forbidden by this policy;

Reporting promptly any incidents of sexual or other harassment or other inappropriate behavior; and

Cooperating in any investigation conducted under this policy by providing accurate and complete information about any incidents with which an employee is familiar.

7.9. Use of Telephone and Mail Systems

The ELCA needs to maintain effective telephone communications, and employees should always use an approved greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner. Personal use of the telephone system for long-distance and toll calls is not normally permitted. Personal calls should be limited to meal times and other breaks and should be kept brief. Employees should practice discretion when making local personal calls and may be required to reimburse the organization for any charges resulting from their personal use of the telephone.

The use of church-paid postage for personal correspondence is not permitted.

7.10. Safe use of Cell Phones, Computers, and other Electronic Devices

Whether their cell phone, tablet, computer, or similar electronic communication device is provided by the ELCA or paid for by an individual employee, ELCA staff members are expected to observe the following guidelines in their use of such devices for ELCA-related business:

Employees are required to abide by the law or ordinance of a particular jurisdiction with regard to the use of electronic communication devices while driving a motor vehicle, and will be solely responsible for any traffic violations relating to such use.

Safety must always be of paramount concern, and employees should never place themselves or others at risk to fulfill work-related needs.

Employees should never attempt to send or review text or email messages while operating a motor vehicle.

Employees should place calls either prior to driving or while on rest breaks, and to drive to a safe parking location before accepting calls.

Employees should always be conscious of their surroundings and refrain from discussing confidential matters in a public setting or under circumstances where their conversation could be overheard or their screen viewed by others.

7.11. Electronic Communications Policy

7.11.1. Policy Overview

The churchwide organization is committed to an environment that encourages the use of technical resources and other forms of electronic communications as essential tools to support the ELCA's mission and ministry. The term "technical resources" includes, but is not limited to, all electronic communications systems, computer hardware and software, smartphones, tablets, data, information, email, instant messages, social media sites, Intranet, Extranet and Internet services, domain name registrations, and related systems. All employees are required to abide by this Section 7.11 in their use of the ELCA's technical resources as well as with Section 7.12, which deals specifically with social media. In particular, technical resources are to be used in a manner that is consistent with good stewardship and the mission and ministry of the ELCA; that is responsible, professional, and legal; that does not compromise the security or confidentiality of proprietary or other sensitive information or the ELCA's technical resources.

Employees are expected to use their ELCA-provided email address only when representing the ELCA unless authorized by the Executive for Information Technology. Employees are personally responsible for any activities they conduct with an ELCA-provided email address, and for any of their activities that can be traced back to the ELCA's domain or assets.

Employees will be held responsible for their use of an ELCA provided email address or ELCA technical resources to engage in any social media or professional social networking activity, including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, personal blogs, and Twitter. Employees must obtain written approval from the Executives for Human Resources and for Information Technology before establishing any external social media or professional social networks identified with or utilizing equipment or resources of the churchwide organization. Employees should reference the Electronic Communication procedures on the churchwide organization's intranet for further clarification.

7.11.2. Acquiring Technical Resources

All technical resources provided by or through the churchwide organization are assets of the ELCA and must be acquired only by Information Technology or with the written approval of the Executive for Information Technology. No employee may load, download, or receive software on ELCA technical resources without the prior written approval of the Executive for Information Technology.

7.11.3. No Expectation of Privacy

ELCA employees do not have a personal privacy or proprietary right in any matter created, received, sent, or stored on ELCA technical resources, telephones, equipment, or on third-party resources used for work-related matters, whether or not the matter is designated as private or confidential.

The ELCA has the right, at any time and without prior notice, to monitor employees and to read, listen to, and copy all files or data contained on any technical resource, including but not limited to email messages, instant messages, Internet access records, voice messages, faxes, official employee content on Internet discussion groups, and personal file directories.

The ELCA also has the right in its complete discretion to access all technical resources for the purpose of supporting its mission and ministry, complying with statutory requirements and internal policies regarding internal investigations, and any additional issues that may arise in connection with the management of the ELCA's electronic communications systems.

7.11.4. Prohibited Activities

The following behaviors are examples of previously stated or additional activities that are prohibited in the use of ELCA equipment or technical resources. They include, but are not limited to:

- Violating any law, statute, regulation, or ordinance;

- Violating any ELCA policy or procedure or otherwise interfering with the mission and ministry of the ELCA;

- Jeopardizing the safety and security of ELCA members, employees, or technical resources;

- Jeopardizing the tax-exempt status of the ELCA, any ELCA synod or congregation, or any affiliate listed under the ELCA group ruling for federal income tax exemption, including transmission of political or partisan campaign materials;

- Violating the legal rights of any person or entity;

- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's code or password without authorization;

- Copying, pirating, or downloading software and electronic files without permission;

- Creating unauthorized contractual liability for the ELCA;

- Giving the impression that personal views are those of the organization;

- Sending anonymous email messages;

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images;

Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations, or advertisements not related to business purposes or activities or using the Internet for any sort of gambling;

Sending or posting messages that defame any other individuals or organizations;

Attempting to break into the computer system of another person or organization; and

Downloading or participating in the viewing or exchange of pornographic or sexually explicit materials unless specifically authorized for an investigation or other extraordinary, work-related purposes.

7.11.5. Avoiding Harassing Behavior

When communicating about the ELCA or ELCA-related matters, employees must never send or display any information that may be construed as offensive or harassing. Offensive or harassing messages include, but are not limited to, pornographic images, sexual references, racial slurs, comments regarding an individual's gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, national origin, disability or any other characteristic protected by law, and comments that threaten or intimidate others.

7.11.6. Speaking on Behalf of the Organization

Unless specifically instructed or authorized, employees are restricted from speaking to the news media or others while purporting or appearing to represent the ELCA.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that all information they share in work-related Internet discussion groups, chat rooms, blogs, or social networking sites is accurate and that any personal opinions they express are clearly identified as personal and not attributed to the ELCA.

7.11.7. Posting Recommendations for Colleagues

Online recommendations and comments about current and former churchwide employees could have unanticipated consequences, even if made personally by an employee and not on behalf of the organization. Therefore, employees must clear all potential recommendations and comments with the Executive for Human Resources if they refer to anyone who is or was ever associated with the churchwide organization.

7.11.8. Safety and Mission

Electronic communications that negatively affect an employee's job performance, the safety of others, the ELCA's mission and ministry, or the business interests of the churchwide organization may be treated as employment-related, regardless of whether the communication took place during or outside of working hours.

7.11.9. Reporting Violations

Employees are expected to report any actual or perceived violations of this policy to any supervisor, the head of any office or unit, the Executive for Human Resources, the Executive for Information Technology, or the General Counsel.

7.12. Social Media

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America understands that social media can be a helpful and rewarding way to share one's life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. Nonetheless, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. This policy, which applies to all ELCA employees, is intended to assist employees in making responsible decisions about use of social media. The churchwide organization has additional requirements for persons who are employed to create and use social media as part of their employment responsibilities.

For purposes of this policy, "social media" is defined as all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, whether or not associated with the ELCA, including postings to one's own or someone else's blog, journal, diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board, or chat room.

The same principles and guidelines found in these Personnel Policies apply to activities online. Ultimately, each employee is solely responsible for what they post online.

Maintain confidentiality. Never divulge information that would be considered confidential.

Observe all other policies of the ELCA. Refrain from inappropriate postings that contain discriminatory remarks, harassment (sexual or any other type), threats of violence, or inappropriate or unlawful conduct.

Be respectful. Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, members, suppliers, and other people who work with the churchwide organization, synods, or congregations. Keep in mind that resolving work-related complaints by speaking directly with co-workers or supervisors is more effective than by posting to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, an employee who decides to post complaints or criticism, avoid posting anything that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating; that disparages fellow employees or synods or congregations within the ELCA; or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation and posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion, or any other legally protected status.

Be honest and accurate. Make sure posted information or news is honest and accurate, and, if a mistake is made, that it be corrected quickly. Be open about any previous posts that have been altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any rumors or information known to be false about the churchwide organization, any synod or congregation, or other employees.

Represent yourself accurately. When participating in an online community and commenting on topics related to the ELCA, employees must make it clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the church. Do not create a link from any blog, website, or other social media site to an ELCA website without identifying yourself as an ELCA employee.

Do not post at work. Refrain from using social media while on work time or on ELCA equipment unless such activities are related to your duties or have been specifically authorized by a supervisor. Employees may not use their ELCA email address to register on social networks or other sites for personal use without permission.

Check comments by others. Any photos or messages that are linked or “tagged” from “friends” and attached to employee site(s) or profile(s) that violate these guidelines are not permitted and, if not promptly removed from the employees own page or site, will be attributed to the employee.

No Retaliation. The ELCA prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation of a possible deviation.

Nothing in this policy or any other ELCA policy should be interpreted in a manner that unlawfully prohibits any right employees may have to engage in protected concerted activity.

7.13. Use of Facilities and Property

Office supplies or equipment may not be used for personal use unless advance written permission from a supervisor has been obtained.

Equipment, documents, official records, or other property belonging to the ELCA may not be removed from the Lutheran Center for any reason without advance permission.

7.14. Security Inspections

The ELCA wishes to maintain a work environment that is free of illegal drugs, alcohol, firearms, explosives, or other improper materials. To this end, the church prohibits the possession, transfer, sale, concealment or use of such materials in the workplace.

Desks, file cabinets, and other storage locations may be provided for the conveniences of employees but remain the sole property of the churchwide organization. Employees should have no expectation of privacy with respect to the contents of their desks or other storage locations on the organization’s premises. Accordingly, any authorized agent or representative of the organization may inspect them, as well as any articles found within them, at any time, either with or without prior notice.

The churchwide organization seeks to discourage theft or unauthorized possession of the property of employees, vendors, and visitors. Any authorized ELCA agent or representative may also inspect persons entering or leaving the workplace and any packages, briefcases, backpacks, or other belongings in the possession of such persons. Any employee who wishes to avoid inspection of any articles or materials should not bring them to work.

7.15. Preventing Workplace Violence

All employees, visitors, guests, independent contractors and other individuals should be treated with courtesy and respect. Fighting, “horseplay,” or other conduct that may be dangerous is prohibited. All threatened or actual violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to any supervisor or Human Resources employee. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by visitors, vendors, solicitors, or members of the public. All suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported as soon as possible. When making such a report, be as specific and detailed as possible.

The CWO will promptly investigate all reports of actual or threatened violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected to the extent practical. To attempt to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the ELCA may suspend employees, either with or without pay, during any investigation.

The CWO encourages employees to bring any disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors before the situation escalates into potential violence. The Problem Resolution Procedure in Section 9 may be used as appropriate.

The CWO will assist in the resolution of employee disputes, and will not discipline employees for raising legitimate or reasonable concerns.

7.16. Weapons Policy

The churchwide organization prohibits weapons of any type on the premises of the Lutheran Center, any buildings owned by the churchwide organization, or rented premises, and at any churchwide-sponsored events. This general prohibition includes visible or concealed weapons, even those for which the owner has a valid permit. This policy applies to all ELCA employees and also to contractors, vendors, and visitors. Prohibited items include any form of weapon, as well as any explosive that is illegal under federal, state, or local laws or ordinances.

To ensure that prohibited weapons and other contraband are not present on its property, the ELCA reserves the right to inspect work areas, desks, and personal belongings (including, but not limited to, items such as employee packages, purses, backpacks, or lunch bags) when it has a reasonable suspicion of possession of prohibited weapons or substances.

Employees who observe or have knowledge of any violation of this weapons policy should immediately report it to any supervisor or any Human Resources employee.

7.17. Vehicle Use and Insurance

Employees who use their personal vehicles for churchwide organization-related business must first provide proof of adequate insurance coverage and maintain the appropriate driver's license. Such employees must promptly inform Human Resources of any restriction or revocation of their driver's license and of any cancelation or modification of their personal vehicle insurance coverage.

7.18. Drug and Alcohol Use

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America seeks to provide a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. To promote this goal, churchwide employees are required to report to work capable of performing their jobs in a satisfactory manner.

While in the Lutheran Center or other churchwide office locations, no employee may abuse, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Illegal drug use includes the unauthorized use or possession of a legal drug as well as the unauthorized use or possession of a controlled substance. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace. Depending on the circumstances, employees may consume alcoholic beverages at church-related functions, but are expected to use common sense and to avoid intoxication.

Violations of this policy may lead to notification of the appropriate law enforcement authorities, disciplinary action up to and including discharge, or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program.

The ELCA believes it is in the public interest to provide a program to assist employees suffering from alcoholism or other chemical dependencies through proper referral to appropriate community and professional agencies for help. Employees with drug or alcohol problems that have not resulted in or are not the immediate subject of disciplinary action may request approval to take time off to participate in a rehabilitation or treatment program. Sick leave may be granted if the employee agrees to abstain from use of the problem substance; abides by the ELCA's policies, rules, and prohibitions relating to conduct in the workplace; and if the leave will not cause undue hardship on the ELCA. An employee in these circumstances may be requested to sign a conditions-of-continued employment agreement.

Employees with questions about either this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should contact their supervisor or Human Resources.

7.19. Additional Employment

Employees may not accept additional employment that will conflict with their present job responsibilities. Employees may not conduct other business or employment during ELCA business hours, on churchwide premises, or utilizing churchwide offices or equipment. Such inappropriate additional employment includes employment that interferes with the efficient performance of the employee's duties or creates a conflict of interest. Failing to disclose additional employment or continuing to work at an additional job that interferes with employment with the ELCA may be determined to be a conflict of interest for purposes of Section 2.10.2.

7.20. Solicitation Prohibited

In an effort to provide a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose.

The churchwide organization recognizes that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace. Nonetheless, employees may not solicit or distribute literature concerning these activities during working time. (Working time does not include meal periods, work breaks, or any other periods in which employees are not on duty.)

There are approved email addresses that allow staff, who opt in, to send and receive certain "solicitations".

8. DISCIPLINE AND DISCHARGE

8.1. Progressive Discipline

Disciplinary action ordinarily follows counseling by the supervisor and may call for any of four steps—verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay, and termination of employment—depending on the severity of the problem and the number of previous occurrences.

With respect to most disciplinary problems, the four steps mentioned above will normally be followed:

A first offense may call for a verbal warning;

The next offense may be followed by a written warning;

Another offense may lead to a suspension; and

Still another offense may then lead to termination of employment.

By using such progressive discipline, the churchwide organization seeks to correct most employee problems at an early stage. The policy of progressive discipline does not change the employment-at-will relationship, however. The churchwide organization may bypass any one or more of the progressive disciplinary steps. Problems that are serious enough to justify either a suspension or discharge will be dealt with accordingly even if counseling or warnings were not previously given.

Generally, in the administration of discipline, the organization will give primary consideration to the employee's disciplinary record for the past two years. Depending on the frequency, pattern, and seriousness of previous violations, however, the organization may consider the employee's total employment record with the organization.

8.2. Grounds for Discipline or Discharge

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are not acceptable at work; many are detailed throughout these policies. The actions listed below are additional examples of conduct that may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. They include, but are not limited to:

Unsatisfactory job performance;

Unauthorized disclosure of any confidential information;

Violating any of the ELCA's policies or rules, whether described in these Personnel Policies or elsewhere;

Excessive tardiness, absenteeism, or absence without call (no call, no show);

Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property or money;

Falsifying time records or other organization-related documents, including, but not limited to, an application for employment, a request for a leave, or any business document;

Violating safety or health rules at work;

Working or attempting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;

Possessing, distributing, selling, transferring, or using alcohol or illegal drugs at work, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment;

Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace;

Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace, including malicious gossip;

Negligence or improper conduct that causes or could have caused injury to other person(s) or damage to property, equipment, or vehicles;

Intentionally injuring or damaging or attempting to injure or damage other person(s) or property, equipment, or vehicles;

Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct toward managers or supervisors;

Smoking or using other tobacco products at work;

Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment or inappropriate behavior;

Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, at work;

Unauthorized absence from your workstation during the workday;

Unauthorized use of computers, telephones, the Internet, or other electronic communications systems, the mail system, or other equipment;

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information;

Other unsatisfactory performance or conduct, whether or not described in these Personnel Policies.

This list is not comprehensive and does not alter the at-will status of churchwide employees. The ELCA has the right and will exercise the right to take appropriate action based on the individualized circumstances of a particular case. The ELCA's action may include any level of discipline up to and including discharge based on conduct that warrants that action, whether or not the conduct is described in these Personnel Policies.

9. PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

All ELCA employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect and to offer positive and constructive criticism. The churchwide organization encourages an atmosphere in which any job-related problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response. Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction, but the organization will consider complaints in accordance with the following procedure.

Employees who disagree with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices or a particular decision or action may express their concern through the problem resolution procedure described below. No employee acting in a reasonable manner will be penalized for voicing a complaint or using this problem resolution procedure. The steps described below are intended to facilitate an informal resolution, and attorneys are not allowed to participate directly in the process.

Step 1. The employee describes the problem to the immediate supervisor within five days after the problem arises. If the supervisor is unavailable or the supervisor is the source of the problem, the employee may describe the problem to any other supervisor. If the matter is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, he or she may proceed to Step 2.

Step 2. The employee presents a written complaint to the supervisor within five days of the occurrence of the Step 1 discussion. The supervisor has ten days to give a written reply. If the written reply does not resolve the complaint to the employee's satisfaction, he or she may proceed to Step 3.

Step 3. Within five days after receiving the written reply referred to in Step 2, the employee sends the written complaint and the reply to Human Resources with an explanation of why Step 2 is not sufficient or fully satisfactory. The Executive for Human Resources (or his or her designee) will try to send a written reply to the employee within ten days. If the written reply does not resolve the complaint to the employee's satisfaction, he or she may proceed to Step 4.

Step 4. Within five days after receiving the written reply referred to in Step 3, the employee sends a written statement, together with all prior documentation, to the Executive for Administration requesting his or her consideration of the complaint and reasons why there has been no satisfactory resolution or treatment. The Executive for Administration may, but is not required to, consult with other members of the Administrative Team and may, but is not required to, meet personally with the employee and others while considering the matter. The Executive for Administration will send a written decision to the employee normally within 30 days after the receipt of the employee's written statement requesting his or her consideration. The Executive for Administration's decision is final.

10. ENDING THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

This Section 10 reviews the various ways the employment relationship may come to an end. Regardless of the reason for termination, the churchwide organization requests that the employee cooperate in the transition process and participate in an exit interview. This is especially true when an employee resigns or retires. In addition, the organization asks that, on the effective date of the resignation or retirement, all work assignments be completed to the extent possible and all files be brought up to date.

Exit interviews provide a way for the employee to reflect on his or her experience at the churchwide organization and to offer comments, advice, or suggestions regarding the organization's policies and practices.

10.1. Resignation or Retirement

Resignation or retirement is a voluntary decision on the part of the employee to terminate the employment relationship. The churchwide organization asks that employees give at least two weeks advance notice. The last day of employment must be a day on which the employee is working.

10.2. Completion of a Specific Term

Employees of the churchwide organization serving for a specific term—whether because of a term call, election to an office with a specific term, or pursuant to a written employment agreement for a specified time, or other reason—will be separated from employment at the end of that period. The preceding sentence does not preclude employment in a different capacity.

10.3. Discharge Based on Performance or Behavior

Subject to any applicable restrictions and procedures in the ELCA's governing documents, there may be situations where the ELCA decides the employment relationship must be terminated for disciplinary reasons. The organization's preference for progressive discipline (see Section 8) does not alter the existence of an at-will relationship or preclude the imposition of discharge if the organization determines discharge is the appropriate action.

The ELCA considers employment-related decisions on a case-by-case basis, and these Personnel Policies cannot address every situation that may arise. Therefore, nothing in this document prevents the dismissal of an employee where dismissal is in the best interest of the church. For example, personal misconduct by an employee that could adversely affect the ELCA's relationship with its synods, congregations, or the general public or the ELCA's ability to communicate its mission and message would lead to the prompt termination of employment.

All involuntary terminations must be approved by the Executive for Human Resources and the head of the affected office or unit. Depending on the particular circumstances, it is generally appropriate to consult with the Executive of Administration or with an officer of this church.

10.4. Termination for Other Reasons

There may be situations where this church decides to separate an employee or group of employees based on program changes or budgetary reasons having nothing to do with job performance. This church recognizes the difficulty of such separations, especially because, as noted in Section 5.15, unemployment insurance benefits are not available. Therefore, this church will attempt to achieve mutually acceptable termination arrangements with the separating employee. Depending on the particular situation, such arrangements might include salary continuation for a specified period, a lump-sum payment, subsidized health benefits for a specified period, outplacement assistance, or a combination of such benefits. No terminating employee will be provided more than the equivalent of one month's pay without executing a full release of all claims in a written agreement approved by the Executive for Human Resources and the General Counsel.

10.5. Job Abandonment

If an employee fails to report to work or call his or her supervisor for three consecutive days when scheduled to work, the organization may determine the employee's job has been abandoned as of the first day of absence.

10.6. Rehire

A former employee's eligibility for rehire may depend on past performance. Former employees are not guaranteed rehire. Generally, rehired employees start over with respect to eligibility for benefits if the break in the employment relationship lasted more than a year.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

By signing this form, I acknowledge that on the date of my signature as shown below I have received a copy of the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies dated November 2014 and as updated from time to time, from my employer, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (referred to for convenience below as the "ELCA"). I understand the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies describes important information about working for the ELCA and that it is my responsibility to read and become familiar with the contents of the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies and to comply with the policies it contains. I also understand that the ELCA may change or add to these policies or adopt or change other policies as it deems appropriate, with or without advance notice, and it is my responsibility to become familiar with such revisions. I further understand that I should ask my supervisor or Human Resources any questions not answered in the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies.

I acknowledge that I have entered into my employment relationship with the ELCA voluntarily and that, I am an employee at will. I understand that, subject to applicable law, the employment relationship of an employee at will can be terminated at any time for any legal reason, with or without cause or notice. I understand that no manager or supervisor has any authority to change this employment-at-will relationship.

If I am on an ELCA roster and I receive a call from the Church Council for churchwide employment, I understand that the Church Council has the right to terminate my Comment Roster status call and that it will terminate in any case whenever this employment terminates.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that the Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies are not a contract of employment and I understand that the ELCA has the right and will exercise the right to take necessary action, including discharge, for conduct that requires such action, whether or not such conduct is referred to in this document.

Employee's Signature

Date Signed

Chapter 7. MINISTRY

7.10. MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIZED PEOPLE OF GOD

7.11. This church affirms the universal priesthood of all its baptized members. In its function and its structure this church commits itself to the equipping and supporting of all its members for their ministries in the world and in this church. It is within this context of ministry that this church calls some of its baptized members for specific ministries in this church.

7.20. MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.21. Within the people of God and for the sake of the Gospel ministry entrusted to all believers, God has instituted the office of ministry of Word and Sacrament. To carry out this ministry, this church calls and ordains qualified persons.

7.22. A minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in the faith, aptness to preach, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of the ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. A minister of Word and Sacrament shall comply with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

7.23. The standards for acceptance and continuance of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be set forth in the bylaws.

7.24. The secretary of this church shall maintain a roster containing the names of ministers of Word and Sacrament who qualify on the basis of constitutional provisions 7.22., 7.23., 7.30., and 7.31., and related bylaws.

7.30. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.31. In accordance with the description stated in 7.22., ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures.

7.31.10. Basic Standards

7.31.11. Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Sacrament of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

- a. commitment to Christ;
- b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
- d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
- e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
- f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
- g. membership in a congregation of this church.

7.31.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

- a. Every pastor shall:
 - 1) preach the Word;
 - 2) administer the sacraments;

- 3) conduct public worship;
 - 4) provide pastoral care;
 - 5) seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel;
 - 6) witness to the Kingdom of God in the community, in the nation, and abroad; and
 - 7) speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world.
- b. Each pastor with a congregational call shall, within the congregation:
- 1) offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead;
 - 2) supervise all schools and organizations of the congregation;
 - 3) impart knowledge of this church and its wider ministry through distribution of its periodicals and other publications;
 - 4) endeavor to increase the support given by the congregation to the work of the churchwide organization and synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
 - 5) install regularly elected members of the Congregation Council; and
 - 6) with the council, administer discipline.

7.31.13. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided below, a candidate for ordination as a pastor shall have:

- a. membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
- b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee for at least a year before being approved for call;
- c. satisfactorily completed the requirements for the Master of Divinity degree from an accredited theological school in North America, including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work;
- d. completed at least one year of residency in a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, except when waived by the appropriate committee in consultation with the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- e. been recommended for approval by the faculty of a seminary of this church or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- f. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the Conference of Bishops and adoption by the Church Council;
- g. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
- h. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

7.31.14. Approval under Other Circumstances. Candidates for ordination as pastors or for reception who by reason of (a) age and prior experience, (b) ordination in another Lutheran church body, or (c) ordination in another Christian church body, whether in North America or abroad, shall be approved by the candidacy committee for ordination or reception according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In preparing such criteria, policies, and procedures, the appropriate churchwide unit shall consult with the seminaries of this church and, as appropriate, with other churchwide units.

7.31.15. Reinstatement. A person seeking reinstatement as a pastor, whether having served previously in this church or in one of its predecessor bodies, shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a pastor in this church.

7.31.16. On Leave from Call. A pastor of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the pastor is a member, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. Normative Pattern: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, a pastor who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of three years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synodical bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit, a pastor engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Sacrament, may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church for a maximum of six years.
- c. Family Leave: A pastor who has been in active service under call for at least three years may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, such a pastor who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the pastor or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—for a maximum of six years beginning at the completion of an active call.
- d. Exception to these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

7.31.17. Ordination in Unusual Circumstances. For pastoral reasons in unusual circumstances, a synodical bishop may provide for the ordination by another pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of an approved candidate who has received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of minister of Word and Sacrament. Prior to authorization of such an ordination, the bishop of the synod of the candidate's first call shall consult with the presiding bishop as this church's chief ecumenical officer and shall seek the advice of the Synod Council. The pastoral decision of the synodical bishop shall be in accordance with policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

7.31.20. Invitation to Service

7.31.21. In accord with bylaw 8.72.11. and following, a minister of Word and Sacrament of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been established by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may serve contractually in a ministry setting of this church under a "Letter of Invitation to Service" upon the authorization of the bishop of the synod in which such service occurs.

7.40. CALLS FOR MINSTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

7.41. Letters of Call. Letters of call to ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council.

7.41.10. General Categories

7.41.11. Service under Call. A pastor of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, a synodical council or assembly, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or

- churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.44.A16.
- b. A pastor serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a pastor shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.
 - c. Pastors serving as interim pastors appointed by the synodical bishop may serve under a letter of call, according to policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council. A call to interim ministry shall be a term call extended by the Synod Council upon recommendation of the synodical bishop.
- 7.41.12. Initial Call to Congregational Service.** Because the responsibilities of the office of the ministry of Word and Sacrament are most clearly focused in the congregational pastorate, experience in which is deemed by this church to be invaluable for all other ministry of Word and Sacrament, initial service of at least three years shall be in the parish ministry in this church. Exceptions may be granted under criteria and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- 7.41.13. Calls to Non-Congregational Service.** Calls to serve in institutions, agencies, and other entities inside and outside this church may be extended where there is an identifiable relationship of the work to the purpose of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls involve, for example, the care of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, pastoral care, and activities closely associated with those tasks including oversight in the church and in inter-Lutheran and inter-church agencies and institutions. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by pastors for their convenience or status. Synodical councils and the Church Council may seek the advice of the Conference of Bishops in specific situations.
- 7.41.14. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call.** When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council—according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a pastor for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. Care is to be exercised so that positions in the church and in the world that can be filled adequately and appropriately by the laity not be filled by ministers of Word and Sacrament for their convenience, status, or personal preference. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is deemed to be fulfilling no longer the mission needs of this church.
- 7.41.15. Calls to Serve in Unusual Circumstances.** When it is deemed to be in the interests of this church in the care of the Gospel, pastors may be called for a stated period of time, not to exceed three years, to minister on behalf of this church while employed in an occupation outside the traditional range of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such calls may be extended by a Synod Council or the Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops according to criteria and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. Such calls shall be reviewed annually.
- 7.41.16. Calls in Predecessor Church Bodies.** Accountability for specific calls to service extended in predecessor church bodies shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church.
- 7.41.17. Retirement.** Pastors may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the pastor is listed on the roster.
- a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
 - b. If a pastor who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no ELCA congregations in the vicinity besides the congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the pastor is listed on the roster may grant permission for the pastor to hold membership in a

- congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 7.41.18. Disability.** Pastors may be designated as disabled and continue to be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the pastor is listed on the roster.
- a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
 - b. If a pastor who has been granted disabled status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no ELCA congregations in the vicinity besides the congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the pastor is listed on the roster may grant permission for the pastor to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- 7.41.19. Retention of Roster Records.** When a pastor resigns or is removed from that roster of this church, the roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church, and the synodical bishop shall invite the person at the time of resignation or removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the roster record.
- 7.42. Each person on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be related to that synod:**
- a. to which the congregation issuing the call to the minister of Word and Sacrament is related;
 - b. which issues a letter of call to the minister of Word and Sacrament;
 - c. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament was listed at the time of the issuance of a letter of call from the Church Council;
 - d. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synodical bishop and Synod Council of each affected synod, to promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in each synod of its region;
 - e. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament was listed at the time of the issuance of a call to federal chaplaincy or on the roster of the synod of current address, if approved by the synodical bishop and received by the Synod Council;
 - f. in which the minister of Word and Sacrament, upon receiving a call from this church, serves as a deployed staff person or on the roster of one of the synods to which the ordained minister is deployed;
 - g. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament was listed when placed on leave from call;
 - h. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if designated as disabled, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the pastor for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or
 - i. on whose roster the minister of Word and Sacrament, if granted retired status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the pastor for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- 7.42.01.** If the service of a pastor who receives and accepts a letter of call from this church, under 7.42.c., would be enhanced through transfer of roster status from the previous synod of roster to the synod of current address, such a transfer may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- 7.42.02.** In unusual circumstances, the transfer of a pastor who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- 7.42.03.** In certain circumstances for the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, the transfer of a pastor serving under call in the churchwide organization may be authorized, at the initiative of the presiding

bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved in such a transfer after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.

7.43. A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall be either co-terminus with, or not longer than, the duration of the service or employment for which the call was issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for ministry of Word and Sacrament, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.

7.43.01. When the Synod Council or the Church Council, as the calling source, determines that the service or employment no longer fulfills the criteria under which a call was issued, the Synod Council or the Church Council shall vacate the call and direct that the individual be placed on leave from call or, if such leave status is not granted, the individual shall be removed from the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament.

7.43.02. Pastors previously under call to the churchwide organization or to a synod shall respect the integrity of the ministry in which they no longer serve and shall not interfere with or exercise the functions of the office or position in which they no longer serve unless invited to do so by the presiding bishop or Church Council in the churchwide organization or, in the synods, by the bishop or the Synod Council.

7.44. Each synod shall maintain a roster containing the names of those ministers of Word and Sacrament who are related to it on the basis of 7.42. of this constitution.

7.44.A16. Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament

a. Principles for Sources of Calls

- 1) *A "call" is an action by expressions of this church, as specified in the "Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Sacrament," through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a "letter of call."*
- 2) *Interdependence within the body of this church suggests that any action of one of its entities affects other entities. Therefore, interdependence is expressed in all calls extended within this church.*
- 3) *A call expresses a relationship between this church and the person called involving mutual service, support, accountability, supervision, and discipline.*
- 4) *A letter of call is issued by that expression of this church authorized to do so which is most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.*
- 5) *Decisions on calls for ministries in unusual circumstances not otherwise provided for but deemed to be in the interests of this church's care of the Gospel are referred to the Conference of Bishops for recommendation to the appropriate calling body.*

b. Table of Sources of Calls for Pastors

<i>Setting</i>	<i>Calling Body</i>
<i>1.0 Congregational ministry</i>	
<i>1.1 Single congregation</i>	<i>Congregation meeting</i>
<i>1.11 Pastor</i>	
<i>1.12 Senior Pastor</i>	
<i>1.13 Associate/assistant pastor</i>	
<i>1.14 Co-pastor</i>	
<i>1.15 Shared-time pastor</i>	
<i>1.2 Multiple-congregation parish</i>	<i>Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal</i>
<i>1.21 Pastor</i>	
<i>1.22 Other pastoral arrangements</i>	

1.3	<i>Coalition and cluster ministry</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.4	<i>Congregations beyond ELCA</i>	
1.41	<i>Independent Lutheran congregation</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.42	<i>Overseas independent Lutheran congregation</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
1.43	<i>Other</i>	<i>Synod Council or Church Council</i>
1.5	<i>Interim pastor</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
1.6	<i>Pastor in a congregation under development</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
2.0	<i>Synodical ministry</i>	
2.1	<i>Bishop</i>	<i>Synod Assembly</i>
2.2	<i>Assistant to bishop</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
2.3	<i>Shared staff by two or more synods</i>	<i>Synod Council of one of the participating synods</i>
2.4	<i>Synod staff partially supported by grants from churchwide units</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
3.0	<i>Regional ministry</i>	
3.1	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
3.2	<i>Shared synodical-churchwide staff</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
4.0	<i>Churchwide ministry</i>	
4.1	<i>Presiding bishop and secretary</i>	<i>Churchwide Assembly</i>
4.2	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
4.3	<i>Staff of the churchwide organization</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
5.0	<i>Chaplaincy and institutional ministry</i>	
5.1	<i>Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
5.2	<i>Institution/agency related more to than one synod</i>	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
5.3	<i>ELCA-related institution/agency</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
5.4	<i>Federal agency/institution</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
5.5	<i>Military</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
6.0	<i>Campus ministry</i>	
6.1	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
7.0	<i>Church camp ministry</i>	
7.1	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.0	<i>Ecumenical ministry</i>	

8.1	<i>Related to a synod</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
8.2	<i>Related to more than one synod</i>	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
8.3	<i>National/international organization</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
9.0	<i>Inter-Lutheran ministry</i>	
9.1	<i>Related to a synod</i>	<i>Synod Council</i>
9.2	<i>Related to more than one synod</i>	<i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i>
9.3	<i>National/International</i>	<i>Church Council</i>
10.0	<i>Educational ministry</i>	
10.1	<i>ELCA-related seminary chaplain/faculty/administrator</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
10.2	<i>Chaplain/faculty/administrator of seminary unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
10.3	<i>ELCA-related college chaplain/faculty/administrator</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>
10.4	<i>Chaplain/faculty/administrator of a college unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which college is located</i>
10.5	<i>ELCA-related school chaplain/faculty/administrator</i>	<i>Congregation of which the school is a part or, if related to several congregations, Synod Council of the synod in which the school is located</i>
10.6	<i>Chaplain/faculty of a school unrelated to ELCA</i>	<i>Synod Council of the synod in which school is located</i>
10.7	<i>Director/staff of a continuing education center related to a churchwide unit</i>	<i>Synod Council in which the main office of center is located upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
11.0	<i>Missionary ministry</i>	
11.1	<i>Outside United States</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
11.2	<i>Within United States</i>	<i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i>
12.0	<i>Other</i>	
12.1	<i>Non-stipendiary service under call</i>	<i>Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops</i>

*12.2 Unusual ministries (as
in conjunction with
occupations and in
approved situations
not otherwise
specified)* *Synod Council or Church
Council upon
recommendation by the
Conference of Bishops*

- 7.45. In keeping with the historic discipline and practice of the Lutheran church and to be true to a sacred trust inherent in the nature of the pastoral office, no minister of Word and Sacrament of this church shall divulge any confidential disclosure received in the course of the care of souls or otherwise in a professional capacity, nor testify concerning conduct observed by the minister of Word and Sacrament while working in a pastoral capacity, except with the express permission of the person who has given confidential information to the minister of Word and Sacrament or who was observed by the minister of Word and Sacrament, or if the person intends great harm to self or others.**
- 7.46. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a minister of Word and Sacrament and a congregation shall be as follows:**
- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a pastor, shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or, following consultation with the synodical bishop for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the pastor, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the pastoral office effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor;
 - 5) suspension of the pastor through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the pastor from the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement; or
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
 - b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the pastor under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the pastoral office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered leaders and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered leaders and one layperson.
 - c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the pastor's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the pastorate vacant and the pastor shall be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Sacrament as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the pastor to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the pastor to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
 - d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the pastor and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the pastor's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken

- by the congregation and by the pastor, if appropriate. If the pastor and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the pastor's call, the congregation may dismiss the pastor only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
 - f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- 7.47. Persons on the roster of ministers of Word and Sacrament of this church as defined herein shall be subject to discipline as set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.
- 7.47.01. No person who belongs to any organization other than the Church which claims to possess in its teachings and ceremonies that which the Lord has given solely to the Church shall be *ordained* or otherwise received into the ministry of this church, nor shall any person so *ordained* or otherwise received by this church be retained in its ministry who subsequently joins such an organization. Violation of this rule shall make such minister subject to discipline.
- 7.50. MINISTRY OF WORD AND SERVICE
- 7.51. This church calls and *consecrates/ordains* qualified persons to provide a ministry of Word and Service, exemplifying the life of Christ-like service to all persons and creation: nurturing, healing, leading, advocating dignity and justice, and equipping the whole people of God for their life of witness and service within and beyond the congregation for the sake of God's mission in the world.
- 7.52. A minister of Word and Service of this church shall be a person whose commitment to Christ, soundness in the faith, aptness to serve, teach, and witness, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the documents of this church; who has been properly called and *ordained*; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. A minister of Word and Service shall comply with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
- 7.53. The standards for acceptance and continuance of ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be set forth in the bylaws.
- 7.54. The secretary of this church shall maintain a roster containing the names of ministers of Word and Service who qualify on the basis of constitutional provisions 7.52., 7.53., 7.60., and 7.61., and related bylaws.
- 7.54.01. Ministers of Word and Service shall be known as deacons.
- 7.54.A16. Those persons rostered in predecessor-church-bodies as commissioned church staff (*The American Lutheran Church*), deaconesses (*The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches*), deaconesses (*The American Lutheran Church*), deacons (*The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches*), lay professional leaders (*the Lutheran Church in America*), and commissioned teachers (*The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches*) shall be retained as deacons of this church (except for removals in accord with the governing documents, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church). Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church.
- 7.54.B16. Those persons previously rostered as associates in ministry, deaconesses, or diaconal ministers in the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* shall be retained as deacons of this church (except for removals in accord with the governing documents, criteria, policies, and procedures of this church). Accountability for specific calls shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church.

7.60. STANDARDS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

7.61. In accordance with the description stated in 7.52, ministers of Word and Service shall be governed by the following standards, policies, and procedures:

7.61.10. Basic Standards.

7.61.11. Persons admitted to and continued in the ministry of Word and Service as deacons of this church shall satisfactorily meet and maintain the following, as defined by this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in policies developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council:

- a. commitment to Christ;
- b. acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- c. willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
- d. academic and practical qualifications for ministry, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
- e. commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
- f. receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
- g. membership in a congregation of this church.

7.61.12. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, every deacon shall:

- a. Be rooted in the Word of God, for proclamation and service;
- b. Advocate a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the Church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world;
- c. Speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world, witnessing to the realm of God in the community, the nation, and abroad;
- d. Equip the baptized for ministry in God's world, that affirms the gifts of all people;
- e. Encourage mutual relationships that invite participation and accompaniment of others in God's mission;
- f. Practice stewardship that respects God's gift of time, talents, and resources;
- g. Be grounded in a gathered community for ongoing diaconal formation;
- h. Share knowledge of the ELCA and its wider ministry of the gospel, and advocate for the work of all expressions of this church; and
- i. Identify and encourage qualified persons to prepare for ministry of the gospel.

7.61.13. Preparation and Approval. Except as provided below, a candidate for ????? as a deacon shall have:

- a. membership in a congregation of this church and registration, by its pastor and council, of the candidate with the candidacy committee;
- b. been granted entrance to candidacy by and under the guidance and supervision of the appropriate committee for at least a year before being approved for call;
- c. satisfactorily completed the requirements for a Master's Degree in theology or a related area, including practical preparation, as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit, such as internship and supervised clinical work, or in lieu of a Master's Degree, had equivalency assessed through a competency assessment at the request of the candidacy committee.
- d. been examined and approved by the appropriate committee according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit after consultation with the Conference of Bishops and adopted by the Church Council;
- e. been recommended to a congregation or other entity by the bishop of the synod to which the candidate has been assigned for first call in accordance with the procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council; and
- f. received and accepted a properly issued and attested letter of call.

7.61.14. Approval under Other Circumstances. A candidate may, for reasons of age or prior experience, be granted approval under criteria and procedures which permit certain equivalencies as defined by the appropriate churchwide unit.

7.61.15. Reinstatement. A person seeking reinstatement as a deacon shall be registered by the pastor and council of the congregation of which such a person is a member with the candidacy committee of the synod in which the person was last rostered or, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved, after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church, with the candidacy committee of the synod of current residence. The person then shall be interviewed, examined, and approved for reinstatement by the candidacy committee under criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council. In this process, the committee shall review the circumstances related to the termination of earlier service together with subsequent developments. The person is reinstated after receiving and accepting a letter of call to serve as a deacon in this church.

- a. Any person removed from the rosters of ministers of Word and Service that existed on December 31, 1987, as cited herein, who seeks to return to active roster status must apply for acceptance to a roster of this church under the standards, criteria, policies, and procedures that apply to the official rosters of ministers of Word and Service, as identified in 7.51.03.b. This same requirement shall apply to those certified during the period of January 1, 1988, through September 1, 1993, as associates in ministry of this church.
- b. A person on the roster of a previous church body or a person on the roster of associates in ministry of this church, who was so certified during the period between January 1, 1988, and September 1, 1993, shall relinquish such a roster category upon being received and accepted on another roster of this church.

7.61.16. On Leave from Call. A deacon of this church, serving under a regularly issued letter of call, who leaves the work of that ministry without accepting another regularly issued letter of call, may be retained on the roster ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod of which the deacon is a member, under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

- a. Normative Pattern: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, a deacon who is without a current letter of call may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of three years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- b. Study Leave: By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, with the approval of the synodical bishop and in consultation with the appropriate churchwide unit a deacon engaged in graduate study, in a field of study that will enhance service in the ministry of Word and Service in this church, may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church for a maximum of six years.
- c. Family Leave: A deacon who has been in active service under call for at least three years may request leave for family responsibilities. By annual action of the Synod Council in the synod of which a member, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, such a deacon who is without a current letter of call and who requests leave for the birth or care of a child or children of the deacon or the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition may be retained on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church—under policy developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—for a maximum of six years, beginning at the completion of an active call.
- d. Exception to these limits for the purpose of serving the needs of this church may be granted in accordance with established policy of this church by the Synod Council in the synod of current roster after having received approval by the Conference of Bishops.

7.70. CALLS FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SERVICE

7.71. Letters of Call. Letters of call to ministers of Word and Service of this church or properly approved candidates for this church's roster of ministers of Word and Service shall be issued in keeping with this church's constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions as well as policies regarding such calls developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council.

7.71.10. General Categories

7.71.11. Service under Call. A deacon of this church shall serve under a letter of call properly extended by a congregation, synod council, the Church Council, or the Churchwide Assembly.

- a. Calls may be extended either for stated periods of time and for shared-time ministry by the appropriate calling body under criteria recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council for service in a congregation, synod, or churchwide unit, in an institution or agency of this church, or in another setting in a category of work as provided by continuing resolution 7.74.A16.
- b. A deacon serving under call to a congregation shall be a member of that congregation. In a parish of multiple congregations, a deacon shall be a member of one of the congregations being served.

7.71.12. Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call. When it is deemed necessary for the mission needs of this church, a letter of call may be issued by the Synod Council— according to criteria, policies, and procedures recommended by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council—to a deacon for non-stipendiary service after the Synod Council has sought and received approval by the Conference of Bishops. A call to non-stipendiary service is to be reviewed at least annually by the Synod Council and continued only as warranted for the ministry needs of this church. Such a call may be terminated by the Synod Council when it is deemed to be fulfilling no longer the mission needs of this church.

7.71.13. Calls in Predecessor Church Bodies. Accountability for specific calls to service extended in predecessor church bodies shall be exercised according to the policies and procedures of this church.

7.71.14. Retirement. Deacons may retire upon attainment of age 60, or after 30 years on a roster of this church or one of its predecessor bodies, and continue to be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the deacon is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for granting retired status on the roster of ministers of Word and Service shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If a deacon who has been granted retired status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no ELCA congregations in the vicinity besides the congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the deacon is listed on the roster may grant permission for the deacon to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.71.15. Disability. Deacons may be designated as disabled, and continue to be listed on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church, upon endorsement by the synodical bishop, by action of the Synod Council in the synod in which the deacon is listed on the roster.

- a. The policies and procedures for designation of disability on the official roster of ministers of Word and Service shall be developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.
- b. If a deacon who has been granted disabled status resides at too great a distance from any congregation of this church to be able to sustain an active relationship with that congregation, or if there are no ELCA congregations in the vicinity besides the congregation previously served, the bishop of the synod in which the deacon is listed on the roster may grant permission for the individual to hold membership in a congregation or parish of a church body with which a relationship of full communion has been declared and established by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

7.71.16. Retention of Roster Records. When a deacon resigns or is removed from the roster of this church, the roster record shall be retained by the secretary of this church, and the synodical bishop shall invite the person at the time of resignation or removal to provide, annually, appropriate current information for the roster record.

7.72. Each person on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church shall be related to that synod:

- a. to which the congregation issuing the call to the minister of Word and Service is related;

- b. which issues a letter of call to the minister of Word and Service;
 - c. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service was listed at the time of the issuance of a letter of call from the Church Council;
 - d. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if a seminary teacher or administrator, was assigned by the seminary board, subject to approval by the synodical bishop and Synod Council of each affected synod, to promote proportionate representation of faculty and administration in each synod of its region;
 - e. in which the minister of Word and Service, upon receiving a call from this church, serves as a deployed staff person or on the roster of one of the synods to which the minister of Word and Service is deployed;
 - f. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service was listed when placed on leave from call;
 - g. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if designated as disabled, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Service for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church; or
 - h. on whose roster the minister of Word and Service, if granted retired status, was listed when last called or the synod of current address, upon application by the minister of Word and Service for transfer and the mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- 7.72.01.** If the service of a deacon who receives and accepts a letter of call from this church, under 7.72.c., would be enhanced through transfer of roster status from the previous synod of roster to the synod of current address, such a transfer may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- 7.72.02.** In unusual circumstances, the transfer of a deacon who is on leave from call may be authorized upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- 7.72.03.** In certain circumstances for the sake of the ministry and mission needs of this church, the transfer of a deacon serving under call in the churchwide organization may be authorized, at the initiative of the presiding bishop of this church, upon mutual agreement of the synodical bishops involved in such a transfer after consultation with and approval by the secretary of this church.
- 7.73.** **A letter of call issued by a Synod Council or the Church Council to a minister of Word and Service of this church shall be either co-terminus with, or not longer than, the duration of the service or employment for which the call was issued. With the exception of persons designated as employees of a synod or the churchwide organization, such a call does not imply any employment relationship or contractual obligation in regard to employment on the part of the Synod Council or Church Council issuing the call. The recipient of such a call remains subject to this church's standards and discipline for ministry of Word and Service, as contained in this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions and in the policy and procedure documents of this church.**
- 7.73.01.** When the Synod Council or the Church Council, as the calling source, determines that the service or employment no longer fulfills the criteria under which a call was issued, the Synod Council or the Church Council shall vacate the call and direct that the individual be placed on leave from call or, if such leave status is not granted, the individual shall be removed from the roster of ministers of Word and Service.
- 7.73.02.** Deacons previously under call to the churchwide organization or to a synod shall respect the integrity of the ministry in which they no longer serve and shall not interfere with or exercise the functions of the office or position in which they no longer serve unless invited to do so by the presiding bishop or Church Council in the churchwide organization or, in the synods, by the bishop or the Synod Council.
- 7.74.** **Each synod shall maintain a roster containing the names of those ministers of Word and Service who are related to it on the basis of 7.72. of this constitution.**
- 7.74.A16.** *Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service*
- a. *Principles for Sources of Calls*
 - 1) A "call" is an action by expressions of this church, as specified in the "Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service," through which a person is asked to serve in a specified ministry. Such an action is attested in a "letter of call."

- 2) *Interdependence within the body of this church suggests that any action of one of its entities affects other entities. Therefore, interdependence is expressed in all calls extended within this church.*
 - 3) *A call expresses a relationship between this church and the person called involving mutual service, support, accountability, supervision, and discipline.*
 - 4) *A letter of call is issued by that expression of this church authorized to do so which is most directly involved in accountability for the specified ministry.*
 - 5) *Decisions on calls for ministries in unusual circumstances not otherwise provided for but deemed to be in the interests of this church's care of the Gospel are referred to the Conference of Bishops for recommendation to the appropriate calling body.*
- b. *Table of Sources of Call for Ministers of Word and Service*
- | <i>Setting</i> | <i>Calling Body</i> |
|--|---|
| 1.0 <i>Congregational ministry</i> | |
| 1.1 <i>Single congregation</i> | <i>Congregation meeting</i> |
| 1.2 <i>Multiple-congregation parish</i> | <i>Congregation meetings, acting on a common proposal</i> |
| 1.3 <i>Coalition and cluster ministry</i> | <i>Synod Council</i> |
| 1.4 <i>Congregations beyond ELCA</i> | |
| 1.41 <i>Independent Lutheran congregation</i> | <i>Synod Council</i> |
| 1.42 <i>Other</i> | <i>Synod Council</i> |
| 2.0 <i>Synodical ministry</i> | |
| 2.1 <i>Assistant to Bishop</i> | <i>Synod Council</i> |
| 2.2 <i>Shared Staff by two or more synods</i> | <i>Synod Council</i> |
| 2.3 <i>Synod staff partially supported by grants from churchwide units</i> | <i>Synod Council</i> |
| 3.0 <i>Regional ministry</i> | |
| 3.1 <i>Staff</i> | <i>Church Council</i> |
| 3.2 <i>Shared synodical-churchwide staff</i> | <i>Church Council</i> |
| 4.0 <i>Churchwide ministry</i> | |
| 4.1 <i>Secretary</i> | <i>Churchwide Assembly</i> |
| 4.2 <i>Treasurer</i> | <i>Church Council</i> |
| 4.3 <i>Staff of the churchwide organization</i> | <i>Church Council</i> |
| 5.0 <i>Institutional ministry</i> | |
| 5.1 <i>Institution/agency related or unrelated to a synod</i> | <i>Synod Council</i> |
| 5.2 <i>Institution/agency related more to than one synod</i> | <i>Synod Council of one of the synods</i> |
| 5.3 <i>ELCA-related institution/agency</i> | <i>Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit</i> |
| 5.4 <i>Other</i> | <i>Church Council</i> |
| 6.0 <i>Campus ministry</i> | |
| 6.1 <i>Staff</i> | <i>Synod Council</i> |
| 7.0 <i>Church camp ministry</i> | |
| 7.1 <i>Staff</i> | <i>Synod Council</i> |

- 8.0 *Ecumenical ministry*
 - 8.1 *Related to a synod* *Synod Council*
 - 8.2 *Related to more than one synod* *Synod Council of one of the synods*
 - 8.3 *National/international organization* *Church Council*
- 9.0 *Inter-Lutheran ministry*
 - 9.1 *Related to a synod* *Synod Council*
 - 9.2 *Related to more than one synod* *Synod Council of one of the synods*
 - 9.3 *National/International* *Church Council*
- 10.0 *Educational ministry*
 - 10.1 *ELCA-related seminary* *Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
 - 10.2 *Seminary unrelated to ELCA* *Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
 - 10.3 *ELCA-related college* *Synod Council of the synod in which college is located*
 - 10.4 *College unrelated to ELCA* *Synod Council of the synod in which college is located*
 - 10.5 *ELCA-related school* *Congregation of which the school is a part or, if related to several congregations, Synod Council of the synod in which the school is located*
 - 10.6 *School unrelated to ELCA* *Synod Council of the synod in which school is located*
 - 10.7 *Director/staff of a continuing education center related to a churchwide unit* *Synod Council in which the main office or center is located upon the request of appropriate churchwide unit*
- 11.0 *Missionary ministry*
 - 11.1 *Outside United States* *Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
 - 11.2 *Within United States* *Church Council upon request of appropriate churchwide unit*
- 12.0 *Other*
 - 12.1 *Non-stipendiary service under call* *Synod Council upon approval by the Conference of Bishops*
 - 12.2 *Unusual ministries (as in conjunction with occupations and in approved situations not otherwise specified)* *Synod Council or Church Council upon recommendation by the Conference of Bishops*

7.75. TERMINATION OF A CALL

7.75.01. The provisions for termination of the mutual relationship between a deacon and a congregation shall be as follows:

- a. The call of a congregation, when accepted by a deacon shall constitute a continuing mutual relationship and commitment which shall be terminated only by death or following consultation with the synodical bishop for the following reasons:
 - 1) mutual agreement to terminate the call or the completion of a call for a specific term;
 - 2) resignation of the deacon, which shall become effective, unless otherwise agreed, no later than 30 days after the date on which it was submitted;
 - 3) inability to conduct the office to which they have been called effectively in that congregation in view of local conditions;
 - 4) physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon;
 - 5) suspension of the deacon through discipline for more than three months;
 - 6) resignation or removal of the deacon from the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church;
 - 7) termination of the relationship between this church and the congregation;
 - 8) dissolution of the congregation or the termination of a parish arrangement;
 - 9) suspension of the congregation through discipline for more than six months.
- b. When allegations of physical disability or mental incapacity of the deacon under paragraph a.4) above, or ineffective conduct of the office under paragraph a.3) above, have come to the attention of the bishop of this synod,
 - 1) the bishop in his or her sole discretion may investigate such conditions personally together with a committee of two rostered leaders and one layperson, or
 - 2) when such allegations have been brought to the synod's attention by an official recital of allegations by the Congregation Council or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the voting members of the congregation, the bishop personally shall investigate such conditions together with a committee of two rostered leaders and one layperson.
- c. In case of alleged physical disability or mental incapacity under paragraph a.4) above, the bishop's committee shall obtain and document competent medical opinion concerning the deacon's condition. When a disability or incapacity is evident to the committee, the bishop of this synod may declare the position vacant and the deacon shall be listed on the roster of Ministers of Word and Service as disabled. Upon removal of the disability and restoration of the deacon to health, the bishop shall take steps to enable the deacon to resume the ministry, either in the congregation last served or in another appropriate call.
- d. In the case of alleged local difficulties that imperil the effective functioning of the congregation under paragraph a.3) above, the bishop's committee shall endeavor to hear from all concerned persons, after which the bishop together with the committee shall present their recommendations first to the deacon and then to the congregation. The recommendations of the bishop's committee must address whether the deacon's call should come to an end and, if so, may suggest appropriate severance arrangements. The committee may also propose other actions that should be undertaken by the congregation and by the deacon, if appropriate. If the deacon and congregation agree to carry out such recommendations, no further action need be taken by the synod.
- e. If either party fails to assent to the recommendations of the bishop's committee concerning the deacon's call, the congregation may dismiss the deacon only at a legally called meeting after consultation with the bishop, either (a) by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee did not recommend termination of the call, or (b) by a simple majority vote of the voting members present and voting where the bishop and the committee recommended termination of the call.
- f. If, in the course of proceedings described in paragraph c. or paragraph d. above, the bishop's committee concludes that there may be grounds for discipline, the committee shall make recommendations concerning disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions of this church's constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.

7.76. Persons on the roster of ministers of Word and Service of this church as defined herein shall be subject to discipline as set forth in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*

7.80. LICENSURE AND SYNODICALLY AUTHORIZED MINISTRY

7.81.01. When need exists to render Word and Sacrament ministry for a congregation or ministry of this church where it is not possible to provide appropriate pastoral leadership, the synodical bishop—acting with the consent of the congregation or ministry, in consultation with the Synod Council, and in accord with standards and qualifications developed by the appropriate churchwide unit, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and approved by the Church Council—may authorize a person who is a member of a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to offer this ministry. Such an individual shall be supervised by a pastor appointed by the synodical bishop; such service shall be rendered during its duration under the sacramental authority of the bishop as the synod's pastor. Such an individual will be trained and licensed to fulfill this ministry for a specified period of time and in a given location only. Authorization, remuneration, direct supervision, and accountability are to be determined by the appropriate synodical leadership according to churchwide standards and qualifications for this type of ministry. Authorization for such service shall be reviewed annually and renewed only when a demonstrated need remains for its continuation.

III. Charter of Responsibilities

A. This working group shall explore ministry to and with same-gender couples and their families and the impact of that ministry on society and the ministry of this church in order to bring recommendations regarding next steps for conversation and resource sharing within the ELCA. Being grounded in Scripture, faith, prayer, and the understanding of the body of Christ, the means to accomplish this work includes:

1. Attending to what social science is discovering regarding changing family configurations including the increase in legalization of same-gender marriage, attitude shifts within this church on same gender couples and ~~is- the~~ impact of these changes on the ministry of this church.
2. Identifying ~~both~~ the diverse ministry efforts and resources already available within the ELCA and discovering what ~~is-may be~~ missing in terms of efforts and resources experienced within the ELCA.
3. Developing specific recommendations that address all four convictions¹ to foster conversation and sharing of resources throughout this church through such means as:
 - a. Identifying or making available a variety of enhanced resources, such as stories or ministry practices arising from various contexts, for individual, congregational and synodical engagement with pastoral ministry (including resources developed by others).
 - b. Providing guidance for means to create conversation within the Conference of Bishops.
 - c. Expanding communication and information distribution efforts among all elements of the ELCA ecology, especially through the use of new and emerging media.
4. Developing specific recommendations that address all four convictions for “appropriate next steps in carrying out commitments to pastoral care for same-gender couples and their families.” This may include:
 - a. Guidance for pastoral expectations for how we work with, walk with and minister to same-gender couples and their families as well as minister to clergy who serve in this church.
 - b. Guidance for lay persons for how we work with, walk with and minister ~~with-to~~ same-gender couples and their families.
 - c. Guidance for identifying and equipping resource persons who can enable and encourage conversations about this church’s ministry with and to same-gender couples and their families.
 - d. Guidance for what should be said, if anything, to those who choose not to participate in conversations and resource sharing.

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B. Throughout its work, the working group shall:

1. Consult with the Conference of Bishops and the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council.
2. Attend and listen to all four bound-conscience convictions regarding human sexuality.
3. Engage the full diversity of experience, expertise and wisdom among ELCA members in how to understand and provide pastoral care for same-gender couples and their families.
4. Consult with synods and congregations who are already providing pastoral care to same-gender couples and families, and sharing resources.

¹ From the social statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust (CA09.03.13) (pp. 19-20)

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“The ELCA recognizes that it has a pastoral responsibility to all children of God. This includes a pastoral responsibility to those who are same-gender in their orientation and to those who are seeking counsel about their sexual self-understanding....

This church also acknowledges that consensus does not exist concerning how to regard same-gender committed relationships, even after many years of thoughtful, respectful, and faithful study and conversation. We do not have agreement on whether this church should honor these relationships and uplift, shelter, and protect them or on precisely how it is appropriate to do so. In response, this church draws on the foundational Lutheran understanding that the baptized are called to discern God’s love in service to the neighbor....We further believe that this church, on the basis of “the bound conscience,” will include these different understandings and practices within its life as it seeks to live out its mission and ministry in the world. This church recognizes that, with conviction and integrity:

1. On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that same-gender sexual behavior is sinful, contrary to biblical teaching and their understanding of natural law. They believe same-gender sexual behavior carries the grave danger of unrepentant sin. They therefore conclude that the neighbor and the community are best served by calling people in same-gender sexual relationships to repentance for that behavior and to a celibate lifestyle. Such decisions are intended to be accompanied by pastoral response and community support.
2. On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that homosexuality and even lifelong, monogamous, homosexual relationships reflect a broken world in which some relationships do not pattern themselves after the creation God intended. While they acknowledge that such relationships may be lived out with mutuality and care, they do not believe that the neighbor or community are best served by publicly recognizing such relationships as traditional marriage.
3. On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that the scriptural witness does not address the context of sexual orientation and lifelong loving and committed relationships that we experience today. They believe that the neighbor and community are best served when same-gender relationships are honored and held to high standards and public accountability, but they do not equate these relationships with marriage. They do, however, affirm the need for community support and the role of pastoral care and may wish to surround lifelong, monogamous relationships or covenant unions with prayer.
4. On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that the scriptural witness does not address the context of sexual orientation and committed relationships that we experience today. They believe that the neighbor and community are best served when same-gender relationships are lived out with lifelong and monogamous commitments that are held to the same rigorous standards, sexual ethics, and status as heterosexual marriage. They surround such couples and their lifelong commitments with prayer to live in ways that glorify God, find strength for the challenges that will be faced, and serve others. They believe same-gender couples should avail themselves of social and legal support for themselves, their children, and other dependents and seek the highest legal accountability available for their relationships.”

A Conversation in Process: ELCA Word and Service Entrance Rite Discernment Team
October 2014 – Bishop Bill Gafkjen (Indiana-Kentucky Synod), chair

In 2010 the ELCA Church Council requested the establishment of a task force to address ministries of Word and Service. In 2012, the Church Council affirmed the recommendation of this task force, known by then as the Word and Service Task Force, that this church should move toward the creation of a single, unified roster of Word and Service ministry to incorporate and expand on the current three rosters (Associates in Ministry, Deaconesses, Diaconal Ministers). The Church Council also affirmed that this roster of ministers will be diaconal in nature. “Deacon” has been the working title for this roster.

In late 2013, the ELCA Church Council appointed a second task force to work alongside the Word and Service Task Force. While the first team continues to address the many aspects and tasks that make up moving to one, unified roster of Word and Service, this recently established Entrance Rite Discernment Team is tasked with exploring and recommending an appropriate entrance rite for this new roster. An entrance rite is the public, liturgical act by which the church recognizes and sets aside people for particular forms of public ministry. Currently, Associates in Ministry are commissioned, Deaconesses and Diaconal Ministers are consecrated, and Pastors are ordained.

This Entrance Rite Discernment Team has met twice for a total of four days. We have convened conversations each in our own settings, connected with teaching theologians, heard various presentations, studied numerous resources, prayed, heard God’s Word, and listened and spoken with one another honestly and earnestly. Near the end of the second meeting the team discussed three questions intended to deepen, expand, and focus our ongoing work.

What have we agreed upon so far?

- The work of this team needs to connect vitally with the mission of the whole church.
- Ministries of *diakonia* are crucial to the life and ministry of this church. Likewise, the work and ministry of public ministers of Word and Service are important and necessary in the work of the church for the life of the world.
- It is essential to value a variety of public ministries and to give attention to justice between and among public ministers and ministries.
- Theological, historical, and polity differences within the ELCA need careful attention in discerning and forming both a unified roster of Word and Service and in recommending an entrance rite.
- We will resist quick fix solutions to complicated challenges.
- We need to have more conversation with and among the whole church about ministries of *diakonia* and the question of the appropriate entrance rite for ministers of Word and Service.
 - Such conversation ought to include foundational questions like “What roles do ordination and other entrance rites have in the life of the church?”
- Historical, theological, confessional, ecumenical, and global perspectives on the development and practice of entrance rites and rituals for public ministry are helpful in discernment for current contexts.
- Current and potential rostered ministers appear to have more energy around and investment in the question of this entrance rite than do members of congregations.
- “Freezing” ministries while we discern this entrance rite would be an injustice and should not happen.
- “Rostered leader” is not the most helpful terminology in referring to public ministers who are on the rosters of the church.

What questions and continuing concerns do we have?

- Is this church ready and willing to open conversation about the nature of leadership in the church and its relationship to ecclesiology and mission?
- Is there broad agreement across the ELCA that *diakonia* is essential to the life of this church?
- How do we keep a clear and persistent focus on servant ministry and leadership of the whole people of God?
- Is there agreement across the ELCA that establishing this roster is an important way to address the need for this church to grow in diaconal ministry in the world?
- How do we address equity among the “rosters” as well as perceived concerns about hierarchies of position among public ministers?
- How can we provide helpful language that would clarify the distinctive forms of ministry offered by pastors and deacons?
- How do we keep an eye on clarity of language that reflects and deepens our theological and other commitments, rather than clouds or confuses them, and helps to avoid hierarchical and power dynamics?
- Can we craft rites and rituals that do not foster power inequities but, rather, enhance and affirm the ministries of all the baptized?
- How can we expand our exploration of historical/theological perspectives on consecration, ordination, and the diaconate?
- How can we manage or embrace our various diversities around the question of entrance rite as opportunities and gifts more than roadblocks and challenge for uniting in mission?
- Do the two separate decisions (regarding unification of the roster and decisions about appropriate entrance rite) need to come before the church simultaneously? If so, should the discernment and recommendation process be slowed in order to engage a broad spectrum of this church in the discernment, or would such a delay have an undue detrimental impact on those currently on the rosters or considering candidacy for Word and Service ministry?
- What is the role of this team in addressing topics like symbols, attire, and other similar concerns related to public ministers and their ministries?
- Will it be helpful to review the work of the Communal Discernment Task Force for insight or guidance about how to deepen and broaden involvement in discernment about entrance rites and related concerns?

What should or will we do next?

- Identify particular groups, communities, and events that need to be engaged in this conversation, especially where members of this team can be present to listen and facilitate discussion.
- Explore ways of engaging a broader participation in this discernment, including webinars, emails, social media, discussion guides, etc.
- Provide broader access to the resources that are part of this team’s conversation and discernment, e.g. share documents about ecumenical, Lutheran, global, historical, and developmental perspectives on entrance rites or public ministry.
- Explore the Communal Discernment Report to glean insight and guidance for this team’s work.
- Request that the ELCA Church Council appoint a diaconal minister, preferably under age 40, to serve on this team, as another expression of engaging the future, current, and whole church in this discernment.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Corporate Social Responsibility Issue Paper Policy and Procedures

Background

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) gives expression to this church's concern for corporate social responsibility – both in its internal activities and in its interaction in the broader society – through exercising its rights as a corporate shareholder on issues of social concern. This is accomplished through screening of stock ownership, casting of shareholder ballots, filing of shareholder resolutions, and dialogue with corporations to address these issues. For the churchwide organization and for separately incorporated ministries, the ELCA makes recommendations regarding shareholder action. Individual Lutherans and other organizations are encouraged to apply these recommendations within their own portfolios.

In determining precise actions to take or recommend, the ELCA draws on the foundation of its social policy. This policy consists of social statements, messages, and Churchwide Assembly and Church Council social policy resolutions and reflects an understanding of this church's social responsibility that includes theological, social, and ethical considerations.

The issues brought to the ELCA regarding corporate social responsibility are complex, and the possible responses are multi-dimensional. In November 2003, the ELCA Church Council put in place a process for writing and approving an issue paper that addresses a concern within society that may require action by the ELCA Corporate Social Responsibility program (CSR). Issue papers interpret the social teaching of this church as they relate to investments.

A standard format for an issue paper includes:

1. Overview of the problem/issue in society;
2. Review of ELCA social policy surrounding the issue;
3. Proposals outlining how corporations might play a role in the solution to the issue (including a sample list of specific companies or sectors of industry that might be approached about the issue);
4. Identification of any screens the ELCA would implement; and
5. The boundaries of resolved clauses that the ELCA would endorse.

Advocacy staff, through the use of the CSR consultant, will coordinate the writing and revision process for development of issue papers.

New Issue Papers

From time to time, the ELCA may wish to develop a new CSR issue paper. Sometimes a complex issue arises that cannot be covered by an existing paper or a revision of one. This situation would trigger development of a new paper. In addition, when each new ELCA social statement is approved, a review of all issue papers will be made to see if revisions to current issue papers are needed or if a new issue paper needs to be developed in light of the new social statement.

New issue papers will be drafted with input from staff of Portico Benefit Services (formerly known as the Board of Pensions of the ELCA), the Portico Corporate Social Responsibility Committee, the director for studies, and other appropriate ELCA staff. Depending on the topic, others may be consulted for input and advice. When a new issue paper is refined and authorized by the executive director of the Congregational

and Synodical Mission unit of the churchwide organization, it will be taken to the Conference of Bishops for advice and forwarded to the Church Council for consideration and approval.

Review and Revision of Existing Issue Papers

In order to assure timely review and revision of approved issue papers, the following guidelines will apply:

1. Issue papers will be reviewed every four (4) years. The review will include research on the background materials and current ELCA social policy and will confirm or modify all web links in the document. Approval for these revisions will be treated in the same way as a new issue paper and therefore will be forwarded to the executive director of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for authorization, for advice from the Conference of Bishops, and for approval by the Church Council;
2. Non-substantive revisions of issue papers may be approved at any time by the executive director of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit and revisions will be included in the annual CSR report. (Examples may include such items as grammar, Web link substitutions, name changes, etc.);
3. When additional resolution guidelines to support an issue are needed, they may be made at the recommendation of the CSR review team to the executive director of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for approval, provided that they are consistent with the original issue papers approved by the ELCA Church Council; and
4. If substantive changes to an issue paper need to be made, the matter will be treated as a new paper and forwarded to the executive director of Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for authorization, for advice from the Conference of Bishops, and for approval by the Church Council.

Annual reports, including all resolutions that have been approved and/or filed, as well as information regarding ongoing dialogues, will be prepared by the CSR consultant and shared with the ELCA Church Council, the Conference of Bishops, and Portico, and may be shared with any ELCA-related organization and others.

*Approved by the Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility – May 24, 2007
Approved by Church Council – April 2012 (CC12.04.09)*



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Social Criteria Investment Screens Policy and Procedures

Background

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) gives expression to this church's concern for corporate social responsibility – both in its internal activities and in its interaction in the broader society – through exercising its rights as a corporate shareholder on issues of social concern. This is accomplished through screening of stock ownership, casting of shareholder ballots, filing of shareholder resolutions, and dialogue with corporations to address these issues. For the churchwide organization and ELCA-related organizations,¹ the ELCA makes recommendations regarding shareholder action. Individual Lutherans are encouraged to apply these recommendations within their own portfolios.

In determining precise actions to take or recommend, the ELCA draws on the foundation of its social policy. This policy, consisting of social statements, messages, and Churchwide Assembly and Church Council social policy resolutions, reflects an understanding of this church's social responsibility that includes theological, social, and ethical considerations.

Within this context, the issues that are brought to the ELCA regarding corporate social responsibility are complex and actions are multi-dimensional. This church is assisted in its decision-making through the development of social criteria investment screens that guide this church in evaluating the types of investments it wishes to hold. The original policy concerning these screens was developed in 1989 and revised in 2006.

Social criteria investment screens provide a guide for this church with regard to corporate social responsibility. They delineate areas in which the ELCA would like to invest or refrain from investing and provide criteria to evaluate the scope of the work. The objective of social criteria investment screens is to identify the dimensions of a given problem area, and within those dimensions to focus on egregious problems that are most critical to address. All social criteria investment screens have the overall objective of addressing the ELCA's concern for the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of corporations.²

Social criteria investment screens do not constitute binding mandates or provide, for example, specific lists of corporations. It is the responsibility of the ELCA and each ELCA-related organization and individual Lutherans to develop and manage a prudent and responsible investment portfolio. The ELCA social criteria investment screens offer a context for decision-making about socially responsible investments.

¹ For purposes of this policy, ELCA-related organizations include, but are not limited to, separately incorporated ministries (Portico Benefit Services [formerly known as the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America], the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA, the Publishing House of the ELCA [Augsburg Fortress, Publishers], Women of the ELCA, the Endowment Fund of the ELCA) and other related organizations and agencies (e.g., ELCA seminaries, ELCA colleges and universities, Lutheran Services in America, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service).

²Sustainability is not just financial sustainability but includes social and environmental sustainability. See <http://www.iccr.org/publications/2011SSRG.pdf> and <http://www.unpri.org/principles/>

Development and Review of Social Criteria Investment Screens

The following process applies to the development and review of social criteria investment screens:

1. When a major issue in society exists that involves the business community, it may be appropriate for the ELCA to develop a social criteria investment screen on the issue. An initial review of the issue will be explored by the corporate social responsibility review team. If the CSR review team deems it appropriate to move forward in the development of a screen, it will develop and oversee a *study process*. In order to ensure appropriate input, the following steps will be taken:
 - a. assessing the social policy basis to support a screen;
 - b. listening to the voices of those most vulnerable and negatively affected by the issue;
 - c. receiving comments from all offices and units of the churchwide office that relate to this issue in their ongoing work;
 - d. encouraging participation by synods;
 - e. receiving comments from experts on the issue;
 - f. ensuring that minorities have opportunity to express their concerns;
 - g. receiving input from Portico Benefit Services (formerly known as the Board of Pensions of the ELCA), the Endowment Fund of the ELCA, the Conference of Bishops, and other appropriate organizations concerning specific fiduciary responsibility that might impact this social criteria investment screen;
 - h. hearing the concerns of other churches from around the world on the issue;
 - i. ensuring that the voices of those most affected by the issue are present at the table.
2. The results of this *study process* will be received by the executive director of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit of the churchwide organization (CSM) for review and discussion. If the results indicate a need for this church to develop a social criteria investment screen on this issue, the CSR review team will develop a *writing process* to ensure the social criteria investment screen is consistent with the social policy of this church and can be implemented by fiduciaries within this church and the offices and units of the churchwide organization. In order to ensure that appropriate input at this level occurs, the following steps will be taken:
 - a. assessing the social policy basis to support a screen;
 - b. listening to the voices of those most vulnerable and negatively affected by the issue;
 - c. receiving comments from all offices and units of the churchwide office that relate to this issue in their ongoing work;
 - d. encouraging participation by synods;
 - e. receiving comments from experts on the issue;
 - f. ensuring that minorities have opportunity to express their concerns;
 - g. receiving input from Portico, the Endowment Fund of the ELCA, the Conference of Bishops, and other appropriate organizations concerning specific fiduciary responsibility that might impact this social criteria investment screen;
 - h. hearing the concerns of other churches from around the world on the issue;
 - i. ensuring that the voices of those most affected by the issue are present at the table.
3. A proposed social criteria investment screen will include the following:
 - a. Authority: a section that relates the issue to ELCA social policy;
 - b. Wording: a clear, succinct statement of the position of this church on the issue;
 - c. Definition: a section that places the issue in relation to the broader society, and indicates the scope, extent, or depth that this church deems it necessary to implement the criteria.

4. Additional documents may be developed, including an implementation plan for informing this church of the screen, and suggestions about how to implement it. These would not be part of the actual social criteria investment screen document.
5. The proposed social criteria investment screen will be considered by the CSR review team for review and recommendation to the executive director of CSM unit. Upon authorization by the executive director of the CSM unit, the proposed social criteria investment screen will be recommended to the Conference of Bishops for advice and the ELCA Church Council for approval. The Church Council's action may include recommendations concerning implementation. Any approved screen with accompanying recommendations will be posted on the ELCA web site and hard copies will be circulated to the following: presiding bishop, synodical bishops, Portico, Endowment Fund of the ELCA, Mission Investment Fund, seminaries, colleges and universities, social ministry organizations, and separately incorporated ministries, and may be provided to others.
6. Annually, at least one social criteria investment screen will be reviewed by the CSR review team. This cycle will ensure that the language is timely and the issues inclusive. Should the review process lead to a recommendation for a total revision of the social criteria investment screen, a more abbreviated form of the *writing process* would proceed. The CSR review team will report on the review process, whether or not a revision is recommended in an annual report submitted to the executive director of CSM unit, the Conference of Bishops and the ELCA Church Council. The report will be distributed to the following: Portico, staff of the churchwide organization working with the issue, and others as appropriate.
7. The CSR review team also may initiate an earlier review of a social criteria investment screen in consultation with the executive director of the CSM unit, utilizing the abbreviated *writing process*.

Approved by Advisory Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility – April 2006

Approved by Church Council – November 2006

Approved by Church Council – April 2012 (CC12.04.09)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council
Program and Services Committee Charter
Approved by Church Council, November 2014~~3~~

Organization and Purposes

The organization and purposes of the Program and Services Committee is described in ELCA continuing resolution 14.41.D99:

A Program and Services Committee shall be composed of members of the Church Council elected by the council and shall have staff services provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop. This committee shall assist the council in assuring that churchwide purposes, policies, and objectives are being fulfilled through the programs and services of the units of the churchwide organization. All churchwide policies and strategies recommended by units that have implications for congregations, synods, other churchwide units, or institutions and agencies of this church shall be considered by this committee for recommendation to the Church Council.

In fulfilling its purposes, the Program and Services Committee also shall facilitate the implementation of the following strategic directions of the ELCA:

- Support congregations in their call to be faithful, welcoming, and generous, sharing the mind of Christ.
- Assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions, and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach.
- Step forward as a public church that witnesses boldly to God's love for all that God has created.
- Deepen and expand our global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships for the sake of God's mission.
- Assist this church to bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God's mission in a pluralistic world.

Responsibilities

A. The responsibilities of the Program and Services Committee include:

1. Review and consider new and revised churchwide policies and strategies recommended by units that have implications for congregations, synods, other churchwide units, or institutions and agencies of this church for recommendation to the Church Council. This includes:
 - a. New and revised social policies and procedures
 - b. New and revised social statements
 - c. Proposals from program units
 - ~~d. Personnel policies, including pension and benefits~~
2. Monitor corporate social responsibility policies, issue papers, social criteria investment screens, and related activities. Review and consider recommendations to Church Council.
3. Ensure churchwide unit policies and procedures are effective in practice and consistent with overall churchwide purposes, policies, and objectives.
 - Act on the policies and recommendations proposed by churchwide units subject to consideration by the Churchwide Assembly.
 - Develop a calendar of anticipated work for the triennium at the first committee meeting following the Churchwide Assembly.
 - Accomplish other tasks that may be assigned by the Church Council.

B. Members of the Program and Services Committee are expected to prepare for meetings by reviewing the agenda, minutes, and meeting materials in advance of meetings, to participate actively in meetings, and to complete timely responsibilities assigned by the committee.

Leadership

Members of the Program and Services Committee shall elect a chair at the last meeting of the triennium and a vice-chair and secretary at the first meeting of the triennium.

Meetings

The Program and Services Committee will meet in conjunction with regular meetings of the Church Council. Other meetings may be held for special or emergency purposes, ordinarily by conference call, at the request of the chair or a majority of committee members. A majority of the voting membership of the committee shall constitute a quorum.

Amendment of Charter

The Program and Services Committee will review this charter at the first meeting of the committee following a Churchwide Assembly. Amendments to this charter may be recommended at any time, subject to approval by the Church Council.

Evaluation

The Program and Services Committee will evaluate its meetings. In addition to reviewing and evaluating its meetings, the committee will work with Research and Evaluation to develop a process for evaluating its work each triennium. These processes will include evaluation of the committee's commitment to racial and gender equity.

| This charter was approved by the Church Council at the November 201~~4~~3 Church Council meeting.

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council
Program and Services Committee Charter
Approved by Church Council, November 2014**

Organization and Purposes

The organization and purposes of the Program and Services Committee is described in ELCA continuing resolution 14.41.D99:

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In fulfilling its purposes, the Program and Services Committee also shall facilitate the implementation of the following strategic directions of the ELCA:

- Support congregations in their call to be faithful, welcoming, and generous, sharing the mind of Christ.
- Assist members, congregations, synods, and institutions, and agencies of this church to grow in evangelical outreach.
- Step forward as a public church that witnesses boldly to God's love for all that God has created.
- Deepen and expand our global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships for the sake of God's mission.
- Assist this church to bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God's mission in a pluralistic world.

Responsibilities

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1. Review and consider new and revised churchwide policies and strategies recommended by units that have implications for congregations, synods, other churchwide units, or institutions and agencies of this church for recommendation to the Church Council. This includes:
 - a. New and revised social policies and procedures
 - b. New and revised social statements
 - c. Proposals from program units
2. Monitor corporate social responsibility policies, issue papers, social criteria investment screens, and related activities. Review and consider recommendations to Church Council.
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 - Act on the policies and recommendations proposed by churchwide units subject to consideration by the Churchwide Assembly.
 - Develop a calendar of anticipated work for the triennium at the first committee meeting following the Churchwide Assembly.
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Amendment of Charter

The Program and Services Committee will review this charter at the first meeting of the committee following a Churchwide Assembly. Amendments to this charter may be recommended at any time, subject to approval by the Church Council.

Evaluation

The Program and Services Committee will evaluate its meetings. In addition to reviewing and evaluating its meetings, the committee will work with Research and Evaluation to develop a process for evaluating its work each triennium. These processes will include evaluation of the committee's commitment to racial and gender equity.

This charter was approved by the Church Council at the November 2014 Church Council meeting.

Draft of a Social Message on Gender-based Violence

For Study and Response
Prior to Nov. 26, 2014

The response form can be downloaded from or filled out online at www.elca.org/socialmessages

Theological Discernment Team
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

September 2014

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Draft of a Social Message on Gender-based Violence, fall 2014; This a DRAFT for public comment. It is not an ELCA message.

29 **Outline**

30 Preface

31 I. A starting place: words to those who suffer or inflict gender-based violence

32 Survivors to survivors

33 Church to perpetrators

34 Church to survivors

35 II. What is gender-based violence? Definition, voices and descriptions

36 III. Context and sources of gender-based violence

37 IV. Confession of sin

38 V. Religious contributions to the problems

39 VI. Social forces

40 Commercial sexual exploitation

41 Media

42 Economic forces

43 Racism

44 Fears of sexualities and bodies

45 Laws and the legal system

46 VII. Confession of faith

47 VIII. The ELCA's calling

48 Respond to and prevent gender-based violence with care

49 Respond to and prevent gender-based violence with accountability

50 Respond to and prevent gender-based violence through education

51 IX. The ELCA's social witness

52 Commitments for a new beginning

53

54 **Preface**

55 Gender-based violence has been a largely ignored epidemic in human society. This message [if
56 adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)] seeks to bring
57 the epidemic into the open for the sake of survivors and perpetrators, for education and deliberation, and
58 as a call to action. Each of these goals requires different kinds of written expression, namely the
59 difference between personal words and stories, description and analysis, and endorsement and
60 recommendation. These three kinds of expression are interwoven throughout because each is necessary
61 and each depends upon the other as this message begins to present a whole and faithful account.

62 **I. A starting place: words to those who suffer or inflict gender-based violence**

63

64 *A survivor may say to other survivors:*

65 We are created, loved and redeemed by God through Christ. Our bodies, hearts and minds are
66 beloved by a gracious God who, the Bible tells us, creates each person *imago dei* (in God's image) and
67 God weeps with us because we have been hurt and betrayed. God fiercely opposes gender-based violence
68 because those who commit it have treated us as their objects and heinously violated our bodies, hearts and
69 minds. Such violation is not right.

70 Sometimes it seems as if faith is only about our hearts and minds, but faith also has to do with our
71 bodies. One of our church's pastors writes: "Bodies which have been assaulted and abused are loved by
72 Christ, anticipated in his death, redeemed through his incarnation and resurrection, and will be healed and
73 restored in God's own time. Such a teaching insists upon God's own reverence for the flesh. The body
74 remains precious despite the injury done to it."¹ Our flesh is beloved. Our flesh is also known, for Jesus
75 was also exposed, tormented and wounded. He also cried out to ask why God had forsaken him in his
76 deepest moments of need and fear (Mark 15:34). We are not alone.

77 *Members of the ELCA may say to those who commit gender-based violence:*

78 God condemns such violence. God weeps when you use the gifts of strength, thought and action
79 to inflict gender-based violence on another person. Your actions wound those you hurt, as well as God
80 and God's creation. The power you seek is evil, but God calls you to the true life and richness found in
81 kindness, compassion and mercy. You may yourself be a survivor of gender-based violence or other
82 violence. The Apostle Paul writes that God asks us not to pass along violence (Romans 12:9-21). God
83 calls you to repent, seek forgiveness and amend your life with the help of others.

84 *Members of the ELCA may say to survivors:*

85 God says no to such violence. God condemns what someone has done to hurt you and to have
86 power over you. God's love gives life. Through God's promises, we have life. God promises that
87 nothing shall stand between you and the good news of God's love, grace and healing in Jesus Christ, not
88 even the one(s) who hurt you. This is the good news of grace for you. We know that bodies matter
89 because not only has God become one of us in Christ, but we also know that Christ is present in all
90 human experience, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ promises life.

91 The promise of the resurrection life in Christ is not just about the future — what will happen
92 when you die. It is for your healing, your embodiment right now. God's intent is the healing of your
93 body, psyche, emotions and spirit—all of you, your whole being. Healing is possible because God's
94 presence and power is to bring new life again and again. And it is through the preaching of the gospel
95 and the sacraments of baptism and holy communion that God shapes us, as bodies and as the body of
96 Christ together, to bind us to God's self and one to another. We are the body of Christ. Together.

97 **II. What is gender-based violence? Definition, voices and descriptions**

98
99 Words of healing are crucial. Speaking that serves healing must ask what gender-based violence
100 is and why it happens. We now turn to this task.

¹ Joy A. Schroeder, "Sexual Abuse and a Theology of Embodiment: Incarnating Healing," in *The Long Journey Home*, ed. Andrew J. Schmutzer (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 193.

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101 Gender-based violence is physical, sexual or emotional harm directed at a person because of their
 102 **biological characteristics [green indicates a word present in the glossary]**, perceived or self-identified
 103 **gender**, or significant difference from socially and/or religiously constructed definitions of masculinity
 104 and femininity. Gender-based violence includes coercion and deprivation of freedom. Gender-based
 105 violence occurs in a multitude of forms and may be experienced at any point in a person’s life.

106 *We listen, with God, to the voices of those who have suffered gender-based violence within*
 107 *society and within the ELCA:*²

108 ***In society***

109 My fiancée punched me in the face in a hotel elevator
 110 and dragged me out. It was caught on video.

111 A man broke into our house at night
 112 and raped me in bed.

113 Because I was gay, a group of men severely beat me
 114 and then hung me on a country barbed-wire fence to die.

115 My husband controlled all the money
 116 and always told me I was worthless.
 117 I had no way to leave.

118 ***In the ELCA***

119 A week after my hysterectomy, my husband dragged me off the couch by my hair and screamed, “Get off
 120 your ass and get to work!” Then he kicked me in the abdomen.

121 I bled profusely while our daughters hid in their closet.

122 A trusted peer and friend sexually assaulted me at a Lutheran youth event.

123 My mentor had little response. Nothing was ever resolved.

124 I tried to counsel an abusive husband and abused wife.

125 During a session, he killed her and himself with a gun.

126 When I was a teen, my pastor made me feel special.

127 He coerced me into a long-term sexual relationship with him.

128 Four or five men gang-raped me after I marched in a Gay Pride parade.

129 A pastor going by on his bike covered my naked body with his jacket.

130 *We listen, as members of Christ's body, becoming aware that:*

131 The body of Christ suffers from gender-based violence.

132 We are wounded, bleeding and dying. The body of Christ is in crisis.

133 Our hope rests in Jesus Christ,

134 who by the power of the Holy Spirit

135 activates and enables the church to denounce and resist evil,

136 create safe communities, and work toward reconciliation and healing.

² These descriptive summaries actual events and personal stories.

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146 There are many types of gender-based violence. Each of the forms puts at risk a person's
147 freedom, body and life and violates that person's psychological and spiritual integrity.

148 The scope of gender-based violence is enormous. People of all classes and of all ethnicities in all
149 nations suffer violence inflicted on them by others for gender-based reasons. Gender-based violence
150 happens in both private and public situations. It occurs in families, other social relations, the church, the
151 state, education, and in society more broadly. It affects people of every age and of every gender.

152 While many different people are affected by gender-based violence, women and girls³ are
153 especially targeted. Nationally, 25 percent of women over the age of 18 have experienced sexual or
154 physical violence at the
155 hands of a current or former
156 intimate partner. Globally
157 the percentage rises to 30
158 percent.⁴

159 This targeting
160 shapes and constrains their
161 lives as becomes clear from
162 the vulnerability of girls. Of
163 the 18.2 percent of women
164 who have survived rape or
165 attempted rape, 12.3 percent
166 were younger than age 12
167 when they were first raped
168 and 29.9 percent were
169 between the ages of 11 and
170 17. Girls ages 16-19 are
171 four times more likely than
172 the general population to be
173 the victims⁵ of rape,

174 attempted rape or sexual assault. And 93 percent of juvenile sexual assault victims know their attacker.⁶

Types of gender-based violence

Gender-based violence can include sexual and other physical assault, including murder; rape; harassment, sexual and non-sexual; sexual and physical abuse (by clergy, coaches, teachers, superiors, strangers, family members, caregivers or friends); stalking; intimate relationship violence, regardless of gender, including employment, housing, educational intimidation and obstruction, rape and murder; elder abuse or child abuse ; sex-specific torture; reproductive coercion; female genital mutilation (also known as female genital cutting); early and forced marriage; honor crimes; mail-order brides; dowry violence; practices used to decrease the number of girl babies, such as prenatal sex selection, infanticide, or child neglect; sex tourism; forced prostitution; human trafficking for sex; pornography; and violence during armed conflict, including rape, enslavement, torture and murder.

³ "Women and girls" is here used as an inclusive term.

⁴ For statistics as of the writing of this message, see Appendix.

⁵ The literature refers to both victims and survivors. This document uses both terms. The term *victim* stresses that harm has occurred; the term *survivor* indicates the reality after violence.

⁶ For statistics as of the writing of this message, see Appendix.

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175 Worldwide, women, girls and gender non-conforming people live with the memory and/or the
176 fear of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence.

177 What is universal about gender-based violence is that gender is a central motivating factor, yet it
178 is not the only one. Every act or threat of gender-based violence, every perpetrator, and every survivor is
179 influenced by **intersections** of identities and of privilege and oppression, such as race and ethnicity, age,
180 ability, sexual orientation and gender identity, social class, and economic situation.

181 These intersections show up in both social systems and in individual mindsets. For example, race
182 and ethnicity and age are significant factors in gender-based violence. In the United States, some women
183 of color experience higher rates of intimate partner violence and rape than the rate of all women together.⁷

184 Gender-based violence also is *not* limited to injuries inflicted by men on women and girls. There
185 is increasing awareness of sexual and physical violence against men and boys;⁸ intimate partner violence
186 against men by women; and intimate partner violence within same-gender relationships. Such violence is
187 wrong. Some of this violence is gender-based; some is not.

188 **III. Context and sources of gender-based violence**

189
190 Gender-based violence is a global problem and continues unabated; it happens everywhere. The
191 United States is part of this global problem. As a Lutheran body in the United States, this church
192 primarily addresses our U.S. context as the one in which we have immediate call and responsibility. This
193 national context includes attention to the fact that gender-based violence occurs within ELCA
194 congregations and affiliated institutions and organizations.

195 While focused nationally, however, this social message does acknowledge the global character of
196 the problem and the importance of working worldwide to address gender-based violence. The ELCA
197 celebrates the relationships of ongoing accompaniment concerning gender-based violence with global
198 partners. It is through shared service, advocacy, theological dialogue, and ecumenical and inter-faith

⁷ See Appendix for statistics as of publication.

⁸ See, e.g., Lara Stemple and Ilan H. Meyer, "The Sexual Victimization of Men in America: New Data Challenge Old Assumptions," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 6 (June 2014): e19-e26. This research focuses on male victimization in institutions such as mental health and criminal justice. There is also growing public knowledge of male victimization by clergy, coaches, teachers, caregivers and peers (such as through sexual harassment and hazing). Notable in this research is that when men and boys are in situations in which they are vulnerable to the power of others over them, it can lead to physical and emotional harm to them. Age, race and class can be contributory factors in situations of vulnerability. For greater insight into violence against gender non-conforming men, see Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, with Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), 3.

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199 relations that it becomes possible to care wisely for people’s immediate needs and to address root causes
200 of gender-based violence.⁹

201 The causes of gender-based violence are complex and multiple. How human beings think and act
202 socially and religiously are closely intertwined with the dynamics of power and control. While each act
203 of gender-based violence may be an individual's action, it is shaped by power dynamics that function to
204 subordinate another person and coercively control them. This dynamic is possible in every relationship;
205 thus, everyone is potentially affected by gender-based violence.

206 Regardless of who is the target of gender-based violence, this dynamic of power and control is
207 rooted in the values of a particular social system; globally, this social system is **patriarchal**. Gender-
208 based violence is recognized internationally as essential to maintain gender inequality.

209 Thus work to end gender-based violence must be focused on understanding mindsets about
210 gender, power and violence, and how human beings act out what we think as individuals influenced by
211 communities and institutions. Ways of thinking affect us all — survivors, perpetrators and bystanders.
212 Not only individuals, but families, communities and societies suffer. We, the body of Christ, suffer.

213 While there is a common root to gender-based violence, there are local expressions of it
214 worldwide. Each act of violence is particular — someone harms someone else — yet each act occurs
215 within or is supported by a social system. In other words, every act of violence has a context and varies
216 across time and place.

217 Even though gender-based violence is not exactly the same in every location, these are not
218 isolated instances. To truly understand gender-based violence and to create safety and well-being, it is
219 necessary to understand the particularities of each act of violence, the array of the many forms of this
220 violence, *and* its place in the context of patriarchal social systems. A patriarchal social system is male-
221 dominated, male-identified and male-centered; it operates with a high value on control of women and
222 “non-dominant others.” Though there has been much social progress toward gender equality in the United
223 States, patriarchy is still the dominant *social system* in the United States and within Christianity.

224 The definition of patriarchy as a social system is not a description of every person, social
225 relationship, Christian congregation, etc. It is, instead a description of a nexus of social relations, habits,

⁹ The work of The Lutheran World Federation is one example of the global efforts in which the ELCA participates. See, e.g., “Churches Say ‘No!’ to Violence Against Women” (Geneva, Switzerland: Lutheran World Federation, 2002),

<http://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Churches%20Say%20No%20to%20Violence%20against%20Women.pdf>, and Elaine Neuenfeldt, ed., “Lutheran World Federation Gender Justice Policy” (Geneva, Switzerland: Lutheran World Federation, 2013), <http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-lwf-gender-justice-policy>, which is implemented through all realms of Lutheran World Federation service, advocacy and dialogue. The ELCA participates in such work in several ways, e.g. The Lutheran Office for World Community.

Draft of a Social Message on Gender-based Violence, fall 2014; This a DRAFT for public comment. It is not an ELCA message.

226 laws, ideas and beliefs, often religious, in which *everyone* participates in varying measures.¹⁰ A
 227 patriarchal social system both relies upon and results in significant male dominance and female
 228 subordination.

229 This dynamic is kept in place through tools of power and control. Gender-based violence
 230 functions as one such tool, whether as threats, actual acts or inadequate responses to such acts. For
 231 example, sexual harassment in schools and work places serves to intimidate girls and women from
 232 asserting themselves and from developing their gifts fully. Rape also serves as a means of control,
 233 whether within dating, marriage or war. As particular targets of rape, women thus learn to live in fear,
 234 wrestling with this ceaseless threat and its implication that they are objects of control.

235 A culture of patriarchy requires and depends upon female subordination and thrives through
 236 structural, theoretical and religious gender inequality. Whether recognized or not, patriarchal values
 237 permeate how U.S. society operates.

238 In light of this systemic factor, this message contends that a critical step to decrease gender-based
 239 violence is to change social and religious understanding and practices that make the violence possible.
 240 Specifically, gender-based violence must come to be understood in its context of social structures, gender
 241 roles and gender-based discrimination. Longstanding efforts such as rights-based arguments made within
 242 the law, therapy and pastoral counseling are essential and beneficial. Years of activism, research and
 243 scholarship demonstrate, however, that these alone cannot address the depth and tacit approval of this
 244 society's gender-based violence.¹¹

245 While no one solution will bring an end to gender-based violence, the ELCA recognizes and
 246 affirms that restoring health and well-being to all of God's people requires a multi-faceted approach. This

¹⁰ A patriarchal social system is *dominated* by the voice and authority of men. In such a social system, what is most highly valued is *identified* as male-oriented. A patriarchal social system is *centered* on males; the world is portrayed with men as the main actors in life and reflects their ideas and values. To maintain male priority in a social system, all "others," including women, gender non-conforming people, and non-dominant men must be and are socially devalued or diminished or controlled. One implication of a patriarchal social system is that the people who are "good" are the ones who endure gender-based violence and remain silent about it, do not challenge male privilege, and do not transgress binary gender boundaries. See Allan A. Johnson, *The Gender Knot*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2005) and *Privilege, Power, and Difference* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006).

¹¹ See Elizabeth M. Schneider, *Battered Women & Feminist Lawmaking* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 20-56. Advancement of international human rights — women's rights as human rights — is important in the creation of global change based on universal claims. Working to end gender-based violence and other gender-based discrimination through human rights arguments and standards can provide empowerment for people's legal consciousness, sense of identity, psychological health and political and moral agency. Addressing gender-based violence depends in part on human rights-based arguments. Nevertheless, human rights assertions alone cannot create the conditions to weaken the prevalence and intensity of gender-based violence. Rather, lessening gender-based violence depends upon changes in social and religious consciousness; thus, part of this church's work is to address the ways we see and think about God, the world and ourselves. If there is no social and religious change, people who are harmed by gender-based violence will only be able to continue to ask for mercy and protection in a world that sees and thinks about them as deserving the violence.

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247 reality means the ELCA is called to speak and act prophetically to address the root causes and values,
248 structures, and results of our patriarchal social system.¹²

249 The way forward is multi-faceted because every act of gender-based violence is unique and
250 specific. Each survivor needs to be met at the point of their pain; each perpetrator needs to be held
251 accountable for the violence they commit.

252 At the same time, addressing gender-based violence requires careful attention to social and
253 religious contexts since these contexts and the personal experiences of violence are mutually related.
254 Decreasing gender-based violence will therefore require action in many aspects of life and its
255 intersections, including in social movements, politics, law, education, families and religion. For this
256 church, the way forward begins with confession of sin.

257 **IV. Confession of sin**

258
259 The ELCA as part of the body of Christ confesses its sin. We are called to confess both as
260 individuals and corporately as part of the church catholic. We, as part of this church, are in a body that
261 has victims and perpetrators. The confession of both our individual sin and our corporate sin allows the
262 truth to be told and orients our efforts to address all aspects of gender-based violence (1 John 1:5-9). The
263 church confesses together.¹³

264 To sin is to trespass our relationships of trust and love with God and with other humans and all of
265 creation, yet sin is also a web in which we are corporately bound. Sin produces suffering and
266 destruction.¹⁴ Far too often, far too many of us have failed God and others:

- 267 • We have failed to care for victims and survivors of gender-based violence;
- 268 • We have failed to do what is necessary to prevent it; and
- 269 • We have failed to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

270 We are called to confess that gender-based violence is about *us*, as people in the body of Christ in
271 the ELCA. We are not simply in a position of rescuing or caring for people outside of this church.
272 Rather, we participate in the forces of sin and are called to confess that we often have failed to recognize
273 our own participation in gender-based violence, as individuals and as a church.

¹² Readers are referred to the ELCA social statement anticipated in 2019 on this and related issues.

¹³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes the call to communal confession very well: “It is not enough for individuals to repent and be justified....[T]he church must likewise repent and be justified. The community that is from God to God, that bears within itself eternal meaning, endures in God’s sight and does not melt into the fate of the many. It is willed and created and has become culpable; it must seek repentance, believe in and experience justification and sanctification, and experience judgment and grace at the limits of time.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 119.

¹⁴ See Ted Peters, *God — The World’s Future*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 162-178.

274 We are called to confess that far too often we have remained silent, or allowed ourselves to
275 remain oblivious to gender-based violence, or even resisted acknowledging what is happening. We are
276 called to confess that as a church we often deny the realities of gender-based violence and resist hearing
277 God’s call to take it seriously.

278 We are called to confess that far too often too many of us have actively or passively contributed
279 to the ways that religious ideas, people and institutions have encouraged or permitted gender-based
280 violence. And we are called to confess that corporately we are ourselves caught in the web of interwoven
281 systems that deny or reinforce gender-based violence in church and society.

282 This church also looks with thanksgiving to God through Christ as the source of salvation and the
283 hope for our lives. Such confessions are not the end but beginnings. We in this church who confess give
284 thanks for the promise of forgiveness and the opportunity to amend our ways. We will pray that such
285 confession would turn us to new paths that completely alter our understanding of and our response to
286 gender-based violence. We will pray that such confession might turn us to work that better conforms this
287 church to the life-giving ways of God.

288 **V. Religious contributions to the problems**

289
290 While religious consciousness and practices are not the sole contributors to gender-based
291 violence, this church acknowledges how religious factors often contribute extensively. First and
292 foremost, people of faith have responded too often with silence. Behind the statistics of gender-based
293 violence are incredibly unspeakable atrocities, but they are so common that they have come to be
294 expected.¹⁵ Sometimes silence flows from not seeing. Sometimes it takes the form of oblivion — when
295 we choose to be uninformed — or to turn away deliberately, so that we do not see what we do not want to
296 see.

297 Religious people and institutions also deny and resist. It is easier to deny what we hear, see and
298 otherwise know than to face it. It is easier to resist naming what has happened or what is happening than
299 to name it. For example, when intimate partner violence is misidentified as marital misunderstanding or
300 anger mismanagement, what is really at play is denied and resisted. In such cases the dynamic of power
301 and control that is strategically used by one partner to harm another is not seen or acknowledged. These
302 different forms of denial and resistance are a failure to care for victim/survivors of gender-based violence.

303 In this regard, the “ministry of nice” that prevails in many congregations leads, too often, to
304 discrediting hints or reports of gender-based violence by victims. People of faith can be, in that sense, too
305 often like the Levite or the Priest (Luke 10:25-37) who walk past one who has been injured, because we

¹⁵ See Elizabeth Gerhardt, *The Cross and Gendecide: A Theological Response to Global Violence Against Women and Girls* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2014) and *Miss Representation*, directed and written by Jennifer Siebel Newsom (New York, N.Y.: Virgil Films & Entertainment, LLC., 2012), DVD.

306 do not want to “involve ourselves.” We may be afraid of confronting people, appearing to take sides in
307 relationships, or triggering traumas for others by talking openly about gender-based violence.

308 But God calls God's people to do more: God calls us to stop, listen, see, name and minister in
309 the midst of ugliness and pain, among and to those whose lives are affected by gender-based violence.

310 Denial and resistance also cause us to fail to demand accountability from those who commit
311 gender-based violence. When the church fails to hold perpetrators and society (i.e., the law and criminal
312 justice system, healthcare, childcare, education, etc.) accountable to prevent, address and redress gender-
313 based violence, we also resist God’s call to care and so participate in the perpetuation of gender-based
314 violence.

315 Even when religious people or institutions respond, we may participate in the forces of gender-
316 based violence through faulty or inadequate responses. Certain religious responses fault victims, do not
317 hold perpetrators accountable, and perpetuate the violence.

318 Remaining ill-equipped to respond to and to prevent gender-based violence also perpetuates the
319 situations and forces that maintain cycles of violence. Those ministering to a person abused by an
320 intimate partner cannot provide appropriate care if they do not understand the cycle of power and control
321 in abuse or do not seek out the help of professional advocates. Likewise, faith-based views that
322 emphasize saving a marriage at the expense of safety and well-being enable abusers and deny the needs
323 and safety of the person who is abused.

324 People of faith also participate in perpetuating gender-based violence when we hold onto social
325 and church histories, harmful biblical interpretations and theologies, and ways of thinking and acting that
326 deftly reinforce gender-based violence. For example in the United States there is a history of treating
327 women as incompetent and incapable of rational thought. This pattern served to reinforce their lesser
328 status and deprived them of legal and economic rights necessary to make their own decisions and care for
329 themselves and sometimes their children.¹⁶ In a similar vein, as Lutherans we need to face our own

¹⁶ Only by 1993 was marital rape declared illegal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Historically, the common law doctrine of “coverture” stipulated that a free married woman did not have a separate legal existence from her husband. Married women could not own property in their own names, sign binding contracts, file suit, or, except under specific circumstances, control their earnings; in the event of their husband’s death, they were not able to act as guardian to their own children. See “Women, Enterprise & Society: Women and the Law” (manuscript collection), Harvard Business School and President and Fellows of Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass., 2010, web, http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/wes/collections/women_law/. Slave women had no legal existence apart from those who claimed to own them: they were traded, used and sometimes forced to have children by those with power over them. See “Women, Enterprise & Society.” Early laws and judicial decisions gave “legitimacy” to these concepts by permitting physical “chastisement” by husbands of their wives, permitting marriage to be asserted as a defense to rape, and by denying aid to victims based on their theory that judges should “not interfere with family government in trifling cases.” It would take more than 100 years before a state would enact a law criminalizing a physical assault by a husband on his wife. See *Bradley v. State*, 2 Miss. (Walker) 156 (1824) in “History of Battered Women’s Movement,” *SafeNetwork: California’s Domestic Violence Resource*, 1999, <http://www.icadvinc.org/what-is-domestic-violence/history-of-battered-womens-movement/>.

330 history, including the use of Martin Luther’s writing on “domestic discipline” and the long church history
331 of blaming victims for violence.¹⁷

332 At the heart of Lutheran biblical interpretation is Luther’s own ardent priority: interpretation of
333 Scripture should reveal God’s grace to humanity. Interpretation of Scripture should “carry Christ” to the
334 listener or reader.¹⁸ Yet sometimes scriptures have been and are used to emphasize the “value” of
335 submission, praise suffering as a “good,” and urge forgiveness without accountability. People suffer from
336 such harmful interpretations.

337 This church is speaking out against interpretations of Scripture that cheapen the treasure of faith,
338 give license to those who harm and fail to stand with victims. Yet some ask whether more remains to be
339 done in terms of biblical interpretation. Some urge this church to reckon more deeply with the biblical
340 legacy of violence against women, as well as the practical effects and considerations of the language of
341 faith.¹⁹

342 Some are asking this church in its concern about sources of gender-based violence to wrestle
343 more particularly with the predominance of male references to God. They believe that predominantly
344 masculine and male-associated language for God denies the fullness of who God is and perpetuates the
345 assumption that men are closer to the image and likeness of God. Other people of faith do not see
346 significant connections between such language and violence.

347 Likewise, some raise questions about the complex array of ways in which Christian theology,
348 including the Lutheran theological tradition, sometimes contributes to gender-based violence. For
349 example, the sacrifice of the cross sometimes is interpreted to mean that suffering “like Jesus” is good; in
350 instances of gender-based violence, this can be incredibly harmful theology.

351 How people of faith think about God and our relationships with God and with one another needs
352 careful consideration. As a church, clarity and refinement is needed as we seek to draw upon life-giving

¹⁷ See, e.g., Mary Pellauer, “Lutheran Theology Facing Sexual and Domestic Violence,” 2nd ed. (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2011),

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Violence_Theology_Booklet.pdf. Pellauer outlines Luther’s strong writing on the “proper” submission of women to men and his ambivalence on child abuse and wife-beating. Although he exhorts husbands to be peaceable, he writes, “[T]he female sex inclines naturally to what is forbidden to it, to reign, to rule and to judge. From this there come marital discord, blows and beatings” (“Titus, 1527,” *Luther’s Works* 29:57). See, e.g., Joy A. Schroeder, *Dinah’s Lament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007) for a disquieting explanation of Christian theological victim-blaming through medieval Christianity.

¹⁸ The ELCA has an important opportunity to lift up and support reinterpretations of texts that have for centuries been used to keep women and girls in social and religious positions “below” men and boys, such as creation and sin in Genesis and New Testament epistles commonly referred to as the “domestic texts.”

¹⁹ Texts that portray violence against women that the ELCA at-large has not addressed include, for example, Abraham’s use of Sarah for his own safety (Genesis 12:10-20); Lot offering his daughters to rapists in order to protect male guests (Genesis 19:1-11); Schechem raping Dinah (Genesis 34:1-19); and the second wife who was betrayed by her husband and raped and murdered by a gang of men (Judges 19). Texts that reveal God in diverse ways include Genesis 1:2; Isaiah 49:15; Matthew 23:37; and Luke 15: 1-10.

353 resources in Lutheran theology *so that every neighbor is served* by the proclamation of the gospel, not
354 harmed.

355 As a church, there are many ways in which we are called to break our silence. As part of the
356 body of Christ, we must do so. Silence needs to end in organizations and schools and among
357 congregations, pastors, leaders and members. Gender-based violence is a human problem to which God
358 turns us in exceeding love through Christ’s life, death and resurrection. The whole church is called to
359 condemn this sin, to care for everyone who is harmed, and to question and change mindsets, systems,
360 theologies, policies and practices that support gender-based violence.

361 VI. Social forces

362
363 Intertwined with but often distinct from religious contributions to gender-based violence are
364 social forces that influence and support gender-based violence. Among these social forces are a wide
365 range of commercial sexual exploitation, the media, economics, racism, fears of sexualities and bodies
366 and. the legal system,.

367 *Commercial sexual exploitation*

368 The ELCA defines commercial exploitation as organized, for-profit sexual exploitation. It
369 includes audio or video sex, prostitution and human trafficking,²⁰ wherein approximately 80 percent of all
370 victims are women and girls. It also includes pornography and stripping which expresses, among others,
371 deep desires for power over and fears of women.²¹ Pornography demeans and devalues people who have
372 been thoroughly objectified, typically through violence. Most often, the objects of pornography, even
373 when a male is in the scene, are female.²² In pornography, violence is strongly linked to sex and
374 sexuality.

375 *Media*

376 “Public imagery of women is the text for all the other forms of violence [based on gender].”²³
377 Although not as violent as pornography, there is a steady message that women are subordinate to men
378 communicated through advertising, news and magazines, gaming, music, movies and television. As
379 “entertainment” many games, shows, movies, and music commonly incorporate images of violence
380 against women or girls as central elements in their story-lines. Viewers of mainstream media are exposed
381 repeatedly to subtle or not-so-subtle messages that women and girls are largely sexual objects, or deserve

²⁰ See “ELCA Social Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation,” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2001), 1-3.

²¹ See Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence against Women and the Church’s Response*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 64-65.

²² See Cooper-White, 78. According to Cooper-White, exceptions are gay male pornography.

²³ Cooper-White, 66.

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382 and enjoy pain and humiliation, or are so irrational that they need to be dominated.²⁴ This legitimates the
383 “everydayness” of gender-based violence.

384 *Economic forces*

385 There are at least three general ways that experiences of gender-based violence and money are
386 intertwined. First, people who have experienced or are experiencing gender-based violence may lose
387 their jobs, which often leads to the loss of other securities, such as transportation, housing, food and
388 children.

389 Survivors of gender-based violence may be so significantly harmed that they are unable to work
390 or they may suffer severe depression from the experience. They may miss work repeatedly for court dates
391 and other legal appointments and/or they may be seen as a risk by employers simply for having been
392 victimized. Any of these situations may be the reason for the loss of a job for a survivor.

393 Second, some victim/survivors feel compelled to remain in situations of gender-based violence in
394 order to maintain economic stability. For instance, someone abused by an intimate partner may be
395 compelled to remain in the abusive relationship because the partner earns the necessary income, often the
396 only economic means to care for children. In other instances, victim/survivors remain in jobs or
397 situations in which they are sexually harassed, coerced into sexual relations, and/or abused by colleagues,
398 supervisors, or peers because the job or the education are their only means to economic stability.

399 Third, some victim/survivors of gender-based violence are psychologically, emotionally and
400 physically forced or coerced into gender-based violence by people who want to make money at their
401 expense. Such is the case in the systems of human trafficking, prostitution, pornography, mail-order
402 brides and other forms of forced marriages.

403 *Racism*

404 Racism is an inherently evil force that has shaped not only the history of the United States, but
405 also individual lives and the social fabric of the present. Racism is rooted in the sinful idea that skin color
406 means there are categories of people who have different value and ability.²⁵ In the United States,
407 therefore, racism profoundly affects gender-based violence in at least two important ways.

408 First, multi-ethnic women and American Indian and Alaskan Native women are far more often
409 the targets of gender-based violence than all women together.²⁶

410 Second, racism may affect how victims of color think about turning to the U.S. legal system for
411 justice. When a racial or ethnic community is marginalized, the risks to expose each other to the U.S.

²⁴ See the film, *Miss Representation*.

²⁵ See *Freed in Christ: Race Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: ELCA, 1993), 4.

²⁶ See Appendix for statistics as of publication.

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412 legal system may be perceived to be high.²⁷ A survivor in the same marginalized racial or ethnic
 413 community as the perpetrator, therefore be less inclined to press charges. This perception may account
 414 for the fact that women of color are less likely to report intimate partner violence than the average rate of
 415 reporting for all women nationally.²⁸ There is a racial and ethnic situatedness to making the decision
 416 about whether or not to report crimes and bring charges against someone.

417 *Fears of sexualities and bodies*

418 Although often not recognized there is a connection between violence against women and girls
 419 and violence against anyone who does not conform to dominant gender and sexual expectations. For
 420 example, violence against gay men because they are gay is a form of gender-based violence. Violence
 421 against anyone who does not act according to normative expectations is also a form of gender-based
 422 violence. For anyone who does not conform to dominant gender and sexual expectations, their lives are
 423 shaped by the memory of, or fear of, violence.

424 *Laws and the legal system*

425 Within the last 50 years, laws pertaining to gender-based violence have proliferated compared to
 426 other times in human history. There is increased realization that people should not have to experience
 427 gender-based violence in various forms. For example, it is now illegal to sexually harass a co-worker, to
 428 rape a spouse, and to abuse a spouse. This church affirms such developments.

429 Nevertheless, research reveals continued gender bias in the law and the legal system. For
 430 example, though the rate of prosecution for domestic violence is increasing, in many jurisdictions a
 431 substantial proportion of domestic violence defendants are given deferred prosecution or dispositions that
 432 do not involve findings of guilt.²⁹ A trio of studies found, however, that at least 25 percent of the
 433 defendants that received deferred sentences will re-abuse or reoffend.³⁰ Rape is overwhelmingly a crime
 434 committed by men against women and girls. A recent study found, however, that only approximately *half*
 435 of sexual assault cases that resulted in an arrest were ever prosecuted.³¹ Prosecution was more frequent

²⁷ See *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* (Chicago: ELCA, 2013), for a discussion of risks such as dramatically higher incarceration rates, effect on employment prospects and others, 13.

²⁸ See “Statistics on Violence Against API Women,” *Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence*, accessed Sept. 4, 2014, <http://www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php>.

²⁹ See “Practical Implications of Current Domestic Violence Research: For Law Enforcement, Prosecutors and Judges: Chapter 6. Prosecution Responses.” National Institute of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. United States Department of Justice. June 2009, accessed September 17, 2014. <http://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/intimate-partner-violence/practical-implications-research/ch6/pages/diverting-first-offenders.aspx>.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ See C. Spohn and D. Holleran. “Prosecuting Sexual Assault: A Comparison of Charging Decisions in Sexual Assault Cases Involving Strangers, Acquaintances, and Intimate Partners.” <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/199720.pdf>. Among the author’s observation was that sexual assault prosecutions were most likely when prosecutors believed “the evidence is strong, the suspect is culpable, and the victim is blameless.” “In cases that involved friends, acquaintances, and relatives, prosecutors were significantly

436 when the victim was viewed by the prosecutor as “blameless” and less frequent where the victim was
 437 viewed as having engaged in “risk-taking behavior” or where her “reputation or character were
 438 questioned.”³²

439 The nature of violence against women on college campuses is a further demonstration in which
 440 multiple factors combine to support gender-based violence.³³ One factor is the inaction of institutions.
 441 Recently, the Department of Education found it necessary to write to all colleges to remind them of their
 442 obligations under federal law to provide a “prompt, thorough, and impartial” inquiry into allegations of
 443 gender-based violence and their obligations, consistent with state law, to determine “whether appropriate
 444 law enforcement or other authorities should be notified.”³⁴

445 Rape is, however, not solely a crime by men against women. Although until 2011 rape was
 446 defined exclusively in this way by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the FBI now uses a much more
 447 comprehensive definition of rape. The research indicates that various obstacles in reporting sexual assault
 448 or rape deter prosecution in some cases. In cases of gender-based violence against gender non-conforming
 449 individuals or people in same-sex relationships, the law and the legal system continue to be even more
 450 consistently biased. In other words, laws and the legal system do not yet properly ensure the freedom,
 451 autonomy and full participation as citizens necessary for all people.

452 VII. Confession of faith

453
 454 God’s beloved creatures suffer gender-based violence at the hands of each other. Such violence
 455 violates human dignity, divides humanity, abuses power, and gets in the way of proclamation. Christ is
 456 the beginning for Christians of any response to gender-based violence. God’s grace through Jesus Christ
 457 binds the Christian church to God and the body of Christ one to another.

458 The church remains at the cross -- that is, remains steadfast -- when it takes the necessary risks to
 459 proclaim faith in Christ and to resist and transform the roots of gender-based violence. It remains
 460 steadfast when it seeks to renounce the idolatry and hatred of gender-based violence, to set clear
 461 boundaries against evil, and to *be* the suffering flesh, the body of Christ that is the church.

462 God through Jesus Christ promises grace. Because we receive grace, we extend grace. It is that
 463 simple. The promise of grace has meaning for our being and action right now. God gives, not takes, in

less likely to file charges if the victim engaged in risk-taking behavior at the time of the incident or if her reputation or character were questioned.”

³² *Ibid.*

³³ <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2010/02/24/4360/lack-consequences-sexual-assault>

³⁴ One in five women is sexually assaulted in college, but colleges often fail to respond appropriately. In a study of data submitted to the Department of Justice by 130 colleges, the Center for Public Integrity found that just 10 to 25 percent of perpetrators were expelled from college, leaving many victims of sexual assault to attend classes or live on the same campus as their rapist. <http://www2.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html> .

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464 grace; by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are likewise open to each other's needs. God's grace is
465 immediate and active in us and de-centers how much the ELCA may wish to preserve the way things are.

466 Through the incarnation, God stretches into human life, particularly our sorrow and experiences
467 of nothingness. Jesus Christ shares fully in our deepest need and vulnerability on the cross. Jesus was
468 betrayed, laid low, made into non-being, and was ripped apart by being fully exposed on the cross; his
469 whole body suffered from the evil of violence.

470 Whoever is likewise laid low, made into non-being, and ripped apart by gender-based violence is
471 fully known by God. God is there, in the depths of suffering. Because we all receive God's grace, we are
472 all equal before God. This refutes the belief that a human being has the authority to make someone else
473 into an object, especially through violence. This is reason to put our hope in Christ.

474 In the resurrection, God promises new life through the Spirit, providing the hope of divine
475 compassion, which is generated in us as we stretch out toward each other. To confess Christ means that
476 the body of Christ knows and sees itself as the violated body, as the body that is marked in the flesh,
477 together. Not them, us. We are marked. Our bodies are reoriented by this confession.

478 Word and sacrament bind us to God and to each other. The preached word is the proclamation of
479 God's grace through Jesus Christ. Sacraments are enacted word, God's communal acts that are the very
480 meaning and root of our relationships.

481 The sacraments disrupt our expectations of how life should be. In Baptism, water symbolically
482 washes us and our foreheads are marked with the sign of Christ, the cross, a symbol of the place of the
483 lowest in the world. Through this symbol of the margins, the body of Christ is held together in its vast
484 plurality.

485 In the Eucharist, Christ becomes part of our bodies; through this eating and drinking, we are
486 bound to Christ and to each other. Through it, we participate in the sorrow and pain of the whole body of
487 Christ — "all the unjust suffering of the innocent, with which the world is everywhere filled to
488 overflowing."³⁵ And through the work of the Holy Spirit, we experience the body of Christ as relational
489 — "one inseparable body and flesh."³⁶

490 Thus through preaching and the sacraments, we are with each other, to be knit together in our
491 vulnerabilities through Christ, who is active in our real bodies. This church and its members are therefore
492 free to take the risks of the cross to love and serve and seek justice for people who experience gender-
493 based violence.

494

³⁵ "Word and Sacrament I," *Luther's Works* 35:54.

³⁶ "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 6-8," *Luther's Works* 23:149.

495 **VIII. The ELCA's calling**

496

497 The ELCA's response in the face of gender-based violence is first and foremost to be prophetic,
 498 to declare that faith in the God who creates, redeems and sustains means saying no to such violence. As
 499 the ELCA affirms, "We care for the earth and serve the neighbor in society with the joyful confidence
 500 that God's faithfulness alone sustains the Church and renews our faith, hope, and love."³⁷

501 God calls this church to recognize the needs of victims, survivors, bystanders and perpetrators
 502 and to work within its power to address what causes and enables gender-based violence.³⁸ God calls the
 503 church to respond with care, accountability and education as well as to give attention to the social order
 504 through advocacy. Addressing gender-based violence is gospel-centered work; it is ministry.

505 *Respond to and prevent gender-based violence with care*

506 The ELCA commits itself to respond with swift and appropriate care and intervention with
 507 anyone experiencing gender-based violence. Situations of gender-based violence such as ongoing abuse
 508 are often volatile and can quickly escalate. In order to respond with safety and care for everyone
 509 involved, the ELCA is called to strengthen and empower individual, congregational and institutional
 510 responses.

511 **Congregations**

512 *The ELCA calls upon and encourages congregations to:*

- 513 • safely provide information for visitors and congregants on access to crisis care and safety
 514 plans.
- 515 • put in place and enforce congregational policies and practices that promote safe and
 516 healthy congregations.
- 517 • support survivors through local expert care giving and advocacy agencies with donations
 518 of goods, money and volunteer services. Survivors have very practical needs: safety; shelter, food, and
 519 clothing; mental health care; legal counsel; work and transportation; and child care and education.
- 520 • be clear with anyone experiencing gender-based violence that God's grace through Jesus
 521 Christ means that God condemns how they have been hurt.
- 522 • be clear with perpetrators that God calls them to repentance, accountability and the
 523 obligation to make amends.

³⁷ "The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective" (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1991), 10.

³⁸ The ELCA affirms, "This church must participate in social structures critically, for sin also is at work in the world. Social structures and processes combine life-giving and life-destroying dynamics in complex mixtures and in varying degrees. This church, therefore, must unite realism and vision, wisdom and courage, in its social responsibility. It needs constantly to discern when to support and when to confront society's cultural patterns, values, and powers. . . . As a prophetic presence, this church has the obligation to name and denounce the idols before which people bow, to identify the power of sin present in social structures, and to advocate in hope with poor and powerless people." See "The Church in Society," 4.

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524 • provide safe spaces for people to tell the truth of what happened to them and for them to
525 be believed.

526 *We commend congregations that:*

527 • care for survivors and people who might be vulnerable to gender-based violence through
528 any of the above means.

529 • support efforts to repent and recover on the part of those who have committed gender-
530 based violence.

531 *We call upon rostered and lay leaders of congregations to:*

532 • be prepared to respond to crises with the help of experts in the fields of gender-based
533 violence through training, education, dialogue and collaboration with local and national partners. This
534 will include education on appropriate interventions when gender-based violence occurs, including how
535 not to blame victims, preach forgiveness improperly, or reinforce unhealthy dynamics that enable gender-
536 based violence to occur.

537 • collaborate with local experts in care and advocacy in order to respond to survivors'
538 needs.

539 • care for people experiencing gender-based violence by believing them and helping them
540 to find the resources they need.

541 • preach about gender-based violence in order to speak the truth and care for others.

542 *We urge members in congregations in which other members experience gender-based violence,*
543 *or such violence occurs to:*

544 • speak the truth about what has or is happening.

545 • support networks of care and support.

546 • support, rather than blame, victims.

547 • love unceasingly, in the midst of pain, violence and ugliness, as a visible manifestation of
548 the love of Christ for all.

549 **Synods**

550 *The ELCA commends and encourages synods that*

551 • require training and education of their leaders on responding to and preventing all forms
552 of gender-based violence.

553 • partner with local experts and agencies to provide services to survivors and education for
554 the community.

555 *We encourage synods, their congregations, and other ministry sites on their territory to:*

- 556 • support education for congregations and pastors about laws and practices concerning
557 mandatory reporting of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence.

558 **Social ministry organizations**

559 *The ELCA commends social ministry organizations that:*

- 560 • provide care through protection and support of the many needs of survivors for safety and
561 well-being.

562 *Respond to and prevent gender-based violence with accountability*

563 Accountability assists in creating justice. This church is called to create, strengthen and use
564 policies and practices with strong means of accountability. This church is called to respond to assailants
565 by calling them to account for their actions. People who inflict gender-based violence need to be
566 accountable to the person they harmed, the families of survivors, society, and sometimes to the
567 community of faith. The ELCA has a role to play in changing the fact that the majority of perpetrators of
568 gender-based violence remain free and in communities. Accountability contributes to interrupting cycles
569 of violence.

570 Accountability for their actions is the first priority with assailants, yet many also need pastoral
571 care in a community of faith. When it is possible, pastors and other leaders may assist perpetrators with
572 confession and repentance even though this does not require or automatically assure forgiveness from the
573 survivor.

574 **Congregations**

575 *The ELCA calls upon and encourages congregations to:*

- 576 • Hold perpetrators accountable for their actions, including church leaders.
577 • Understand and uphold ELCA “Visions and Expectations.”

578 **Synods**

579 *The ELCA encourages synods, their congregations, and other ministry sites on their territory to:*

- 580 • provide and make public their policies on sexual harassment at public and sponsored
581 meetings and events.
582 • put in place transparent policies and practices that provide for safety, confidentiality and
583 due process for survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.

584 **Churchwide organization and ministries**

585 *The ELCA encourages the churchwide organization to:*

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586 • review its organizational policies and practices to ensure that they provide for safety,
587 confidentiality and due process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.

588 • review ELCA “Visions and Expectations” to ensure the text adequately expresses
589 standards and expectations regarding gender-based violence.

590 **Educational institutions**

591 *The ELCA encourages church-related educational institutions to*

592 • review or put in place policies and practices that ensure safety, confidentiality and due
593 process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.

594 **Social ministry organizations**

595 *The ELCA encourages church-related social ministry organizations to*

596 • review or put in place policies and practices that ensure safety, confidentiality and due
597 process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.

598 *Respond to and prevent gender-based violence through education*

599 Through ongoing education, the ELCA is called to respond to and prevent gender-based violence.

600 Some of this education is practical. It is also faith-based. Life-giving witness to the gospel in theology
601 and teaching gives life; it does not contribute to practices, laws and beliefs that enable gender-based
602 violence. Thus the ELCA is called to work among many and varied partners to discern roadblocks and
603 resources within the Lutheran theological and practical tradition through dialogue, study and action.

604 **Congregations**

605 *The ELCA calls upon its congregations and their leaders to*

606 • Engage in education through dialogue, analysis and careful study of the social and
607 religious factors that contribute to gender-based violence, including understandings about the roles and
608 characteristics of men and women, ideas about and images of God, ideas about salvation, the cross,
609 suffering, sin and grace.

610 • Learn about and be prepared to respond to the specific contexts, needs and characteristics
611 of various forms of gender-based violence.

612 • Learn about secular theories and practices to address gender-based violence and dialogue
613 with others.

614 • Support and teach about healthy relationships, including sexual relationships.

615 **Educational institutions**

616 *The ELCA encourages church-related colleges that have not done so to*

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- 617 • review their curriculum to break the silence by ensuring that matters regarding gender-
618 based violence are treated fully in courses appropriate to the subject matter.
- 619 • review the possibilities for events that encourage awareness among students of the nature
620 of gender-based violence and the means to dialogue.
- 621 • give appropriate attention to policies intended to curb gender-based violence and to foster
622 appropriate responses that avoid “re-victimization” of those who have suffered gender-based violence on
623 their campuses.

624 *The ELCA encourages seminaries to*

- 625 • include theological and practical preparation among seminarians that considers the
626 problems and resources found in Scripture and the Lutheran theological tradition.

627 *IX. The ELCA's social witness*

628
629 Bonded to Jesus Christ, this church announces that the God who justifies expects all
630 people and social institutions to do justice and to foster practices that serve the common good. Such
631 witness is given as Christians live out their callings as citizens or through the ELCA's various institutional
632 efforts as a public church.

633 This church is called to a social witness that is prophetic and includes robust advocacy.
634 That is, it is called to join its voice with and for those whose voices are often shunted aside in speaking
635 about what is needed to reduce gender-based violence. Such ministry must include advocacy for laws
636 that prevent gender-based violence, care for victims and survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and
637 empower efforts toward continual safeguards and change through local, state, federal and global
638 initiatives.

639 In the interplay of the social order a vast number of organizations and agents need to be
640 challenged toward prevention and reduction of gender-based violence. These include employers and
641 corporations, sporting organizations, public education, the healthcare system, public and private social
642 caregivers, the judicial system, the United States Armed Forces, members of the media, and leaders in
643 emerging social medias.

644 The changes needed will vary, obviously, according to the particular character of each
645 organization or system. Yet in each case the goals should reflect the development and application of
646 practices that protect, provide care, hold perpetrators accountable, and challenge mindsets. This church,
647 aware of its own sinfulness, will seek to witness to and urge the pursuit of such goals within the social
648 order, an order that ultimately answers to the God of justice.

649

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650 Toward that end:

651 **Congregations, leaders and members**

652 *The ELCA calls upon congregations, leaders and members to*

653 • be local advocates within schools, judicial systems, healthcare and social services for
654 transparent and appropriate responses to survivors and perpetrators and for measures to decrease the
655 possibilities of gender-based violence.

656 • collaborate with others to advocate for improvements.

657 • advocate for legislation that prevents and responds to gender-based violence.

658 • advocate for improved crisis response in their communities through dialogue and
659 partnership with various public services.

660 • advocate for improvements in social discourse and practice about the intersections of
661 gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation and age.

662 • serve as witnesses and advocates for individuals going through legal processes.

663 • speak words of both gospel and law that counter religious contributions to gender-based
664 violence.

665 • call for accountability from prosecutors, the judicial system, and those in power when
666 they fail to respond, appropriately, to gender-based violence in society or their institutions.

667 **Churchwide organization**

668 *The ELCA calls upon those who speak publically on its behalf to*

669 • advocate for legislative and administrative efforts that reduce gender-based violence,
670 provide care for victims and survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and empower people to work for
671 continual safeguards and change through local, state, federal and global initiatives.

672 • make clear in appropriate public address that this church opposes religious contributions
673 to gender-based violence.

674 **Social ministry organizations**

675 *The ELCA calls on social ministry organizations to*

676 • work from their experiences in ministry with survivors toward the passage of preventive
677 laws and the encouragement of alternative models of responding to gender-based violence.

678 • expand means that empower survivors of gender-based violence to be leaders for change,
679 advocates and caregivers on behalf of others also hurt by gender-based violence.

680

681 **Commitments for a new beginning**

682

683 The way forward for reducing and ending gender-based violence is long and multi-faceted. Each
684 survivor needs to be met at the point of their pain; each perpetrator needs to be held accountable for the
685 violence they commit. At the same time, addressing gender-based violence requires careful attention to
686 social and religious contributions since these and the personal experiences of violence are mutually
687 related.

688 This church commits itself to listen, with God, to the voices of those who have suffered gender-
689 based violence within society and within the ELCA. This church commits itself, by God's grace, to walk
690 new paths that alter past understanding of and inadequate responses to gender-based violence. This
691 church commits itself to stand for changes in the social order that will foster the flourishing of *every*
692 person's life since all people have been made *imago dei* (in God's image, Genesis 1:17).

693 Glossary

694

695 **Biological characteristics:** The physical and physiological traits that we often associate with either males
696 or females, but observation and research show that such physical and physiological traits do not
697 exclusively belong to one or the other. These traits include not just genitalia, but also body hair, facial
698 hair, height, muscle mass, body fat, body shape, breast tissue and the size of hands and feet, to name a
699 few. These traits often shape how people are perceived or identify in terms of their gender.

700

701 **Gender:** Categories into which cultures/societies separate behaviors and characteristics that are usually
702 considered masculine or feminine. The most common gender identities are *woman* and *man*, but other
703 identities exist and are becoming more widely used and understood.

704

705 **Gender non-conforming:** Within this message, we use gender non-conforming to refer to people whose
706 gender identity, gendered way of acting in the world, and biological characteristics do not completely fit
707 within predominantly expected ways of acting as a man or a woman. There are many different identities
708 and experiences included under the umbrella of gender non-conforming.

709

710 **Intersection:** The way that one form of oppression or privilege can be shaped by and can shape other
711 forms of oppression or privilege. This means that the oppression experienced by a lesbian woman of color
712 will be different than that experienced by an economically impoverished gender non-conforming white
713 person. Factors that can intersect with and thus influence the individual experiences of gender-based
714 oppression include: age, ability, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality/citizenship, social class,
715 economics and religion. Human identities are made up of many different intersections.

716

717 **Justice:** An underlying human sense about fairness, right treatment and reciprocity; there are many kinds
718 of justice people have in mind when they use the word. Some of them include: retributive justice,
719 corrective justice, distributive justice, restorative justice, structural justice, fair or equal treatment under
720 the law, ending oppression based on power differences, or biblical righteousness. In this document, the
721 term justice emphasizes the latter half of these meanings but always with the biblical emphasis on justice
722 as right relationship with God and within community.

723

724 **Patriarchy:** The social, institutional, legal, political, educational, economic, religious and interpersonal
725 systems of society that best serve men and the interests of men with status and power. While all people
726 within a patriarchal system participate in it, the system functions with men at the center. This means that,
727 sometimes unconsciously, people participate in systems that control and oppress women, girls, gender
728 non-conforming people, LGBTQ people, and all those who are not normative, heterosexual men.

729

730 Appendix: Global and National Statistics

731

- 732 • Globally, an estimated 30 percent of women who have been in a relationship have experienced
- 733 sexual or physical violence at the hands of their intimate partner.ⁱ
- 734 • Nationally, 25 percent of women over the age of 18 have experienced sexual or physical violence at
- 735 the hands of a current or former intimate partner.ⁱⁱ
- 736 • Nationally, race and ethnicity significantly affect the frequency of intimate partner violence.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 737 • Globally, an estimated 38 percent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.^{iv}
- 738 • Nationally, almost 33 percent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.^v
- 739 • Globally, one in five women will be a victim of attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.^{vi}
- 740 • Nationally, one in six women will be a victim of attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.^{vii}
- 741 • Nationally, 97 percent of rapes committed against adults (both men and women), are committed by
- 742 men.^{viii}
- 743 • Nationally, 60 percent of sexual assaults are not reported to the police and 97 percent of rapists will
- 744 never spend a day in jail.^{ix}
- 745 • Nationally, 83 percent of girls aged 12 to 16 have experienced some form of sexual harassment in
- 746 public schools.^x
- 747 • Nationally, of those people who express a gender non-conforming identity while in grades K-12, 78
- 748 percent are made the victim of harassment, 35 percent are made the victim of physical assault, and
- 749 12 percent are made the victim of sexual violence.^{xi}
- 750 • Nationally, 25 percent of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people have been the victim of rape, and 72
- 751 percent have been the victim of other forms of sexual violence.^{xii}
- 752 • Nationally, an estimated 20-25 percent of lesbian and gay people experience hate violence within
- 753 their lifetimes.^{xiii}
- 754 • Nationally, of gender- and sexuality-based hate crime homicides in 2012, 53 percent of victims
- 755 were transgender women.^{xiv}
- 756 • Nationally, of gender- and sexuality-based hate crime homicides in 2012, 73 percent of victims
- 757 were people of color.^{xv}
- 758 • Nationally, in 2013, white men were more likely than any other racial and ethnic demographic to be
- 759 perpetrators of gender- and sexuality-based hate violence. Of all men who perpetrate gender- and
- 760 sexuality-based hate violence, the majority by age were 19 to 29 years old.^{xvi}
- 761

ⁱ World Health Organization, “Violence against Women: Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women,” WHO, last modified October 2013, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>.

ⁱⁱ According to this survey, almost 64 percent of women who reported being raped, physically assaulted, and/or stalked since the age of 18 were targeted by a current or former husband, cohabiting partner, boyfriend, or date. Likewise, those reporting assaults within the past year averaged more than three assaults per year. See Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2000), iii.

ⁱⁱⁱ According to *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence*, women of color are more likely to be victimized than average, with American Indian/Alaskan Native women experiencing significantly higher rates of intimate partner violence (37.5 percent) than do women of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. According to the Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence, 41-60 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander women experience Intimate Partner Violence, “Statistics on Violence against API Women,” *APIIDV*, accessed Sept. 4, 2014, <http://www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php>. See A. Raj and J. Silverman, “Intimate Partner Violence against South-Asian Women in Greater Boston,” *Journal of the American Medical Women’s Association* 57, no. 2 (2002): 111-114, and Mieko Yoshihama, “Domestic Violence against Women of Japanese Descent in Los Angeles: Two Methods of Estimating Prevalence,” *Violence Against Women* 5, no. 8 (1999):869-

897, cited in “Statistics on Violence Against API Women,” *APIIDV*, accessed Sept. 4, 2014, <http://www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php>.

^{iv} World Health Organization, “Violence Against Women.”

^v Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports “Crime in the United States, 2000,” (2001), cited in National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “Domestic Violence Facts,” *NCADV*, accessed Aug. 28, 2014.

^{vi} United Nations, “Ending Violence against Women and Girls,” *Resources for Speakers on Global Issues*, accessed Aug. 28, 2014, <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/endviol/>.

^{vii} Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1998), 11.

^{viii} Percentage was calculated from data in Tjaden and Thoennes, *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women*, 47.

^{ix} The 3 percent statistic has been calculated by taking reporting rates into consideration. See, *National Crime Victimization Survey*, Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008-2012, and *Felony Defendants in Large Urban Countries*, Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice, 2002-2006, cited in “Reporting Rates,” *RAINN*, accessed Sept. 5, 2014, <https://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates>.

^x American Association of University Women, “Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School,” (Washington, D.C.: AAUW, 2001), 20-21, cited in United Nations, “Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women,” *UNWomen.org*, accessed Aug. 28, 2014, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

^{xi} Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A Mottet, and Justin Tanis with Jack Harrison, Jody L. Merman, and Mara Keisling, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), 3.

^{xii} Of the 25 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual people who have been the victim of rape, survey statistics showed that all of them were lesbian or bisexual women. Both percentages were found from our own calculations of survey data from Mikel L. Walters, Jieru Chen, and Matthew J. Breiding, *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation* (Atlanta, Ga.: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013), 6-11.

^{xiii} Shelby Chestnut, Ejeris Dixon, and Chai Jindasurant, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2012* (New York, N.Y.: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2013), 10-13.

^{xiv} *Ibid.*, 8.

^{xv} *Ibid.*

^{xvi} The most recent studies of hate violence show that in 2013 39 percent of perpetrators were perceived as white by victims, as opposed to other various racial or ethnic backgrounds, 72.45 percent were male as opposed to female or transgender, and 30.7 percent were between 19 and 29 years old. See Osman Ahmed and Chai Jindasurant, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2013* (New York, N.Y.: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2014), 51-53.

Hearing the Cries: Criminal Justice Social Statement **Progress Report of Implementing Resolutions**

Education

Race & Criminal Justice was a plenary presentation during the 2014 joint North/West Lower Michigan and Southeast Michigan Synod assemblies by ELCA Program Director for Racial Justice.

Planning is underway in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, in partnership with Congregational and Synodical Mission, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, the African Descent Lutheran Association Philadelphia Chapter and Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania will sponsor a daylong gathering to equip congregations to accompany individuals and families impacted by incarceration. The event is scheduled for June 6, 2015. Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, will deliver the keynote.

The theme of mass incarceration education will be included in the strategic plans of the ethnic associations.

Work is underway toward the development of a study guide to *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries*. A writer and design company have been contracted to craft the study guide as an interactive pdf that will include several varied length curriculum sessions, multiple audience entry points, video clips, and leader's guide. The resource will be available on the ELCA web site, or for purchase as a flash drive or in print. Target date for completion is April of 2015.

Resources

Lutheran Men in Mission have provided free copies of New Testament translation bibles in Spanish for outreach ministry to formerly incarcerated individuals.

A Bible study prepared for the African Descent Lutheran Association will focus on the issue of incarceration and its impact on communities of African descent. The Bible study will be featured in the fall 2014 newsletter of the association.

The ecumenical resource "Healing the Community" provides a framework for churches to be stations of hope. Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this resource has been implemented in over 20 sites nationally. This model is currently used in Southeastern Pennsylvania, Lower Susquehanna and Southeastern synods.

New Start Congregations

A partnership of the ELCA and the Prison Congregations of America (PCA) connects synodical bishops, Directors for Evangelical Mission and local leaders in starting ministries with incarcerated individuals and/or with formerly incarcerated people as they reintegrate into society. The Church of the Damascus Road prison ministry is the first PCA in the state of Texas. The congregation is part of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana mission area.

Living Gospel Ministry, located in the northwest community of Philadelphia, provides life skills, employment search assistance and help with accessing government benefits to formerly incarcerated individuals and their families.

Accompaniment

The Intersection, a congregation located in Dorchester, Massachusetts, provides educational preparation classes for adults preparing to take the Massachusetts State High School Equivalency Test (formerly known as the GED). This initiative is specifically intended to be a resource for returning citizens but will be available to any adult in need of obtaining a GED.

Advocacy

The ELCA Washington Office is part of an interfaith coalition for smarter sentencing reform. In June 2014, they issued an action alert for support of *Smarter Sentencing Act*. This bipartisan legislation would reduce racially disparate mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses and allow current prisoners serving outdated sentences for crack cocaine offenses to apply for a sentence reduction.

The ELCA State Public Policy Office in California is advocating for sentencing policy reform. California Prop 47 is on the ballot for November 2, 2014. If approved by the state's voters, this law would reduce the classification of most "non-serious and nonviolent property and drug crimes" from a felony to a misdemeanor.

In 2013 The ELCA was able to formally sign on as an official supporter of the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth on the basis of the social statement *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries*.

Synod staff members report sharing copies of and text from *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* in advocacy efforts with legislators in several states, states as diverse as New Jersey or Mississippi.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The action directed by Implementing Resolution #8 of *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* to develop a social investment screen on private prison operations was undertaken by the CSR consultant under the auspices of churchwide organization's inter-unit CSR Review Team. Following normal protocol for the development of a screen, the process involved review by Church Council, Conference of Bishops and staff at Portico Benefit Services. The adoption of this screen is expected at the November 2014 meeting of the Church Council after a final review by its Program and Services Committee.

Ecumenism

The ELCA is working within the National Council on interreligious relations with a focus on peace and mass incarceration. The 2014 Christian Unity Gathering focused on Mass Incarceration and what we can do together ecumenically to help contribute to a solution to this crisis.

Breaking the Chains: Mass Incarceration & Systems of Exploitation will be the 2015 Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) theme. The event will take place in Washington D.C. from April 17-20, 2015. Over 1,000 participants will gather to build a movement to shake the foundations of systems of human exploitation (Acts 16:16-40), including a prison-industrial system that incarcerates millions of people in the U.S. and abroad.

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA
Youth and Young Adults Ministries Case Statement

As a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and life, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) offers a variety of opportunities for youth and young adults to grow in, explore, claim and reclaim their faith and baptismal identity. We are a church that believes youth and young adults are not the future – they are the present – and as a church, we need to continually find ways to move youth and young adults into the full life of our church.

The Case

Through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, we have the opportunity to expand our ministries with youth and young adults to engage a population seeking authentic community and opportunities to serve their neighbors. Through this expansion, we will cultivate young leaders, lift up the importance of diversity and inclusion, and build a robust network of support for youth and young adults in our church.

How

Raise \$4 million to be used in two categories:

- **\$1 million** to make an annual \$250,000 investment in youth and young adult ministry for four consecutive years beginning in 2015. These funds would be spent during the life of the campaign in the form of grants for youth and young adult ministry initiatives by individuals, congregations, synods and partner ministries.
- **\$3 million** to start a permanent ELCA endowment fund. Income generated by the fund would be granted for youth and young adult ministry initiatives by individuals, congregations, synods, partner ministries and the churchwide organization. The endowment fund would also extend the life of the campaign well beyond the initial four years and provide a way to solicit and receive additional contributions in the future.
- Establish an ongoing grant process, administered by the churchwide organization and staffed by a representative group of network partners, which would solicit grant requests and make decisions on grant allocations based on clearly-established criteria.

Objectives

- Provide funding for leadership internships with Lutheran Services in America (LSA), in partnership with Lutheran Colleges and Universities and Lutheran Campus Ministry.
- Award individual scholarships for young adults participating in opportunities that support the cultivation of young leaders, including Lutheran Immersion and Formation Experiences (LIFE), Abundant Life Together, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, Urban Servant Corps, Border Servant Corps, Young Adults in Global Mission and others. Priority will be given to applicants from under-represented groups, especially persons of color and communities of poverty.
- Create and maintain a robust network of support for youth and young adult ministry and vocational discernment that includes former young adult program participants, partner communities, military and other federal chaplains and other supportive individuals. Leverage available technology to create dynamic online communities and support fundraising efforts.
- Administer a grants program aligned with objectives to support:
 - lay vocational exploration and engagement in lay theological education programs,
 - relationship-building between different racial, ethnic, economic and geographic groups,

- social entrepreneurship efforts initiated by youth and young adult community leaders and other bold pilot projects to advance objectives,
 - leadership development opportunities for youth and young adults of color, and
 - capacity building with partner communities such as Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM), Lutheran Campus Ministry Network (LCMNet), ELCA Youth Ministry Network, and Synodical Youth Ministry Band of Leaders (SYMBOL).
- Grow leadership development and faith formation opportunities that build momentum and strengthen partnerships through churchwide ministries, the annual Youth Leadership Summit and the ELCA Youth Gathering.

In summary

With the \$4 million goal for Youth and Young Adults within *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, we can make a tremendous impact throughout this church and society. With this campaign, we can equip and empower young leaders, cultivate a culture of diversity and inclusion and create a dynamic community of supportive adults and peers to move youth and young adults into the full life of our church.

Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA
Disability Ministries Case Statement

As a church committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is called to welcome all people in all its congregations and ministries into full participation as baptized members of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:14-26). This church believes that God, as creator, redeemer and sustainer, intends that we regard all people as of equal worth and make it possible for all—those without and those with disabilities—to participate freely and fully as members of society in all important aspects of common life.

Mission

Because of God's gift of grace in Christ and our call as followers of Jesus, we as members of the ELCA commit ourselves to work toward the full, just and equitable involvement of people living with disabilities in our congregations and in society.

The Case

Through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, we have the opportunity to expand our ministries with people living with disabilities to become an inclusive, whole community of faith by connecting and equipping members and congregations with the resources necessary to welcome all of God's people.

• **Serve as a Convener**

The ELCA calls upon congregations to encourage and support individuals with disabilities so they may participate fully in the life of the congregation and together all may experience being the body of Christ. In order to support congregations in this work, the churchwide organization will strengthen its efforts to publicize existing resources and provide support to synods, congregations, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, church-related educational institutions and communities of people with disabilities in the ELCA to create connections and convene networks of support that would otherwise not exist.

Objectives:

- Networks – Lift up faithful stories from around the church in regards to disability ministries and share these best practices for others to follow; use the extensive network of expertise, resources and tools of Lutheran Services of America; bring together people interested in disability ministry on a national level.
- Advocacy – Listen to partners, create easy access to their services, celebrate their journeys; serve as advocates as individuals and in congregations, communities, and at the state and federal level.
- Resources – Create a database of pooled resources to better equip our congregations with relevant, practical information.

- **Develop Leaders**

The leadership of people with disabilities is a critical aspect of becoming an inclusive, whole community of faith. Congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization are urged to call upon and support individuals with disabilities to assume more leadership responsibilities in all aspects of a congregation's life, ministry and governance.

Objectives:

- Equip/Sensitize – Working with others, provide workshops for seminaries, lay schools, synods and the Conference of Bishops on serving people with disabilities, including sections on theology and disability.
- Provide Internships – Designate internship positions at the churchwide office specifically for people with disabilities; encourage synods to do the same.
- Encourage participation in the wider church, for example, by providing scholarships to:
 - Churchwide Assembly
 - Synod Assembly
 - National Youth Gathering
 - One God One Call Conference
 - LSA Annual Conference
 - Summer Institute of Theology and Disability

In summary

With the \$4 million goal for Disability Ministries within *The Campaign for the ELCA*, we can make a tremendous impact throughout this church and society. With this campaign, we can equip congregations to open their doors to all, make information readily available on how to find resources to better serve people living with disabilities, recognize and train new leaders, and reach out to communities to embrace and invite people living with disabilities into this church.

Progress Report of the Word and Service Task Force

In the previous three updates to rostered leaders of the ELCA from the Word and Service Task Force, the following information from various *working documents* was included:

- The working title of ELCA Deacon for the new roster
- The working core values of the new roster which emphasize a prophetic diakonia that commits itself to risk-taking and innovative service on the frontiers of the church's outreach, giving particular attention to the suffering places in God's world
- The automatic transfer of all members (including on leave from call, on disability or retired) on the current three rosters unless they choose to resign from the roster
- A theological master's degree as the educational norm for service on the new unified roster
- For those who do not hold a theological master's degree, the Candidacy Committee may request an equivalency competency assessment.

Information stating the following was also sent to all those working with the candidacy process: *If the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly approves the proposal to move to a new roster of Deacons, then those candidates who have been endorsed by August 8, 2016 shall be allowed to finish their candidacy process under the standards in place at the time of their endorsement. These requirements must be completed no later than August of 2020.*

Responses to the three updates have been encouraged and received. There have been conversations with members of the present lay rosters at their various gatherings. An article concerning the new unified roster is now posted in the SEEDS section of *Living Lutheran*. Task Force members are working on a FAQ sheet to encourage further conversations throughout the church.

The necessary constitutional changes to move to one unified Word and Service roster are being prepared through the Office of the Secretary.

The Entrance Rite team, which came out of the work of the Word and Service Task Force, began its work this past summer and met again in October. Believing that discernment is at the heart of their work, the members now call themselves the Entrance Rite Discernment Group. Bishop Gafkjen serves as chair.

The Word and Service Task Force continues to work on the candidacy pieces for the new roster. This includes working documents dealing with formation and internship. However, none of the candidacy pieces will come to the Churchwide Assembly in 2016. If the proposal to move the present three lay rosters to one unified roster of Word and Service is passed along with the necessary constitutional changes, then the working documents could be shared with the team working on the new Candidacy Manual.

According to the timeline presented in all the updates, the Word and Service Task Force will submit a draft proposal/recommendation for the unification of the present three lay rosters into one new unified roster to the spring 2015 Conference of Bishops and Church Council meetings.

Publishing House of the ELCA (Augsburg Fortress)

Submitted by Beth A. Lewis

Strategic Focus

Augsburg Fortress, the ministry of publishing of the ELCA, has made significant changes in recent years in response to the shifting landscapes of both North American church life and the publishing industry. These are exciting, but challenging times for denominational publishers. To address these rapidly changing needs, we have focused our ministry and business of publishing in these categories and under these three imprints: worship & music resources and Lutheran faith formation resources from [Augsburg Fortress](#); ecumenical faith formation resources from [sparkhouse](#); and books and digital resources for adult learners and leaders from [Fortress Press](#).

Resources for Congregations (Worship and Music)

The Augsburg Fortress and churchwide worship teams continue to work closely together to craft worship resources specifically for ELCA congregations and other ministries. Among the key resources published in 2014 is the fourth edition of the classic resource [Altar Guild and Sacristy Handbook](#) by Anita Stauffer. This book is a part of our growing collection of [Worship Matters](#) resources.

In addition, in October this team will launch a new resource, [Sundays and Seasons: Preaching](#). It provides new commentary and ideas for proclamation based on the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). This resource has been created from several perspectives.

[PreludeMusicPlanner.org](#) continues to gain a loyal following among church musicians. This web-based subscription resource allows worship leaders the opportunity to search for music by keyword, RCL date, Bible readings, themes, music type or genre, voicing or instrumentation, musician skill level, composer and other options.

Resources for Congregations (Faith Formation)

The sparkhouse team has published several exciting new faith formation resources in 2014 with learner, leader and video components. These include new lessons for [Holy Moly](#) and [Connect](#), for children and tweens, respectively.

New from sparkhouse this year are our RCL-based [Whirl](#) Sunday School for children and [Echo the Story 36](#), a dynamic video- and print-based resource to teach the Biblical narrative to youth. In addition, the third part of our adult faith formation resource, [animate.practices](#), launched this summer.

By far the largest sparkhouse initiative this summer was [sparkhouse Online](#), a new subscription-based resource that incorporates content from our children's faith formation resources ([Spark](#), [Holy Moly](#), [Connect](#) and [Whirl](#)), plus robust classroom planning, administration and communications tools.

Resources for Higher Education

Fortress Press (FP) continues to expand the number of books and digital resources published for adult learners and leaders. In just the past couple of years FP has expanded from approximately 70 titles per year to over 100. One new series that is particularly exciting is [Foundations for Learning](#), intended for first-year seminary students or those who are considering seminary education.

A few of our many new Fortress Press publications since the April ELCA Church Council meeting include the following:

- [Empowering Memory and Movement: Thinking and Working across Borders](#); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; Both*
- [Before Nature: A Christian Spirituality](#); H. Paul Santmire; Both
- [The Bible: An Introduction, Second Edition](#); Jerry L. Sumney; Print, ebook, Inkling
- [A Study Companion to The Bible: An Introduction, Second Edition](#); Anthony Le Donne; Both
- [Reading Theologically](#); Eric D. Barreto, series editor; Both
- [Behind the Gospels: Understanding the Oral Tradition](#); Eric Eve; Both

- [*By Bread Alone: The Bible through the Eyes of the Hungry*](#); Sheila E. McGinn, Lai Ling Elizabeth Ngan, and Ahida Calderón Pilarski, eds.; Both
- [*From Despair to Faith: The Spirituality of Søren Kierkegaard*](#); Christopher B. Barnett; Both
- [*Between Magisterium and Marketplace: A Constructive Account of Theology and the Church*](#); Robert C. Saler; Both
- [*Saving Beauty: A Theological Aesthetics of Nature*](#); Kathryn B. Alexander; Both
- [*Jürgen Moltmann: Collected Readings*](#); Jürgen Moltmann, Margaret Kohl (editor), writer of Introduction is Richard Bauckham; Both
- [*Political Augustinianism: Modern Interpretations of Augustine's Political Thought*](#); Michael J. S. Bruno; Both
- [*The World in the Trinity: Open-Ended Systems in Science and Religion*](#); Joseph A. Bracken, S.J.; Both
- [*Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, Second Edition*](#); John J. Collins; Print, ebook, Inkling
- [*A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, Second Edition*](#); John J. Collins; Both
- [*Reviving the Congregation: Pastoral Leadership in a Changing Context*](#); Michael W. Foss; Both
- [*Breaking Bread, Breaking Beats: Churches and Hip-Hop—A Basic Guide to Key Issues*](#); The CERCL Writing Collective; Both
- [*Luther on Faith and Love: Christ and the Law in the 1535 Galatians Commentary*](#); Sun-young Kim; Both
- [*Fortress Commentary on the Bible: The Old Testament and Apocrypha*](#); Gale A. Yee, Hugh R. Page Jr., and Matthew J. M. Coomber, Editors; Both (ebook coming Q1 2015)
- [*Fortress Commentary on the Bible: The New Testament*](#); Margaret Aymer, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and David A. Sánchez, Editors; Both (ebook coming Q1 2015)
- [*Indexes and Supplementary Materials: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 17*](#); Edited by Victoria J. Barnett and Barbara Wojhoski, with the assistance of Mark S. Brocker; Both (ebook coming Q1 2015)
- [*The Reformation to the Modern Church: A Reader in Christian Theology*](#); Keith D. Stanglin, editor; Print

**Both means both Print & eBook formats*

Warehousing and Fulfillment

The unit report for the April ELCA Church Council meeting noted that we were approximately two-thirds of the way done with moving over 2,000,000 items from our distribution center in Grove City, Ohio to our new outsourced distribution partner, [Professional Book Distributors Worldwide, Inc.](#) (PBD) in Bolingbrook, Illinois. While any transition of this size and complexity has a few bumps along the way, the operation is now providing excellent service for our customers at a significantly reduced cost.

New Office

As of October 6, Augsburg Fortress has a new home! Augsburg Fortress and Fortress Press share the 8th floor, and sparkhouse has one-half of the 7th floor with an open staircase between the two spaces. The space is very contemporary, open and welcoming. The building, 510 Marquette Avenue South, is located at the corner of 5th Street S and Marquette Avenue in downtown Minneapolis. Should your travels bring you to the Twin Cities, please let us know so that we may welcome you and provide you with a tour of our new workspace!

Summary

Thank you for your interest in and continuing support of your ministry of publishing! We welcome suggestions from our partners in ministry from across this church. Please send your thoughts or questions to Beth Lewis at ceo@augsbuorg.org.

Augsburg Fortress, Publishing House of the ELCA Digest of Board Actions

Submitted by Beth A. Lewis

Dates of Board Meetings: May 2-3, 2014 and October 17-18, 2014

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

None.

Category 2: Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit

Voted to approve the minutes of the October 18-19, 2013 and December 17, 2013 Board of Trustees meetings in open session. (PH.14.05.01)

Voted to receive the 2013 financial statements audit report as submitted. (PH.14.05.02)

Voted to reappoint McGladrey as external auditors for the audit of the 2014 and 2015 financial statements of Augsburg Fortress, the Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (PH.14.05.03)

Voted to elect Linda Brown and Tim Maudlin for one year extensions ending August 31, 2015, to their terms as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, of the Augsburg Fortress Board of Trustees, and to elect Clint Schnekloth, class of 2015, to serve on the Board Development Committee of the Board of Trustees. (PH.14.05.04)

Voted to amend the Augsburg Fortress bylaws as follows: SECTION 5.1 Tenure of office. The officers of this corporation shall be a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, an Executive Director, one or more Vice Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer and such other officers as the Board of Trustees may from time to time designate. The Executive Director shall be elected to a four-year term in consultation with and with the approval of the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA and shall be eligible for re-election. Officers, other than the Executive Director and the Vice Presidents, shall normally be elected by the Board of Trustees to serve for terms of three years in alignment with the triennial ELCA Churchwide Assembly cycle and until their respective successors are chosen and have qualified. Officers are eligible for re-election by the Board of Trustees. Any officer may at any time be removed by the Board of Trustees with or without cause; provided, however, that the Executive Director may be removed only in consultation with and upon the approval of the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. The same person may hold more than one office at the same time, except the offices of (a) Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, and (b) Executive Director and Vice President. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary shall be members of the Board of Trustees, but other officers need not be trustees of this corporation. (PH.14.05.05)

Voted to elect Ms. Beth Lewis to a fourth four-year term as president and chief executive officer, beginning effective September 1, 2014, in keeping with bylaw 17.40.03 in the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and that the chair of the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the presiding bishop of the ELCA, prepare and execute, upon approval by the board's Executive Committee, a contract for the service of Ms. Lewis as president and chief executive officer for the period commencing September 1, 2014. (PH.14.05.06)

Voted to approve the minutes of the May 2-3, 2014 Board of Trustees meeting in open session. (PH.14.10.01)

Executive Session actions

Voted to approve the minutes from the October 18-19, 2013 and December 17, 2013 Board of Trustees meetings in *executive* session. (ES/PH.14.05.01)

Voted to authorize Augsburg Fortress to use \$1,000,000 from the board restricted fund to launch sparkhouse Consumer with work commencing October 2014. (ES/PH.14.10.01)

Voted to approve the minutes of the May 2-3, 2014 Board of Trustees meeting in executive session. (ES/PH.14.10.02)

Voted that management's decisions around the timing and usage of this board reserve fund in 2014 will not be charged against the Balanced Scorecard measure #1 goal for the purposes of staff incentive achievement for calendar year 2014. (ES/PH.14.10.03)

Voted to approve the Augsburg Fortress Philosophy of Total Rewards for Executives document dated August 2014. (ES/PH.14.10.04)

Category 3: Other procedures and board actions

None.

Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM)

Submitted by Doug Haugen

The vision of Lutheran Men in Mission is for every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ. The mission is, by God's grace, to help congregations build life-changing ministries with men; to strengthen men's faith and relationships for witness and service; to equip followers of Jesus Christ through events, resources and leadership development.

Events

Since the last ELCA Church Council meeting, Lutheran Men in Mission has conducted one "One Year to Live" retreat. One Year to Live is a retreat model developed by Lyman Coleman in cooperation with Lutheran Men in Mission. The retreat is designed to help men take an honest look at their faith, what is keeping them from experiencing God more fully, and what they believe God is calling them to do for the rest of their lives within the safety of a small group. The retreat is completely "lay led" as all the small group facilitators and staff members have been participants in earlier retreats. Over 700 men have now experienced the "One Year to Live" weekend. The intent is to eventually bring this to every synod.

The Lutheran Men in Mission Assembly (business meeting) was held at the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel July 17-18, 2014 followed by "Guys, Guts and God's Glory", the Lutheran Men's Gathering, July 18-20, 2014. From the responses we have received thus far, this may have been the most impactful gathering we have ever had. In fact, this was the largest offering we have ever received at an event.

Leadership

Lutheran Men in Mission's goal in the next five years is to generate a network that anyone can come to with questions on male issues and the "how tos" of men's ministry. To that end, we have brought together 23 of the most creative "out-of-the-box" thinkers on men's ministry from various ethnicities, ages and geographic areas. With just one meeting completed, we are well on our way toward fulfilling that vision by utilizing social media, accessing networks within the ELCA and beyond, developing strategies and resources and holding events that reach all men for Christ.

"Building Men for Christ" is training designed to help rostered and lay leaders, male and female, to see ministry with and to men as an integral part of overall congregational ministry and helps them reach and activate men for the congregation's ministry and outreach. Like "One Year to Live," this one-day workshop continues to spread to new areas. Five hundred leaders have now been trained at 27 events. Please go to www.lutheranmeninmission.org for the updated schedules of "One Year to Live" and "Building Men for Christ."

Resources

The *Master Builders Bible for Men* continues to be our strongest resource, with over 57,000 in circulation, and we are producing 7,500 more. Along with the study questions written in the margins, what makes this resource unique is the thirty-two page section for men's ministry leaders.

LMM has distributed 25,000 *El Nuevo Testamentos* to Spanish-speaking ministries through our synod and congregational men's ministries.

ManTalk is a deck of playing cards designed to help men engage in meaningful (and fun) conversation. Four categories of questions deal with relationships, sports and leisure, lessons and reflections, and ethics and spirituality.

The most recent issue of the *foundations* newsletter focuses on the Lutheran Men's Gathering, "Guys, Guts and God's Glory," that was held last summer. *foundations* is distributed to approximately 8,000 men.

New Staff

Lutheran Men in Mission operates with three full-time staff, and we are happy to welcome a new contract staff person, Craig Corbin. Craig is serving as our Director of Development and is overseeing our growing donor and income base. Welcome Craig!

Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA (MIF)

Submitted by Eva M. Roby

Financial Update

The Mission Investment Fund, the ELCA's sole lending ministry, remains focused on its mission to serve the ELCA in all its expressions. Total assets rose to \$666.9 million as of August 31, 2014, up from \$660.1 million at year-end 2013. Net assets, or equity, rose to \$193.8 million at August 31, 2014, up from \$190.2 million at year-end 2013. Our capital ratio remains a solid 29 percent, a testimonial to this organization's strength and stability.

Loans to congregations and ELCA-related ministries for capital projects declined to \$454.1 million at August 31 from \$464.4 million at year-end 2013 primarily due to the refinancing of one large loan with another lender. At August 31, 2014, MIF had 776 loans outstanding.

Total investment obligations increased to \$467.8 million as of August 31, 2014, from \$464.3 million at year-end 2013. Contributing to the gain were two million-dollar investments—both by ministries that are first-time investors in MIF.

Marketing

One of MIF's ongoing strategic goals is to increase awareness of and participation in MIF by ELCA congregations, their members and related ministries. Our marketing efforts—including communications via website, direct mail, publications, advertising and ELCA events—are ever focused on this goal.

This past spring, MIF's Chicago-based and deployed staff represented MIF at 58 ELCA synod assemblies. Recent direct mail campaigns promoted MIF ministry loans as well as MIF Term and Demand Investments for individuals, congregations and ministries. This year, in addition to advertising in ELCA publications such as *The Lutheran* and *Gather*, MIF focused on online opportunities with newspapers in Minneapolis, Fargo and Philadelphia. These markets have high concentrations of ELCA Lutherans.

Key Initiatives

We are midway through the work toward accomplishing the initiatives outlined in our 2013-2015 strategic plan. In August, we opened a new call center to provide our customers with more immediate access to customer service representatives—and answers to their inquiries. We introduced an array of new features for customers who use MIF online services. These enhancements are key to attracting a younger, more tech-savvy market and provide useful tools for completing daily transactions as well as financial planning.

Partnerships

As we work to serve the mission and goals of the ELCA in all of its expressions, MIF has provided financial support to two key ELCA conferences in recent months. In cooperation with the Office of the Treasurer, MIF funded and played a key role in organizing in late September the first conference held in many years for synod treasurers. This was held in Philadelphia from September 25-27, 2014. These sessions covered the fiduciary responsibility of treasurers and presented an excellent opportunity for MIF to discuss investments and loans. MIF also provided funding for a meeting of synod vice presidents in conjunction with the Conference of Bishops in early October at the Lutheran Center in Chicago. This offered another opportunity to increase awareness of MIF with key synod leaders.

The Mission Investment Fund is also working closely with the ELCA churchwide office to create an ELCA-sponsored credit union to offer more financial choices for members and congregations. The National Credit Union Administration is in the final stages of reviewing the application for a credit union charter.

Looking Ahead

As we are about to enter the third year of our strategic plan, MIF is continuing its work on key strategic initiatives. In addition, we have begun planning the process for the development of the 2016-18 Strategic Plan, and we will focus on this process at the MIF Board of Trustees meeting in October. We are confident that the brightening economy will fuel new building projects, and MIF, the expert in church building, is prepared for the opportunity.

Portico Benefit Services

Submitted by Jeffrey D. Thiemann

This summary from Portico Benefit Services provides a brief overview of several topics, including: two percent discount, Portico's impact at synod assemblies, brand review, pilot health plan choices for Portico employees, operational efficiencies, legal update, outreach pilot programs, investment market news and Portico's ongoing support for the ELCA Fund for Leaders.

Two Percent Discount: We've Arrived!

In 2014, nearly all eligible ELCA entities earned the two percent discount: 63 synods, six seminaries and three churchwide ministries. Collectively, we saved \$2.3 million.

Having Impact at Synod Assemblies

Portico leaders and regional representatives attended 60 synod assemblies in 2014. We have heard from the Conference of Bishops that our presence is important. Next year, we also intend to furnish a one-page "annual report," which we hope can be included in the assembly materials.

Brand Review: Time to Activate

To assess how we are viewed as an organization and identify ways to more powerfully live out our values and brand, Portico invested in a brand review which reinforced that our faith component is what makes us unique. Our ministry is doing more than offering benefits; it is helping our members toward wellness. Our members seek relationships, not just transactions, based on shared values, transparency, fiscal responsibility and personalized service.

Pilot: Portico Employees Can Choose Gold+ or Silver+

Data has shown that when members are in charge of their own health care, they understand their plan and coverage better, use their benefits more efficiently, and lead a healthier lifestyle. A High Deductible Health Plan paired with a Health Savings Account (Portico's Silver+ and Bronze+ health benefit options) puts members more in charge by allowing them to reap benefits from staying in good health and spending health care dollars wisely.

To learn more about member response to this concept, we are launching a two-year pilot. Portico employees this year and next will have a choice between the Gold+ and Silver+ health plan options. While the Gold+ option is recommended by the ELCA Church Council, we know that some employees will opt for the benefits of the Silver+ option with the highest level contribution to an HSA, which provides similar actuarial value to the plan member. Using this test group, Portico intends to learn if members do understand their coverage better, use their benefits more efficiently and tend toward a healthier lifestyle.

Operational Efficiencies Achieved

Portico's operating and capital expenses were under budget through the period ending June 30, 2014. As a result:

- Retirement Plan Expense Ratio forecast is on target at 0.67 percent. Compare this to the average expense ratio of Lipper peer group mixed-asset target allocation moderate funds at 1.39 percent, as of December 31, 2013.¹
- Health plan expense ratio is 11.5 percent, under the budgeted 12.4 percent. When compared to external benchmarks, we are among the most efficient stewards of health care dollars in the U.S.

¹ Lipper data obtained from Wilshire Associates, Inc. (Wilshire Compass). All of the mutual fund information contained herein was supplied by Lipper, a Thomson Reuters Company, subject to the following: Copyright 2013 © Reuters. All rights reserved. Lipper shall not be liable for any errors or delays in the content, or for any actions taken in reliance thereon.

Legal Update

- Portico continues legislative efforts as part of the Church Alliance to enable clergy and lay employees enrolled in church health plans to receive the same tax credits as other individuals. Traction, to date, is minimal.
- The much-publicized case regarding housing allowances remains in the Seventh District Court of Appeals. Portico continues to advocate for the clergy housing allowance. While the court has not yet ruled, a lawyer with the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty recently commented: “The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago appeared Tuesday (September 9, 2014) to lean toward either dismissing the case because the allowance’s challengers lack legal standing or upholding the allowance as constitutional.”

Outreach Pilot Programs

In search of new ways to support healthy leaders for ministry, Portico representatives are implementing pilot programs now and during 2015 in partnership with a variety of synods and regions. These pilots will involve retirees, rostered leader spouses, call committees, candidacy committees, members under the age of 40 and synod staffs.

Investment Market News

Most primary investment markets have positive returns for the year through August, led by the U.S. stock market which returned more than nine percent during that time.

- Non-U.S. stocks have returned five percent year to date, driven by strong returns from emerging markets.
- With interest rates moderating, the total return for the investment grade bond market has advanced to 4.8 percent year to date, and high yield bonds returned 5.7 percent as yield premiums continued to tighten.

The overall Portico investment program performed well relative to objectives and to comparable funds year to date.

- The balanced funds benefited from broad diversification, including allocations to high yield bonds and alternative investments such as private equity and real assets, which boosted returns as they returned more than publicly traded stocks and bonds during the period. For example, the 60e Balanced Fund returned 7.65 percent through August 2014. Comparable mutual fund returns centered around less than six percent over that same period.
- The majority of the active portfolio managers have added value by exceeding their specific performance benchmarks.
- The Funded Ratio for the ELCA Participating Annuity Investment Fund has improved during the year, and was 1.136 as of August 31, 2014.

Ongoing Support for ELCA Fund for Leaders

- Portico took first place in the Blue Bike Challenge, sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield this past May. Team Portico beat out four other teams with 863 miles and over 1,500 social media posts. The grand prize of \$5,000 was earmarked for the ELCA Fund for Leaders.
- My wife, Pam, and I are donating \$5,000 to the ELCA Fund for Leaders if 60 percent or more of plan members select benefits on myPortico by the mid-way point, November 11, 2014. Our goal is to lessen the strain to the process caused by last-minute enrollment, which is good for our members and Portico employees.

Portico Benefit Services Digest of Board Actions

Submitted by: Jeffrey D. Thiemann

Meeting Dates: July 31 – August 2, 2014 and October 31 – November 2, 2014

Category I: Policies with an impact beyond the unit which require Church Council approval.
None

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

August 2014 Resolutions/Actions

Approved the resolution relating to the Execution of Instruments pursuant to Section 9.4 of the Bylaws of this Corporation.

Approved amendments to:

ELCA Disability Benefits Plan (to remove the offset for veterans' disability benefits – effective September 1, 2014)

ELCA 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan (to remove the Plan's spousal consent requirement; members can withdraw from the Plan without spousal consent – effective January 1, 2015)

Received amendments approved by the President to:

Signed/dated: April 11, 2014

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 1.02 (the Plan to note that the HSA is now available to Members with the ELCA-Primary Silver+ and Bronze+ health benefit options as of January 1, 2014)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 2.08 (to clarify who a dependent is for a HSA)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 2.09 (to clarify that a member's dependent care expenses are FSA-eligible when a member is looking for work)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 2.41 (to add the definition of Wellness Dollars and how they are integrated with a HSA)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 3.01 (to clarify a Member's eligibility to participate in the Plan)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 3.05 (to clarify HSA eligibility rules)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 3.07 (to accommodate members from Luther Seminary who don't have Silver+ or Bronze+ but request continuation coverage)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 4.02 (to clarify the funding process)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 4.03 (to clarify that members' health coverage contributions are not administered by the claims administrator)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 4.04 (to clarify the allocation of funds to accounts)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 4.05 (to recognize the use of the debit card as the primary payment vehicle)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 4.06 (to clarify that the debit card applies to health accounts, not dependent care)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 4.07 (to clarify payment order when a member has more than one account)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 4.10 (to clarify that the termination rules are specific to the type of account and are set forth in Article 4. For example, a member can receive reimbursement from a HSA after the date of termination)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 5.05, 5.06, 5.07 and 7.05 (to change Eligible Employer to Participating Employer to be consistent with defined terms within the document)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 7.07 (to clarify that a member may have to agree to certain eligibility rules; *e.g.*, if enrolling in a HSA, the member cannot also be enrolled in a non-HDHP (high deductible health plan)).

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 9.02 (to clarify that members are not required to contribute to a HSA, employers may make HSA contributions and, for members with a HSA, wellness dollars will be deposited into their HSA).

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 9.03 (to recognize that the IRS allows different contribution amounts for members who are 55 or older. It also provides clarity that the flexible benefits plan doesn't contribute wellness dollars; instead those contributions are made by the ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Trust)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 9.05 (to clarify the member's responsibility to pay administrative fees when participation in the plan terminates)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 9.06 (to clarify that USERRA rules apply to the HSA)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 9.07 (to change "Plan Year" to "year")

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 2.01 (to clarify certain individuals can be considered an Eligible Employer)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 3.02, 3.05, 4.01, 4.07, 5.01, 5.02, 5.04, 5.05, 6.07, 6.08, 18.25 (to change "Other Employer-Provided Group Coverage" to "Other Valid Health Coverage" and changing the effective date of coverage)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 3.02 (to clarify when the Applicable Waiting Period will start after waiving coverage)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 4.02 (to modify the definition of Eligible Spouse to recognize same sex marriage)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 6.06 (to allow for continuation coverage if an employer stops sponsoring a member)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 9.01, 9.04 (to recognize a different health coverage option for Luther Seminary)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 12.06 (to clarify the requirement for prior authorization for BRCA (genetic) testing)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 17.20, 17.20 Appendix A, 20.02, 20.03 (to recognize a different health coverage option for Luther Seminary)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 18.20 (to modify the definition of Former Spouse to recognize same sex marriage)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 20.02 (to add the definition of Wellness Dollars)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 20.10 (to clarify contributions)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 20.13 (to clarify how wellness dollars are administered)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 20.16 (to clarify that a PWA Member has the option to be reimbursed using claims crossover)

ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan – Section 5.01, 5.02, 5.03, 8.02, 8.20 (to change Lump Sum Death Benefit to Lump Sum Survivor Benefit)

ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan – Section 8.07 (for consistency with MN Life Insurance Company's beneficiary designation policies)

ELCA 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan – Section 9.01 and 9.02 (to clarify distribution timing and payment options)

ELCA 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan – Section 9.05 (to change who grants approval for unforeseen emergencies, from the Agent to Portico Benefit Services)

Signed/dated: July 21, 2014

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 3.01 (to clarify a Member’s eligibility to participate in the plan – retroactively effective January 1, 2014)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 9.01 (to confirm that the member cannot contribute to a HSA if he or she is covered under a FSA – retroactively effective January 1, 2014)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 3.06 (to clarify that open enrollment will be held each calendar year – retroactively effective January 1, 2014)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 4.07, 5.02, 5.05 and 6.08 (to align billing practices with plan processes regarding waivers – retroactively effective January 1, 2014)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 4.06 and 6.05 (to update the Plan to reflect final regulations under the PPACA regarding how long a child remains a dependent – retroactively effective July 1, 2014)

Effective January 1, 2015

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 3.01 (to clarify eligibility and reflect guidance under PPACA)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 4.05 (to recognize that members may choose to have a debit card)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 6.02 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 9.02 (to reflect that Portico can accommodate one-time and monthly HSA contributions)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 7.03 (to clarify the administrative process for members who are part of a “sponsored couple” or who have multiple employers)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 16.03 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

ELCA Survivor Plan – Section 9.04 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

ELCA Disability Benefits Plan – Section 10.04 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

ELCA Retirement Plan – Section 9.10 (to simplify the cash-out rules)

ELCA Retirement Plan – Section 12.05 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan – Section 8.10 (to simplify the cash-out rules)

ELCA Master Institutional Retirement Plan – Section 11.05 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

ELCA Retirement Plan for the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society – Section 8.10 (to simplify the cash-out rules)

ELCA Retirement Plan for the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society – Section 11.05 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

ELCA 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan – Section 9.03 (to simplify the cash-out rules)

ELCA 457 (b) Differed Compensation Plan – Section 13.02 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

ELCA Supplemental Retirement Plan for the Government Chaplains – Section 5.03 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

ELCA Continuation of the ALC and LCA Minimum and Non-Contributory Pension Plan – Section 4.04 (to create a three year statute of limitations in which to file a lawsuit for benefits)

Approved the resolution approving the 2015 Contribution Rates for the Survivor, Disability and Medical and Dental Benefits Plans, and Retiree Support.

Approved the resolution concerning approval of Pricing Change for Group Retirement Plan Business.

November 2014 Resolutions/Actions

Received amendments approved by the President to:

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Sections 9.01, 9.04, 17.20, 20.02, 20.03, 20.04, 20.12, 20.13 and 20.14 (to remove the recognition of a different health benefits option for Luther Seminary)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 12.06 (to clarify the requirement for lung cancer screening required by the ACA)

ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plan – Section 16.02 (to clarify the administration and process for appeals)

ELCA Disability Benefits Plan – Sections 5.08, 5.11, 8.06 and 8.23 (to clarify the lifetime limit for disability payment periods and to change the definition of Defined Compensation to exclude severance benefits)

ELCA Flexible Benefits Plan – Section 3.07 (to clarify a Member's eligibility to participate in the plan)

ELCA Retirement Plan for the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society – Sections 2.32 and 8.06 (to change the break in service and the time frame in which a Member can request a payment after separation from 60 days to 91 days, as requested by the employer)

ELCA Retirement Plan for the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society – Section 11.02 (to accommodate the revised fee structure)

ELCA Survivor Benefits Plan – Section 8.13 (to clarify that an "Eligible Child" is eligible for coverage through the month in which they turn twenty-six (26))

Approved the resolution relating to the Execution of Instruments pursuant to Section 9.4 of the Bylaws of this Corporation.

Approved 2015-2017 Strategic Plan.

Approved 2015 Budget.

Approved the resolution establishing the annuity adjustment (3.4%), dividend (24.0%) and interest-crediting rate (8.1%) for 2015 for the ELCA Participating Annuity of the ELCA Retirement Plan.

Category III: Other procedures and board actions.

May 2014 Electronic Vote

Approved the retention of PricewaterhouseCoopers as the independent auditor for the year ending December 31, 2014.

August 2014 Resolutions/Actions

Approved Policy Governance Manual (final edits).
Received Portico's August 2014 Management Report and all Committee Reports, en bloc.
Approved use of Undesignated Contingency Reserve Fund to assist Plan member.

November 2014 Resolutions/Actions

Approved resolution designating a portion of 2015 remuneration as rental/housing allowance for the following Portico Benefit Services employees:

Pr. Paul E. Aebischer
Pr. Richard J. Bruesehoff
Pr. Jeffrey D. Thiemann
Pr. Harold L. Usgaard

Approved resolution designating retirement and disability payments as rental/housing allowance for 2015.

Approved resolution relating to the Augustana Annuity Trust.
Approved Charters and Calendars for Executive Committee, Board Development Committee, Audit Committee, and Appeals Committee, en bloc.

Received Portico's November 2014 Management Report and all Committee Reports, en bloc.

Women of the ELCA

Submitted by Linda Post Bushkofsky

The women's organization continues its strong ministries in global education, scholarships, racial justice, grants, Bible study, cross-cultural immersion and stewardship. The organization's award-winning publications assist and inspire. The work of the churchwide staff of Women of the ELCA is to support the organization's participants as they live out our mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

The Ninth Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA was held July 22-24, 2014, in Charlotte, N.C. Delegates from across the organization, numbering 363, conducted the business of the organization. Officers and a churchwide executive board for the 2014-2017 triennium were elected and a budget for FY2015 was approved. Officers for the 2014-2017 triennium are: Patti Austin, president, of Decatur, Ga.; Jody Smiley, vice president, of Blacksburg, Va.; Becky Shurson, secretary, of Yucaipa, Ca.; and Ely Smith, treasurer, of Fircrest, Wa. The Rev. Sue Gamelin, of Jamestown, N.C., preached and presided at opening worship, and the Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop/Executive for Administration, led the Bible study.

The Triennial Convention Offering raised \$77,152 to benefit Women of the ELCA (50%), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (25%), and On Eagles' Wings Ministries (25%), a Charlotte-based organization working with victims of human trafficking.

Over 2,400 women assembled for the Ninth Triennial Gathering (July 24-27, 2014, also in Charlotte). Under the theme "of many generations," women gathered for workshops, featured speakers, worship, servant events and more. The Rev. Susan Sparks, the first female pastor of the historic Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York City, was a featured speaker. Sparks is also a stand-up comedian, trial lawyer, breast cancer survivor and author of *Laugh Your Way to Grace: Reclaiming Humor in the Spiritual Path*. The Rev. Becca Stevens, an Episcopal priest serving as chaplain at St. Augustine's at Vanderbilt University, was the other featured speaker. The author of many books, Stevens is founder of Magdalene & Thistle Farms, a community and social enterprise standing with women recovering from violence, prostitution, addiction and life on the streets.

The Rev. Claire Schenot Burkat, bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (SEPA) of the ELCA, preached at the opening service, a Thankoffering service with Holy Communion. The Rev. Raquel Rodriguez, director for the Latin America and Caribbean desk of the ELCA's Global Mission, presided. The triennial gathering Thankoffering, collected at opening worship on July 24, raised \$38,978.22. Thankofferings support the churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA.

The Rev. Linda Norman, treasurer of the ELCA, preached at closing worship and The Rev. Callista Isabelle, College Chaplain at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa., presided. At the closing worship service of the gathering, the offering totaled \$41,649.06 to benefit Katie's Fund (25%), Women of the ELCA Scholarships (25%), and International Leaders – Women (50%), an initiative of the ELCA to provide scholarships to women leaders in the global church.

Music and worship leadership for the gathering was provided by the Global Musicians of the ELCA. Stephanie Burke, artist-in-residence and liturgical drama director at Christ Lutheran in Charlotte, coordinated an interactive mural project in the exhibit space which also provided a backdrop for closing worship.

The Run, Walk, and Roll raised over \$25,000 to support Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls. Through this program, Women of the ELCA provides seed grants to congregational units to start health ministries in their communities.

In-kind gifts are always a huge part of the triennial experience. They allow Women of the ELCA and triennial participants an opportunity to say “thank you” to our host city by providing these gifts to local agencies. The 2014 Triennial Gathering brought with it the following:

- \$14,785 in gift cards
- 15,877 minutes in phone cards
- 6,635 toiletry items
- 3,717 pairs of socks and underwear
- 118 quilt kits
- 116 quilts
- 1,508 prayer shawls

This year’s recipients included:

- The Legacy Hall program of Florence Crittenton Services
- The Journey Place program of The Relatives
- Faith Farm of Lutheran Services Carolinas
- Lutheran World Relief
- Lily Pad Haven

Over 500 women pre-registered onsite in Charlotte for the 2017 Triennial Gathering that will be held in Minneapolis, Minn., July 13-16, 2017. Additional information about the gathering can be found at welcatg.org, where discounted pre-registration for the 2017 event is available through the end of 2014.

The September 2014 to May 2015 Bible study—published in *Gather* magazine—is on conversion and transformation stories in the Bible. The writer is Carol LaHurd. Carol is adjunct professor at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. She has taught biblical studies and Islam at such institutions as the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn.; Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.; and Fordham University, New York City. From 2006 to 2010, she was coordinator of the Middle East Peace Not Walls campaign of the ELCA.

The organization’s health initiative, Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls, is making available seed grants for congregational units. The grants, ranging up to \$1,000, are to be used for health initiative programs intentionally involve women across generations and are easily replicable by other units. More information is available at welca.org.

The application process for Women of the ELCA grants and scholarships opens December 15, 2014. More details can be found at welca.org.

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

- www.womenoftheelca.org
- www.welcatg.org
- www.boldcafe.org
- [www.Facebook.com/womenoftheelca](https://www.facebook.com/womenoftheelca)
- [www.Twitter.com/womenoftheelca](https://www.twitter.com/womenoftheelca)
- www.Pinterest.com/womenoftheelca

Women of the ELCA Digest of Board Actions

Submitted by Linda Post Bushkofsky

Meeting date: April 24-26, 2014 (Louisville, Ky.) and October 17-18, 2014 (Chicago, Il.)

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

None.

Category 2: Policies related to the day-to-day functioning of the unit or to the specific mandate of the unit

Modified the board's stewardship development policy to include a statement encouraging board members to continue supporting board development goals after their service on the churchwide board ends.

Received word that the organization's communication efforts and publications were honored by both the Associated Church Press and the Religion Communicators Council.

Rejoiced in learning that Katie's Fund had reached more than \$1 million by April 15, surpassing the goal to grow the endowment to \$1 million by the start of the triennial gathering in July 2014.

Sent two referrals from the Ninth Triennial Convention, relating to constitutional provisions, to the Constitution Review Committee for study and recommendation.

Adopted a rank order process to be used in synodical organizations as voting members to the Tenth Triennial Convention (July 11-13, 2017) are elected.

Elected Deborah Banks-Williams, of Chicago, Il.; Joan Iverson, of Lamberton, Minn.; and Lisa Plorin, of Upham, N.D. to join the officers on the executive committee.

Rejected a request from the Northeastern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization that the churchwide organization become the financial repository for a synodically-based project to fund solar energy for Phebe Hospital in Liberia.

Rejected a request to engage in fundraising for specific ministries not funded in the FY2015 budget approved by the Ninth Triennial Convention.

Received and acted on the recommendation of the executive director review committee that conducted the annual review of Linda Post Bushkofsky, the organization's executive director.

Category 3: Other procedures and board actions

Engaged in both racial justice and stewardship education.

Reviewed board members' participation in the 2013 conventions of synodical women's organizations.

Committed itself to engage in racial justice education at each board meeting.

Received evaluation summaries and budget reports from the Ninth Triennial Convention and the 2014 Triennial Gathering, both of which were held in Charlotte, N.C., in July 2014.

Responses to Synodical Resolutions

1. The Isolation of Individuals Living in Our Communities Virginia Synod (9A) [2013]

RESOLVED, that members of the Virginia Synod Assembly encourage their congregations to pray for those living in isolation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that members of the Virginia Synod Assembly encourage their congregations to identify and reach out to those who are living in isolation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod encourage congregations and individuals to partner with institutions and agencies who work with children, youth, adults, and senior citizens to identify and reach out to those who are living in isolation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod of the ELCA forward this to the ELCA Church Council for further consideration.

Church Council Action (CC13.07.35c)

To receive the resolution of the Virginia Synod on The Isolation of Individuals Living in Our Communities;

To refer the resolution to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit;

To request that a report be brought to the November 2013 meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and

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

Response from Congregational and Synodical Mission (April 2014)

At its November meeting, the Church Council adopted a social message on “The Body of Christ and Mental Illness.” The very first page of that message speaks about the loneliness and isolation that those with mental illness experience. However, under the heading of “The Call to Companionship”, the message reminds us that being integrated into a community is treated as definitive by Jesus. In fact, on page 12 the message clearly states that “to people who are experiencing mental illness, physical, prayerful companionship can be a sign of God’s presence in a time when God’s presence cannot be felt any other way.” And so, in italics on page 16, we read that “The ELCA commits as a church to accompanying you in your valley of the shadow...” We also read of a commitment to the families and caregivers of those with mental illness, “The ELCA as a church commits to accompanying you as families and caregivers with honest, hopeful yet realistic, and prayerful companionship.”

To assist congregations in beginning conversations about the particular loneliness and isolation that those with mental illness experience, a congregational study guide has been developed to accompany the mental health message. Conversations about the isolation involved with mental illness can help to broaden the discussion so that the isolation experienced in the world in general can also be addressed.

For those whose isolation has led to despair and thoughts of suicide, there is an Independent Lutheran Organization called Lutheran Suicide Prevention Ministry which can provide many resources for helping people to move through the valley of the shadow.

Church Council Action (CC14.04.11)

To refer this matter to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for further work.

Background from Congregational and Synodical Mission (November 2014)

After the April 2014 Church Council meeting, the Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) unit followed up with the Virginia Synod and the author of the resolution regarding their intention as directed. A discussion with Bishop James Mauney, Virginia Synod, led into communication with the author of the resolution. The author then wrote a response to Bishop Mauney expressing that the intention of the resolution was to address isolation experienced from people with mental illness. Her primary concern was “that what is lacking is not that congregation members don’t care, they just are not aware and lack a degree of understanding. Therefore, the goal would be to raise awareness and understanding.” The author of the resolution and Bishop Mauney both expressed appreciation for our follow-up.

The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit strongly affirms the current and available congregational resources and materials, as noted in the April 2014 response. These available materials would address the concern noted and would assist congregation members to develop awareness and understanding that could enable them to support those living in isolation due to mental illness. We commend all these congregational resources to our members for their study to help them support those living in isolation in their congregations and communities.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To thank the Virginia Synod for encouraging congregations and individuals to reach out to those living in isolation;

To receive the responses from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit;

To encourage congregations and individuals to use the mental health message congregational study guide to engage in conversations about isolation;

To encourage congregations and individuals to utilize the resources provided through Lutheran Suicide Prevention Ministry; and

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

2. The Future of ELCA Seminaries

Northern Great Lakes Synod (5G) [2014]

RESOLVED, that the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the ELCA:

1. Reaffirm the generous financial support given to ELCA seminaries and seminarians from the Northern Great Lakes Synod and many of its member congregations; and
2. Inform its congregations and members, by means of the spoken, printed, and electronic word, of the financial struggles that ELCA seminaries are experiencing, in particular the two seminaries relating to this synod which are the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa; and
3. Through its rostered leaders and congregation members, identify and lift up potential leaders who may serve its congregations and encourage them to pursue theological education; and
4. Educate its congregations and members, by means of the spoken, printed, and electronic word, that the ELCA Foundation, seminary foundations, and the Northern Great Lakes Synod Endowment Committee can help people plan and develop charitable trusts, gift annuities, and other planned gifts that will help ELCA seminaries continue into the future; and
5. Urge the Church Council to continue to review and adapt the institutions and practices of ELCA theological education to meet the needs in varied congregational contexts for this time

and beyond, and to communicate these efforts and results annually to the 65 synods; and be it further
RESOLVED, that the Northern Great Lakes Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and positive action.

Executive Committee Action (EC14.08.18b)

To receive the resolution from the Northern Great Lakes Synod regarding the future of ELCA seminaries; and

To refer the resolution to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention to be presented to the November 2014 Church Council meeting.

Background from Congregational and Synodical Mission (November 2014)

The first four resolves in the resolution from the Northern Great Lakes Synod on “The Future of ELCA Seminaries” are welcome reaffirmations of this synod’s commitment to the ELCA’s shared work in preparing leaders for mission through the ELCA’s seminaries.

Concerning the fifth resolve, the ELCA Church Council, at its November 2014 meeting, is receiving an interim report from the Theological Education Advisory Council (TEAC). TEAC’s purpose is to review the institutions and practices of ELCA theological education. This will include adaptations already underway, new possibilities for the organization and how theological education is delivered and supported. This interim report, along with any Church Council actions related to it, will be publicly available following the November 2014 meeting.

TEAC will continue its work during the next year, bringing its final report and recommendations to the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To thank the Northern Great Lakes Synod for its resolution on the future of ELCA seminaries;

To receive the response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit;

To acknowledge the ongoing work of the Theological Education Advisory Council in addressing the concerns expressed in the resolution; and

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

3. Statement on Aging

Virginia Synod (9A) [2014]

WHEREAS, a statement of the Lutheran Church in America regarding “Aging and the Older Adult” was adopted by the Ninth Biennial Convention, Chicago, Illinois, July 12–19, 1978; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) upon its founding accepted the statement as a historical document; and

WHEREAS, the document has never been rescinded; and

WHEREAS, the statement is not binding for the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, while this church is blessed by the vital growth of young people and families, it is also blessed by the increasing number of senior members, making the subject of aging of paramount importance to a significant number of ELCA congregations; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod form a committee to study the issue and draft a social statement on aging; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod Council request the Church Council to bring the 1978 statement, "Aging and the Older Adult," out of retirement and revise it as appropriate to make it a living document.

Executive Committee Action (EC14.08.18d)

To receive the resolution from the Virginia Synod regarding the statement on aging; and
To refer the resolution to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention to be presented to the November 2014 Church Council meeting.

Background from Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2014)

The 2014 Virginia Synod discussed matters about aging and the church, adopting two actions that call for the development of social documents on aging. The first directed action to the synod itself and the second requested action on the part of the ELCA Church Council. The Executive Committee of the ELCA Church Council considered the resolutions at their August 2014 meeting and referred them to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, directing that a report or a timeline be presented to the November 2014 Church Council meeting to indicate when the second resolve would receive further attention.

Discussion regarding appropriate action on this request within the Office of the Bishop involves several considerations.

The first follows from the application of the term "social statement" by the synod in regards to the action it authorized for itself. While the use of this term causes confusion when applied to a synod document, given the specific and widespread meaning of the term for a specific kind of churchwide document, the synod is not taking upon itself the intention to draft a social statement on behalf of the ELCA. Rather, the intent is to produce a synodical study document that probes matters of aging and might inform conversation on relevant issues from the standpoint of faith. That is, the resolution does not use the term "social statement" in the technical sense and with the accompanying protocol specified in "[Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns](#)." It does seem useful to clarify this matter in the Church Council action to the synod for the sake of clarity.

The second set of considerations involves the comparative significance of this issue at this time in relation to: a) existing work on the development of social documents, b) previously existing requests for additional documents, and c) churchwide staff capacity. It is widely recognized that a dominant cohort of ELCA membership is living longer and with greater vigor in ways that strengthen the presence and contribution of older adults within the church. It also is widely recognized that life span expansion and the use of rapidly evolving medical technology sharpens the challenges and dilemmas as individuals live longer. As the resolution itself points out, the 35-year-old LCA document "Aging and the Older Adult" could provide significant basis for the development of a document, even though dated by themes, scope, and cultural shifts since 1978.

Given these considerations, the need for a social message on aging seems clearly worth an assessment even while it remains uncertain whether a document should or would finally be authorized. The recommendation from the Office of the Presiding Bishop below calls for such an assessment. At the same time, any commitment for an assessment must be added to an already extensive work load for the Theological Discernment Team as a whole and for the Director for Theological Ethics who would take primary responsibility.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

- To thank the Virginia Synod for its resolution on aging;**
- To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop;**
- To ask that the term “social statement” be avoided in the work of the synodical committee drafting a synod document on aging for the sake of clarity regarding the technical meaning “social statement” as used in “Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns;”**
- To acknowledge both the continuing limited staff capacity as well as the continuing presence of important social questions around aging; and**
- To invite an assessment and possible recommendation from the Theological Discernment Team staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding the feasibility of developing a social message on aging that includes attention to the 1978 LCA statement, “Aging and the Older Adult”; and**
- To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

4. Constitutional Provision on Limited Voting Rights

Grand Canyon Synod Council (2D) [2014]

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council of Grand Canyon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby petitions the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recognize the distinctive situation of certain ELCA congregations in Sunbelt areas that experience with joy a large influx of seasonal members who are active participants in the life of those congregations and who are crucial in congregations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Grand Canyon Synod Council petitions the Church Council to affirm the experience of various congregations that are situated primarily in areas with a substantial population of retired persons in which the involvement of seasonal members is greatly facilitated by minimizing distinctions between voting and associate members, especially as related to the mission and ministry and the local affairs of such congregations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Grand Canyon Synod Council, demonstrating clear recognition of these concerns, recommends that the following amendment be proposed by the Church Council of the Evangelical Church in America to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address the particular needs of certain congregation in some synods:

To adopt a new constitutional provision as 9.54. to read in the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*:

- 9.54.** A congregation may grant limited voting rights to associate members with the approval of the synod responsible for the review of the congregation's constitution, subject to the following limitations: Associate members in affected congregations (a) shall be deemed to be active participants who offer crucial support for the congregation's overall mission and ministry; (b) shall not have the right to vote on any matter governed by provisions 7.46. and 9.62. in this constitution; (c) shall not have the right to serve as an officer or member of the Congregation Council; (d) shall not be eligible to serve as a voting member of the Synod Assembly or the Churchwide Assembly; and (e) shall be governed by any additional limitations as the Synod Council may require as a condition of the synod's approval of voting and other privileges for associate members.

Executive Committee Action (EC14.08.18a)

To receive the resolution from the Grand Canyon Synod concerning a constitutional provision on limited voting rights; and

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention to be presented to the November 2014 Church Council meeting.

Background from Office of the Secretary (November 2014)

The Grand Canyon Synod has requested that a provision be added to the ELCA Constitution to allow associate members to have the privilege of voting in congregational meetings where they hold associate membership with certain limitations. This proposal will be part of the review of the constitutions in anticipation of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. Early conversation would not see this provision added as written to the ELCA Constitution. A provision could be considered in the Model Constitution for Congregations. The timeline would be to have a proposal ready for the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee to review at its April 2015 meeting. A proposal could be recommended to the Churchwide Assembly at the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary and to thank the Grand Canyon Synod for its resolution on Constitutional Provision on Limited Voting Rights;

To acknowledge such a provision could be considered for the Model Constitution for Congregations and will be incorporated into the overall constitutional review work of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee;

To request the Office of the Secretary consider the constitutional provision as it reviews possible amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

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

**5. Transparent and Accountable Congregation Management
Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2014]**

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly instruct the Metropolitan New York Synod Council to request that the Church Council propose an amendment to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* by adding this clause to the end of C12.09:

“...including financial reports that fairly represent the financial status of the congregation.”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly direct the Metropolitan New York Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council for consideration and possible action.

Executive Committee Action (EC14.08.18c)

To receive the resolution from the Metropolitan New York Synod regarding transparent and accountable congregation management; and

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this resolution will receive further attention to be presented to the November 2014 Church Council meeting.

Background from Office of the Secretary (November 2014)

The Metropolitan New York Synod has asked that language requiring a report of the financial status of a congregation be part of the annual report to the annual meeting. This also will be reviewed as part of the overall review of the constitutions in preparation for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly. The timeline would call for review by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee at its April 2015 meeting. Any proposal for amendment would be part of the proposed amendments acted on at the November 2015 Church Council meeting.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary and to thank the Metropolitan New York Synod for its resolution on Transparent and Accountable Congregation Management;

To acknowledge such an amendment could be considered for the Model Constitution for Congregations and will be incorporated into the overall constitutional review work of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee;

To request the Office of the Secretary consider the amendment as it reviews possible amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

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

Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions

1. Social Statement *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility*

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA11.04.17)

1. To call upon members of this church to pray, work, advocate and apply genetic knowledge and technology in ways that respect and promote the community of life justly and wisely;
2. To call upon congregations and other sites of ministry to give renewed attention to becoming places of koinonia in Christ that foster a deepened understanding of and commitment to baptismal vocation, everyday callings and moral formation and discernment;
3. To encourage leaders in conferences, synods or other appropriate bodies to compile lists of resources for their jurisdictions to which pastors, counselors and individuals can turn for help when seeking information or guidance in dealing with genetic issues;
4. To call upon this church's advocacy ministries to support and advocate for measures consistent with this social statement;
5. To affirm the study document "Genetics and Faith: Power, Choice and Responsibility" as a resource for ongoing deliberation and discernment, and to direct the Theological Discernment team of the Office of the Presiding Bishop to maintain its availability as long as demand continues;
6. To affirm the 2004 ELCA Social Policy Resolution "Genetically Modified Organisms in the Food Supply" and its continuing value for the mission and ministry of the ELCA;
7. To encourage the churchwide organization to maintain a database of ELCA members with expertise related to genetic science and technology that can serve as a primary resource for consultation;
8. To direct the Theological Discernment team of the Office of the Presiding Bishop to assess the feasibility of developing a social message on regenerative medicine, including, but not limited to, a range of stem cell technologies; and to bring to the ELCA Church Council in November 2013 a report and possible recommendations, in accordance with Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns (Chicago: ELCA, 1997, revised 2011); and
9. To call upon the Office of the Presiding Bishop to establish and oversee a process of implementation and accountability for Genetics, Faith and Responsibility and to report annually on implementation to the ELCA Church Council through November 2015, with progress reports made available through www.elca.org.

Background from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2014)

Since 2003, one implementing resolution (IR) in each social statement has directed or called upon units of the churchwide organization to provide a process for accountability and reporting regarding the implementation of the resolutions attached to it. The 2011 statement, *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility*, specified an annual report in IR#9 (through 2015) and this report assesses activities during 2014. Activities for 2013 or earlier are reported in the [November 8-10, 2013 Church Council materials, specifically Exhibit J, Part 6](#).

Resolutions #1 and 2 of *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility* call for prayer, ministry and daily work that "respect and promote the community of life justly and wisely." These activities are unquantifiable and difficult to assess, especially in terms of congregational activity and renewed attention "to becoming places of Koinonia in Christ." Barring a churchwide survey, it also remains difficult to report accurately what actions were generated by Resolution #3, which encourages church leaders "to compile lists of resources for their

jurisdictions” that might help pastors and others seeking to deal with generic issues. ELCA advocacy ministries (Resolution #4) have not given priority or visibility to issues around genetics this year. Yet, staff of the churchwide organization is familiar with the statement and report referring to it on occasion.

It is clear, however, that the ELCA’s statement continues to create visibility and reflection for its concerns. For example, the statement was reviewed significantly in *Kristeligt Dagblad* (a Danish newspaper) in September 2013, was summarized on the Pew Research Center website last June, and cited in a Washington Post article that drew from the Pew site.

Ecumenically, this social statement has been widely recognized for its excellence—most clearly indicated in the activities within The Episcopal Church, USA. That church’s 2012 General Convention adopted Resolution A-013 that expressly commends the leadership of the ELCA and called upon itself to “follow the example of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other denominations in seeking to identify the moral, ethical and theological principles” raised by GMOs. The subsequent Episcopal working paper draws at length from both *Genetics, Faith & Responsibility* and the 2004 ELCA social policy resolution “Genetically Modified Organisms in the Food Supply.” (This social policy resolution was reaffirmed in Resolutions #5 and #6) The working paper discusses themes and principles from these ELCA documents for over ten pages and cites them as sources of guidance for the resolutions proposed to the 2014 General Convention.

Resolution #7 encourages the churchwide organization to maintain a database of ELCA members with relevant expertise and an initial, brief list compiled in late 2011 remains available. The churchwide organization’s integrated database (ECIS) would be the natural location for the creation of a complete database, however in light of other priorities staff capacity limitations remain. No further efforts have been made to create such a database.

Resolution #8 directs the Theological Discernment team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop to assess “the feasibility of developing a social message on regenerative medicine...” and to bring a report to the ELCA Church Council by November 2013. A delay for this activity was approved by Church Council action in November 2013 due to limited staff capacity and will be the subject of Church Council attention at the November 2014 meeting. It should be noted that moral questions surrounding regenerative medicine largely have been replaced in public conversation by other topics such as Ebola or the Affordable Health Care Act. However, it remains appropriate to conduct a thorough assessment.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop in response to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly action related to the implementing resolutions for the social statement, Genetics, Faith and Responsibility.

2. Social Statement *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries*

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA13.05.16)

1. To call upon members of this church through steadfast prayer, discernment, Christian education, ministry efforts and public action to share the gospel of God’s love in Jesus Christ as they hear the cries, offer hospitality, accompany and advocate on behalf of those whose lives are caught up in or committed in service to the criminal justice system;
2. To call upon members, congregations, synods, social ministry organizations and churchwide ministries to advocate intentionally and creatively for system reform consistent with the principles and recommendations set forth in this social statement;

3. To encourage ELCA congregations to work with victims, victim advocates and victim support organizations, to grow in sensitivity and response to the harm caused by crime, and to grow in awareness of restorative justice practices;
4. To encourage ELCA congregations to become intentional sites of ministry and action for the incarcerated and their families, possibly in ecumenical collaboration, and with special attention to re-entry ministries and to preferential hiring for ex-offenders, as appropriate;
5. To hold in prayer the ministry of ELCA chaplains and pastors serving in all correctional facilities, or serving with law enforcement agencies around the country, and to encourage all expressions of the ELCA and its affiliated institutions to provide greater support to prison ministry;
6. To request the ELCA's Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to enlist the aid of leaders in conferences, synods, seminaries, social ministry organizations or other appropriate groups in creating and maintaining a resource database, to which members, pastors, seminarians or other professionals can turn for information about activities, models and training modules that support ministry to people and action toward reform of the criminal justice system;
7. To call upon the ELCA's Worship and Liturgical Resources Team to develop additional liturgical resources for those involved in the criminal justice system, such as services and prayers for victims and A Social Statement their families, for those incarcerated, for those employed in the system, or rites of blessing for those engaging in visitation ministries;
8. To direct the staff of the ELCA's advocacy ministries to coordinate efforts to develop on behalf of this church a social investment screen on private prison operations, along with developing education materials to use within the ELCA for understanding these actions;
9. To direct the ELCA's Theological Discernment Team in the fall of 2015 to bring to the ELCA Church Council an assessment of the feasibility of developing a social message on U.S. national drug policy, in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (Chicago: ELCA, 1997, revised 2006, 2011);
10. To encourage the three expressions of this church to utilize the recommendations of the Addressing Social Concerns Review Task Force in the process of disseminating and implementing this social statement; and
11. To call upon appropriate staff in the ELCA's Congregational and Synodical Mission unit and the Office of the Presiding Bishop to establish and oversee a process of implementation and accountability for this social statement that provides a report on implementation to the ELCA Church Council in the fall of 2017.

Background from Congregational and Synodical Mission unit (November 2014)

Education

Race & Criminal Justice was a plenary presentation during the 2014 joint North/West Lower Michigan and Southeast Michigan Synod assemblies by ELCA Program Director for Racial Justice.

Planning is underway in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, in partnership with Congregational and Synodical Mission, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, the African Descent Lutheran Association Philadelphia Chapter and Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania will sponsor a daylong gathering to equip congregations to accompany individuals and families impacted by incarceration. The event is scheduled for June 6, 2015. Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, will deliver the keynote.

The theme of mass incarceration education will be included in the strategic plans of the ethnic associations.

Work is underway toward the development of a study guide to *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries*. A writer and design company have been contracted to craft the study guide as an interactive pdf that will include several varied length curriculum sessions, multiple audience entry points, video clips, and leader's guide. The resource will be available on the ELCA web site, or for purchase as a flash drive or in print. Target date for completion is April of 2015.

Resources

Lutheran Men in Mission have provided free copies of New Testament translation bibles in Spanish for outreach ministry to formerly incarcerated individuals.

A Bible study prepared for the African Descent Lutheran Association will focus on the issue of incarceration and its impact on communities of African descent. The Bible study will be featured in the fall 2014 newsletter of the association.

The ecumenical resource "Healing the Community" provides a framework for churches to be stations of hope. Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this resource has been implemented in over 20 sites nationally. This model is currently used in Southeastern Pennsylvania, Lower Susquehanna and Southeastern synods.

New Start Congregations

A partnership of the ELCA and the Prison Congregations of America (PCA) connects synodical bishops, Directors for Evangelical Mission and local leaders in starting ministries with incarcerated individuals and/or with formerly incarcerated people as they reintegrate into society. The Church of the Damascus Road prison ministry is the first PCA in the state of Texas. The congregation is part of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana mission area.

Living Gospel Ministry, located in the northwest community of Philadelphia, provides life skills, employment search assistance and help with accessing government benefits to formerly incarcerated individuals and their families.

Accompaniment

The Intersection, a congregation located in Dorchester, Massachusetts, provides educational preparation classes for adults preparing to take the Massachusetts State High School Equivalency Test (formerly known as the GED). This initiative is specifically intended to be a resource for returning citizens but will be available to any adult in need of obtaining a GED.

Advocacy

The ELCA Washington Office is part of an interfaith coalition for smarter sentencing reform. In June 2014, they issued an action alert for support of *Smarter Sentencing Act*. This bipartisan legislation would reduce racially disparate mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses and allow current prisoners serving outdated sentences for crack cocaine offenses to apply for a sentence reduction.

The ELCA State Public Policy Office in California is advocating for sentencing policy reform. California Prop 47 is on the ballot for November 2, 2014. If approved by the state's voters, this law would reduce the classification of most "non-serious and nonviolent property and drug crimes" from a felony to a misdemeanor.

In 2013 The ELCA was able to formally sign on as an official supporter of the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth on the basis of the social statement *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries*.

Synod staff members report sharing copies of and text from *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* in advocacy efforts with legislators in several states, states as diverse as New Jersey or Mississippi.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The action directed by Implementing Resolution #8 of *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* to develop a social investment screen on private prison operations was undertaken by the CSR consultant under the auspices of churchwide organization's inter-unit CSR Review Team. Following normal protocol for the development of a screen, the process involved review by Church Council, Conference of Bishops and staff at Portico Benefit Services. The adoption of this screen is expected at the November 2014 meeting of the Church Council after a final review by its Program and Services Committee.

Ecumenism

The ELCA is working within the National Council on interreligious relations with a focus on peace and mass incarceration. The 2014 Christian Unity Gathering focused on Mass Incarceration and what we can do together ecumenically to help contribute to a solution to this crisis.

Breaking the Chains: Mass Incarceration & Systems of Exploitation will be the 2015 Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) theme. The event will take place in Washington D.C. from April 17-20, 2015. Over 1,000 participants will gather to build a movement to shake the foundations of systems of human exploitation (Acts 16:16-40), including a prison-industrial system that incarcerates millions of people in the U.S. and abroad.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop in response to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly action related to the implementing resolutions for the social statement, *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries*.

3. Update on the Book of Faith Initiative

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA13.02.04)

To affirm the Book of Faith initiative as a continuing emphasis and priority in this church, and to request that the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—who “as its pastor, shall be a teacher of the faith of this church and shall provide leadership for the life and witness of this church” (ELCA constitutional provision 13.21.)—continue to lead this initiative personally and in collaboration with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, other appropriate churchwide units, and the Conference of Bishops;

To reaffirm the overall goal of the Book of Faith initiative to help individuals and congregations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to open Scripture and join the conversation;

To call on congregations, synods, the churchwide organization, and other ministries of this church to continue to promote deep biblical engagement that approaches the Bible as the written Word of God, using “multiple methods” to engage persons individually and in community with others;

To call upon Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, as the publishing ministry of this church, to consult with all expressions of this church and its related institutions and agencies as appropriate to undergird and support the Book of Faith initiative in order to enhance the biblical literacy of all members of this church as well as those seeking a better understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ;

To encourage engagement of the Book of Faith initiative by colleges, universities, and seminaries of this church, recognizing the continuing challenge of assisting pastoral and lay leaders in taking up their roles as teachers of the Bible in ways that engage and inspire the current and future members and seekers in this church;

To encourage the Book of Faith initiative leadership in conversation with its many partners to continue implementation of the initiative so as to respond to such challenges as: biblical illiteracy, Bible and mission outreach, addressing the great variety of cultures that make up this church and world, appealing to the growing number of persons in society claiming to be “spiritual but not religious,” creative use of social media, and the importance of family and home as centers of faith development; and

To give thanks to God for all of the individuals, congregations, synods, and churchwide ministries for their deep and abiding commitment to the centrality of God’s transforming Word in Christ, in proclamation, and in Scripture.

Background from Augsburg Fortress, Publishers (November 2014)

[Augsburg Fortress](#) has actively partnered with others in all expressions of this church and many of its related institutions and agencies since the inception of the Book of Faith initiative in 2007. In listening to the needs of leaders across this church, Augsburg Fortress has published 122 unique [Book of Faith](#) learning and teaching resources written by 70 different authors whose primary workplace includes a wide range of our ELCA congregations, agencies and institutions. In addition, Augsburg Fortress assists the churchwide organization on marketing the Book of Faith initiative, including a website, brochures and use of social media.

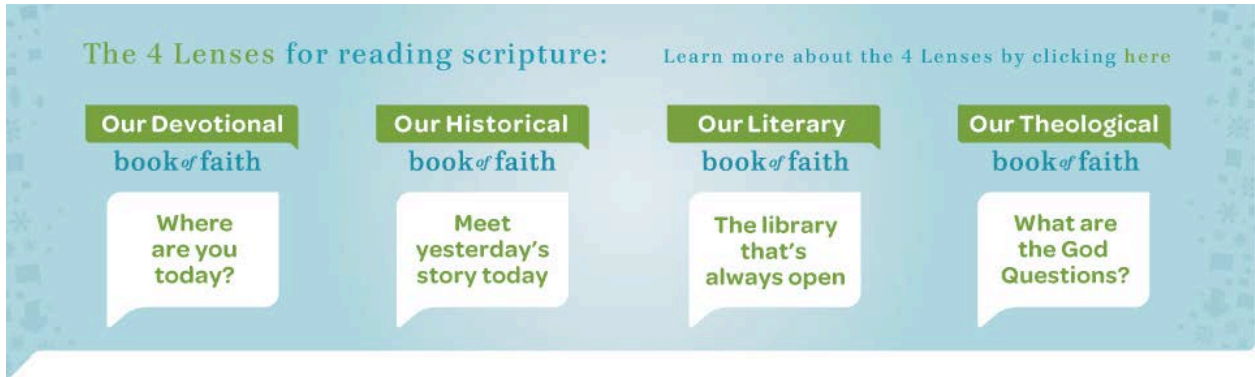
Beyond the resources published under the Book of Faith initiative imprint, Augsburg Fortress and our ecumenical faith formation division, [sparkhouse](#), continue to partner with people across this church to publish a wide range of print, digital and video resources for teaching and learning, worship planning and personal devotion, which are designed to enhance biblical fluency for children, youth and adults.

In addition, one of the major pillars of our [Fortress Press](#) publishing program is biblical studies, many of them created to enhance the knowledge and confidence of students as well as pastors who lead their congregations toward biblical literacy.

Background from Congregational and Synodical Mission (November 2014)

The 2013 Churchwide Assembly voted to “affirm the Book of Faith initiative as a continuing emphasis and priority in this church.” The presiding bishop, in collaboration with the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, continues to provide leadership for this initiative.

In response to the call to promote deep biblical engagement that approaches the Bible as the written Word of God, using “multiple methods” to engage persons individually and in community with others, we have launched a promotional campaign to deepen the understanding of multiple methods of engagement. We are calling on people throughout the church to engage our devotional, historical, literary and theological Book of Faith. (See attachment at the end of this document for a fuller advertisement of these four lenses.)



In response to the call to encourage engagement of the Book of Faith initiative by colleges, universities, and seminaries of this church, we are in the process of initiating, in collaboration with the seminaries, a newly imagined Book of Faith Hein Fry Challenge. The purpose of this challenge is to enliven the biblical engagement of the whole church by providing current examples of innovative and effective ways of teaching and learning the Scripture. This challenge will result in both conferences and videos. The Book of Faith Initiative was also highlighted in two seminary publications. The [June 2014 issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*](#) is dedicated to the Book of Faith Initiative and downloadable for free at the [Book of Faith website](#). The lead article in [Word and World's summer 2014 issue](#), *Igniting Biblical Imagination*, highlights the initiative.

We are responding in a number of ways to a variety of the challenges listed in the passed resolution.

In response to the challenge of Bible and mission outreach, we continue, in partnership with Faith Practices and Mission Development Leaders, to promote [Story Matters: Claiming our Biblical Identity for the Sake of the World](#).

We continue to expand our online presence. We have 1,107 members of the Facebook Book of Faith group. We have 1,798 followers on Twitter and counting. We are in the ongoing process of improving our website, www.bookoffaith.org.

Several new projects are in the works: We are forming a team to participate in the 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit. We are active in the formation of an evolving group, *Partners in Adult Learning*. We are working with the Covenant Cluster in envisioning a partner initiative entitled *Life of Faith*. And we are working with ELCA Research and Evaluation to create a new survey that will gauge how ELCA members think about and read the Bible. This survey will be significant in that it will grow out of our Lutheran theological tradition and experience rather than most of the extant surveys that have a more fundamentalist viewpoint.

Other challenges continue to be present as we envision the future of the Book of Faith initiative, including “the importance of family and home as centers of faith development, addressing the great variety of cultures that make up this church and world, and appealing to the growing number of persons in society claiming to be “spiritual but not religious.” Such challenges as these will be met as the initiative transitions to a new director, following the February 2015 retirement of Diane Jacobson.

At the heart of the initiative is the continuing overall goal “to help individuals and congregations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to open Scripture and join the conversation.”

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the report and thank Augsburg Fortress, Publishers and the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for their ongoing work to help individuals and congregations throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to open Scripture and join the conversation.

4a. Motion J: Native Americans and Alaska Natives

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Organization be committed to inviting the tribal leader or a representative of the sovereign tribal or region wherein any and at every ELCA Churchwide Organization sponsored event held—e.g. Churchwide Assemblies, Global Mission Events, ELCA Youth Gatherings, smaller or regional events, etc.—with costs incurred to be supported by each event’s budget, to bring a word of welcome/greetings from their nations or peoples; and that consultation with the ELCA Director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries be done so as to ensure the invitation is extended appropriately; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Organization be committed to ensuring at least one educational component is developed and offered to participants at every Churchwide Organization sponsored event—e.g. Churchwide Assemblies, Global Mission Events, ELCA Youth Gatherings, smaller or regional events, etc.—regarding American Indian and Alaska Native tribal peoples of the nation or region wherein the Churchwide Organization sponsored event is being held, with costs incurred to be supported by each event’s budget; and that consultation with the ELCA’s Director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries be done so as to ensure such an educational experience is developed and presented appropriately.

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA11.04.18)

To refer Motion J to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for consultation with the American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries to identify ways to address the intent of the motion.

Church Council Action (CC13.04.27f)

.....

To recommend the establishment of a working group of the ELCA American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries Program for the purpose of recommending guidelines for this church on ways to approach and offer invitations to the American Indian and Alaska Native community, guidelines for the American Indian and Alaska Native community on acceptable ways to provide greetings at ELCA events, suggestions for which events or opportunities might be most appropriate for greetings, a possible educational experience, and consideration of the costs and monies of funding such participation; and

To request that a report of the findings from the working group be brought to the Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) unit and a report from CSM be made to the ELCA Church Council at its November 2013 meeting.

Church Council Action (CC13.11.69o)

To receive the response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit; and
To postpone the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit report with possible recommendations to the November 2014 meeting of the ELCA Church Council.

4b. Motion N: American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples

RESOLVED, that this assembly commits this church, the ELCA, to go beyond apologies and begin working on renewed, healthy and responsible relationships with American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA commits to becoming the leader among churches in the area of advocacy and active support of justice, self-determination, sovereignty, and advancement of American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples and their nations and governments; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA endorses the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on September 13, 2007, adopts the declaration as the standard for our own practices, and commits to implementing the values and principles of the declaration within the work and structure of this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this assembly asks the presiding bishop to write to the president of the United States of America, encouraging the president to continue building strong government-to-government relationships with all of the federally recognized tribes, as well as to work collaboratively with tribes and the National Congress of American Indians on discerning how to best fully and effectively implement the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for the sake of justice in the lives and communities of American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA actively supports the work and goals of the ELCA's director of American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries, the American Indian and Alaska Native Advisory Team, and the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association and, further, that this church will actively seek their counsel, in order to deepen our understanding of the oppression and colonized histories lived and remembered by American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples, as well as to gain insight on the present situations of injustices experienced by and opportunities that lie before American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA encourage its membership, and especially its leadership, to educate themselves about American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples; starting with the tribes and Peoples whose reservations and/or nations are nearest us, then the tribes and Peoples who first inhabited the lands whereupon church buildings now sit; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA actively explore funding opportunities to better serve American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples and social services organizations that provide direct services such as the Oaks Indian Mission, Lakota Lutheran Center, Navajo Lutheran Mission and others, so that they may have sufficient resources to feed and house children and families in serious poverty; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA periodically encourage synods and congregations to go beyond mission trips to American Indian and Alaska Native communities and become active advocates for and supporters of them; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA commits to being a part of dreaming, praying and working together with American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples for a reconciled and hopeful future, recognizing that immediate action and long-term commitment are required for renewed, healthy and responsible relationships to be built.

Rationale of the Reference and Counsel Committee

The Reference and Counsel Committee receives the motion with gratitude. We acknowledge ongoing efforts of American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries in the ELCA.

We also recognize that we have for too long as a church failed to act more intentionally on and to educate each other about issues of justice for American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. The Churchwide Assembly is unable to endorse the United Nations document that it has not yet read and studied. There is further work to be done if we are to seriously move forward with the goals of this motion.

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA13.06.29)

To refer Motion N to the Congregational and Synodical Mission and Global Mission units.

Church Council action (CC13.11.69I)

To refer Motion N: American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, in consultation with the Global Mission unit and the working group of the ELCA American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries Program; and

To request that a report and possible recommendations be presented to the November 2014 meeting of the Church Council.

Background from Congregational and Synodical Mission (November 2014)

Following is a summary of the scope of the work that will need to be addressed by the American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIAN) Ministry Program in the coming months ahead.

Motion J First Resolved Recommendations:

1. Create a working group by the American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIAN) Ministry Program:
 - a. Recommend guidelines for this church on ways to approach and offer invitation to Indian Nations to bring greetings to ELCA Churchwide events;
 - b. Consider other questions, including:
 - i. Types and sizes of events that might be appropriate for greetings,
 - ii. Cost estimates for participation in such events,
 - iii. Consideration of how they will be funded; and
 - c. Recommend guidelines to the American Indian and Alaska Native communities on acceptable ways to provide greetings at ELCA events.

Motion J Second Resolved Recommendations:

1. A series of six 5-minute educational videos to be used at appropriate ELCA events, introducing:
 - a. The Lutheran historical commitment to accompany American Indian and Alaska Native peoples in North America, and
 - b. The lifting up of current concerns in Indian Country.
2. The AIAN Ministry Program and the AIAN Lutheran Association
 - a. serve as consultants in the production of the videos, and
 - b. commit to finding partners and advocates...to provide funds for the proposed recommendations.

Motion N First Resolved Recommendations:

1. To acknowledge the benefit of past apologies to bring attention to the communities and issues of AIAN tribes in North America;
2. To commend current and past efforts, by parts of the ELCA, to take action on the intent of this resolved. For example, the Montana Synod not only wrote an apology to

the tribal nations of Montana, but also is in the process of going to each nation and hand-delivering the apology, seeking a more meaningful relationship with each nation;

3. To encourage the rest of the ELCA to follow suit and seek out face-to-face engagement with tribal nations closest to their locations; and
4. To encourage closer collaboration of ELCA staff and bishops with the National Congress of American Indians and find common cause with each other.

Motion N Second Resolved Recommendations:

1. To commend past and current relationships between ELCA staff and AIAN leaders, including ELCA advocacy staff collaborating on the Violence Against Women Act Amendments and the Office of the Presiding Bishop staff's inviting comment on the Justice for Women statement by Wendy Helgemo (Ho-Chunk), a senior congressional staffer and member of the ELCA; and
2. To encourage closer collaboration of ELCA staff and bishops with the National Congress of American Indians in areas of advocacy which are of common cause, including the Conference of Bishops' ready benches.

Motion N Third Resolved Recommendations:

1. Ask the AIAN Working Group to work with the staff of the ELCA Global Mission unit and the Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC) who have already been following the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in order to come up with recommendations on how to proceed with the intent of this resolved; and
2. Join with our ecumenical partners to address the church's complicity in making the Doctrine of Discovery a foundation of U.S. Federal Indian Law and take actions to repudiate this doctrine.

Motion N Fourth Resolved Recommendations:

1. Encourage Presiding Bishop Eaton to write the President of the United States of America to:
 - a. commend him for his commitment to Native Nations,
 - b. urge him to continue to strengthen government-to-government relationships between tribal nations and the U.S. federal government, and
 - c. urge him to work collaboratively with the National Congress of American Indians on implementation of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Motion N Fifth Resolved Recommendations:

1. Commend the ELCA in its past and current support of American Indian and Alaska Native ministries in the ELCA and commend the staff of the ELCA, in all its expressions, for its support of these ministries throughout the church;
2. Commend the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit (CSM) for establishing an interim strategy for accomplishing the work of the AIAN ministry program in, what has been a long-term vacancy in the program director's position;

3. Request that CSM implement the ELCA Church Council's desire for an AIAN working group, which has suffered the consequences of the current position vacancy;
4. Request that the interim program director begin work on revising the ELCA AIAN ministry strategy, which is quite out-dated; and
5. Request that the AIAN Ministry Program begin work on an AIAN leadership initiative:
 - a. For the leadership needs of ELCA AIAN ministries, and
 - b. In collaboration with the Council of Native American Ministries, to address leadership needs in common in the ecumenical AIAN arena.

Motion N Sixth Resolved Recommendations:

1. Following the recommendations to Motion J, ask the AIAN working group to create a series of five-minute educational videos, by curating current products or adapting them to the format and intent of this resolved, such as: previous Commission for Multicultural Ministries videos, resources from Select Learning/Seraphim Communications, the Native Nations collaborative, videos produced by our full-communion partners; and
2. Encourage all expressions of the ELCA to find ways in which to have face-to-face engagement with the American Indian and/or Alaska Native communities around them.

Motion N Seventh Resolved Recommendations:

1. Request that the ELCA AIAN Ministries program director work with appropriate staff of the Mission Advancement unit (MA) in creating a communications and marketing strategy for the Native American Ministries Endowment Fund, so that it may be further strengthened, in order to support the intention of this resolved;
2. Utilize the existing Multicultural Resources Fund to create interpretive products for the purpose of this resolved; and
3. Work with ELCA Program Director for Community Development and the Poverty and Justice Ministries Team-CSM, to create a consultation plan for ELCA AIAN ministries to take advantage of the capacity-building workshops and related processes to increase and stabilize their financial capacity.

Motion N Eighth Resolved Recommendations:

1. Request that the AIAN ministry program work with appropriate MA staff to develop a communications vehicle to inform all the expressions of the ELCA of the state of its AIAN ministries, the issues of concern in these communities and opportunities for learning and service in these communities; and
2. Request that a new Indigenous Institute be planned to coincide with the 2015 National Congress of American Indians annual meeting, held in San Diego, CA in November 2015 and to make strategic invitations to Directors for Evangelical Mission and other synod leaders to participate in this Institute, so that they become stronger allies with American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Motion N Ninth Resolved Recommendations:

1. To commit to the intent of these resolves and these recommended actions to fulfill them, providing prayer support and resources to this end, as the Creator allows and we are able; and
2. To commend the current work of the ELCA American Indian and Alaska Native ministry program, the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association, and the Native Ministry Team, who have already engaged many of these resolves and commend all those in the ELCA who have supported this work and have shown a commitment to them.

Concluding commentary on these resolutions and the work of the ELCA in American Indian and Alaska Native communities

Two unfortunate vacancies in the position of program director for American Indian and Alaska Native ministries of the ELCA, and the programmatic void that occurred as a result of them, have delayed the implementation of the ELCA Church Council's actions. However, by devoting staff time during the interim and a resurgence of efforts among the ELCA and many of its full-communion partners, there is a reason for confidence that this will no longer be the case. Many of us greatly appreciate the patience of the ELCA Church Council and we anticipate good things to come in the near future. In reality, this work has not stopped just because of a programmatic vacancy. Our ELCA ministries in AIAN communities continue to struggle and grow. There are challenges and there are new opportunities that present themselves. We thank you for your partnership in this work.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To thank the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit for their response;

To acknowledge the challenges of accomplishing the broad scope of the work due to diminished staff capacity;

To encourage the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to continue its ongoing efforts in implementing the recommendations outlined in its response, including establishment of an AIAN working group; and

To encourage all expressions of the ELCA to work on renewed, healthy and responsible relationships with American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples.

5. Fossil Fuels

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA13.03.07f)

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Oregon, Northwest Washington and New England synods regarding climate change and fossil fuels;

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to:

1. confess that both our witness to God's goodness in creation and our acceptance of caregiving responsibility have often been weak and uncertain;
2. support and encourage synods, congregations, members, the churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions of this church that are working to reduce their use of fossil fuels and improve their stewardship of energy resources;
3. support and encourage synods, congregations, members, the churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions of this church to adopt and advocate for policies that reduce energy use, and with it our dependence on fossil fuels, as an

expression of this church's commitment to address climate change and to care for God's creation;

4. support and encourage synods, congregations, members, the churchwide organization, and agencies and institutions of this church to re-examine lifestyles and environmental footprints as they relate to the climate crisis and to improve their stewardship of energy resources and promote care for God's creation;

To refer the matter of evaluating the feasibility and advisability of developing revised or additional investment screens and related recommendations to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit with the request that it ask the Corporate Social Responsibility Team to provide a report with possible recommendations to the November 2014 meeting of the ELCA Church Council; and

To forward any possible revisions of these policies to the separately incorporated ministries, agencies and institutions of this church for implementation as appropriate.

Background from Congregational and Synodical Mission (November 2014)

In an effort to fulfill the actions set out by the Churchwide Assembly related to fossil fuels, the ELCA engaged in a campaign during the summer of 2014 to support the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed rules to reduce carbon emissions, which would diminish the use of fossil fuels in the U.S. The following is an overview of the Clean Air Campaign/ Climate Change actions:

- ELCA Lutherans leaders throughout the country attended and gave testimony at all public hearings on the EPA's proposed rules for carbon emissions at power plants. Speakers included:
 - Rev. Dr. Leah Schade (PA), Rev. Paul Lubold (PA), Rev. Bill Rosenow (DC), Ms. Mary Minette (DC), Rev. Edward Wolff (TN), Dr. James White (Dir. Of Institute for Arctic Alpine Research, member at Trinity Lutheran, CO), Rev. Robert Moss (CO)
- In our campaign in support of the EPA's proposed rules on carbon emissions at power plants throughout the US, we encouraged Lutherans to send comments to the EPA.
 - We have received 1182 paper and electronic comments to send to the EPA so far. We will be presenting these comments to Gina McCarthy, Administrator for the EPA, this month.
- We encouraged Lutherans to sign on to an interfaith climate petition to global leaders, letting them know that Lutherans support action to combat climate change.
 - As of 10/1 we have collected 1219 signatures in support of the Climate Petition.
- Hundreds of Lutherans (an estimated 350) traveled to New York City for the People's Climate March as part of the Interfaith Contingent. Those representing the Lutheran faith were one of the largest groups present at a march of over 400,000 people.
- This year we have doubled the number of Lutherans in our network who are active on Environmental issues

The Corporate Social Responsibility Team did evaluate the feasibility of developing revised or additional investment screens. It was determined that no additional investment screens are needed at this time. However, there is a recommended revision to the Environment Social Criteria Investment Screen. The social criteria investment screen, "[Environment](#)", is available in the Program and Services materials and will be reviewed by the committee during its meeting in November.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To receive the response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit; and
To affirm the continued efforts in supporting and encouraging all expressions of this church to reduce their use of fossil fuels and improve their stewardship of energy resources.**

6. Category B1: Hydraulic Fracturing

Background from the 2013 Churchwide Assembly Memorials Committee

The issues surrounding hydraulic fracturing are complex and diverge significantly from place to place. Rural landowners, including some ELCA congregations and ministries, have benefitted financially from leasing to drilling companies, but other parts of these communities may be suffering from environmental or social impacts related to drilling. The moratorium on hydraulic fracturing suggested by the New England synod in its memorial is a solution that some communities might embrace, while others would not. For that reason, it would be difficult for the ELCA, as a national church, to endorse a single approach to this complex issue.

Given the complexity of these issues, including a number of environmental and economic factors, and the variety of important and valid perspectives held by ELCA members and communities on this issue, a dialog, as suggested by the Upper Susquehanna Synod's memorial, could be constructive and helpful for this church body. Convening such conversations could both underscore the challenges in finding a single policy solution for such a complex issue and lead to new understanding and new approaches as we live out our shared commitments to addressing hunger and poverty, supporting rural communities, and caring for God's creation.

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA13.03.07e)

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Upper Susquehanna and New England synods regarding hydraulic fracturing;

To thank the Upper Susquehanna and New England synods for raising an important issue and for their continued partnership as advocates for a cleaner energy future for our communities and for God's creation;

To recognize the complexity of issues surrounding hydraulic fracturing and the divergent views of this practice that exist within the ELCA;

To support and lift up the ongoing and evolving work of ELCA advocacy ministries of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to monitor and engage issues related to hydraulic fracturing; and

To encourage all ELCA synods, congregations and members to inform and educate themselves through the lens of the social statements Caring for Creation (1993), Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All (1999), and Genetics, Faith, and Responsibility (2011) about the issues pertaining to hydraulic fracturing by engaging in 1) grassroots conversation, 2) the sharing of pertinent stories, and 3) workshops and study groups to discern the theological, moral and ethical facets of this practice.

Background from Congregational and Synodical Mission (November 2014)

The Corporate Social Responsibility Team addressed the issues outlined in the churchwide action on Hydraulic Fracturing in the ["Extractives Industries Issue Paper"](#) document found in the Program and Services materials. By addressing all extractive

practices, with a particular emphasis on populations and locations most severely impacted by extractive practices such as hydraulic fracturing, the Corporate Social Responsibility Team has provided a framework within which further educational efforts can be made.

Another first step was the inclusion of hydraulic fracturing as part of the advocacy presentations given at both the Western North Dakota and Western Iowa Synod Assemblies.

Consideration related to further educational efforts is a part of the CSR Team's standing agenda.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To receive the response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit; and
To encourage the educational efforts in addressing the issues surrounding hydraulic fracturing.**

7. Immigration Reform

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA13.03.08)

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Northeastern Pennsylvania, Lower Susquehanna, New Jersey, Southwestern Pennsylvania and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., synods regarding comprehensive immigration reform;

To advocate for the adoption of comprehensive immigration reform legislation, consistent with guidance articulated in the ELCA message on "Immigration" and as set forth by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services:

- Provide an earned pathway to lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship for undocumented immigrants and their families
- Ensure the humane and just enforcement of U.S. immigration laws, specifically by reducing the use of immigration detention and expanding the use of community support programs for immigrants who do not need to be detained
- Protect families from separation and ensure an adequate supply of visas for families seeking to reunite
- Provide adequate resources and protections to ensure the successful integration of refugees, asylees, survivors of torture and trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and other vulnerable migrants
- Ensure the protection of U.S. citizen and migrant workers;

This legislation should provide a reasonable path to citizenship for undocumented individuals currently living and working in the United States, and set fair immigration quotas that are not discriminatory;

To call on rostered leaders, in their preaching and teaching, to promote an understanding of immigration issues that addresses welcome, promotes concern for the vulnerable, and calls believers to foster the highest possible level of moral discourse in church and society;

To call on congregations to engage in prayerful, reasoned discussion and education on issues related to immigration, availing themselves of resources prepared by the ELCA and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service;

To call on rostered leaders and congregations of the ELCA to communicate with the President of the United States, Senators, and Members of Congress, to develop and pass such comprehensive immigration reform legislation in the current session; and

To call on the presiding bishop of this church to continue to communicate to members of Congress the ELCA's position on immigration reform.

Church Council Action (CC13.11.69h)

To request the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, to bring a report on the ELCA advocacy activities related to comprehensive immigration reform by the November 2014 meeting of the Church Council.

Background from Congregational and Synodical Mission (November 2014)

Although the Senate led in April 2013 with its passage of a long-awaited and long-fought-for humane Comprehensive Immigration Reform package, House leadership has yet to follow the Senate's lead and will unlikely vote on any positive immigration reform measures in the lame duck session ahead. Sadly, the legislation that passed the Senate expires at the close of 2014 with the end of this Congressional session. Therefore, the probability of the passage any sort of comprehensive immigration reform legislation, particularly one that reflects Lutheran principles and values, is slight at best until the advent of a new Administration in 2017 and renewed political will in Congress.

As Congress fails to deliver overdue solutions to our outdated and inadequate immigration laws, President Obama is expected to take some steps to provide relief to a segment of the current undocumented population. Administrative steps hold the most promise for short-term fixes to the immigration system.

Regardless of how truculent the current political environment may be in regard to the possibility of a good immigration reform package, Lutherans continue to keep up the fight toward justice and family unity. Quite contrary to Congress's culture of impasse, Lutherans continue to engage on a whole array of immigration-related issues with eyes kept on comprehensive legislative solutions and federal agency practices and procedures:

- In the wake of the dramatic increase of children and families crossing the southern border of the U.S., Lutherans, through the leadership of LIRS and affiliates like Lutheran Social Services of Texas, along with Lutheran Disaster Response and the ELCA Advocacy Office, reached out to the Administration and to Congress to request that proper funding be made available to meet the children's basic needs without detracting from important work to resettle traditional refugees. Because the federal agency that cares for children who arrive alone also resettles refugees, the increase in arrivals of unaccompanied children resulted in a cut in programming for refugee services. LIRS sought supplemental funding to ensure that both vulnerable populations received the support they need, and continues to fight for adequate funding through the appropriations process.
- Lutherans also advocated for ensured access to legal counsel and continue to work to ensure that children are kept safe and held in child-appropriate settings while awaiting the adjudication of their legal status. LIRS worked with the Administration to ensure that children were placed in the least restrictive and as small a setting as possible, with a strong emphasis on foster care. LIRS has also led the way in working to ensure safe release of minors to relatives already living in the U.S. This has meant advocacy with the Administration to work toward the guarantee of adequate post-release follow-up services as a means of helping to safeguard children from possible abuse, trafficking, or neglect as well as a means of helping families navigate the Byzantine immigration system that currently exists.
- While the number of children and families crossing the border has diminished to some extent since the peak of arrivals this past summer, the numbers of children arriving alone and with parents has truly been astounding. In response, the Administration has reinstated the obsolete and inhumane practice of family

detention and is increasingly holding newly arrived mothers and their babies, toddlers and teens in immigration detention facilities. In response to this, LIRS is advocating strongly with the Administration to release families into communities, with proper case management support, such as under the care of a Welcoming Congregation. The ELCA Advocacy Office is working in conjunction with LIRS on this issue and is considering, if capacity allows, a possible advocacy campaign on this issue in the year to come. LIRS has begun to directly speak with Lutheran churches and pastors as a way to educate and mobilize Lutherans around this issue and to help Lutherans understand how a comprehensive immigration reform package could help end family detention in the U.S.

- Another Lutheran effort towards showing compassion and welcome for migrants and refugees is one led by Lutheran pastor, the Rev. Alexia Salvatierra, called Guardian Angels. The Guardian Angels is a response to the crisis of unaccompanied migrant children crossing the U.S./Mexican border. Recent studies have shown that roughly 60 percent of the children appear to have credible asylum cases (many connected to the potential for murder or trafficking by organized crime in their home countries.) While the House passed a Bill on August 1, 2014, only allowing children (without any guarantee of legal representation) seven days to prove their asylum case, the Senate did not concur. However, federal immigration courts have implemented faster initial hearings for unaccompanied children and families released from detention. These faster hearings, known as the “rocket docket”, negatively impact the ability to find legal representation necessary to mount a challenge to deportation. All children who arrive to the U.S. without valid visas are placed into deportation proceedings and have no right to government-appointed counsel. This is a confusing and anguishing time for their caregivers, many of whom don’t know what to do or how to help. The National Lawyers’ Guild is currently engaged in a suit to gain the provision of legal counsel for these children. They need court observers who are trained to watch for violations of the trafficking laws and report them to the guild. The Guardian Angels program is designed to engage immigrant and non-immigrant congregational members in accompanying these children and families to court, both for pastoral support and to document violations. Guardian Angels may also be in a position to advocate in other ways (e.g. write letters to authorities on behalf of particular children and families). The Welcoming Congregations Network of the Southwest California Synod is in partnership with the National Lawyers’ Guild (NLG) to train volunteers and link them with families. Volunteers attend court at a time and date when the unaccompanied migrant children are going through the court process, wearing T-Shirts that identify them and being available to pastorally support families. The NLG offices are across from the court so the most efficient way to structure the program is for the assigned volunteers to meet at their offices to be briefed on the cases for the day before going across the street. The NLG will also inform the court about the Guardian Angels project. Volunteer trainings are currently being scheduled by the NLG (legal counsel) and LIRS (a webinar on effective ministry to children and families).
- While Congress keeps immigration reform in limbo, millions of immigrants must suffer the consequences of this inaction. Approximately 300 churches across the country, through the leadership of the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition \(IIC\)](#)*, are responding to the immediate needs of immigrants by providing sanctuary. One such

* The ELCA is a member of IIC.

congregation is Augustana Lutheran Church in Portland, OR, which has committed to hosting at least one undocumented man. His case marks the first time in recent years that an immigrant has been granted sanctuary inside an Oregon church. During the past decade, as reform has stalled, it is perceived by some that churches around the country have offered refuge to immigrants who lack legal status because immigration officials generally do not arrest people inside churches and other places of worship.

- Because CIR is currently stalled in Congress, the push now is for some fixes on the Administrative front that could ease some of the burden immigrants face while awaiting Congress' eventual passage of an immigration reform package. The following are what Lutheran pastors and congregations, such as Reformation Lutheran in Washington, DC, are asking of the Administration:
 - Renew and Expand Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA);
 - Expand Use of Prosecutorial Discretion and Amend Civil Enforcement Priorities;
 - End Secure Communities and 287(g) Agreements;
 - Reform Deportation Policies and Practices;
 - Reform Detention Policies and End the Detention Bed Mandate;
 - Expand Implementation of the Rule on Provisional Unlawful Presence Waivers;
 - Respect Department of Labor Actions and Parental Rights;
 - Increase Opposition to Anti-Immigrant State Policies; and
 - Prioritize Funding to Promote Immigrant Integration and Protect Vulnerable Populations.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To receive the report from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit on current ELCA advocacy activities related to comprehensive immigration reform; and
To affirm the ongoing work of this church and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services on this issue.**

8. Gender Identity Discrimination

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Eastern North Dakota, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Eastern Washington-Idaho, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Southwestern Texas, Saint Paul Area, Sierra Pacific, Northwest Washington, Greater Milwaukee, Southwest California, Minneapolis Area, Metropolitan New York, Northwestern Minnesota, Upstate New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Southwestern Minnesota, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., and Indiana/Kentucky* synods regarding their concern for the important issue of employment non-discrimination and their common cause in memorializing the 2013 Churchwide Assembly;

To acknowledge the continued lack of state and federal anti-discrimination workplace laws addressing the categories of sexual identity and gender identity and the recent and recurring proposals concerning the employment non-discrimination legislation, including a proposal to provide a religious exemption;

To recommit this church to principles of non-discrimination in employment and to call for other employers to engage in similar practices;

To affirm the work by the ELCA advocacy ministries and Corporate Social Responsibility Team in supporting employment non-discrimination legislation and request that they continue to support legislation that opposes workplace discrimination;

To request that the presiding bishop of this church communicate to members of Congress the support of the ELCA for legislation that prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity while providing for religious exemptions; and

To encourage all ELCA synods, congregations, and members to add their voices in support of legislation that prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

Church Council Action (CC13.11.69f)

To request the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to bring a report on the ELCA advocacy activities related to Gender Identity Discrimination by the November 2014 meeting of the Church Council.

Background from Congregational and Synodical Mission (November 2014)

With inter-religious coalition members, the ELCA helped in a federal legislative effort late last year to push the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) through to final passage.

On November 7, 2013, with concerted advocacy from faith-based leadership in partnership with other sectors, the Senate passed ENDA. However, as with many pieces of legislation, House leadership referred the bill to its Workforce Protections Subcommittee.

During the winter and spring of 2014, a coalition of partners including the ELCA, worked to garner House support to move the bill through committee. Meetings to encourage House representatives, requests to the business community for support and work to further concretize interfaith support made up the bulk of the work over the first months of the year.

However, advocacy work to support ENDA in the House diminished and has practically stopped as LGBT coalition partner groups began to pull out of the ENDA fight due to the Supreme Court's Hobby Lobby decision.

While there are no other pieces of legislation that address gender identity discrimination solely moving in either the House or Senate, the ELCA continues to assess and address other advocacy work through a gender lens. Examples of how this is realized in the ELCA's advocacy portfolio include recommending that issues around gender identity discrimination as it relates to mass incarceration, asylum issues, as well as the International Violence Against Women's Act (IVAWA) are addressed in legislative language. The ELCA also continues to raise the issue of Gender Identity Discrimination as it works with the Administration. In a meeting with Labor Secretary Thomas Perez, ELCA advocacy staff noted the churchwide commitment to end gender discrimination in the workplace and encouraged Secretary Perez to do what can be done through Executive Order on this issue. In the area of housing, the ELCA has done the same encouragement through appropriate channels with Housing Urban Development.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To receive the response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit; and
To request the ELCA Advocacy Office continue its efforts in supporting legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment and public services.**

9. State and Commonwealth

Background

.....
To amend †S3.01. by striking “state” in the last line and substituting the word “Commonwealth,” and to amend 10.01.11. by striking the word “state” in the fifth line and substituting the word “commonwealth,” striking the final comma in the same line and substitute the word “and,” and striking the word “state” in the last line and substituting the word “commonwealth.”

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA13.03.16)

To refer this matter to the Office of the Secretary with a requested report to the Church Council by the fall of 2014.

Background from the Office of the Secretary

Currently all references are to “the state of ...” and four of the states refer to themselves as “commonwealths”. This resolution was presented by a pastor from Pennsylvania. It is the opinion of the secretary that this change does not need to be made at this time. The constitution of the United States refers only to states and not to states and commonwealths. The website for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (pa.gov) self-identifies as the “Keystone State”. While it is appropriate to refer to the Commonwealths of Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky, it is not standard practice to do so when referring to them along with states that are not commonwealths. All commonwealths are states.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary; and
To decline to amend this church’s constitutions by striking the word ‘state’ and substituting the word ‘commonwealth.’**

10. Term Limits for Officers

Churchwide Assembly Action Motion I

To amend the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by inserting the following provisions:

13.23. No person shall be eligible to be elected to a third consecutive six-year executive term to the office of presiding bishop.

13.33. No person shall be eligible to be elected to a third consecutive six-year term to the position of vice president.

13.43. No person shall be eligible to be elected to a third consecutive six-year term to the office of secretary.

Rationale of the Reference and Counsel Committee

The Reference and Counsel Committee receives the motion with gratitude. We are not advocating for or against term limits.

The proposed resolution requested consideration of term limits for all officers selected by the Churchwide Assembly. In the coming days, we will have many conversations about this

assembly's decisions. The conversations about leadership needs and our future elections are already taking place. The proposed motion engages one of many points of conversation.

Recommendation of the Reference and Counsel Committee

To refer this resolution to the ELCA Church Council and Conference of Bishops for broad-based conversation beginning in spring 2014 (for example – inviting the input of our vice presidents) with a possible report by the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council with sufficient time for potentially bringing action to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

The items for attention include:

- Identification of the needs of the Churchwide Organization for each office (that are deeper than the constitutional descriptions);
- Identifying leaders to potentially serve; and
- Conversation about possible limitation of duration in terms.

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA13.06.28)

To refer Motion I to the Church Council and Conference of Bishops for broad-based conversation (e.g. inviting the input of synodical vice presidents) beginning in spring 2014 with a possible report to the Church Council at its November 2015 meeting and recommendations to the 2016 Churchwide Assembly.

The items for attention include identifying the needs of the churchwide organization for each office that are deeper than the constitutional descriptions, identifying leaders to potentially serve, and discussing the possible limitation of duration in terms.

Church Council Action (CC13.11.69k)

To refer Motion I: Term Limits to the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

To request that a report with possible recommendations be brought to the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council.

Background from the Office of the Secretary (November 2014)

In surveying synod bishops, vice presidents and secretaries, Secretary Chris Boerger learned that 18 synods have term limits for bishops, 37 have term limits for vice presidents, 30 have term limits for secretary and 27 have term limits for treasurer.

In response to the question, “Do you believe your synod would favor or oppose a two-term limit for churchwide officers?” the response was 33 percent in favor, 22 percent oppose and 45 percent not sure. The comments section noted the strength of having new ideas and new perspectives as a reason for term limits. Loss of experience and corporate memory were the most common negatives noted. Several comments were made about an election as a form of term limits.

While there was some enthusiasm expressed for this concept, there was also some strong opposition. This issue has also been the subject of synod memorials three times in the life of this church. On all three occasions, the request to establish term limits was declined by the Churchwide Assembly.

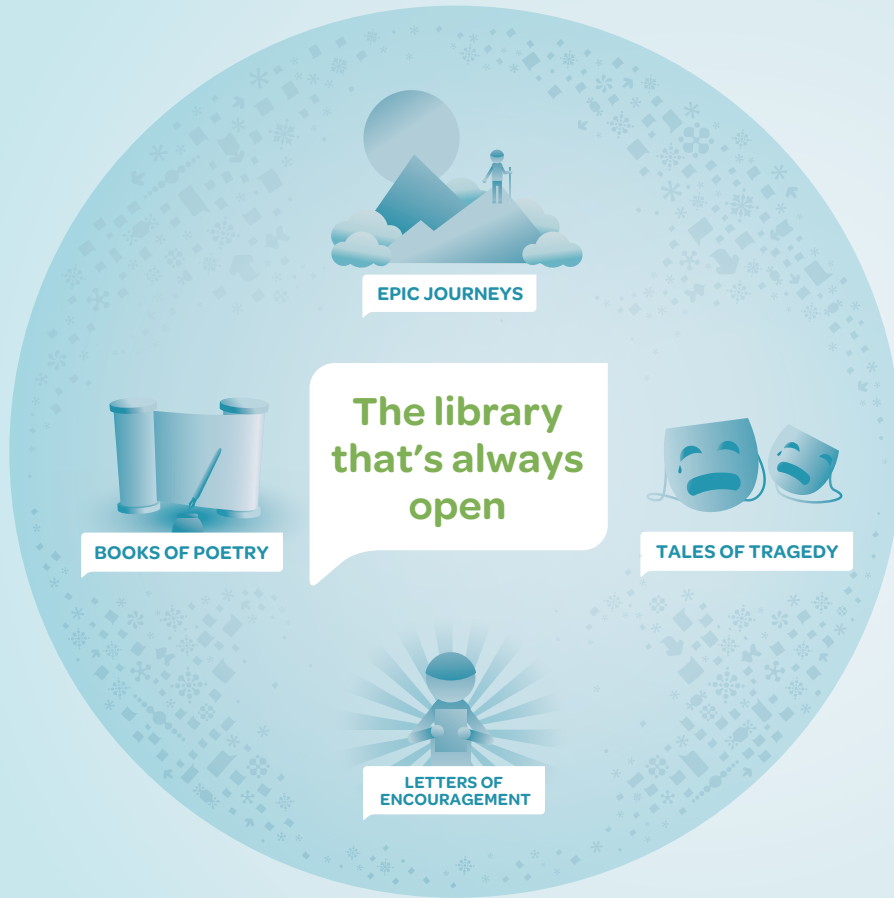
Therefore, Secretary Boerger does not recommending that this church amend the constitution to establish two-term limits for churchwide officers. He will be working with a group from the Executive Committee to look at officer election processes. He does not anticipate that term limits will be part of that discussion.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary; and

To decline to amend the ELCA Constitution to establish term limits for churchwide officers.



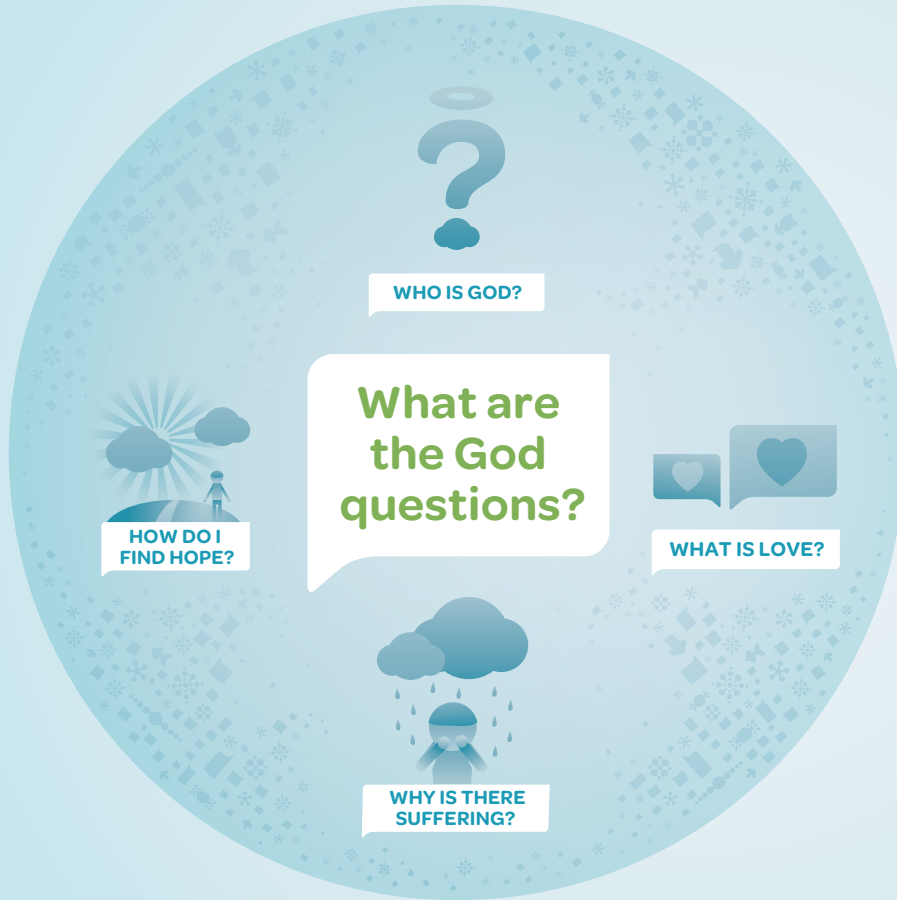
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God's work. Our hands.

August 2014 Church Council Retreat Evaluation

This assessment is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the August 2014 Church Council Retreat held at Camp Carol Joy Holling in Ashland, Nebraska.

Worship/Prayer Service

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not applicable
a. Worship supported the content of the retreat.	0% (0)	0% (0)	3% (1)	34% (11)	53% (17)	9% (3)
b. Self-guided "Take-a-Hike" reflections supported the content of the retreat.	0% (0)	3% (1)	22% (7)	25% (8)	28% (9)	22% (7)
c. Prayer services supported the content of the retreat.	0% (0)	0% (0)	19% (6)	31% (10)	38% (12)	13% (4)

August 2014 Church Council Retreat Evaluation - Open-Ended Responses

Question: 2. Please include any comments about the worship/prayer service below:

Response
I walked one morning and attended morning chapel the other. I appreciated the choice. Missed offering in Sunday worship.
I enjoyed and appreciated the worship experiences although I thought we could have had more attention to prayer in the midst of the sessions (as we do in our meetings)
Thanks for those who planned the worship services and for all who participated in leadership of the services - liturgist, musicians, presiders, and preachers. Very meaningful.
I would have preferred worship be either better prepared or that it had taken a more spontaneous approach. It felt like we were trying to reproduce a formal liturgy with traditional leadership, without sufficient preparation. The situation made preparation difficult, and I fault no one. I wonder if in the future, our worship can be more simple, with shared leadership of the whole (more participatory, for lack of a better word). I'd rather go with less "high churchy stuff" than feel like things were obviously thrown together at the last minute.
I always appreciate Holden Evening Prayer
I didn't participate in the "take a hike"
Bishop Eaton's flute accompaniment was a highlight.
Well planned and well executed. Thanks to Steve and Jim and all the musicians.
Did not attend council retreat.
I enjoy worshipping with council. It's a very focused time.
Closing worship was excellent. Was a treat to hear bishop Eaton's flute.

Facilities

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not applicable
a. The rooms were comfortable.	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	16% (5)	75% (24)	9% (3)
b. The facilities/grounds were well-kept.	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (2)	84% (26)	10% (3)
c. Quality meals/snacks were served.	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	13% (4)	81% (25)	7% (2)

Question: 4. Please include any comments about the facilities below:

Response
Great site, though challenging to get to.
The meals were excellent but I was sick on Saturday and suspect food poisoning. Could have been on the airplane, however, but I did wonder if anyone else had that problem.
One of the best retreat centers I have been to and more comfortable than the hotel that we use for our meetings.
What a wonderful retreat center and opportunity for us to see the ELCA Camping ministries in action - great choice
Wonderful hospitality.
Mmm! Mtn dew and chips/pretzels
great setting, and excellent hospitality on the part of Carol Joy staff. kudos to the committee for setting this up.
Beautiful place. I loved be at and supporting an ELCA Bible camp.
The facility offered access to nature as well as wonderful rooms. The air-conditioning was especially appreciated at that time of year.
What a great facility! A real treasure.
Did not attend council retreat.
Facility was excellent in every respect.
Great location Wish we could have enjoyed the setting a bit more
Beautiful location with access to nature as well as wonderful facilities. The time of year was really hot, so the air-conditioning in the rooms was very welcome.
The facility worked great!

Agenda Schedule

5. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not applicable
a. We utilized our time well.	0% (0)	19% (6)	0% (0)	31% (10)	41% (13)	9% (3)
b. We received adequate breaks.	0% (0)	22% (7)	3% (1)	50% (16)	16% (5)	9% (3)

Question: 6. Please include any comments about the agenda schedule below:**Response**

The scheduling of breaks was not adequate. When some complained we quit, and did not make as good use of the time as we could have, and we did not cover all items on the agenda

We need to continue to work toward wellness goals of rest and balance that with work. With travel and time changes, these were ridiculously long days.

I know we were there to work and devote our limited time together to the subject at hand, but that degree of intensity is wearing on body and minds, and more breaks may have been useful.

For me a retreat would have been more effective had it had attention to knowing each other grounded in faith rather than 'business'

Good planning and leadership.

I was disappointed with the amount of time spent learning how to have a conversation, rather than having that conversation. I thought this was going to be a time to dig into the deeper questions. I understand that some groundwork needed to be done, but I felt like the retreat and our presenter were all about the groundwork. Frankly, it wasn't worth my time until we abandoned the scripted agenda to do the small group thing on day 2(?). Given the frustration that brought that about, I know I am not the only one who felt this way. We also spent too much time going over the same old issues/topics that we all already know about. We all know where the church has been and we know the present culture/context, as well as what's on the horizon. I worry that our institution will get stuck fiddling with analysis rather than acting as the Church as it is called to be in this ever changing world.

I think we could have spent more time working on our core values as a council after John gave us such a nice frame-work and common language to work with.

The schedule was pretty packed, but given the loads of things to be discussed, a tight schedule was understandable and acceptable.

Did not attend council retreat.

I thought the schedule was a bit too full. We did receive adequate breaks however I would have enjoyed a few hours of sabbath time.

I think the schedule was so tight that it was difficult to have a chance to contemplate or reflect on all of the material. It took us until Saturday afternoon to really get at the heart of meaningful matters. I little more sabbath time would have been helpful.

Retreat Objective: Team-Building

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not applicable
a. We were able to strengthen our interpersonal relationships and bond together as a council.	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	34% (11)	56% (18)	9% (3)
b. The facilitator helped the council achieve the goal of team-building.	0% (0)	0% (0)	9% (3)	48% (15)	32% (10)	9% (3)

Question: 8. Please include any comments about team-building below:**Response**

These factors may have been achieved regardless of the content of the presenters.

I now feel part of a team.

The facilitator was interesting and challenging. He had a depth of experience that he could draw from in his teaching. At times, he seemed to be unaware of veering off course of what we wanted him to be doing. I did not understand his use of his son in the presentations nor did I think it added any value - just my opinion.

The "breakout groups" were particularly helpful in achieving these goals.

It went well for how large of a group it is.

As a council, I felt the fellowship time more conducive to strengthening relationships. The facilitator and our discussion did help to build a stronger understanding of the ELCA structure and its inherent lack of clarity when it comes to leadership and team work across the different bodies of authority/power/leadership. This will be helpful moving forward.

Small group discussions proved really helpful. It enabled and encouraged those who are not comfortable to speak in a large group to express their concerns and ideas.

Did not attend council retreat.

The main strength of these things is the opportunity to get better acquainted with our working partners --personalities and perspectives-- in a relaxed situation. Every aspect of a retreat should be planned with this in mind.

Retreat Objective: Roles and Responsibilities

9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not applicable
a. We better understand our roles and responsibilities as a board of directors.	0% (0)	6% (2)	6% (2)	56% (18)	22% (7)	9% (3)
b. The facilitator helped the council achieve the goal of understanding its governing roles and responsibilities.	0% (0)	6% (2)	19% (6)	38% (12)	25% (8)	13% (4)
c. We are able to govern more effectively now than before the retreat.	0% (0)	0% (0)	22% (7)	44% (14)	25% (8)	9% (3)

Question: 10. Please include any comments about governance below:**Response**

My uncertainties about the council's role was not altered by the retreat.

It became clear that our structure mitigates against role clarity.

The content assumed we were a secular board of directors, not the board in an organization where the board and the officers are elected separately and have no legal duty of accountability to each other. ELCA governance is much more complex than regular for profit/nonprofit governance.

That improvement in governance would come from relationships. I didn't think the sessions were about governance so much as general leadership (which is also valuable, just different)

a. and b. seem to say the same thing - a better understanding of our roles and responsibilities was achieved. Effectiveness will be seen in our future functionings as a board/council.

regarding c.) I hope we will be more effective, but this is also dependent upon the staff, bishops, and others with whom we share leadership within the ELCA. We will see.

I think there is more that could be done into the future in terms of board development, but time is always an issue.

Time will tell whether 9c is true.

Now that we know each other a little better, we may be more inclined to ask questions or comment on something.

Did not attend council retreat.

While I believe we began to develop a better understand our roles and responsibilities as a board of directors, I'm not sure the council collectively understands the role of the council better. I think the retreat may have helped lead us to govern more effectively but I'm not positive it did.

The best moment was when we went to the quadrants -to reveal our attitude toward the staff deciding a recommended policy for us to approve or not, or the the staff presenting us with a wider range of options to discuss and make our choices.

Big Ideas: Learning More or Primers

Please read the following descriptions and indicate below which three ideas you believe are the highest priorities for further discussion.

A. Podcasts/YouTube videos should be made available for Church Council members to learn more about historical matters or important issues facing the church. An example would be having a podcast on the history of the Church Council.

B. Mandatory tour of the Lutheran Center so that the Church Council can know more about the churchwide organization and be able to see and hear firsthand about what the staff does.

C. Church Council could ask staff what would be helpful for them. Church Council contact information would be shared with staff for direct communication.

D. Church Council would receive interim reports (in between meetings of the council) from task forces and groups about the progress of their work. These reports would include names and contact information of the staff crafting the reports.

E. Position papers/presentations could be given from the committees to explain to the full council the arguments for and against the committee recommendations.

	A	B	C	D	E
Highest Priority	13% (4)	3% (1)	25% (8)	34% (11)	25% (8)
Second-highest Priority	22% (7)	9% (3)	9% (3)	22% (7)	38% (12)
Third-highest Priority	17% (5)	13% (4)	27% (8)	23% (7)	20% (6)

Big Ideas: Conversation and Small Group Discussions

Please read the following descriptions and indicate below which three ideas you believe are the highest priorities for further discussion.

A. There is a need for more structured opportunities for questions after a report is given for both the individual committees and the full council. Voting members could talk in pairs after a report for a few minutes and then be brought back to order for questions from the full committee/council.

B. Small groups should be varied so that the same people are not in the same groups for every discussion.

C. To accommodate those who need space to think or speak, cards could be made available for questions/comments. These cards could be placed in a basket and shared later for consideration.

D. Church Council could use the Communion Practices memorial from the Northern Illinois Synod to experiment with these ideas for small group discernment ideas.

E. Virtual teams of Church Council members could meet by teleconference in between the in-person meetings of the council.

F. Feedback about issues and concerns should be shared up front instead of just at the end of the meeting.

G. Churchwide staff could collect issues for the presiding bishop to share with the council. The council could then hear about issues earlier and provide some answers to staff.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Highest Priority	59% (19)	3% (1)	3% (1)	6% (2)	16% (5)	3% (1)	9% (3)
Second-highest Priority	9% (3)	16% (5)	19% (6)	6% (2)	19% (6)	22% (7)	9% (3)
Third-highest Priority	17% (5)	17% (5)	10% (3)	7% (2)	10% (3)	20% (6)	20% (6)

Big Ideas: Time

Please read the following descriptions and indicate below which three ideas you believe are the highest priorities for further discussion.

A. More frequent full council virtual meetings in between the in-person meetings.

B. More deliberations at round tables.

C. More time between the meetings of the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council. (Currently, there is a month in between these meetings.)

D. More dialogue (in various groupings) before the in-person meetings.

E. Because of the triennial cycle, institute three meetings a year (one would be virtual).

	A	B	C	D	E
Highest Priority	6% (2)	38% (12)	0% (0)	38% (12)	19% (6)
Second-highest Priority	20% (6)	23% (7)	10% (3)	33% (10)	13% (4)
Third-highest Priority	11% (3)	14% (4)	14% (4)	18% (5)	43% (12)

Question: 14. Please share any ideas or comments about the retreat that you feel could help in this evaluation.**Response**

It was wonderful. Could have used a little more social time together. (Just a suggestion: I am a non-drinker and the social times are usually organized around wine etc. Also, the youth who are now part of the Council can't drink alcohol. It feels a little isolating when jokes, etc are all around drinking for the social get-togethers.)

In order to apply what we learned at the retreat, some reminder coaching from John in the weeks following could have been helpful. Though I was fully engaged at the retreat, it is hard to even remember what we discussed. Normal life crowds out my council work except for immediately prior to the meetings.

The facilitator should have significantly modified his "canned" program for businesses and secular nonprofits to apply specifically to the ELCA governance structure. We should have had more follow-up on some of the brainstorming sessions we did around tables, applying those results to improving the governance operations of the Council

I thought that it was very intense but useful. I am concerned that some participants might want to beat to death topics at council meetings which I think would be the wrong lesson to take from the retreat. Longer meetings are not necessarily better meetings. The real point is that good -- and better -- communication, education, and information dissemination are essential to a well-informed voting body. At the same time we need to repose trust in our leadership and staff and resist the temptation to micromanage every issue. I felt this retreat was particularly helpful and timely given the change of bishop and secretary and the recent influx of new council members like myself. I like the idea of doing this on a more regular basis to build a sense of a bonded, cohesive community. Frankly, I'm not much for small group or round-table breakout sessions, and post-it-note charts and dot voting. I just like to get down to business. I like our council board room at the Lutheran Center and think it is a great place for our meetings. I think as we work together more as a board we will get better at it. I liked the idea of trying to work on the elements of our elephantine church body (created by compromise and committee) so as to better tap into the leadership, resources and wisdom of our bishops as well as the theologians of our schools and seminaries.

I thought that the retreat was overscheduled and that more time should have been allowed for informal conversations and re-creation. Information fatigue increased as the retreat went on. The key moment in the retreat was when Church Council members began to question the relevance of the presentations. After that moment we began to better focus on how we could be a better council.

The last series of questions about priorities were hard to understand and evaluate. In the last question I didn't think any of them should necessarily have been priorities.

Thank you for the retreat planning committee's good work.

All ideas are covered well at this point.

I liked the interactive aspects. With the paper and small groups

I greatly appreciated the "Polarities" piece; working to discover what's happening under the surface. I have already used some of that in my own congregational ministry.

I really appreciate the time and efforts that churchwide staff put into the retreat, making it successful and effective. I think it's very helpful when churchwide staff joined the small group discussions. They listened, respected different and sometimes opposing opinions. They got a better sense of the concerns of council members. Though we are confined by time, we are not DEFINED by time. Most of the time, it is a matter of communications. We just need to find better ways to communicate with one another and exchange ideas.

The retreat was a very positive experience.

I was not able to attend the retreat unfortunately. Therefore, I am unable to comment on this survey regarding the retreat itself. One observation is that there is an important difference between how the Council structures its time for its standing governing responsibilities such as finance, nominating, personnel, etc. and time on matters of church policy - such as position papers, and task forces. Not all topics are of equal weight and importance in every meeting. It is critical that the Bishop's staff organizes and manages the agendas in a matter that is most relevant to the decisions required for that time period. We shouldn't have a one size fits all approach to agenda setting - and the use of small groups or interim reporting or meeting should be tailored to the decision making needs.

I would have expected more direct involvement with the question of how we, as Church Council members, can function as a more effective board of directors? How can the churchwide structure help us to do our jobs better? What expectations for our roles and responsibilities exist beyond the confines of our group?

I appreciated the change in setting, despite the logistical challenges. It was helpful to be away from an office setting, and to see another facet of our church's ministry. I would have preferred some more "down" time during the day, but given the task at hand I understand why we could not do that.

Question: 14. Please share any ideas or comments about the retreat that you feel could help in this evaluation.

Response
I appreciate John Scherer's ability and willingness to "go with the flow" - to allow the conversation to shift away from his plan - to adapt the focus of the presentation on the fly.
Did not attend council retreat.
Overall, a very good experience.
I like it when we have guests participate in the council meetings and retreats, to lead worship, preach, devotions etc. example, seminary professors, staff, etc. it gives added visibility to the Church Council to leaders from the various "wings" of the Church.
This retreat was helpful in getting to know other members of the council. I am not sure we accomplished our goals regarding leadership and the role of the council.

Question: 15. Based on your experience, would you recommend a retreat for future councils? Why or why not?

Response
Yes, it was essential to getting to know one another, and feeling comfortable with dialog at future meetings.
No. It is expensive and time-consuming, and the group keeps changing.
Yes. Especially if the three year election cycle become permanent, the new members (half) would benefit from becoming acquainted with the returning members.
I would highly recommend retreats. Relationships have time to form, and we are able to really discuss an issue, rather than approve action items.
The focus of the retreat should be revisiting the ELCA's mission, vision and core values. The retreat should have a frank discussion of the roles of the officers (Bishop, Secretary, Treasurer & VP), Council and COB in the governance of the ELCA. The Council should discuss changes to the ELCA Constitution to make governance more rational and mutually accountable.
Yes. I thought it was a good opportunity to grow together as a board. The information presented was worth while, the worship time together was wonderful and the time for conversation was meaningful.
Yes. I felt this retreat was particularly helpful and timely given the change of bishop and secretary and the recent influx of new council members like myself. I like the idea of doing this on a more regular basis to build a sense of a bonded, cohesive community, but with less intensity. When we know each other better we feel more comfortable speaking and less intimidated.
Definitely yes. I believe that the retreat gives Church Council members the opportunity to relate to each other in more holistic way rather than focusing on a need to address the business at hand.
Absolutely, with more opportunity to know each other as persons of faith.
The retreat provided informal opportunities to get to know one another which I greatly appreciated. I think we used the time very well. Flying into Omaha is difficult for many - at least two flights to get there. In the future, what about a retreat in Chicago - one flight for most of us!
Yes. Every three years.
Yes. It got stuff done we can't really do at meetings
Yes. It was a good opportunity to focus on who we are as a council in leading the ELCA. Our meetings are simply too full to allow for such conversation, imagination, and experimentation.
Yes! It was a great bonding experience as a council, and very good conversation time.
Yes, every other year or so. We need time to consider HOW we act as a council - what our priorities are and to evaluate how well we're doing on achieving these goals. I don't think it's the kind of self evaluation we can easily do during a regular "business" meeting.
The retreat should happen after every new class is installed. I felt it gave all of us some time to be "just ourselves" before the formal meeting.
I highly recommend a retreat for future councils, if funds are available. There were more interactions between one another during the retreat. People are able to get to know each other better. Since we are church, we are the body of Christ. Improving interpersonal relationship not only facilitates better working relations, but also practices an authentic way of discipleship.
Yes -- and again use one of our EOCA camps or a college or ...
Yes, the year after church wide assembly with the many new council members.
I would only recommend future retreats if there is a specifically designed and agreed upon outcome. For this past retreat, there was never an agenda provided in advance of the retreat - and other than a primer on governance from the facilitator, it is unclear what the desired outcome of our collective time was intended to be. Taking dedicated time in retreat formats must be accompanied by strong staff work and specific goals & objectives. General relationship building, while important, is not sufficient unless it accompanied by a strong sense of purpose about which the leadership team in management wants to accomplish.
Yes, meeting together is always a good thing. The key is the facilitator, and how we use our time together wisely.
Yes. It was important for me to get to know my council colleagues on a more informal basis. I also learned a great deal about the council's history, which helps put some things in context. I am more inclined to ask questions or make comments in a meeting when I know those in attendance.
Yes. I feel much better about governance possibilities after the retreat.

Question: 15. Based on your experience, would you recommend a retreat for future councils? Why or why not?

Response

Most definitely. I firmly believe that we, as a Council, will function more effectively and efficiently for having spent this time together; getting to know one another a little better and having good discussions about the way we work together.

Did not attend council retreat.

I think the retreat is essential. There wasn't one my first year. I think that this year's retreat demonstrated the definite need.

Yes, helps to function more effectively as a decision-making body when we know and like each other, know what we think about life in the church.

I would only recommend a retreat if there was a specific need or hope which could not be accomplished through the regular meetings. This felt more like a relaxed meeting not necessarily a retreat.

Yes, it is important to have the opportunity to acquaint with other members before being faced with decisions that can build -- or weaken -- the church's staffing and financial position. There are likely to be more of those decisions as various special interests, (ecumenical, progressive, etc.) try to win their causes.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met at the Lutheran Center, Chicago, Illinois, November 7-10, 2014. The council welcomed one new member and centered its work around daily worship, frequent prayer, and personal reflections on faith. It lived into its commitment to be a “Book of Faith” council by participating in a Bible study led by the Rev. Richard Perry, professor of Church and society and urban ministry, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Among the items on which the Church Council took action were the following:

- elected Vernon K. Veal, Bloomington, Illinois, to the Church Council
- approved a revised 2015 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$69,650,020 and a revised 2015 fiscal year World Hunger spending authorization of \$20,000,000
- approved the Private Prisons Social Criteria Investment Screen and amendments to the Environment Social Criteria Investment Screen, the Extractive Industries Issue Paper, and the Military Weapons Social Criteria Investment Screen, and affirmed the proposed succession plan in joint planning around corporate social responsibility work between the churchwide organization and Portico Benefit Services
- approved the implementation of the Disability Ministries program into the *Always Being Made New* campaign as detailed in the case statement
- approved the implementation of the Youth and Young Adult Ministries program into the *Always Being Made New* campaign, setting a goal of \$2 million for current fund gifts and a goal of \$2 million for the creation of a permanent endowment to support youth and young adult ministries into the future
- conferred the honorary title of “presiding bishop emeritus” to the Rev. Herbert W. Chilstrom, Rev. H. George Anderson and Rev. Mark S. Hanson
- approved the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies
- supported the Special Needs Retirement Fund Management Committee’s efforts to provide financial support for annuitants who are receiving at or near the minimum pension
- postponed until the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council a report and possible recommendations from the Theological Discernment Team regarding the feasibility of developing a social message on regenerative medicine, including, but not limited to, a range of stem cell technologies
- elected members to the ELCA Audit Committee, and to the boards of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc., Mosaic, Inc., Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Wartburg Theological Seminary

The Church Council received the following:

- reports from the officers
- reports from its committees
- report from the Conference of Bishops
- report from the executive for administration
- updates from Global Mission, Congregational and Synodical Mission and Mission Advancement
- update on the Campaign for the ELCA

- update on the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation
- update on draft social message on gender-based violence
- presentation from Lutheran World Relief
- update on Mission Support Think Tank
- update on Table and Font conversations and study on *The Use of the Means of Grace*
- greetings from ecumenical partners
- primer on Lutheran Outdoor Ministries
- primer on ELCA Youth Ministry Network

The Church Council also participated in:

- conversation on priorities in the ELCA
- committees of the whole on Theological Education Advisory Council and New Congregational Development
- process observations
- health and wellness activities
- sharing of joys and concerns

Global Mission Responses to Questions from Church Council: 7 November 2014

1. "What causes the higher death toll in Africa compared to when treated here?" (Same person also wrote "Very Powerful presentation. How can we get this out to the greater church?")
 - a. Limited number of health care professionals (and fear among those who exist – lack of reporting to work)
 - b. Already-weak health care system – poorer quality, lack of more advanced medical care, difficult to maintain standard infection prevention and control (IPC) procedures
 - c. Lack of human resources and bed capacity to deal with sheer numbers of cases
 - d. Lack of resources – equipment, supplies, materials, products to provide treatment (providing basic supportive care is associated with increased survival – health facilities in Liberia and Sierra Leone may not have enough of or the ability to treat patients with IV fluids, blood products/transfusions/clotting factors, electrolytes, fever reducers, etc.; there is also a possible effect of experimental therapies that were used in the US)
 - e. Lack of clean water, consistent electricity supply, etc. at health facilities
 - f. Limited access to health care (e.g. for people living in remote areas) – early supportive care improves survival
 - g. Surveillance challenges – early supportive care improves survival (in the US, we have the capacity to more carefully monitor for new cases, and any suspected cases would go immediately for testing and treatment)
 - h. Fear and mistrust of government (people not reporting suspected cases, avoiding going to ETUs for treatment)

2. "Can we get a printed copy of the actions already done especially by Global Mission and Disaster Relief in the face off the Ebola Crisis?"
 - a. Yes. This information is contained in the presentation that will be uploaded to ELCA Community.

3. "How is LDR partnering with LWR, Episcopal Development Relief, etc.? Are there redundancies?"
 - a. ELCA/LDR participates in regular communications (conference calls, email listservs/networks, and other forums) with our companions and other partner organizations, within the US and globally, to help ensure that responses are coordinated. For example, in an ACT Alliance call this morning (7 Nov 2014), a grid was shared that indicates how each funding partner has responded and what activities each implementing organization is engaged in. ELCA has also engaged in targeted communication with specific partner organizations that have relationships with our companion churches in Liberia and Sierra Leone to improve coordination of our responses. We are also in communication with companion synods to help coordinate efforts within the ELCA.
 - b. We are also exploring with LWR an OFDA (Office Foreign Disaster Assistance) opportunity for US funding for psycho-social support to families and communities affected by Ebola that would support of the strengths of Lutheran Church of Liberia and Lutheran Development Service (Liberia). One component of this strategic response would include food distribution to quarantined families that may or not be covered by the collaborative effort with LWR. This would be a component for which ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response would be prepared to contribute complementary funding.

4. "Where are the overlaps between ELCA Malaria, World Hunger (WH), Lutheran Disaster Relief (LDR) and Lutheran World Relief (LWR)?
 - a. Overlaps exist in many countries, and vary by country.
 - b. Using Tanzania as an example:
 - i. ELCA World Hunger funds a variety of health and development projects through our bilateral relationships with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) and other partner organizations in the country.
 - ii. Through the ELCA Malaria Campaign, the ELCA funds the malaria work of LWR implemented together with the ELCT.
 - iii. The ELCA provided WH funds to LWR for two projects in Tanzania in 2014: \$100,000 through local partners.
 1. Combating community vulnerability to the cycle of drought and flooding in Dodoma region. LWR is working with Matomondo to reduce the community's vulnerability to the cycle of drought, flooding, and food insecurity through the protection, conservation and sustainable management of natural resources.
 2. The ELCA is supporting a project called *A Strong Grape Value Chain Contributes to Increased Smallholder Farmers' Food Security* in which LWR is collaborating with UWAZAMAM (an agricultural marketing cooperative in Tanzania) to improve farmers' household income and food security by supporting an increase in production and marketing of grapes, facilitating grape farmers' access to effective and sustainable investment loans, and establishing a sustainable maintenance system for irrigation infrastructure in order to ensure adequate water supply throughout the year.
 - c. In Liberia, World Hunger funds support a number of health and development projects. The ELCA Malaria Campaign funds the Lutheran Church in Liberia's malaria program, and LDR is supporting the Ebola response.

Revised November 7, 2014

En Bloc Items

I. Board Development Committee

II. Budget and Finance

A. Funds Functioning as Endowment

1. ELCA Missionary Housing Support Fund

For many years, the ELCA owned missionary apartments on the campus of Luther Seminary. The missionary apartments comprised a 32,000 square-foot parcel with a 16-unit apartment building, which was historically used to provide housing for Global Personnel during home leave. In May 2014, the churchwide organization entered into an agreement with Luther Seminary and a developer to sell the Missionary Apartments for \$1.2 million. The sale is expected to close shortly.

Consistent with the original use of the missionary apartments, the proceeds from the sale are recommended to be made available to support subsidized costs for Global Personnel housing needs during home assignment and/or reintegration.

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CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To place the proceeds from the sale of the missionary apartments into a Church Council designated fund functioning as endowment entitled ELCA Missionary Housing Support Fund;

To make income from the fund available to support subsidized costs for Global Personnel housing needs during home assignment and/or reintegration;

To request that guidelines for distribution be developed by the Global Mission unit in consultation with the treasurer and executive for administration; and

To authorize that specific distributions from the fund be made upon approval of the Executive Director for Global Mission unit.

2. Dorrer Legacy Fund

Through bequest, the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) received the gift of a 30 percent interest in Country Club Mobile Homes Estates, a general partnership, from Walter B. Dorrer. The restricted gift benefitted the LCA's division for World Mission and Ecumenism. This gift has continued to provide rental income to support the current fund expenses of the ELCA's Global Mission unit. In August 2014, the churchwide organization sold its interest to the partnership for \$412,500.

Consistent with the original intent of the gift, the proceeds from the sale are recommended to be made available to continue supporting current fund expenses of the Global Mission unit.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To place the proceeds from the sale of the ELCA's interest in the Country Club Mobile Homes Estates into a Church Council designated fund functioning as endowment entitled Dorrer Legacy Fund; and

To utilize distributions from the fund to support current fund expenses of the Global Mission unit.

B. Audit Committee Membership

The Audit Committee shall consist of six members. A minimum of two members should be ELCA Church Council Budget and Finance Committee members. Members of the committee shall be appointed by the Budget and Finance Committee and forwarded to the Church Council for approval. Budget and Finance Committee members should be appointed for a two-year term with the possibility of reappointment up to their Church Council term. Non-Church Council members should be appointed for a two-year term, renewable for two additional terms. Terms need to be staggered in recognition of the need for continuity of committee membership from year to year. Biographical information of the nominees is in [Biographies](#).

The current members of the Audit Committee are Ms. Marjorie Ellis, Ms. Louise Hemstead, Mr. Clarence Smith and Ms. Ingrid Sponberg Stafford.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To elect Mr. James Zils and Mr. Richard Wehrheim to the ELCA Audit Committee for two-year renewable terms ending November 2016.

C. Audit Committee Report

At its November 6, 2014 meeting, the ELCA Audit Committee reviewed the audited financial statements for the year ended January 31, 2014 and the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust for the year ending December 31, 2013.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the report of the ELCA Audit Committee describing their review of the audited financial statements, management letter, and response of management for the Churchwide Organization's fiscal year ended January 31, 2014 and the Endowment Fund Pooled Trust's year ending December 31, 2013.

D. Cash and Investments

The rationale for the suggested changes proposed can be found in the [Investment Policy Changes Commentary](#) in the Budget and Finance Committee materials.

1. ELCA Operating Investments

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

**To approve the revised [ELCA Cash Management Policy](#);
To approve the revised [ELCA Operating Investment Policy](#); and
To approve the revised [ELCA Core Investment Policy](#).**

2. [ELCA Charitable Gift Annuity Philosophy and Policy Statement](#)

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the revised ELCA Investment Philosophy and Policy Statement for the Charitable Gift Annuity Program.

III. Executive Committee

A. Approval of Committee Charters

The Executive Committee is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations regarding committee charters. In recognition of the expansive work that the [Program and Services Committee](#) will be involved with in the coming years, the [Legal and Constitutional Review Committee](#) has agreed to take on the responsibility of reviewing the churchwide organization's personnel policies. This requires an amendment to those committees' charters to reflect this change.

The [Audit Committee](#) also has a change to their charter.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To approve the revised committee charters for Audit Committee, Program and Services Committee and Legal and Constitutional Review Committee as amended.

IV. Legal and Constitutional Review Committee

A. Additional Voting Members for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly

For each Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, provision for additional voting members has been made for certain synods. This has been done in keeping with this church's "Principles of Organization." Under those principles, the Church Council was assigned responsibility for ensuring that at least 60 percent of the members of assemblies shall be lay persons and that at least 10 percent of such voting members shall be people of color or people whose primary language is other than English (provision 5.01.f.).

Experience in the registration process for assemblies has demonstrated the need for allocation of additional positions to help ensure fulfillment of the organizational principles and also to provide for broader representation in synods (for example, the Caribbean Synod) that normally would be entitled to only two voting members, one of whom would be the synodical bishop.

The 2011 Churchwide Assembly passed an amendment to bylaw 12.41.11., which describes the process for determining the number of voting members for a Churchwide Assembly and includes the possibility that the Church Council may allocate up to ten additional voting members.

- 12.41.11.** Each synod shall elect one voting member of the Churchwide Assembly for every 6,000 baptized members in the synod. In addition, each synod shall elect one voting member for every 50 congregations in the synod. The synodical bishop, who is *ex officio* a member of the Churchwide Assembly, shall be included in the number of voting members so determined. These voting members elected by each synod shall comply with the principles of organization, commitment to inclusiveness, and interdependence as specified in Chapter 5 of this Constitution. In addition, each synod shall elect one additional voting member who is a youth or young adult at the time of the election and one additional voting member who is a person of color or a person whose primary language is other than English. There shall be at least two voting members from each synod. The Church Council may allocate up to 10 additional voting members among synods, but no single synod may be allocated more than two additional voting members. The secretary shall notify each synod of the number of assembly members it is to elect.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To allocate for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly one additional voting member to the Alaska Synod (1A), Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C), and West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H), making a total of six voting members per synod; and

To allocate for the 2016 Churchwide Assembly two additional voting members to the Caribbean Synod (9F) and Slovak Zion Synod (7G), making a total of six voting members per synod.

B. Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline

With the adoption of Provision *C15.03 of the Model Constitution for Congregations, the issue of congregational member discipline moved into the discipline processes of this church. [Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline](#) currently identify the conduct and behaviors of congregations and rostered leaders that might call for a disciplinary response. Adding congregational members to the process of the church requires that the nature of offenses that

Revised November 5, 2014

might result in member discipline be identified. The “redlined” and “clean” versions of the proposal from the Committee on Appeals are in the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee materials.

Part of this review by the committee raised the issue of whether Chapter 3 of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* should be identified as part of the faith confessed by this church, so you will find proposed amendments to the current language deleting references to Chapter 3.

CC ACTION *[EN BLOC]*

Recommended:

To approve the amended Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline.

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D. Synod Constitution Amendments

Provision 10.12. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* stipulates: "Each synod shall have a constitution, which shall become effective upon ratification by the Church Council. Amendments thereto shall be subject to like ratification"

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To ratify the following amendments to the Rocky Mountain, Southwestern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Southeastern Iowa, Indiana-Kentucky, Northwestern Ohio, New England and Upper Susquehanna synod constitutions.

Rocky Mountain Synod (2E) [2014]

Background:

The 2014 Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly adopted the following constitutional amendments, in accordance with †S18.13.b., to clarify when the terms of officers begin, reduce the size of its Nominating Committee and describe its membership in relation to established criteria, designate the Synod Council to name nominees for vice president, change the date for electing the Executive Committee, bring together the salary-setting functions of the Executive Committee into a bylaw, and straighten up two title provisions.

Recommended Action:

To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Rocky Mountain Synod:

- S8.52. The terms of the officers shall begin on ~~the first day of the third full month following election~~ August 15th or, in the year of a Churchwide Assembly, the day after adjournment of that year's Churchwide Assembly or, in special circumstances, at a time designated by the Synod Council.
- S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of ~~6-12~~ members.
- a. ~~One member shall be elected from each of the ten conferences to serve for a two-year term, not eligible for reelection. In the absence of an election by the conference, the Synod Council, in consultation with the conference dean, shall appoint a person from that conference to serve on Nominating Committee. Membership on the Nominating Committee shall reflect a balance of gender, rostered and lay persons, a multi-cultural presence, and a geographical balance according to the standard representational mandate of the ELCA.~~
- ...
- S9.05. ~~The Nominating Committee~~ Synod Council shall nominate at least one person for vice president; additional nominations may be made from the floor.
- S11.08. The Synod Council shall have an Executive Committee composed of the four synodical officers and four Synod Council members, two elected by the Council at ~~the close of the Synod Assembly~~ Winter Meeting of the Synod Council each year to serve overlapping two-year terms. The Executive Committee shall counsel with the

synodical officers and shall perform those functions of the Synod assigned to it by the Synod Council. This committee, with the exception of the salaried officer(s) of this synod, shall review the work of the officer(s) and the Executive Staff ~~and recommend staff salaries to the Synod Council.~~

S11.20. Catalyst Ministry Teams ~~include Mission Outreach Board, Congregational Ministries Board, Global Mission Committee, Hunger Network Core Team and other groups which may be constituted by Synod Council for a particular purpose.~~

S11.40. Self-Organizing Ministry Teams

Southwestern Minnesota Synod (3F) [2014]

Background:

By recommendation of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod Council, the 2013 Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly approved and the 2014 Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly adopted the following amendments to provision S9.04. The 2014 Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly also adopted bylaw S9.04.04., specifying the process by which its Synod Assembly conducts its election for bishop.

Recommended Action:

To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod:

S9.04. ~~The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly from among the slate of nominees determined in the bylaws. There shall be no nominations from the floor for the office of the bishop. Seconding speeches or statements by the candidates may be permitted according to rules adopted by the synod assembly. Three fourths of the votes cast shall be necessary for election on the first ballot. If no election results, the candidate receiving the least number of votes shall be removed from the slate of nominees. On the second ballot, two thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect. If no election results, the candidate with the least number of votes shall be removed from the slate of candidates. On all remaining ballots until election, a majority of votes cast shall elect. If no election results on a given ballot, the candidate with the least votes shall be removed from the slate of candidates. The bishop shall be elected by the Synod Assembly in accordance with the process specified in the bylaws and continuing resolutions.~~

Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2014]

Background:

The 2014 Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly adopted amendments to the following constitutional provisions to adjust the number and terms of those elected to certain positions within the governance of the synod, to correct terminology used in the election of a bishop, and to remove provisions for committees that no longer exist.

Recommended Action:

To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Minneapolis Area Synod:

- S9.03. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of ~~4-10-15~~ members who shall be elected by each of the conferences to serve for each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly. Additional nominations may be made from the floor for all elections for which nominations are made by the Nominating Committee.
- S9.04. e. During the balloting process, and according to a schedule outlined in the bylaws, printed information about ~~nominees-candidates~~ shall be made available to voting members and opportunity to address the Synod Assembly shall be offered to ~~nominees-candidates~~ for the office of bishop.
- ~~S9.11. The Synod Council shall elect or appoint representatives to the steering committee of its region.~~
- †S10.01. b. The term of office of members of the Synod Council, with the exception of the officers and the youth member, shall be three ~~two~~-years.
- ~~S11.05. The Committee on Ecumenism shall consist of six persons appointed by the Synod Council for a term of three years, renewable one time. Three shall be ordained ministers and three shall be laypersons. The functions of the Committee on Ecumenism shall be to advise the bishop on ways to strengthen ecumenical relationships within the territory of the synod, to assist congregations in the development of ecumenical relationships, and to maintain a relationship with the ecumenical agencies within the territory of the synod.~~

Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod (4D) [2014]

Background:

In the same action to adopt the following constitutional provision, the 2014 Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod Assembly adopted a series of related bylaws establishing the purpose of a Mission Endowment Fund, as well as its governance, staffing, budget, and policies and procedures.

Recommended Action:

To ratify the following amendment to the constitution of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod:

S11.06. There shall be a Mission Endowment Fund of the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2014]

Background:

The 2011 Churchwide Assembly amended required provisions †S8.41. and †S8.51. of the *Constitution for Synods* to give the synod the option of either electing or appointing its treasurer. The constitution of the Southeastern Iowa Synod declares, “The treasurer of this synod shall be appointed to a term of four years and may be reappointed.” The 2014 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly voted to delete provision S9.07. which referred to the former procedure for electing its treasurer.

Recommended Action:

To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Southeastern Iowa Synod:

S7.32. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR)*, latest edition, shall govern parliamentary procedure of the Synod Assembly except where it conflicts with this Constitution, Bylaws or Continuing Resolutions, or any Special Rules of Order the Assembly might from time to time adopt.

S7.33. "Ex officio" as used herein means membership with full rights of voice and vote unless otherwise expressly limited. Ex officio members are not considered in determining the quorum.

~~S9.07. The Synod Council shall nominate two persons for treasurer; additional nominations may be made from the floor.~~

Indiana-Kentucky Synod (6C) [2014]

Background:

The 2013 Churchwide Assembly amended required provision *C17.03. of the *Model Constitution for Congregations* regarding a 120-day notification date from the synod respecting changes to congregations' constitutions. To be consistent with that change, the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Council proposed and the 2014 Indiana-Kentucky Synod Assembly adopted the following amendments to the synod's constitution.

Recommended Action:

To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod:

- S13.03. ~~The governing documents of congregations recognized at the establishment of this church shall continue to govern such congregations. When such a congregation wishes to amend a particular provision of its governing documents, the provision so amended shall must be consistent with the governing documents of this church.~~
- a. All proposed changes in the constitution of incorporation documents of a congregation ~~shall will~~ be referred to the Synod Council. The Synod Council ~~shall must~~ approve or disapprove of the proposed changes ~~within 120 days of receipt thereof, and shall must~~ notify the congregation of its decision; ~~in the absence of a decision, the changes shall go into effect.~~
 - b. The synod ~~shall should~~ recognize that congregations may organize themselves in a manner ~~which they deem most appropriate and that there are a variety of ways in which the required elements may be stated.~~
 - c. The synod will develop, maintain, and make available criteria on which the Synod Council will evaluate congregations' constitutions.

Northwestern Ohio Synod (6D) [2014]

Background:

The 2013 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly and the 2014 Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly amended the synod's governing documents to expand the conference structure for the synod and replace the division, department, cluster, and coalition structures described

below in provisions of Chapters 11 and 12. In accordance with constitutional provision †S18.13.a., the following amendments were approved by both assemblies.

Recommended Action:

To ratify the following amendments to the constitution of the Northwestern Ohio Synod:

- S11.07. The Synod Council, in consultation with the Bishop, shall establish committees, task forces, and/or affinity groups as needed, specifically to develop ministries such as: mission (domestic & global), peace & justice, clergy & lay leadership, synod Office operations, budget & financial support, Synod Assembly, and Ecumenical concerns. These ministries shall also relate to their counterparts at Churchwide.
- ~~a. There shall be four divisions. Each division may have a board or task force as needed consisting of members appointed by the Synod Council. The purpose of each division board and task force shall be to enhance the mission of the church in specifically assigned areas as designated in the bylaws. Division boards and/or task force shall strive for cooperation, communication, interaction with other division boards and/or task forces, accountability to the division, the Synod Council and Synod Assembly, and support among all facets of ministry within the division board and with other divisions boards as appropriate.~~
 - ~~b. Except as otherwise specified, term of office for all division boards shall be for three years, with approximately one third of the membership being appointed annually. A member may serve two consecutive terms. An unexpired term of a year or less shall not be considered in determining eligibility for election. Unless otherwise provided, terms of appointment shall begin on the first day of July.~~
 - ~~c. Each division board shall be accountable to, and function under, the policies of the Synod Assembly through the Synod Council and the Synod Bishop.~~
 - ~~d. Each division board is expected to:
 - ~~1) Assess needs in its area of ministry and related decisions made by the Synod Assembly;~~
 - ~~2) Set goals consistent with this synod's strategic plan and goals;~~
 - ~~3) Determine, plan, and implement appropriate actions and interventions;~~
 - ~~4) Evaluate the outcome effectiveness of goals, plans, and actions; and~~
 - ~~5) Submit an annual report to the Synod Assembly.~~~~
 - ~~e. Each division board shall have the authority to appoint individuals to task forces, work groups, or committees to make operational the various areas of ministry and functions assigned to each division.~~
- ~~S11.08. A Division for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission shall foster and facilitate the efforts of the congregations, institutions and agencies of this synod in reaching out in witness to the Gospel to people in all contexts and cultures.~~
- ~~S11.09. A Division for Church in Society in cooperation with the ELCA Churchwide Church in Society Unit shall assist the congregations, institutions and agencies of this synod to discern, understand, and respond to the needs of individuals, communities, society, and the whole creation through human services and through addressing systems, structures, and societal policies, seeking to promote justice, peace, and care of the earth.~~
- ~~S11.10. A Division for Global Missions, in cooperation with the ELCA Churchwide Global Missions Unit shall be responsible for this church's and this synod's mission and ministry in other countries and shall be the channel through which churches and~~

~~organizations in other countries engage in mission and ministry to this church and to society. This unit shall be responsible for Companion Synod relationships and associated programs, events and other occurrences in regard to these relationships.~~

- ~~— S11.11. A Division for Vocation and Education in cooperation with the ELCA Churchwide Vocation and Education Unit shall be responsible for the development and support of faithful, theologically grounded, and courageous leaders whose vocations serve God's mission in the world; and shall assist this church and this synod and its institutions in equipping people to practice their callings under the Gospel for the sake of the church in community, in the congregations, institutions and agencies, and in the world.~~
- ~~— S11.12. There shall be six (6) departments, which shall report to the bishop of this synod.~~
- ~~— S11.13. There shall be a Department for Pastoral Care and Counseling.~~
- ~~— S11.14. There shall be a Department for Synod Staff and Office Operations.~~
- ~~— S11.15. There shall be a Department for Budget and Financial Support.~~
- ~~— S11.16. There shall be a Department for Communications.~~
- ~~— S11.17. There shall be a Department for the Synod Assembly.~~
- ~~— S11.19. There shall be a Department for Ecumenical Concerns and Development.~~

- ~~— S12.20. This synod may have clusters. Clusters are groups of congregations, within a conference, which share common ministry and interest.~~
- ~~— S12.30. This synod may have coalitions. A coalition is a grouping of congregations and pastors, sharing a common interest in ministry.~~

New England Synod (7B) [2014]

Background:

The 2013 Churchwide Assembly adopted required bylaw †S7.21.01.:

Voting members shall begin serving with the opening of a regular Synod Assembly and shall continue serving until voting members are seated at the next regular Synod Assembly.

To be consistent with new voting members being “seated,” the 2014 New England Synod Assembly adopted the following amendment to the synod’s constitution.

Recommended Action:

To ratify the following amendment to the constitution of the New England Synod:

- S7.24. Ordained ministers under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the roster of ordained ministers of this synod. Associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers of this church serving under call on the roster of this synod shall remain as members of the Synod Assembly so long as they remain under call and so long as their names appear on the official lay roster of this synod. Lay members of the Synod Assembly representing congregations shall continue as such until replaced by the ~~election~~ seating of new members or until they have been disqualified by termination of membership. Congregations shall elect their lay voting members by action of the congregational meeting, church council or other body as they shall individually determine prior to each regular meeting of the Synod Assembly.

Upper Susquehanna Synod (8E) [2014]

Background:

The 2011 Churchwide Assembly amended required provisions of the *Constitution for Synod*, giving each synod the option of either electing or appointing its treasurer. The 2012 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly voted to incorporate those provisions into its constitution with the direction that its Synod Council would appoint its treasurer. The 2014 Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly voted to amend provision S8.55. accordingly.

Recommended Action:

To ratify the following amendment to the constitution of the Upper Susquehanna Synod:

S8.55. Should the vice president, secretary, or treasurer die, resign, or be unable to serve, the bishop, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, shall arrange for the appropriate care of the responsibilities of the officer until an election of a ~~new officer vice president or secretary~~ can be held or the appointment of a new treasurer, or in the case of temporary disability, until the officer is able to serve again. The term of the successor officer, elected by the next Synod Assembly, shall be four years.

V. Planning and Evaluation

VI. Program and Services

A. Update on Genetics Social Statement Resolution 8 - Feasibility of Developing a Social Message on Regenerative Medicine

Churchwide Assembly Action (CA11.04.17)

8. To direct the Theological Discernment team of the Office of the Presiding Bishop to assess the feasibility of developing a social message on regenerative medicine, including, but not limited to, a range of stem cell technologies; and to bring to the ELCA Church Council in November 2013 a report and possible recommendations, in accordance with Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns (Chicago: ELCA, 1997, revised 2011); and

Church Council Action (CC13.11.69z)

To acknowledge both the existing limited staff capacity and the continuing presence of important moral and social questions around regenerative medicine; and

To postpone a report and possible recommendations from the Theological Discernment Team staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding the feasibility of developing a social message on regenerative medicine, including, but not limited to, a range of stem cell technologies, until the November 2014 meeting of the Church Council.

Background from Office of the Presiding Bishop (November 2014)

A delay for this activity was approved by Church Council in November 2013 due to limited staff capacity. Unfortunately due to continued staff capacity limitations as well as changes in priorities such as the Church Council approved delay of the social message on gender-based violence, a postponement is still needed. It should be noted that moral

questions surrounding regenerative medicine largely have been replaced in public conversation by other topics such as Ebola or the Affordable Health Care Act. However, it remains appropriate to conduct a thorough assessment.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To acknowledge both the continuing limited staff capacity and the continuing relevance of important moral and social questions around regenerative medicine; and

To postpone until the November 2015 meeting of the Church Council a report and possible recommendations from the Theological Discernment Team staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding the feasibility of developing a social message on regenerative medicine, including, but not limited to, a range of stem cell technologies.

B. Ministry to and with Same Gender Families (M2SGF) Working Group

M2SGF was established in response to a 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly action. The working group is tasked with exploring the current context of conversations and resources in ministering to and with same-gender couples and their families. A [charter](#) was developed within the working group to help guide its work.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To affirm the charter developed by the Ministry to and with Same-Gender Families working group.

VII. Other Items

A. Church Council Advisor to the Justice for Women Consulting Committee

Ms. Pamela Pritt is unable to continue serving as the Church Council advisor to the Justice for Women Consulting Committee. Pr. Linda Nou has agreed to serve.

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To appoint Pr. Linda Nou as the Church Council Advisor to the Justice for Women Consulting Committee for a two-year term beginning November 2014.

B. Church Council Nominations and Elections

The Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill terms on boards of Separately Incorporated Ministries, social ministry organizations, and seminaries. The relationship of the ELCA to certain affiliated social ministry organizations is expressed through the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit. The Congregational and Synodical Mission unit has forwarded the nominations for social ministry organizations to Church Council. Bylaw 8.31.03. outlines basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. Biographical information is provided in [Biographies](#).

CC ACTION [EN BLOC]

Recommended:

To re-elect to the board of directors of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. to a three-year term expiring in 2018: Mr. Wayne C. Hanson;

To elect to the board of directors of National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Inc. to three-year terms expiring in 2018: The Rev. Galen F. Hora and The Rev. Jeff R. Johnson;

To elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc., to a three-year term expiring in October 2017: Ms. Lisa Negstad;

To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia to a three-year term expiring in 2018: The Rev. Charles Miller; and

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a six-term expiring in 2020: The Rev. J. Mamy Ranaivoson.



Encouraging, Educating, Equipping,
and Empowering Camp Leadership

Ensure the Future

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016

Mission Statement

LOM Encourages, Educates, Equips, and Empowers bold and faithful Outdoor Ministry leaders for service in the church and the world.

Vision Statement

Strong, faith-filled outdoor ministries led by capable servant leaders.

Organizational Goal

LOM is a full service membership organization providing the supports and services needed to ensure the success of Lutheran Outdoor Ministry programs.

Strategic Goals

1. Hire an executive director by January 1, 2015
2. Grow the financial base to sustain a full service ministry
3. Redefine and grow membership
4. Expand and grow member benefits & services
5. Improve internal and external communications and relationships
6. Evaluate and improve governance

Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Board of Directors

Nathan Pile, President

Joel Abenth

Dave Jarvis

Bob Severson

Mark Burkhardt

Meggan Manlove

Susan Troutman

Randy Gullickson

Lindsey Scheid

Randy Youngquist-Thurrow



Lutheran Outdoor Ministries

Who We Are

LOM is a full service, membership organization providing the supports and services needed to ensure the success of Lutheran Outdoor Ministry programs.



Our Mission

LOM encourages, educates, equips, and empowers bold and faithful outdoor ministry leaders for service in the church and the world.

Our Vision

Strong, faith-filled outdoor ministries led by capable servant leaders

LOM is comprised of professionals and board members from ELCA outdoor ministry organizations together with Partner and Associate members such as ecumenical colleagues, students, persons pursuing careers in outdoor ministry, and business partners whose work and services support camping.



The services, products, and benefits available through LOM are designed and developed to help professional outdoor ministry leaders grow in competence and confidence, and to develop a solid network of collegial support. Many of these benefits are available to non-members and non-contributing members, such as the annual fall conference and the basic Leadership Training Events for administrative and program directors – though at a higher cost than contributing members pay. Other benefits are “contributing members only.”

To learn about joining LOM and to see a full listing of membership options and benefits, visit www.LOMnetwork.org.

A Bit of History

LOM is the latest delivery system for the opportunities and services that have been highly valued by Lutheran outdoor ministry professionals for generations. In the early ELCA and its predecessors, this was part of the work of the churchwide offices. In 2005, LOM became a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) and in 2010 it began to operate independently of the offices of the ELCA. It is currently recognized by the ELCA as an Independent Lutheran Organization.





The Annual LOM Conference



The annual LOM fall conference is a cornerstone of the life of LOM. It is a continuing education event and networking opportunity within which the annual business meeting of LOM is conducted. Planning is facilitated through the LOM Event Coordinator by a team consisting of a member of the LOM board and outdoor ministry professionals from the area hosting the conference. The conference cycles from coast to coast so that half of our conferences are held in the midsection of the country. The conference is sometimes planned jointly with other denominations including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or the ELCIC (Canada).

Educational Services and Opportunities

A Leadership Training Event (LTE) is offered each fall, just ahead of the fall conference. The event alternates annually between a program and an administrative curriculum. The curricula are based on defined core competencies for each leadership role.



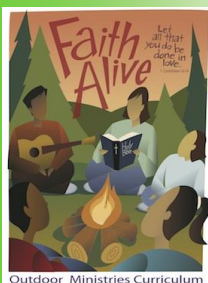
Professional Training Events (PTE) are offered periodically for experienced professionals to go deeper into things that matter to us who do this work.

Board Training Events (BTE) are offered to strengthen boards and give them a “bigger picture” of what is happening and trending across outdoor ministries.

The Education Committee of LOM offers criteria-based Endorsement for educational events offered by LOM member organizations. It also manages, on our website, a calendar of Endorsed events for program directors, executives, environmental educators, and others.

Contributing members attend LTE, PTE, BTE and Endorsed Events for less!

The Annual LOM Outdoor Ministry Curriculum



Each year, LOM develops and publishes a fully resourced summer camp curriculum distributed as a CD-ROM. The curriculum is reproducible with age-level Bible studies, worship resources, program activities, and back-home activities. Annual themes are developed in consultation with outdoor ministry professionals and the curriculum materials are written by persons with outdoor ministry experience. The curriculum is available for purchase on the LOM website.



Outdoor Ministry Consultation Teams



Consultation Teams coordinated through the LOM office are available to LOM organizations in transition or discernment. Teams are comprised of peer professionals (two to four people) to help evaluate existing programs and facilities, assess constituent needs and opportunities for ministry, envision future directions, or help assess the organization's overall mission and structure. The cost of the consultation team is the responsibility of the organization requesting the service. Since consultants volunteer their service, the cost is limited to expense reimbursement for team members.

One Voice For Lutheran Outdoor Ministries



LOM gives its members a common voice in speaking with other networks and organizations.

We use it to build relationships with others like Thrivent Financial, the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Assoc. (PCCCA), the Episcopal Church, the National Council of Churches (NCC), and the American Camp Association (ACA).

We use it to raise awareness of outdoor ministries and to promote common programs such as Servant Learning Events and Adventure Programs, broadly across the church, its synods and seminaries, and to the general public.

We use it to make the case for the interests and needs of LOM members applying for grants and other supports.

www.LOMnetwork.org – Your Portal to LOM



The easy to navigate, LOM website is always the place to go for current information about what's happening in the network: general information, how to join, member benefits, upcoming educational events, what the board is working on, grant opportunities, member contact information, job listings, resources, organizational documents, giving opportunities, and so much more.

follow “Lutheran Outdoor Ministries” on facebook!



Join! Volunteer! Give! Get Involved!



I've been a part of this network for 33 years... never missed a fall conference!

~ Randy Gullickson



It's a place to make life-long friends that believe in you.

~ Dave Jarvis



There is nowhere else to get what you get from LOM.

- A network of colleagues who get it... and get you; who face the same challenges and share the same joys you do; who come as close as anyone to sharing your theology, philosophy, and passion. A network that is not just faith-based, but Lutheran; not just about camping, but about outdoor *ministry*.
- The opportunity to put your interests and concerns before a group that might just design a conference with its energy and resources focused on the exploration of what concerns you most!
- A place where a person who is a bit too far out of the box for some other people who serve in the church, can feel at home and hopeful about the future.
- An organization that doesn't take itself too seriously, yet is serious enough to be professional and hold itself to a standard of excellence... and helps you do the same in your calling.
- An organization that specializes in helping you grow spiritually, professionally, and personally so that your leadership can evolve to meet the needs of the people you serve.
- An organization that is large enough to help you be more than you can be by yourself and small enough to hear you; a place you can serve and make a difference for all of our outdoor ministries.

LOM is an organization that needs you to join and to join in... volunteer as a mentor, committee member, planning team member, stand for election to the board, write curriculum, develop an educational event! Donate! LOM is as effective as WE make it!

LOM Contact Information:

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries
1218 West Addison St.
Chicago IL 60613

Email: LOMadministrator@LOMnetwork.org
Phone: (614)315-2340

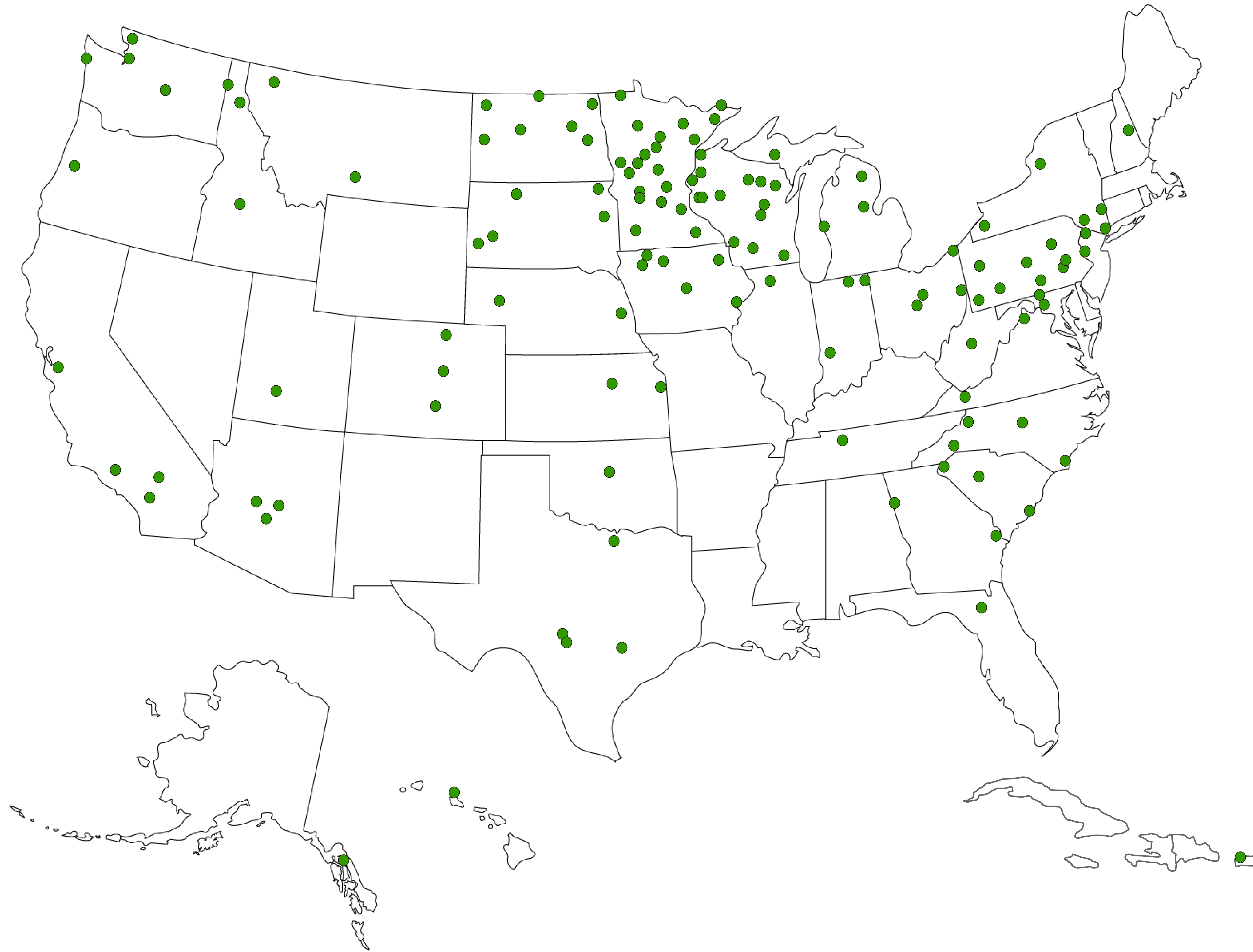


- . 132 outdoor ministry sites
- . 300 full time directors
- . 3,500 summer staff
- . 30,000 acres of land
- . 175,000 summer campers
- . 275,000 year-round campers and retreaters

www.LOMnetwork.org

Mission Statement

*Lutheran Outdoor Ministries **Encourages, Educates, Equips, and Empowers** bold and faithful Outdoor Ministry leaders for service in the church and the world.*



Strong, faith-filled outdoor ministries led by capable servant leaders.

Our Camps

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Alaska
Rainbow Glacier Bible Camp</p> <p>Arizona
Camp ALOMA
LOMONA at Mount Cross Lutheran Church
Spirit in the Desert</p> <p>California
El Camino Pines
Midoriland
Mt Cross
Yolijwa</p> <p>Colorado
Messiah Mountain Retreat Center
Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp
Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp</p> <p>Florida
Luther Springs</p> <p>Georgia
Lutheranch
New Ebenezer Retreat Center</p> <p>Hawaii
Kauai Lutheran Camp</p> <p>Iowa
Camp Shalom
EWALU Camp & Retreat Center
Ingham Lake Lutheran Bible Camp
Lutheran Lakeside Camp
Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp
Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp</p> <p>Idaho
Luther Heights Bible Camp
Lutherhaven Ministries
Shoshone Base Camp</p> <p>Illinois
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center</p> <p>Indiana
Lake Luther
Lutheran Hills
Lutherwald</p> <p>Kansas
Camp Tomah Shinga
Hollis Renewal Center</p> <p>Maryland
Hallowood
Mar-Lu-Ridge</p> <p>Michigan
Camp LU-WIX-E
Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp
Michi-Lu-Ca
Stony Lake</p> <p>Minnesota
Bay Lake Camp
Camp Emmaus
Camp Hiawatha
Camp House
Camp Knutson
Camp Minne-Wa-Kan</p> | <p>Minnesota
Camp Patmos
Camp Vermilion
Cathedral of the Pines
Chi Rho Camp & Conf Center
Faith Haven Youth Lodge
Good Earth Village
Green Lake Lutheran Camp
Lake of the Woods Bible Camp
Luther Crest Bible Camp
Luther Dell
Mount Carmel Ministries
Mt Olivet Retreat Center
Onomia
Shetek Lutheran Ministries
Shores of St. Andrew
Spirit in the Pines
Wilderness Canoe Base</p> <p>Montana
Christikon
Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp</p> <p>North Carolina
Camp Agapé
Kure Beach Ministries
Lutheridge
Lutherock</p> <p>North Dakota
Badlands Ministries
Camp of the Cross Ministries
Metigoshe Lutheran Bible Camp
Park River Lutheran Bible Camp
Red Willow Ministries
St. Olaf Retreat Center
Upper Missouri Bible Camp</p> <p>Nebraska
Carol Joy Holling Camp
Sullivan Hills</p> <p>New Hampshire
Calumet Lutheran Ministries</p> <p>New Jersey
Cross Roads Outdoor Ministries
Pinecrest Lutheran Leadership School</p> <p>New York
Camp MA-HE-TU
Camp Wilbur Herrlich
Koinonia
Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center
Vanderkamp Center</p> <p>Ohio
Camp Frederick
Camp Luther
Camp Mowana
Lutheran Memorial Camp</p> <p>Oklahoma
Camp Oaks</p> <p>Oregon
Camp Lutherwood Oregon</p> | <p>Pennsylvania
Agape Ministries
Bear Creek Camp
Camp Mount Luther
Kirchenwald
Lutherlyn
Nawakwa
Sequanota
Wittel Farm</p> <p>Puerto Rico
Eduardo Roig Lutheran Camp</p> <p>South Carolina
Biggerstaff Christian Retreat
Camp Kinard
Coastal Retreat Center</p> <p>South Dakota
Atlantic Mountain Ranch
Joy Ranch
Klein Ranch
Ne-So-Dak Bible Camp
Outlaw Ranch</p> <p>Tennessee
Rau-Wood Retreat & Conference Center</p> <p>Texas
Briarwood Lutheran Ministries
Camp Chrysalis
Ebert Ranch
Lutherhill Ministries</p> <p>Utah
Lutherwood of Utah</p> <p>Virginia
Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp & Retreat Ctr.
Hungry Mother Lutheran Retreat Center</p> <p>Washington
Galilean Retreat Center
Holden Village
Lutherwood Camp and Retreat Center
Olympic Lutherhaven</p> <p>Wisconsin
Amnicon
Bethel Horizons
Camp Indian Sands
Imago Dei Village
Lake Wapogasset Bible Camp
Luther Park Camping and Retreat Center
Luther Park/Luther Woods
Luther Point Bible Camp
Lutherdale Bible Camp
Ox Lake
Pine Lake Camp
Sugar Creek Bible Camp
Waypost
Wilderness Hatchery</p> <p>West Virginia
Camp Luther</p> |
|--|--|--|

For more information please visit www.LOMnetwork.org/resources



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Church Council Member Synod Visit Report

Note: Information submitted on this form will be printed and prepared for viewing by Church Council and all advisors. **Confidential information should be submitted on a separate file which will be shared with Office of the Presiding Bishop and Synodical Relations staff as appropriate.**

Please *attach* this completed report and e-mail it to john.hessian@elca.org

Name: Paul G. Archer

Synod Visited: Southeast Michigan and Northwest Lower Michigan

Visit Date: May 15-17, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Joint Synod Assembly

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

I attended the joint assembly of the two Synods in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan as a voting member from my home congregation of Hope, Dearborn. In addition to the usual business sessions for the SEMI Synod, I was able to make connection with many in the NWLM Synod during our common worship, Bible study, and fellowship times. Clearly, the Big Deal at this year's joint assembly is the upcoming 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering, to be held in Detroit. We heard a presentation from the Gathering coordinator on the herculean efforts that go into the planning and execution of an important event like this. The voting members were made aware of many opportunities for volunteer service before and during the Gathering

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

I was given a brief opportunity to address the joint assembly, at which time I tried to emphasize the ways in which the ministries of the Churchwide expression and the ministries of the Synods are intertwined. I think it was helpful to make that presentation to two Synod Assemblies at the same time – as if the fact that we were meeting together in a joint assembly was helping to make my point!

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

The idea for a joint assembly was first proposed about 5 or 6 years ago, when there were discussions about merging the two Synods into one. Now that the notion of merger has been set aside, it will be interesting to see if the two Bishops and Synod Councils still see merit in meeting jointly every-other-year.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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Church Council Member Synod Visit Report

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Please *attach* this completed report and e-mail it to john.hessian@elca.org

Name: Paul G. Archer

Synod Visited: Northwest Lower Michigan

Visit Date: April 12, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Synod Council

1. What did you learn about the Synod?
 - As inclement weather had caused me to miss the last two Synod Council meetings, this was my first opportunity to meet with the Council since Bishop Craig Satterlee took office 9 months ago. It was good to hear his update – to hear the challenges he has faced and to know that he is settling into the position quite well. He has been quite successful in building a staff around him, including a new Assistant to the Bishop and a new Director for Evangelical Mission. From all reports, it seems that the ministries of the synod are beginning to build up some momentum.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?
 - The Bishop and all members of the Council expressed gratitude to me for joining them. As the current Vice President of the Synod, Sandy Schlesinger, is a recent member of the Church Council, the Council is not a mystery to them – Sandy has given the Synod Council members a good sense of the work the Church Council does and the ways in which the Synod and the Churchwide Organization are connected and work together. It felt as though the Council members appreciated the chance to hear a current update on the actions of the Church Council. I will certainly continue to keep this connection active.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?
 - One insight I gained was from the beautiful facility in which the Synod Council met on this day – the Maple Creek Senior Living Center in Grand Rapids, MI, which is an agency of Lutheran Social Services of Michigan. I

was unaware of the existence and effectiveness of this beautiful facility until this visit. What a blessing it is to the families of this area!

- Secondly, it was encouraging for me to see and hear that, despite several significant transitions in synod leadership during the past year, the bishop and his assistants are making impressive efforts to be out in the congregations of this synod, making connections with the pastors and members.

Please *attach* this completed report and e-mail it to john.hessian@elca.org



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

Church Council Member Ecumenical Visit Report

Note: Information submitted on this form will be printed and prepared for viewing by Church Council and all advisors. **Confidential information should be submitted on a separate file which will be shared with Office of the Presiding Bishop and Synodical Relations staff as appropriate.**

Please *attach* this completed report and e-mail it to john.hessian@elca.org

Name: Paul G. Archer

Meeting: General Synod Council of the Reformed Church in America

Place: Grand Rapids, Michigan

Date: October 24-25, 2014

As my relationship with the General Synod Council and its members continues to grow, so does my level of engagement in the discussions they have and the decisions they make. I am always warmly welcomed and invited to participate in every aspect of the meeting.

In addition to the typical business conducted at the meetings of the General Synod Council – receiving reports, making appointments, etc. – a great deal of the discussion at this meeting was around the continued implementation of the RCA's 15-year strategic planning process entitled "Transformed & Transforming: Radically Following Christ in Mission Together" (affectionately known as T&T). This entire focus is really quite an impressive undertaking, as it seeks to give direction to the denomination's ministries over the next 15 years. Within the broad scope of T&T, there are three primary, interconnected strategic priorities which will direct the effort and energies of all those involved in leadership across the RCA:

- Cultivating Transformation in Christ
- Equipping Emerging Leaders of Today and Tomorrow
- Engaging in Christ's Kingdom Mission

A great deal of discussion during the GSC meeting was around developing more specific directives under each of these three main areas – directives which will guide the efforts of General Secretary Tom DeVries and his staff, which will engage the members of the RCA at every level, and which will yield measureable results at various points along the way. The members of the GSC seemed quite engaged in the discussion and truly invested in the process. T&T seems like an ambitious endeavor, but one which has great interest and support among the leaders of the RCA.

It was interesting to me, having recently attended the Church Council Retreat in August and had many discussions about the ways we work together as a Council and how we can best utilize our time together, to observe again the working of the GSC. While the duties of the GSC call for more group discussion and a little less vote-taking than happen at a typical Church Council meeting, it struck me that the GSC scheduled plenary sessions with important topics until 9:00 PM – when everyone was clearly tired, and scheduled little or no time for socialization or team-building. I shared these observations with them at the conclusion of the meeting.

I look forward to my next opportunity to meet with my friends in the RCA.

In His service,

Paul G. Archer

ELCA Church Council liaison to the Reformed Church in America



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Church Council Member Synod Visit Report

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Please *attach* this completed report and e-mail it to john.hessian@elca.org

Name: Paul G. Archer

Synod Visited: Southeast Michigan

Visit Date: October 18, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Synod Council

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

This meeting of the SEMI Synod Council, in my mind, was dominated by two discussions of a difficult or challenging nature.

First, a report from Bishop Don Kreiss of the challenges in pastoral leadership and student participation at the only Campus Ministry site on the Synod territory – at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor

Second, a long and passionate report from Bishop Kreiss on the decision by Living Waters Ministries (the separately-incorporated camping and outdoor ministry group connected to both synods in lower Michigan) to close and sell one of the two ELCA camps in the state.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

What I will take away from this meeting – and take with me to future meetings of the Church Council – is a greater understanding of the deep interest and passions that surround Campus and Camping Ministries, of their importance in the life of the ELCA, and of the many ways these ministries can change the lives of those they touch.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

It has occurred to me as I've continued to meet with the Synod Council that, unlike my experiences in Congregational Councils and with the Church Council, the members of the Synod Council, for the most part, do not have responsibilities with a standing committee of the Synod. In fact, there is almost no Synod-level committee activity. By and large, the members of the Synod Council have no responsibilities between meetings, except to read the reports that come to them in the week prior to the meeting. I discussed this briefly with Bishop Kreiss and expressed my concern that a few properly-functioning

committees in the Synod, led by members of the Council, might ease his burden a bit and allow him to focus his energies in different ways.

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Name: Christine Connell

Synod Visited: Upstate New York Synod

Visit Date: June 1-3, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Attendance at Synod Assembly

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

Everyone I came into contact with was hospitable and engaging and committed to the work of the synod. As this was a bishop's election year, with a two term incumbent, I was amazed at the loving presence and respect for the process exhibited by everyone. In casual conversations over meals, everyone spoke highly of all candidates and while discerning the present leadership and the potential for a new direction, everyone voiced acceptability for either direction the Holy Spirit moved the vote.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

Attendees were genuinely welcoming of my participation and as I put myself to work volunteering as an assembly page, I was given the opportunity to interact with many more members than if I just attended and sat in a chair. As an executive at Lutheran Social Services of New York I also had an opportunity to share a bit of what I do and the intersections of my work, the synod work and the church wide work.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

Having a church council member attend a synod assembly goes a long way towards better church relations overall. Sharing the type of work that the council does and letting church members across the country know that they are thought of and in true ministry partnership is an amazing message. These visits are impactful and spiritual!

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2014 Southeastern Synod Assembly Report

Southeastern Synod Assembly was held May 30 - Jun 1, 2014 in Chattanooga, TN. Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock served as the Churchwide Representative.

The following actions were taken by the 2014 Southeastern Synod Assembly:

The following persons were elected in the Southeastern Synod:

- < Ms. Doris Underwood, re-elected to serve as Synod Vice President - 6 year
- < Mr. Hilton Austin, elected to the Synod Discipline Committee - 1 year term
- < Pr. Laura Shally, elected to Synod Council as Conference 6 representative - 2 year
- < Pr. Randy Jones, elected to Synod Council as Conference 7 representative - 2 year
- < Ms. Rundi Reams, elected to Synod Council as Conference 8 representative - 2 year term
- < Mr. Keith James, elected to Synod Council as Young Adult representative - 2 year
- < Pr. Kevin Strickland, elected to Synod Council as At-Large representative - 2 year term
- < Dr. Andrea Green, elected to Synod Council as At-Large representative - 2 year term

Also approved was the 2015-16 Ministry Funding Plan, the 2015 Southeastern Synod Compensation Guidelines, and amendments to the Synod Constitution.

The Southeastern Synod Assembly adopted the following resolutions and memorial:

- < 2014-01 - A Resolution Calling for Synodical and Congregational Conversations about Ministering to Same-Gender Couples and Families
- < 2014-02 - A Resolution Encouraging Stewardship in the Synod
- < 2014-03, as amended - A Resolution to Reform U.S. Immigration Detention
- < 2014-04 - A Memorial Calling for a Worship Rite to Bless Same-Gender Couples
- < 2014-05 - A Resolution of Thanks at the 2014 Assembly

The Assembly received and celebrated the newest congregation of the ELCA Southeastern Synod – Shepherd of the Lake, Loudon, TN

The Assembly was adjourned on Sunday, June 1, 2014 at noon.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Pastor William E. Flippin, Jr.
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Atlanta, GA

Connectional Table (United Methodists) Spring Meeting Report

submitted by William E. Flippin Jr.

The Connectional Table Spring Meeting was held April 28-29, 2014 in Chicago, IL. Bishop Bruce Ough opened the meeting.

There were six plenary sessions conducted over the two-day meeting. Highlights of the plenary sessions included:

Presentation about General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (GBOPHB)

Update by Bishop Sally Dyck from Missional Collaboration Group on Vital Congregations

Presentation of Grant Proposal for Vital Congregations

Presentation by Reverend Kim Cape, General Secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) on Development of Principled Christian Leaders to address the shortage of almost 5,000 elders. Bishops have asked that a Call Sunday be proposed to help focus the call from young clergy. Questions raised included conversations with full communion partners, why focus in almost exclusively about ordained leadership and not including principled lay leadership.

Comprehensive Communication Strategy presented by Reverend Larry Hollon reported on Giving Tuesday \$6.5 million was raised essentially in one day using social media proving that strong and integrated marketing with proper planning, implementation, resources and staffing can produce effective communication strategy

Connectional Table Task Force on Human Sexuality Panel Discussion was held and was presented live streaming broadcast. Panelist included: Bishop Daniel Arichea, The Reverend Dr. Mark Teasdale, and The Reverend Dr. Pamela Lightsey.(Live streaming to Russia was blocked. Russian government can block internet access on issues deemed to be inappropriate. It was reported that UMCCom should have applied for a special interest license in order for the website to be accessible in that region. Individuals from other countries were able to participate.) Questions were received via Twitter and individuals in the room. Bishop Hope Morgan Ward concluded the discussion by expounding on the statements of hope for the UMC and continuing the discussions. Bishop Ward then presented the Human Sexuality Task Force report stating her hope that there is a movement toward prophetic wisdom and greater unity. Motion was made and seconded that the Connectional Table affirm parallel paths through dialogue and amendment (change it from within) of the Discipline to fully include LGBT persons in the life and ministry of the church. The motion was approved but not by unanimous vote.

Bishop Patrick Streiff provided the report of the Missional Collaboration Group on Worldwide Nature of the Church (MCG--WWN) and reviewed the request for more global church and identified that a process should be designed to assess common mission, vision, core values and resources. Motion was made and seconded that the Missional Collaboration Group on the Worldwide Nature be authorized to move forward with this process to solicit feedback through the process outlined. The motion was approved.

Bishop Ough closed the plenary by thanking the group for their full participation in the Connectional Table. He stated that he was impressed with the commitment that everyone gave and that he was grateful for the guests who were present.



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Name: Pastor Vicki Garber

Synod Visited: Indiana Kentucky

Visit Date: September 19-20

Purpose of Visit: as Churchwide Council member, Synod retreat

1. What did you learn about the Synod? IK Synod staff and council met for their annual planning retreat. Bishop Gafkjen led the group through a conversation about the difference between meeting technical challenges and adaptive challenges as well as the difference between fiduciary, strategic and generative modes of operating on boards. This was ironic timing as I had just gone through much of the same material with the PC-USA the three days before this meeting. The conversation was fruitful and will likely yield more options for generative functioning. I also learned that our financial situation is more stressed than I had previously thought.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? Many members expressed a very deep appreciation of the fact that I was there. The feeling was expressed that until I was elected the council didn't see much of the Churchwide council member. Several people thanked me for my service and said that they felt that it meant that they had a connection with Chicago.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits? I think this was the best meeting of the year to attend. It gave me a chance to consider my ministry on the Churchwide Council from the perspective of my Synod.

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Report from the Presbyterian Mission Board meeting, April 23-25, 2014

General information:

- Board and staff are in the midst of preparing for the General Assembly in June.
- Linda Valentine Elected to Third Four-Year Term as Executive Director and recommended that the 221st General Assembly (2014) confirm her election.

Initiatives:

- The 2012 General Assembly embraced a movement to start 1,001 new worshipping communities. Since then 223 new worshipping communities in 98 presbyteries have begun the process.
- “Educate a Child, Transform the World”: a vision for the whole church to address the root causes of poverty, especially as it affects women and girls, by providing quality education to one million children worldwide by the year 2020.
- “Living Missionally”: tapping into our missional identity and inspiring Presbyterians to engage their communities as a graceful response to the grace of God through acts of discipleship.

The theme of the General Assembly is “Abound in Hope.” The Rev. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA), urges the whole church to reflect on these questions:

- We all have a story of faith. Where does your story encounter hope?
- The story of the church is following the Lord who journeys before us. What does it mean to follow the Lord?
- How does your church community make room for people to share their stories of faith? How can we listen to the stories of people who are not in the church?

Other Matters

- The 2015 and 2016 Presbyterian Mission Agency budgets of \$73.6 and \$78.2 million respectively were approved and will be brought to the General Assembly.
- Special Offerings are over what was raised last year

As always it was a great pleasure to be with our Presbyterian brothers and sisters.

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Vicki T. Garber

In the opening session, every member of the board was encouraged to inspire, equip, and connect Presbyterians to join in the mission and ministry of the church, and of the myriad ways the Presbyterian Mission Agency enables that to happen.

- Committees: Each committee began the task of learning their work and building relationships. The 2014 General Assembly tasked us with work to address over the coming years, which the committees began at this meeting.
- An insightful and beneficial conversation on race and poverty was led jointly by the Justice Committee and Leadership Committee. This is a critical topic for our time and one in which the church plays a vital role for justice, leadership, and reconciliation.
- The 1001 new worshipping community movement continues to grow with more than 270 new worshipping communities in more than 100 presbyteries.
- The Finance Committee joined them to hear a progress report on the plan for financial sustainability for Stony Point. The ministry at Stony Point brings people of many faiths together to worship, live, and learn, equipping Presbyterians and persons of many faiths to deepen and live their faith in an interfaith world.
- Board Governance: Rebecca Basinger, a consultant specializing in faith-based board governance, led us in a full day of generative discussion to shape the work and roles of the Presbyterian Mission Agency board.
- Living Missionally: videos, displays, and presentations were all designed to equip you with information, connect you to resources, and prepare you in your work as a board member and an ambassador of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

International Peacemakers: On the last evening together, the board dined with International Peacemakers from Columbia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Palestine, Philippines, Russia, South Sudan, and Syria. Hearing their stories and learning about their work of peace and reconciliation touched the hearts of many.

Stewardship: The board approved revised budgets to accommodate tasks given to us by the General Assembly, an investment in Communications, and building the Mission Agency capital reserves to cover anticipated building needs.

Looking forward, fewer unrestricted funds are projected to be available from receipts and reserves in 2017 and beyond. To engage more Presbyterians in support of key ministries and to assure they continue into the future, there are several fundraising initiatives underway. The Special Offerings Online Gift Catalog is one example.

Presbyterian Mission Agency Multi-Media: Several videos were shown and they are available for use as ambassadors for the Mission Agency: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries, 1001 - Presbyteries receive inspiration and energy, 1001 - New Faith, Young Adult Volunteers, Poverty Alleviation Through Access to Quality Education, Northland Village Church New Worshipping Communities



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Church Council Member Synod Visit Report

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Name: Vicki Garber

Synod Visited: North West Ohio Synod Assembly

Visit Date: May 17, 2014

Purpose of Visit: representing the Churchwide Council

1. What did you learn about the Synod? This Synod does its assembly in one day. Their attendance at the assembly was remarkable, nearly 1200 people attended as delegates, visitors and representatives. The one day format had a number of advantages; less cost for the churches, better access for lay people, etc. However, it did at times feel a bit rushed. They also had no resolutions to deal with. I'm not sure what this would have looked like had they had resolutions.
2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization? This visit, Bishop Lohrman asked me to give a few short words on behalf of the CWC. He also asked me to lead the prayers for the elections that they were having. This was a great opportunity and I heard a lot of very positive feedback on it.
3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits? I think as we do these visits, encouraging the CWC representative to be more visible is a very good thing.

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Name: Cynthia Gustavson

Synod Visited: AROK (Arkansas/Oklahoma)

Visit Date: May 2,3,4 2014

Purpose of Visit:

1. What did you learn about the Synod? Learned about new congregations, new projects, met leaders, and learned about and discussed goals for the coming year.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

I was able to speak to the assembly about the Church Council, as well as about The Lutheran Magazine (which I represent the CC on) and I also conducted a short Bible study. I made myself available to members for conversation and questions.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

It is a wonderful time in which to see how the programs and policies of the ELCA are being carried out at the local level. I was very pleased to find out about what our churches are doing. I had contacted the bishop well ahead of time so that he made sure there was time on the schedule for me, and I had volunteered to help in any capacity. This worked well, and I would do that again.

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Church Council Member Ecumenical Visit Report

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Name: Stephen R. Herr

Meeting: The Executive Council of The Episcopal Church

Place: Embassy Suites in Phoenix-Scottsdale. Arizona

Date: June 10-12, 2014

The Executive Council of The Episcopal Church met June 10-12, 2014 at the Embassy Suites in Phoenix-Scottsdale, Arizona. This was the council's sixth meeting of the triennium. Three more are scheduled before the Episcopal Church gathers for General Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah next June 25-July 3.

The council addressed a wide range of issues and took action on a number of resolutions. Some of the highlights of this meeting included.

1. Resolutions related to advocacy
2. Preparations for a post meeting visit to Navejoland
3. The celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Episcopal Relief and Development
4. Remembering Executive Council member Deacon Terry Star who died in February

There are two ecumenical partners present at these meetings. Peter Wall, Dean of the Cathedral in Hamilton, Canada represents the Anglican Church of Canada and me. This meeting the Council asked us to make brief presentations early in the meeting following the introductory remarks of Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori and House of Deputies President Gay Jennings. Peter and I were then called upon for closing remarks and process observation on the last day.

In my remarks I discussed Luther's explanation to the third article of the creed and how the Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the church. I brought greetings from the ELCA Church Council, its officers including Presiding Bishop Eaton, and from the ecumenical officers Kathryn Lohre and Donald McCoid. I shared with the Executive Council our work in theological education, described the Word and Service roster and the work of the current task force, and the preparations for the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and discussed our 25th Anniversary Campaign. I thanked Stephanie Cheney for serving as the liaison to the ELCA Church Council. Stephanie is stepping down and

for 2014-2015 Executive Secretary Michael Barlowe and House of Deputies President Gay Jennings will attend the ELCA Church Council meetings.

I continue to find it an honor to represent the ELCA at these meetings. I am consistently welcomed and included most graciously in their meetings including being present in Executive sessions of the council. Through this participation of having representatives at each other's meetings, I see our two traditions living into our Call to Common Mission.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Herr



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Name: Stephen Herr

Synod Visited: Lower Susquehanna Synod

Visit Dates: June 6-7, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

The synod assembly gathered under the theme “Feeding the world as we have been fed in Christ” A pre-assembly event held on June 5 entitled Loaves and Fishes brought 1000 members of the synod together to pack 300,324 meals, the largest meal packing event by HungerNE in Pennsylvania.

The synod has a passion for hunger ministries reflected in the many mission moment video clips,c which described the many feeding ministries underway in the synod.

The synod assembly debated and approved a recommendation by the synod council to send a \$45,000 thank offering to the ELCA made possible by a 2013 surplus.

The assembly passed a 2015 budget raising the percentage rate to the ELCA to 45%

The assembly passed a motion to encourage rostered leaders to take their health assessment.

The assembly approved a \$6 million goal for participating in the “Always Being Made New” Campaign.

A motion to strike the bylaw requiring a synod assembly be held each year was referred to the synod council.

ELCA World Hunger Appeal director Dan Rift and Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in PA (LAMP) executive director Amy Reumann both did an outstanding job as the keynote speaker and Bible Study leader respectively. Their presentations strengthened and deepened the synod's connections with the wider church.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

I offered a forum on Friday entitled “Interdependent Ecclesial Feeding: The ELCA, Lower Susquehanna Synod and you.” It was an opportunity to outline our understanding of the Church, our interdependent three expressions of the ELCA. It also was a time to describe the different ministries and functions of each expression and answer questions.

On Saturday I made a presentation to the entire assembly following Dan Rift’s presentation. I shared about the role of the ELCA Church Council and its current areas of focus. I thanked previous church council members from the synod for their service, thanked the persons currently serving on boards in the Churchwide ministries from the synod, and thanked the synod for its mission support including its recent decision to make a thank offering to the ELCA and to increase Mission Support in the 2015 budget.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

While the resolution for the campaign passed, there are some who are concerned and unsure of what it will mean. There were strong voices throughout the assembly in support of the three expressions of the church. Continued follow up and work with the campaign will be helpful.

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Name: Stephen Herr

Synod Visited: Lower Susquehanna Synod

Visit Dates: May 12, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Lower Susquehanna Conference of Deans meeting

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

The synod is experimenting with new ways to implement transformational ministry through synod council calls.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

I had an opportunity to review ELCA Church Council actions from the April Church Council meeting and to field questions. I meet regularly with the fourteen Deans and synod staff (every other month) and have time on the agenda to address Church Council or Churchwide organizational questions. I appreciate this opportunity and believe this deepens the Synod-Churchwide relationship.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

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Name: Stephen Herr

Synod Visited: Lower Susquehanna Synod

Visit Dates: April 26, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Lower Susquehanna Synod Council meeting

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

The synod council heard a presentation and recommendation from Bishop Dunlop regarding a proposal for the synod's involvement in the ELCA 25th Anniversary Campaign. The council spent considerable time discussing the proposal and ultimately decided to adopt a preliminary budget for the campaign in the amount of \$150,000 for the initial year, including contracting with professional fundraising counsel, to begin May 1, 2014.

The council also spent time discussing its role in extending synod council calls in particular to an approved candidate for ordination to serve as an interim associate pastor for one year with the possibility of a future call by the congregation.

The Synod Council recommended to the 2014 Synod Assembly that a one-time thank offering gift of \$45,000 be sent to the ELCA to reflect the generosity of Lower Susquehanna Synod congregations during the FY 2013.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

Bishop Dunlop's presentation on the campaign and the discussion on the thank offering certainly reflected the synod's desire to deepen its relationship with the Churchwide organization. A summary of the Church Council actions from the April meeting was included in each synod council member's packet and I was available to answer questions. I also served in a consulting role with regard to a constitutional question.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

It was helpful to hear differing opinions on a variety of topics including the campaign and role of the synod council in extending calls. I have no suggestions for future visits at this time.

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Name: Stephen Herr

Synod Visited: Lower Susquehanna Synod

Visit Dates: May 29, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Lower Susquehanna Synod Council meeting

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

The synod council and Bishop Dunlop addressed the recent decision by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to approve marriage between GLBT persons. The council passed guidelines for the congregations and rostered leaders of the synod.

The council also finalized plans for the upcoming synod assembly to be held June 6 and 7. The synod's involvement in the 25th anniversary campaign was again a topic of discussion.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

The council inquired of me if the ELCA had provided any guidelines regarding the marriages of GLBT persons. Again I provided some constitutional interpretation and support. While I have been supportive of the campaign in the synod including contributing language to the synod council's resolution to the assembly, I have encouraged the council to find its voice and perspective on the campaign.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

This meeting demonstrated the various points of view and perspectives evident in the synod. Despite these differences, conversation and deliberation is done with mutual respect, consideration and in a faithful way. I commend the council for its work and process. I also would lift up the leadership of Bishop Dunlop and Vice-President Bringman in helping shape a climate where different opinions can find their voice and be heard.

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Name: Stephen Herr

Synod Visited: Lower Susquehanna Synod

Visit Dates: June 7, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Lower Susquehanna Synod Council meeting

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

The synod council met following the synod assembly to reorganize. This included electing a vice-chair of the council and members of the executive committee.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

Dan Rift came to the meeting to thank the synod council for the \$45,000 thank offering to ELCA and to express the appreciation of the churchwide organization. My role was strictly as a process observer and to be available to answer any questions.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

This was my third meeting with the council in as many months and given that it was short and largely a reorganizational meeting, I do not have anything to offer here.

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Name: Stephen Herr

Synod Visited: Upper Susquehanna Synod

Visit Date: June 20, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

The Upper Susquehanna Synod continues to receive me with wonderful hospitality and I appreciated Bishop Robert Driesen's invitation to address the assembly. The synod has deep connections with its companion churches in Liberia and Germany.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

This year I used my time to speak to the importance of our polity and interdependence among the three expressions of the church. I shared information about those issues the Church Council and Churchwide offices were tending to including the Word and Service Task Force, Theological Advisory Task Force, 25th Anniversary Campaign, the upcoming 500th anniversary of the Reformation, and the social statement on women and justice. I thanked the synod for its mission support, for the ministry of Bishop Driesen and for those in the synod who serve in the wider church. Scott Weidler did a fine job representing the ELCA Churchwide expression and in deepening the relationship through his participation and presentations.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

I will be visiting the Upper Susquehanna Synod Council meeting on November 20 to follow up my assembly visit and continue to work on strengthening the relationship between churchwide and the synod.

Please *attach* this completed report and e-mail it to john.hessian@elca.org



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Church Council Member Synod Visit Report

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Name: Linda Nou

Synod Visited: Oregon

Visit Date: October 17-18, 2014

Purpose of Visit: Liaison visit

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

Oregon Synod is very proactive about looking at the issues facing the church in the upcoming years with clergy retirements, utilizing its staff to equip congregational leaders, and are creative in finding alternative funding for ministries. I believe are ahead of the curve in realizing the gravity of the situation that denominational churches find themselves in and are strategizing ways to effectively move forward.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

I believe that the relationship with this synod has been historically strong with two former Church Council members serving on the Synod Council. Being my first visit with this synod, it was simply a time of getting acquainted with them. They were very open and hospitable to me.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

Since Bishop Grauer –Riecke had just returned from the Conference of Bishops, he provided a very complete report of what was going on in the ELCA as a whole. It would be helpful to me to have greater clarity from them on what would be helpful for me to bring (if anything). Building relationship seems to be the best asset I can offer.

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Name: Meri Jo Petrivelli

Synod Visited: Southwest California

Visit Date: 5/30-2014 – 5/31/2014

Purpose of Visit: Synod Assembly

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

This synod has very active outreach and social ministries. I learned about some of their synod-wide ministry teams and programs. They also had a commitment to an efficient assembly, which was completed in 24 hours. Most reports were presented by DVD, all of which were very well done. I was favorably impressed by much of what I witnessed. There was a lot of positive energy and I did not witness much tension.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

I'm not entirely sure it did. My presence was acknowledged at the beginning by Bishop Erwin, but during the business sessions of the assembly there was no time for any type of greeting from me on behalf of the council (which was fine). The dinner conversation included a few questions about what the ELCA council does, but there wasn't all that much interest expressed. I asked them a lot of questions about their ministries, and considered my presence a fact-finding mission about what the Southwest California Synod is about, rather than trying to help them understand (or care) about what the ELCA Church Council does.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

I live in Pacifica Synod, and know several people in Southwest California Synod. I learned quite a bit about their ministries from the assembly and from talking with my friends and acquaintances. Most of what I learned was very positive, and I actually enjoyed my time there.

Having said that, I'm not sure that council members attending another synod's assembly is a productive way to deepen relationships between churchwide and synods. Assemblies are notoriously busy and often chaotic. If the assembly agenda has no time for a greeting or other visible communication, there is little incentive for the assembly members to engage a council member (unless they already know the person). I'm too much of an introvert to walk up to a stranger and engage them in a conversation. If we are trying to strengthen the relationship between the ELCA as a whole and the specific synod, then maybe a display table with information on current ministries would be useful. People are more inclined to ask a question or begin a conversation if something is displayed.

If our goal is to somehow deepen a relationship between the synod and the church council as a body, then I'm of the opinion that attending an assembly isn't really a good vehicle for it. It would probably be better to attend a synod council meeting or a smaller gathering of leaders.

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Name: Mike Ward

Synod Visited: North Carolina

Visit Date: May 30-31

Purpose of Visit: Synod Assembly

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

The Synod has launched an initiative entitled “Forward Together” that is intended to engage all the congregations of the Synod in various ways. All congregations are to enter intentional prayer and Bible Study that has been prepared by a task force. Then, the Synod is training Companions who can walk with congregations to discern their futures. These Companions are being selected by the Bishop and professionally trained to lead a Strategic Visioning exercise with an assigned congregation. So far, more than 70 Companions have been trained, but more congregations have requested them so this initiative will continue to grow.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

I am rostered in the Synod and am the trainer for the Companions and was able to greet every delegate during a special workshop session on behalf of the Churchwide organization and bring a personal face to who serves on Church Council.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

Synod Assemblies are a hard time to make an impact if there is not a workshop time. Had I not had workshop time, very few people would have known who I was. I also wonder if a special nametag would be helpful to help set us apart.

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Name: Man Hei Yip

Synod Visited: New England Synod

Visit Date: 06/05/14-06/07/14

Purpose of Visit: I attended the New England Synod Assembly, 2014 as a representative of the Church Council.

1. What did you learn about the Synod?

The NE Synod has put much emphasis on Christian missions, centering on its necessity and urgency in the here and now. Its theme for 2014 is "Mission and Worship in the Age of the Spirit" which is relevant for both contexts where people are searching for the meaning of life and leaders who are finding ways to sharpen the role of religion in church and society. The term "Christian missions" does not remain a slogan, but a living witness to the faithfulness of God for all people. Bishop James E. Hazelwood will start his World Hunger Appeal Ride and by making a good role model, he wants to mobilize more resources and motivate congregations in fighting hunger in the world. Again after Bishop Hazelwood explained the situation of a \$25,000 budget deficit in mission support, more than \$63,000 received as pledges to the fund by the end of the Assembly. Such an amazing act of love apparently showed that the assembly and people across the Synod are supportive and willing and ready to take up the responsibility to do great work.

2. How did the visit deepen the relationship between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization?

I was glad that the Bishop made an announcement at the assembly of my appointment as a representative of the Church Council. Though I will be filling in the position for a short period of time, the Synod did not take the matter lightly. The connection that has been made raises my awareness to what is happening between the Synod and the Churchwide Organization. It will further open up a way for me to take part in related discussions at both the synodical and churchwide levels. For instance, the pledges to Mission Support

could be a powerful story to share among Church Council members, encouraging more congregations to give and care for God's creation.

3. What insights did you gain and what suggestions do you have for future visits?

What is impressive about the Assembly is that the Synod is open to a collaborative work on mission development based on the principles of inclusivity, reciprocity, and mutual respect. While recognizing the diversity and addressing contextual differences in missions, the interactive approach will enable the Synod to achieve the goal of sustainable leadership, making available effective strategic planning in mission work.

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CC Reporting Schedule - Basically Chronological

internal working document

Resolutions, Memorials, and Others	Action	Where	Units	Response Due
Women and Justice Social Statement	CC 10.11.66e	B1a CC 11/10 B1b CC 4/11	OB	04/11 (delayed until 11/11 and finished) 2019 CWA SS Updates 4/14, 4/15, 4/16 and finally 8/19
Mission Funding Small Congregations, # of Synods and Seminaries, and CWO-Synod Relationship	CC12.11.33	CC Agenda 11/12	OB in consult w/ CC and COB	11/13. Then progress reports 4/14, 4/15, 4/16.
Analysis, Assessment and Measurement of New Mission Starts (SW Calif)	EC 12.04.12 CC13.11.69a	EC Agenda 4-13-12 CC 11/13 Ex B1b and Ex G	CSM	11/12 Delayed to 11/13. Answer came 11/13. Progress report needed by 11/14.
Word and Service Task Force and Entrance Rite Discernment Working Group	CC.12.04.19j CC12.11.38 CC13.11.65	CC Exhibit D 4/12 CC Agenda 11/12	CSM	Gave report in 11/12. Progress reports 11/14 with a final report in 11/15 so that can go to the 2016 CWA.
Ecclesiology of a Global Church Task Force	CC12.11.41	11/12 Agenda	Ecclesiology Task Force	Annual Reports 11/13, 11/14 and a final report 11/15 in time for possible action by 2016 CWA
Theological Education Advisory Council	CC12.11.34	CC Agenda 11/12	OB in consult w/ seminary presidents, COB and Word and Service Task Force	4/13 Finished but more coming. Reports 4/14, 4/15, 4/16.
Mission Funding Monitor remittance system of MIF/Monitor Pilot Programs	CC12.11.32	CC Agenda 11/12. page 22.	MIF, CC and COB	Progress reports 4/15, 4/16. Final report 2016 CWA
Israel and Palestine	CA13.06.27 CC13.11.69j	08/13 CWA	GM w/CSM, MA, OS, OT, Portico	04/14 Delayed to unknown future date.
Communion Practices Category D1	CA13.03.10	08/13 CWA and Ex B2a 11/13 CC	CSM w/OB and COB	04/14 CC

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internal working document

Resolutions, Memorials, and Others	Action	Where	Units	Response Due
Native Americans and Alaska Natives Motion J (2011) AND American Indian and Alaska Native People Motion N (2013)	Motion J CA11.04.18. CC.13.04.27f. Motion N CA13.06.31 CC13.11.69l CC13.11.69o	B2a 11/11 CC11.11.83p CC12.11.34n B2a 11/13	CSM only on Motion J. CSM w/ GM on Motion N.	11/12 Delayed to 4/13. 4/13 answer asked for a working group. Rationale in 11/13. Progress report in 4/14. FINAL ANSWER COMING 11/14.
Long-term process for addressing issues of corporate social responsibility	Motion J CA11.04.18. CC.13.04.xx. Motion N CA13.06.29.	04/12 CC and 11/13 CC	CSM w/OS	2014 (Just the year. No month)
Isolation of Individuals Living in our Communities	CC13.07.xx	7/11/13 CC Exhibit B	CSM	Delayed to 4/14. Then referred back to the unit. Response needed at unknown future date.
Genetics SS Implementing Resolutions	CA11.04.17		OB	Annual answers 11/13, 11/14 and 11/15. Then it is finished.
Genetics SS Implementing Resolution #8 Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine	CA 11.04.17 CC13.11.69z	11/13 CC	OB	11/14 CC
Same Gender Couples and Their Families Category A4 (M2SGF)	CA13.03.12	08/13 CWA	Church Council (OB?)	Fall 2014 COB and 11/14 CC
State vs. Commonwealth	CA13.04.16	08/13 CWA	OS	11/14 CC
Fossil Fuels	CA13.03.07f	08/13 CWA	CSM (CSR)	11/14
Fracking Category B1	CA13.03.07e	08/13 CWA	CSM	11/14
SS on Criminal Justice Implementing Resolutions c. Implementation and Accountability	CA13.05.18	08/13 CWA	CSM w/OB	Annual Reports 11/14, 11/15, 11/16 and Final Report at 11/17 CC
SS on Criminal Justice Implementing Resolutions a. Drug Policy Social Message Feasibility Assessment	CA13.05.18	08/13 CWA	OB	11/15 CC
Nominating Committee 10% YYA	CA13.04.17	08/13 CWA	OS	None yet
Immigration Reform	CA13.03.08 CC13.11.69h	11/13 Ex B2a	CSM w/OB and LIRS	11/14 CC

CC Reporting Schedule - Basically Chronological

internal working document

Resolutions, Memorials, and Others	Action	Where	Units	Response Due
Limited Voting Rights	EC14.08.18a		OS	11/14 CC OS should provide a report or timeline when this will be answered.
Future of ELCA Seminaries	EC14.08.18b		CSM	11/14 CC CSM should provide a report or timeline when this will be answered.
Transparent and Accountable Congregation Management	EC14.08.18c		OS	11/14 CC OS should provide a report or timeline when this will be answered.
Statement on Aging	EC14.08.18d		OB	11/14 CC OB should provide a report or timeline when this will be answered.
Immigration Reform - Welcoming Migrants and Refugees	CA13.03.09 CC13.11.69i	11/13 Ex B2a	OB w/CSM and LIRS	4/15 CC
Gender Identity Discrimination	CA13.03.07a CC13.11.69f	11/13 Ex B2a	CSM w/OB	11/14 CC
Motion H: Voting Rights	CA13.06.29 CC13.11.69j	11/13 Ex B2a	OB w/COB and CSM	4/15 CC
Motion O: Confirmation	CA13.06.32 CC.13.11.69m	11/13 Ex B2a	OB w/ COB and CSM	4/15 CC
Hearing Aids		EC Agenda 10-20-14	Portico	4/15 CC
Motion I: Term Limits	CA13.06.30 CC13.11.69k	11/13 Ex B2a	OS w/ COB and OB	11/15 CC with a possible report and recommendations to the 2016 CWA
Social Message on Gender-Based Violence	11/13 CC CC13.11.63		OB	11/14 CC Delayed to 4/15

**This Exhibit included
personal information
provided solely to the
Church Council for its
deliberations.**

New Congregational Development in the ELCA

The program ministry of New Congregational Development accompanies and resources synodical leadership in the process of birthing, growing, maturing and multiplying new ELCA communities of faith. Our goal is to equip these new communities to become evangelical centers for mission in the public arena. In partnership with local congregational leaders and organizations, ecumenical colleagues, synodical mission tables, Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEMs) and synodical bishops, we aim at building capacity for launching new starts and pursuing ministry vitality and sustainability.

A key priority in our work is to assist this church in its commitment to be in ministry among ethnic and multicultural communities; youth and young adult populations and people who are experiencing poverty, homelessness and marginalization. We are thankful to local leaders who share this commitment and vision and step forward to explore creative ways to plant the seeds of evangelical witness in their locales.

This update will have five parts:

- Entry Points for local ideas of new starts
- Numerical report on New Starts
- Update on Current Systems of Support
- Key Components of a New Start
- Observations and Learnings

I. Entry Points

Models of creative new ministries vary according to context and cultural situations. Thus rather than promoting models, we emphasize ministry principles that can be applied to each unique community. These creative ideas find their way to our office and are welcomed as entry points, rather than definitions as categories. Here are the entry points used the most:

- a. Congregations under Development: expected to grow, mature and organize
- b. Alternate Worshipping Community: one church helping start another
- c. Alternate Worshipping Site: one church starting its own second site
- d. Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities: ministry explorations

II. New Starts as of October 20, 2014

- a. 354 New Ministries are under development.
- b. 50 new starts have begun as of the first ten months of 2014.
- c. 6-8 other potential new starts in the planning stages for 2014.
- d. Since the beginning of the ELCA, 490 new ministries have been organized.
- e. 56 Synods are involved in the ministry of new starts.
- f. 58 percent of all new starts are among ethnic/multicultural communities.
- g. 22 percent are being developed among people experiencing poverty.
- h. 26 new ministries started with leaders whose churches left the ELCA.
- i. 15 immigrants are able to serve as mission developers with visas secured by the churchwide organization, at the request of DEMs and synodical bishops.

An increasing number of new starts are being born out of existing mission-minded churches and among people of color and language other than English. More and more new ministries among young adults are surfacing throughout the ELCA. These new ministries are

primarily urban, near college campuses and connect young adults with people experiencing poverty and homelessness in their communities.

III. Support Systems for New Starts

Crucial to the ministry of new starts is the close relationship between the synodical bishop and the Director for Evangelical Mission. They set the tone for directing the “missional traffic” in their contexts. Second, it is pivotal that the way ministry initiatives emerge in the synod reflect a high level of ownership by leaders on the ground, the people who are on the front lines of God’s work in the public arena. And third, the connections between synodical and churchwide offices, especially the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit (CSM) are very close. That contributes to an emerging culture of trust, freedom and mutual accountability. Together we are creating and coordinating sustainable systems of support for these new starts. Here is a sample of our joint work:

- a. **Strategic Consultations:** Local leaders along with Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEMs) meet with their Synod Mission Tables to discern mission opportunities and their potential in order to create appropriate models and ensure local ownership.
- b. **Supportive Networks :** Ethnic Directors and community leaders; Urban practitioners, Community Organizers; Post-Modern (emerging) leaders; Campus Ministers, Ecumenical Partners, Network for Homeless and Justice Ministries, Prison Ministries, LGBT groups, etc. create these networks. These networks are comprised of local practitioners and partners who share their expertise and advice with DEMs for current and future new starts.
- c. **Mission Funding:** We assist DEMs in finding local partners, synod funds and CSM grants in partnership with the Mission Advancement unit.
- d. **Review Table Process:** Three times a year, a team gathers to affirm local ministry initiatives and allocate churchwide new start grants. We are thankful to key leaders, DEMs and synodical bishops who help us with this work.
- e. **Processing New Ministry Proposals:** We work with DEMs in securing documentation in partnership with synods, CSM, Office of the Secretary, Human Resources and Research and Evaluation.
- f. **Recruitment and Screening of Mission Developers:** We partner with the CSM Leadership Office to screen candidates through the Behavioral Interview Process. We are in close relationship with all Seminaries to introduce students to this area of ministry in the ELCA.
- g. **Mission Developer’s Training:** Mission Developers come together twice for training. The second time they bring a couple of their lay leaders to be included in their planning and implementation of ministry goals. There are two phases to these trainings. They are conducted in both English and Spanish and done in partnership with colleagues in The Episcopal Church.
- h. **Coaching Systems for developers:** CoachNet International provides training and certification for the ELCA to develop its contextual system to prepare and deploy coaches for mission developers.
- i. **Tracking System to monitor progress:** Mission developers submit monthly reports to the ELCA integrated database (ECIS) so that DEMs and other CSM staff can monitor their progress and challenges.
- j. **Housing Ministries:** Loans can be secured by qualified ministries in partnership with the Mission Investment Fund to purchase property.

- k. Training local fiscal agents: They administer salaries and benefits for mission developers.
- l. Organic ministry life of a new community: We use the principles of the Natural Church Development research and curriculum.
- m. Faith Practices of Ministry Leaders: The spiritual wellness of our ministry leaders is tended.
- n. Communication and Mission Interpretation: This work is done with the Mission Advancement unit.
- o. Church Multiplication: We identify and invite key churches with the capacity to start another site or another new church initiative

IV. Key Components of a New Start Proposal (part of the consultation process)

Area Potential

- Sufficient evidence of a mission field through demographics, local relationships and ecumenical partners/denominations.
- Evidence of population growth and community readiness. Is the timing right?

Compelling Vision

- Clarity regarding synodical commitment to new starts
- Local leaders in partnership with the synod (DEM, synod mission tables, etc) own a common vision
- Clarity regarding the target audience for the new start (young adults, ethnic and/or multicultural audiences, suburban, rural, etc.)

Clear Ministry Plan

The vision must include specific ministry outcomes, including measurable steps that strengthen the ministry base to increase capacity for strength, visibility and leadership development.

- Working the plan in the context of partnerships, coaching, support resources and clear lines of accountability increase capacity for growth and health.
- A ministry plan that includes essential components of a missional congregation (principles of organic ministry, faith practices, Scripture, community organizing, etc) enhances the opportunity for the healthy DNA of the ministry.

Adaptive Leadership

- A developer is locally identified and screened through the mission developer behavioral interview process, based on general characteristics of a mission developer as well as by the specific needs of a particular new context.
- The spiritual life of the developer is directly connected to the effectiveness of a new ministry.
- Lay leaders and developer create a strong and workable team culture to provide a framework for health and vitality.
- New starts that have systems and opportunities for lay leadership based on identifying and releasing gifts tend to flourish.

Contextual Model

- The model supports the vision and goals of the ministry plan.
- The model is sensitive to the culture or cultures of the target audience or context.
- The model is consistent with the economic realities of the context.

Adequate Resources

- New starts have a better chance of success with local partner support through prayer, presence and gifts.
- New ministries that can count on the support of partners and the local mission tables for the time that is needed determined by the local context have a better chance of reaching sustainability.
- New ministries that participate in the support of the ministry through stewardship and local giving move more quickly toward maturity.

Good Support Mechanisms

- Developers and new ministries that take advantage of support mechanisms experience greater potential for growth and impact in their communities. Examples of support mechanisms include Mission Developer Training, coaching, supervision with the DEM, Networks/Cohorts of developers, and other fellowship systems; as well as ongoing tracking and monitoring (DEM, CSM reports) of the ministry.
- New ministries that show active, relational involvement in prayer partners, conference activities, ecumenical gatherings, synod events and the synod mission tables grow in ministry capacity, confidence and awareness of being a part of the body of Christ.

IV. Key Learnings and Observations

1. Mission Starts are a “laboratory of ministry innovation.”

Leaders in all expressions of the church are operating with a mindset of exploration, taking time to discern and assess carefully the ministry potential in their target area as well as the level of ownership in the local partners and supporters. Once these components are clearly articulated, local and churchwide colleagues are better able to invest financial resources at a deeper level. This “exploration” time is crucial because a growing number of people either have little or no memory of a Christian experience or are highly suspicious of organized religious expressions. Furthermore, growing groups of people are experiencing marginalization and isolation, and a leader serving in their midst will need extra time to listen, learn and serve with integrity before a response might come forth. In all cases, the “exploratory time” will yield a vision, model and strategy that is creative, unique and appropriate to that context.

Examples: One “exploration” happening out of the 50 new starts in 2014 is taking place in Indianapolis, IN.

In Indianapolis, there is a growing African National population emerging in the city. A local congregation has been serving individuals and families of this community through an English as a Second Language Program. Now, there is interest in a possible new start as a vehicle to engage, serve and be in mutual ministry. Since the African National community is fairly new and there is no specific demographic information, any assessment of potential would have to be done on site and in person.

To that end, DEM Nancy Nyland and her Mission Table put forth a four-month “exploratory proposal,” using the Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community entry point. With the connections of other synods, Mr. Douglas Mumari, a recognized leader from the Oromo community had been identified to be under contract for these four months. He has moved on site to begin his work. Bishop Bill Gafkjen welcomed him and introduced him to colleagues at the Indiana-Kentucky Synod’s Professional Leaders’ Conference. Also, local congregational leaders are thrilled to have him.

Within four months, the result of this exploration will result in a very specific report, with strategic recommendations on how to proceed. It is also possible that the report might point out that there is not sufficient potential for a new ministry, and alternative steps will be put forth.

2. New Congregations point to the emerging realities for ministry in the changing culture of American society. The experiences of mission developers in various parts of the country unveil some commonalities and challenges that assist leaders preparing for planting a new ministry.
 - a. It does take a village to raise a new ministry. The prayerful company of local partners is crucial to the strength and length of support needed by the developer to go deep into the target audience and have the time to raise leaders in order to enhance the ministry base toward sustainability.
 - b. The following examples illustrate the fact that planting, growing, organizing and multiplying new ministries is taking longer than it had for previous generations of developers in the ELCA. The current grants sent from the churchwide organization to the local fiscal agent that handles the finances of a new start usually represent one third of the total budget of the new start.

Examples: (funds represent only the churchwide grants for new starts)

[House for All Sinners and Saints, Denver, CO.](#)

- Organized in 2014
- Six years as new start and one year as organized congregation: \$167,005 total
- This ministry is a seedbed for other mission developers and missional leaders serving already or being prepared to serve in various places in the ELCA.

[Light of the World Lutheran Church, Farmington, MN.](#)

- Organized in 2013
- Three years as a new start and one as newly organized congregation: \$67,000 total
- This congregation has strong lay leadership that serves through their vocation in church and society. They use the principles and tools of community organizing.

[Iglesia Luterana Santa Maria de Guadalupe, Irving, TX.](#)

- Organized in 2008
- Six years as a new start and five years as an organized congregation: \$341,415 total
- This congregation averages 2,500 active participants, who purchased land and built a large church complex with the help of the Mission Investment Fund. It is the largest Latino church in the ELCA.

[Iglesia Luterana Jesus Rey de Gloria, Hialeah, FL.](#)

- Organized in 2012
- Six years as a new start and two years as newly organized church: \$ 367, 319 total
- This is a vibrant congregation that focuses on leadership/discipleship formation, evangelical outreach and public ministry connections. This church has started two new Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities in Hollywood and Homestead, utilizing lay evangelists coached by their Pastor.

[Grace Chinese Lutheran Church, Seattle, WA.](#)

- Organized in 2005
- Five years as a new start and three years as an organized church: \$381,834 total
- This is a praying and missionary church, with strong focus in children and youth. They have started two new ministries in Sammamish Hills and among the young adult multicultural population in Seattle.

3. Mission Congregations develop a growing and multiplying ethos that generates the opportunity to do more. As part of our commitment to sustain a culture of growth in new congregations, we have created over the years our capacity for training, coaching and granting to support new congregations that aim at starting another church and/or develop another strategic ministry site. In both cases, our staff uses the Churches Starting Churches entry point, working with DEMs and Synod Mission Tables to identify and help fund these new possibilities.
4. Intentional work is happening to support the development of Area Ministry Strategies in key places around the country. These strategies will create a communal way to envision, plan and implement ministry.
5. The New Congregations ministry program continues to work with various partners to facilitate the role of DEMs and fiscal agents (serving local new starts) in the process of gathering the necessary forms and documents to record the birth of a new start in the ELCA and include the new ministry in the ELCA's insurance program.
6. The inclusion of New Congregations in the *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* provides an opportunity to increase the base of supporters to the church as well as to enhance our program's capacity to better support existing new starts and fund opportunities for ministry innovation. We continue to coordinate efforts between CSM and MA in articulating the New Congregations case statement for the *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA* and the options to be presented to leaders and potential donors.
7. The intentional ministry relationship with ecumenical partners has expanded the ability of sharing of resources and the opportunities for common witness in strategic communities.

We are thankful to our Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church of Christ colleagues who share our journey of mission development and accompany us in generating ecumenical new starts and in the training of mission developers.

Thank you for your prayers and support.

Rev. Ruben Duran
Director for New Congregations, CSM-ELCA

New Ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
A Response to the Southwest California Synod Resolution
Analysis, Assessment and Measurement of New Starts¹
New and Renewing Congregations Working Group
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
November 2014

This is the same as Exhibit G, Part 1 in the November 2013 Church Council materials.

This report is organized into several sections. Section 1 includes a brief rationale for Lutheran mission in the United States and the Caribbean, a review of the current broader social context for mission, a case for the missional strength of ELCA Lutheran theology and a review of ELCA Lutherans in the present context. Section 2 includes a review of this church's most recent efforts in starting new ministries. Section 3 is a direct response to the resolution from the Southwest California Synod.

New and Renewing Congregations Working Group

Early in 2013, the Executive for Administration of the churchwide organization, Wyvetta Bullock and the Congregational and Synodical Mission (CSM) Unit Executive Director, Stephen Bouman commissioned a small working group of churchwide staff to undertake a full review of the new and renewing congregations enterprise as part of an expanded response to the resolution from the Southwest California Synod and in preparation for the November 2013 report to the ELCA Church Council.

The group was encouraged to seek widespread input from others and to have vigorous conversation about the strengths and weaknesses of the current system as well as making recommendations about the future direction of the two programs. A key motivating factor driving the work of the group was the realization that both our society and our church are experiencing a rapidly changing landscape for mission and ministry. We have an immediate need to quickly adapt to the world and the church we are becoming and to regularly make appropriate changes. The working group included the following staff from the churchwide organization:

Mark Burkhardt, Director – Congregational Centers for Mission
Ruben Duran, Director – New Congregations
Mary Frances, Associate Program Director – New Congregations
Neil Harrison, Program Director – Congregational Renewal
Kenneth Inskeep, Executive for Research and Evaluation
Jane Shields – Director for Evangelical Mission, New England Synod
Pedro Suarez – Director for Evangelical Mission, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Melanie Wallschlaeger – Director for Evangelical Mission, Southwestern Washington Synod

¹ The original resolutions also included reference to redevelopments. Given the text of the resolution, this was understood to be congregations starting over as if they were new ministries rather than ministry renewals which would include congregations not yet at the point of redevelopment.

SECTION 1

God's Mission and the Power of the Gospel

The basis for all Christian mission is God's desire to bless and save the world. Lutherans are called to invite and encourage people to come to faith in God and to understand the power of the Gospel in their lives. While Lutherans are not the only religious people to emphasize the grace of God, it is central to our tradition.

Luther describes the Gospel as “a discourse about Christ, that he is the Son of God and became man for us, that he died and was raised, that he has been established as Lord over all things”.² For Luther, a “proper grasp” of the Gospel means understanding the “overwhelming goodness of God”. “This is the great fire of the love of God for us, whereby the heart and conscience become happy, secure, and content.... This is what preaching the Christian faith means”. According to Luther, “faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace so certain that you could stake your life on it one thousand times”. This confidence defines and motivates Lutherans and it is the source of all goodness. Luther wrote:

Now when you have Christ as the foundation and chief blessing of your salvation, then the other part follows: that you take him as your example, giving yourself in service to your neighbor just as you see that Christ has given himself for you. See, there faith and love move forward, God's commandment is fulfilled, and a person is happy and fearless to do and to suffer all things. Therefore make note of this, that Christ as a gift nourishes your faith and makes you a Christian. But Christ as an example exercises your works. These do not make you a Christian. Actually they come forth from you because you have already been made a Christian. As widely as a gift differs from an example, so widely does faith differ from works, for faith possesses nothing of its own, only the deeds and life of Christ. Works have something of your own in them, yet they should not belong to you but to your neighbor.

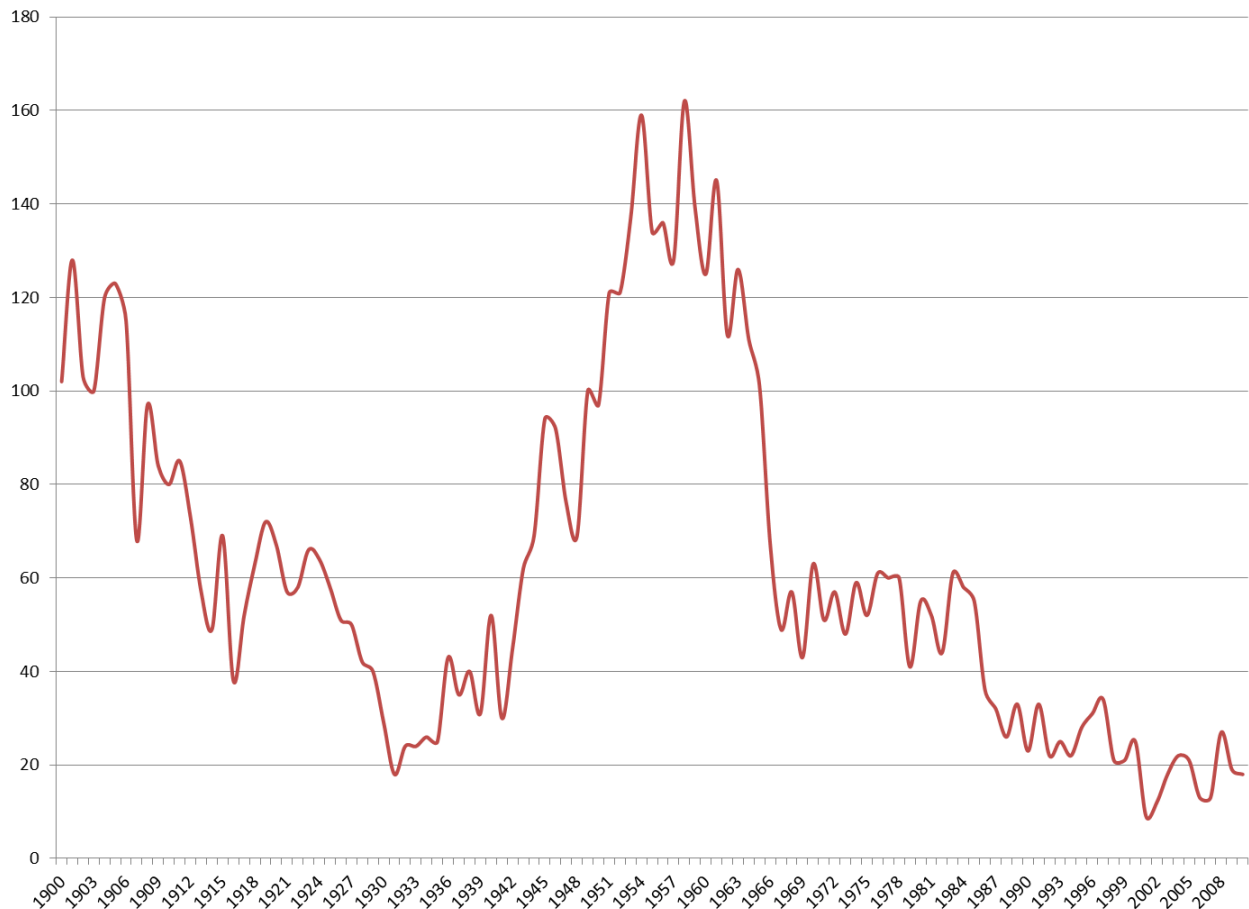
Lutherans believe the goodness of God sets us free and through this freedom—this confidence in the goodness of God—people become happy, secure and content. When Lutherans give themselves in service to the neighbor, lives are changed and communities are restored. The belief is the church should expect to grow as people hear the Gospel and encounter its power.

Growth and the ELCA

The first ELCA Lutheran congregations in the United States (and the Caribbean) date back to the 1600s. By 1850, there were about 1,000 Lutheran congregations in the United States. After 1850, the predecessor churches of the ELCA saw significant growth as immigrants poured into the United States from Europe. By 1900, there were over 5,300 ELCA Lutheran congregations and by 1950 there were about 8,500. From 1950 to 1967 there were a minimum of 100 new congregations started each year as the church moved to the suburbs and benefitted from the post-World War II baby boom. Then, after 1968, the number of new congregations began to slow dramatically (see Figure 1).

² Martin Luther, *A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels*, 1521.

Figure 1: Number of Congregations by Year of Origin for the ELCA and its Predecessor Bodies



In 1970, the membership of the ELCA peaked at 5.6 million baptized members.

Population Change

The population trends of the U.S. present significant opportunities for growth. In 2000, the U.S. population was 281 million. By 2010, the population was 309 million. The projection for 2015 is 322 million. In 2000, the baptized membership of the ELCA was 5,125,919 which was 1.7 percent of the population. In 2010, the baptized membership of the ELCA was 4,274,855 which was 1.4 percent of the population.

The majority (56%) of Lutherans live in 6 states (Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and Ohio). In 2010, these states accounted for 16 percent of the U.S. population. While each of these states is growing, none is growing rapidly. Between 2000 and 2010, the fastest growing states were Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas (see Table 1). Each of these states grew by 1 million or more residents and each of these states is projected to continue growing at a significant rate. While the population of these states increased by a combined 14.7 million, the baptized membership of ELCA congregations in these states decreased by 151,311. In all of these states, ELCA members account for less than 1 percent of the population.

Table 1: Population and Baptized Membership in the Six Fastest Growing States

	U.S. Population				ELCA Baptized Membership			
	2000	2010	change	projection 2010 to 2015	2000	2010	change	percent of population in 2010
Arizona	5,130,632	6,392,017	1,261,385	7,518,953	68,944	46,844	-22,100	0.73%
California	33,871,648	37,253,956	3,382,308	40,136,564	171,030	120,449	-50,581	0.32%
Florida	15,982,378	18,801,310	2,818,932	20,384,896	90,205	68,810	-21,395	0.37%
Georgia	8,186,453	9,687,653	1,501,200	10,771,743	37,096	30,400	-6,696	0.31%
North Carolina	8,049,313	9,535,483	1,486,170	10,160,555	88,902	75,069	-13,833	0.79%
Texas	20,851,820	25,145,561	4,293,741	26,983,559	154,737	118,031	-36,706	0.47%

Congregations

There are approximately 350,000 congregations in the United States.³ Of these congregations, about 314,000 are Protestant and 24,000 are Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches. Non-Christian congregations are estimated at about 12,000. In 2011, the ELCA included 9,765 active congregations or ministries under development which is about 3 percent of all the congregations in the United States.

In the six fastest growing states noted in Table 1, there were approximately 100,000 congregations. Of these congregations, 1,306 were ELCA, which is 228 fewer than in 2000. Instead of having more congregations in these states, the ELCA actually has less. Of the 59 new ministries approved for development in 2012, only eight (14%) were in these six states.

There are approximately 30,000 general ZIP codes (not including PO boxes, or military or business ZIP codes) in the U.S. The ELCA has at least 1 congregation in 7,089 of these ZIP codes. There are 5,287 ZIP codes which no ELCA congregation claims as its primary service area. Many of the 5,287 ZIP codes that no ELCA congregations claim as their primary service area are expected to grow by three percent or more in the next five years. The following is a breakdown by state of these fast-growing ZIP codes: Arizona – 120, California – 597, Florida – 489, Georgia – 258, North Carolina – 269 and Texas – 501.

Going to Church

Perhaps because the vast majority of Americans claim they believe in God, the U.S. is often considered a religious country.⁴ At the same time, the vast majority of people in the U.S. do not go to church on a regular basis. Attempts to estimate the number who worship in a typical week conclude that about 20 percent of the population attends worship.⁵

The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion or religious group is growing at a rapid rate. One-fifth of the U.S. public and a third of adults under 30 are religiously unaffiliated.⁶ Between 1990 and 2008, the number of people responding “none” to the question “what is your religion, if any” increased by 20 million to about 35 million Americans.⁷

³ *Religious Congregations and Membership Study, 2010*. Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies.

⁴ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/147887/americans-continue-believe-god.aspx>.

⁵ C. Kirk Hadaway and Penny Long Marler, “How Many Americans Attend Worship Each Week? An Alternative Approach to Measurement”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, September, 2005.

⁶ “Nones” on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation, Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012.

⁷ Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey*, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, March, 2009.

The Missional Power of ELCA Lutheran Theology

There has been considerable research on those who have no religious affiliation along with those who still consider themselves part of a religious tradition but are disaffected from that tradition.⁸ This growing group levels five basic critiques at organized religion.

1. Religious people are hypocritical, judgmental and insincere.
2. Religions are partly true, but none are completely true.
3. Religious organizations are too focused on rules, not spirituality.
4. Religious leaders want money and power.
5. Religious people are anti-science.

This critique is based on the premise that organized religion does not fit or cannot be reconciled with how life is actually experienced. In post-modernity, if religious dogma or the proscribed practices of a religious group cannot be reconciled with experience, then the claims of that religious groups are suspect. At one time religious beliefs may have played a more significant role in determining the validity (even the actuality) of experience, but for an ever larger group of Americans that time is past. Now, there are no “facts” only claims. Claims, particularly religious claims, are subject to the test of experience.

The philosopher John Caputo noted:⁹

Religious discourses are not “verified” like propositions, by finding a fact of the matter out there with which the proposition makes a snug fit, but rather the event they harbor is “testified” to in experience by being borne out or confirmed in our lives. They give interpretive life and breath to an event, to something that is alive within our sacred names, something going on within us. The truth of a religious discourse is whether a living tradition forms around it; reality testifies to its rationality. By their fruits you shall know them. A religious discourse discloses or illuminates something about the event, about being born and dying, making love and giving birth, having hope and being filled with despair, being lifted up with joy or weighed down by suffering.

It is precisely this kind of experience that ELCA pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber held up in her autobiographical address at the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. She begins by describing how she came to leave the religious tradition of her family. The decision was, in part, based on her inability to reconcile that tradition with her own experience. “[The Christians I grew up with] weren’t interested in having my flavor in their gumbo. I didn’t fit.... Who I was didn’t make sense, so I left that church”. She continues to describe how she became a Lutheran. Part of her transformation was relational but equally important was finding a religious tradition with a language that could more adequately express what she knew to be true experientially about her own experience.

When I left... I hated Christianity. I hated it. I hated the smallness. I hated the fact we had to reject everyone who wasn’t just like us. I hated the narrow mindedness.... That was the only form of Christianity I knew existed and I didn’t like it....

⁸ See the work cited above by the Pew Religious Form and Kosmin and Ariela Keysar.

⁹ John Caputo: *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006, p. 118.

Then this thing happened.... I was on this path toward destroying myself and it was like God reached down and plucked me up and said “that’s adorable but I’m going to put you over here now”. Now I know what that is.... It is the grace of God. At that point, I didn’t have that language for it. All I knew was I didn’t earn it and I just tried to live in response to that gift....

At that time I was trying to be a Unitarian because I didn’t like Christians.... [But] Unitarians have this really high opinion of humanity...like all the good is within us, that we are kind of like, equal to God.... I just thought, it is kind of dark in here—in my heart [it is] kind of dark and it made me suspicious that maybe they didn’t read the paper.... I just don’t really think we are, maybe, that good. So I tried to be a Unitarian but I couldn’t pull it off.

*[At a Lutheran church I went to an adult confirmation class.] What I learned in the confirmation class was that God’s grace is a gift that is freely given. We don’t earn it. We just try to live in response to it.... Nobody is climbing the spiritual ladder.... Nobody is getting better and better and better. God is always coming to us and makes us new and then makes us new again and again.... We don’t make our way to God. We are all simultaneously saints and sinners, 100 percent of both all the time. I thought, I have an enormous capacity for destruction, but I have an enormous capacity for kindness too and finally, someone explained that to me. **I am a Lutheran because your people are the first people in my life to give me language for what I experienced to be true....** It changed my life. I felt a call to give to other people what I had been given.*

Here is what you need to know about the thing you have—this Lutheran liturgy, Lutheran theology, this whole tradition.... It is a feast and it is a feast to be shared and I’m here to tell you that people are hungry and you have a feast entrusted to you and they are ready for it. (Emphasis mine.)

It is not without reason that Pastor Bolz-Weber’s autobiographical description bears considerable resemblance to Luther’s own description of his Tower Experience 500 years ago. Luther too was in the midst of leaving his religious tradition behind. Luther compared what he was taught to what he actually experienced. In this foundational way, Lutheran theology was, from the beginning, modern and because of this, it holds up today under intense scrutiny. In an age of skepticism and relativism, Lutheran theology discloses or illuminates something true, “true” because it is common to human experience, at least to those who are intent on embracing the truth about themselves. Put differently, Lutheranism, as Pastor Bolz-Weber so clearly articulates, makes sense to those who are not easily deceived about themselves. It speaks to people who know their own complexity and the complexity of life. Luther wrote:¹⁰

Meanwhile in that same year I had begun interpreting the Psalms once again. I felt confident that I was now more experienced, since I had dealt in university courses with St. Paul’s Letters to the Romans, to the Galatians, and the Letter to the Hebrews. I had conceived a burning desire to understand what Paul meant in his Letter to the Romans, but thus far there had stood in my way, not the cold blood around my heart, but that one word which is in chapter one: “The justice of

¹⁰ This translation was made by Bro. Andrew Thornton, OSB, for the Saint Anselm College Humanities Program. It is distributed by Project Wittenberg with the permission of the author. (c) 1983 by Saint Anselm Abbey.

God is revealed in it." I hated that word, "justice" of God, which, by the use and custom of all my teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically as referring to formal or active justice, as they call it, i.e., that justice by which God is just and by which he punishes sinners and the unjust.

But I, blameless monk that I was, felt that before God I was a sinner with an extremely troubled conscience. I couldn't be sure that God was appeased by my satisfaction. I did not love, no, rather I hated the just God who punishes sinners. In silence, if I did not blaspheme, then certainly I grumbled vehemently and got angry at God. I said, "Isn't it enough that we miserable sinners, lost for all eternity because of original sin, are oppressed by every kind of calamity through the Ten Commandments? Why does God heap sorrow upon sorrow through the Gospel and through the Gospel threaten us with his justice and his wrath?" This was how I was raging with a wild and disturbed conscience. I constantly badgered St. Paul about that spot in Romans 1 and anxiously wanted to know what he meant.

I meditated night and day on those words until at last, by the mercy of God, I paid attention to their context: "The justice of God is revealed in it, as it is written: 'The just person lives by faith.'" I began to understand that in this verse the justice of God is that by which the just person lives by a gift of God, that is by faith. I began to understand that this verse means that the justice of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive justice, i.e. that by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: "The just person lives by faith." All at once I felt that I had been born again and entered into paradise itself through open gates. Immediately I saw the whole of Scripture in a different light. I ran through the Scriptures from memory and found that other terms had analogous meanings, e.g., the work of God, that is, what God works in us; the power of God, by which he makes us powerful; the wisdom of God, by which he makes us wise; the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

It is with this understanding of God and God's action that Lutherans can confidently claim to know the truth—a truth that is confirmed in the experience of daily life. It is also in this context that Lutherans can confidently respond to the most modern critiques of religious faith.

1. Religious people are hypocritical, judgmental, and insincere. As Lutherans we believe this is true by virtue of the law. We struggle with the fact that we remain sinners—imperfect human beings, but we are equally confident that in the promises of God we become saints—that we can be given to our neighbors as a gift as Christ was given to us—freely and without obligation. Put more straightforwardly, because of the power of the law, Lutherans believe that claiming not to be a hypocrite is downright hypocritical.
2. Religions may be partly true, but none are completely true. As Lutherans we keep our truth claims to a minimum. We know life is messy and salvation is God's work and God will accomplish it.
3. Religions are too focused on rules particularly with regard to homosexuality, abortion, birth control, cohabitation, divorce and remarriage. As Lutherans we believe what Luther taught “that the gospel is really not a book of laws and commandments which requires deeds of use, but a book of divine promises in which God promises, offers, and gives us all his possessions and benefits in Christ.”
4. Religious leaders and institutions want money and power, not truth. This is a strong critique that we must accept with the utmost seriousness. It is a critique that is part of the Lutheran tradition. If this were not true, there would have been no Lutheran church and if it is true of us as Lutherans, there should be another reforming movement.

5. Religious people reject science in favor of superstition. As Lutherans we have no quarrel with science. We take the biblical text very seriously, but we are not obligated to take it literally.

ELCA Lutherans in Missional Context

Despite the growth in the U.S. population and the missional appeal of ELCA Lutheran theology, this church has declined in membership over the last 40 years. The church has simply failed to adjust to the following changes in the society and culture.

The End of Suburbanization

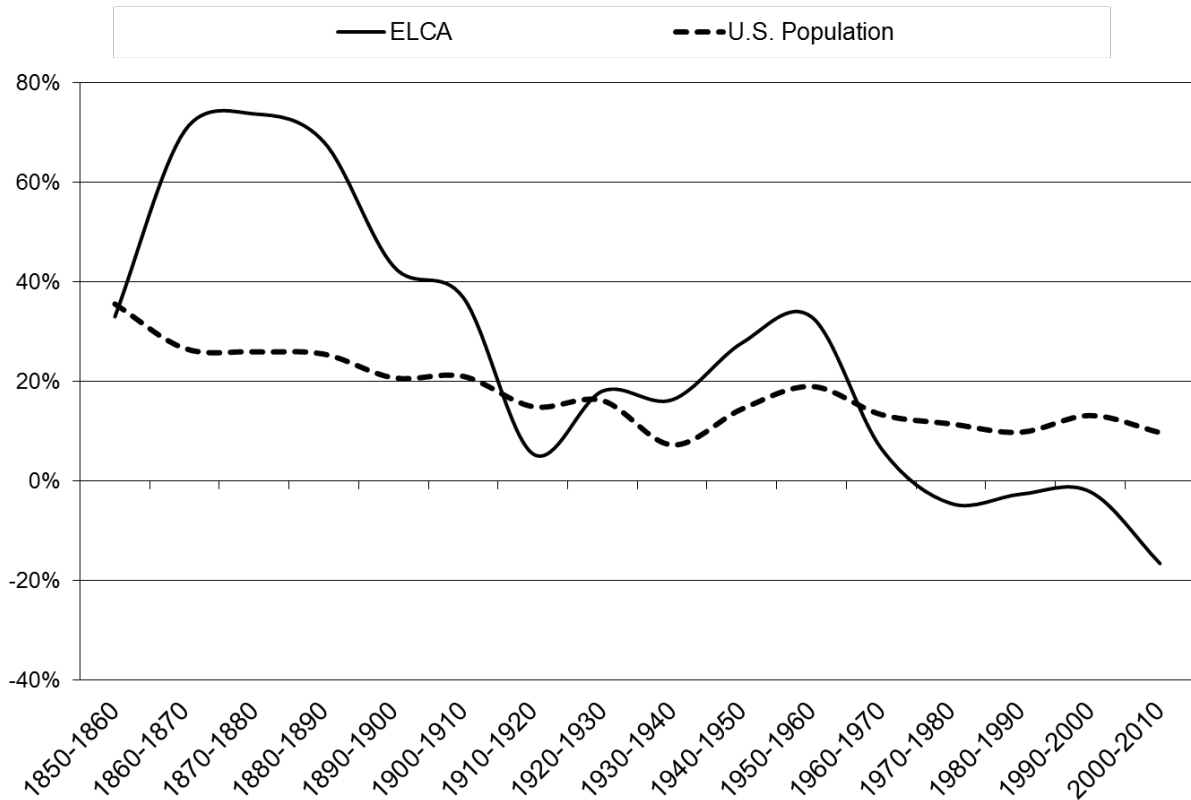
The first growth wave for Lutherans in the United States stretched through the last half of the 19th Century (see Figure 2). It was the golden era of American agriculture. Agriculture was labor intensive. It took place on a large number of small, diversified farms in rural areas where more than half of the United States population lived.¹¹ In 1900, 40 percent of the workforce was employed in agriculture. Those days are gone, but there are still many, many ELCA congregations spread out across the rural countryside. In 2010, agriculture was concentrated on a small number of large, specialized farms where less than a fourth of the U.S. population lives. In 2010, about 2 to 3 percent of the U.S. workforce was employed in agriculture.

The second growth wave for Lutherans came after World War II as part of the development of suburbs. After the war, millions of servicemen returned home. Thousands who had served were entitled to education benefits under the G.I. Bill and housing benefits under the Veterans Administration (VA) and Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Those who went to college created a new professional class in the United States, and those veterans who chose vocational education gained skills for which many were well paid. Household incomes climbed and people could start new families. They needed housing and transportation. Suburbs provided the housing and by 1951 Americans were buying a record 5 million automobiles a year.¹²

¹¹ Dimitri, Carolyn and Anne Effland and Neilson Conlin, The 20th Century Transformation of U.S. Agriculture and Farm Policy, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Economic Information Bulletin Number 3, 2005.

¹² Ward's Automotive Yearbooks, North American Auto Production, 1951 to 2012, March, 2013.

Figure 2: Growth Rates for the ELCA and the United States Population by Decade



But, by 1970, suburban expansion slowed and more importantly, the birth rate (the number of live births per 1000 population) began to decline. Birth rates seem inevitably tied to income. When income goes up, there is a lag and then birth rates start to fall. In 1955, the birth rate was 25.0 live births per 1000 population. By 1970, it had dropped to 18.4 and in 2010, the birth rate was 13.0.¹³ The membership decline of the ELCA, and the quickly slowing number of new ministry starts, occurs precisely in step with the declining birth rate.

Changing Households

New ministries in the ELCA during the suburban expansion depended upon stable two-parent households, anchored in a community and committed to raising children. These households bolstered the Sunday school and vacation Bible school attendance of Lutheran congregations. In 1970, there were 1,519,833 Sunday school pupils and 649,624 vacation Bible school pupils in the predecessor churches of the ELCA. By the time of the merger in 1988, Sunday school attendance had fallen to 1,013,312 and vacation Bible school attendance to 384,635. In 2010, Sunday school attendance was at 400,375 and vacation Bible school attendance was 254,931.

¹³ National Center for Health Statistics

Stable, two-parent households, anchored in communities and committed to raising children still exist, but there are far fewer of them. The average size of a household in 2010 was 2.55 persons down from 3.67 in 1948. This is largely because of the growth in one-person households which now account for 27 percent of all households. Ten percent of these single person householders are headed by an adult who is 75 or older. This compares to 26 percent of single-person households headed by a person 30 to 44 years old.

The Exodus of Young Adults

The membership of the ELCA as a whole is considerably older than the general population. The median age of those 15 to 99 in the ELCA is 58.¹⁴ For the United States, the median age of those 15 to 99 is 39. The membership of the ELCA over represents the age of the population in every category over 50 and under represents the population in every category under 50. The largest differential is for those aged 20 to 44. About a third of the United States population is between the ages of 20 to 44, compared to about a fifth of the active members of the ELCA.

One-third of those 18 to 29 say they attend worship services at least weekly compared to 40 percent of those 50 to 64 and 53 percent of those 65 and over.¹⁵ Also, it is well established these survey-based reports of church attendance over estimate actual attendance by nearly 20 percentage points.¹⁶ Finally, forty-five percent of those 18 to 29 say religion is very important in their lives compared to 59 percent of those 50 to 64 and 69 percent of those 65 and over.

At the very least, these numbers challenge the future of many ELCA Lutheran churches in significant ways. Christian Smith's work on the religious and spiritual lives of young adults, describes in complexity of these challenges.¹⁷

Not all emerging adults think about religion in the same way, but there definitely is a dominant outlook when it comes to religion. Most emerging adults are okay with talking about religion as a topic, although they are largely indifferent to it—religion is just not that important to most of them. So for the most part, they do not end up talking much about religion in their lives. To whatever extent they do talk about it, most of them think that most religions share the same core principles, which they generally believe are good. But the particularities of any given religion are peripheral trappings that can be more or less ignored. The best thing about religion is that it helps people to be good, to make good choices, to behave well. For this reason, it can be a good thing for children to be raised in a religious congregation, since they need to be taught the basics of morality. At the same time, once youth learn what it means to be good, there is no real need to continue being involved in a religious congregation. The time comes to “graduate” and move on. Some emerging adults do of course continue to be part of congregations, but few name them as important places of social belonging. Furthermore, among emerging adults, religious beliefs do not seem to be important, action-driving commitments, but rather mental assents to ideas that have few obvious consequences. What actually do have the power and authority to drive life instead are the feelings and inclinations of the emerging adults themselves. They as individuals can determine what is right, worthy, and important. So they choose from religion to take or leave what they want. At the same time, the personal outlooks of most emerging adults are highly

¹⁴ This age estimate is based on surveys and those under 15 typically do not complete these questionnaires.

¹⁵ *Religion among the Millennials*, Pew Research Center, February 2010.

¹⁶ C. Kirk Hadaway and Penny Long Marler, “How Many Americans Attend Worship Each Week? An Alternative Approach to Measurement”. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, September, 2005.

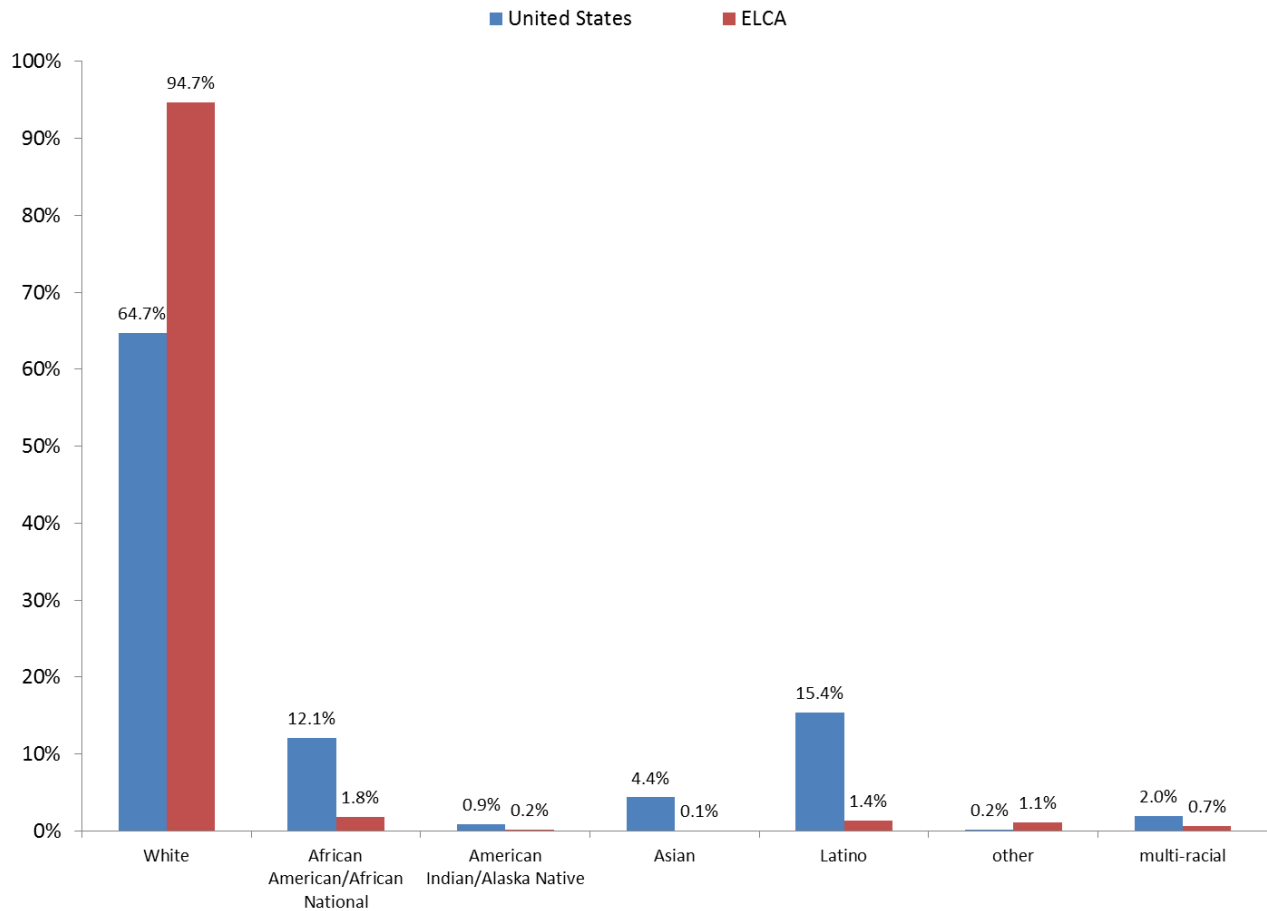
¹⁷ Christian Smith with Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*, New York: Oxford, 2009, p. 286

qualified—sometimes even paralyzed—by their awareness of the relativity of their own cultural and social locations. The latter tend to undercut any confidence they might have in the possibility of holding true beliefs, rendering valid judgments, making worthy commitments.... Best, then, they suppose, to remain tentative, to keep options open, to not get too committed, to push dealing with religious matters off to some future date when through marriage and parenting it becomes more practically important.

The Diversity of Contemporary Society

Among the most significant changes impacting the ELCA is the growing diversity of the U.S. In 1950, 90 percent of the U.S. population was White. In 2010, 65 percent of the U.S. population was White. Between 1950 and 2010, the Latino population has grown from about 2 percent of the total population to 15 percent of the total population. Despite the commitment of those who founded the ELCA to increasing the racial/ethnic diversity of ELCA congregations, progress has been slow. Figure 3 shows the comparison of the ELCA to the United States population. The suburban expansion after World War II was predominantly White as was the growth in nearly all the new ministries begun through the 1970s. Most recently, the ELCA has focused on starting new ministries that are ethnic-specific or multicultural. These new ministries have taken longer to develop, but they have very slowly impacted the overall racial/ethnic make-up of this church.

Figure 3: The Racial/Ethnic Composition of the United States Compared to the Active Participants in the ELCA, 2010



A Middle-Class Church

Based on household income figures collected in 2008, the median household income of a typical worship attendee in the ELCA is about \$50,000, which was very close to the median income of the White population of the U.S. in 2008. The median household income for African Americans was about \$37,000 in 2008 and for Latinos it was about \$42,000.

The Challenge of Lutheran Evangelism

One reason this church has not grown is the lack of attention on the part of its members (lay and clergy) to outreach. As part of the *U.S. Congregational Life survey* in 2008, a random sample of worship attendees were asked if they regularly take part in activities that reach out to the wider community such as visitation, evangelism, community service and social justice. Seventeen percent of ELCA members said they regularly take part in evangelism or outreach activities and 29 percent said they were regularly involved in community service, social justice, or advocacy activities. This compares to 29 percent of Southern Baptist respondents who said they were regularly involved in evangelism or outreach activities and 23 percent that said they were regularly involved in community service, social justice, or advocacy activities.

When asked what aspects of their congregation they find most valuable (up to three options could be selected), 13 percent of ELCA members selected reaching out to those who do not attend church as one of the options. This compares to 31 percent of the Southern Baptist respondents.

As part of a survey for the Living into the Future Task Force (LIFT) completed in 2010, 25 percent of lay leaders in the ELCA “strongly agreed” with the statement “the world needs the message that ELCA Lutherans bring”. This compares to 56 percent of the clergy. Sixteen percent of the lay leaders and 13 percent of the clergy “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with the statement.

When asked on the LIFT survey if there were anything unique about ELCA Lutherans which distinguished them from other Christians, 34 percent of the lay leaders responded “yes”, 33 percent responded “no” and 33 percent responded “not sure”. On the other hand, 86 percent of the clergy responded “yes”. This discrepancy between lay leaders and clergy points to a significant breakdown of teaching in the ELCA.

Finally, when asked to describe the top priorities for congregations, the lay leader respondents to the LIFT survey ranked sharing the good news of the Gospel with the unchurched fifth, behind the following:

1. ensure worship provides a meaningful experience of God
2. ensure that children and youth receive Christian education
3. ensure that adults continue to grow in knowledge and faith
4. provide charity and service to people in need

Little has changed with regard to evangelism in the ELCA in the past 20 years. Here is the summary of the evaluation report of the ELCA’s 1991 Evangelism Strategy.¹⁸

Has the church made progress that it can celebrate? We began this review with reference to the enormous amount of work that has taken place under complex and difficult circumstances. At the same time, we maintain that the preponderance of the evidence suggests that the ELCA has not yet made significant progress in changing the culture of the church with regard to evangelism and, as a result, the evangelism strategy has not achieved its intended purpose. We believe that achieving significant progress will take renewed vision and commitment in addition to the discovery of new methods and

¹⁸ *An Evaluation of the 1991 Evangelism Strategy*, Kenneth W. Inskeep, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, October 3, 2000.

approaches. In terms of vision, the church seems to be caught between the church growth successes of conservative evangelical and fundamentalists and the legacy of the state church. As a reformation church, Lutherans must find another, more creative way—a way to grow that can capture the imagination of the majority of the ELCA members (or at least a very substantial minority.) If it does not, the ELCA will be unable to fulfill its call and make the kind of religious contribution that is so sorely needed in America—piety without condemnation or judgment. In terms of commitment, the ELCA must focus its efforts on educating leaders with this unique, Lutheran vision of church growth and then it must find the means to support them to the best of its ability. Finally, we must find new methods. Our existing repertoire shows only a limited and short-term impact. If we can do all that, with the help of God, we will indeed have something to celebrate.

SECTION 2

New Ministry Development in the ELCA

The churchwide organization of the ELCA, through CSM, is responsible for working with synods and existing congregations to "create and revitalize congregations".¹⁹

Proposals for new ministries are submitted to CSM through its Directors for Evangelical Mission (DEMs). Each proposal is evaluated and approved (or disapproved) by a Review Table. Bishops from each region of the ELCA, along with churchwide staff (including a core group of DEMs), comprise the Review Table. The approval of proposals is contingent on the demographic characteristics of the site, evidence of a clear vision for the new ministry, identifiable outcomes, the commitment of a synod to the development, support from nearby ELCA congregations, and consultation with ecumenical partners. In the case of ethnic-specific ministries, consultation also takes place with the ethnic ministries directors of CSM. Approval, however, does not mean work in a site begins immediately. Actual development is dependent upon the alignment of key factors including finding a suitable mission developer and arranging for additional funding. Upon approval, CSM reserves funding but the amount from CSM is seldom enough to cover the salary of a developer or other startup costs. As a result, additional financial support must be committed from other sources including synods and congregations.

On the one hand, some are dissatisfied with the amount of documentation needed for a new ministry proposal and the staff responsible for the Review Table is sensitive to this concern. On the other hand, those presenting proposals are often asking for a commitment of thousands of dollars and the churchwide organization is also subject to the accusation that it is not careful enough in its stewardship. The resolution from the Southwest California Synod (to which this report is a response) is a clear example of the level of concern.

The Data

The data analysis shows the ELCA has increased the number of ministries coming under development and there is pressure to continue to do so.²⁰ The pool of new ministries has also increased, however, because new ministries are taking longer to become self-sufficient. This means there is a growing pool of ministries which, because of their increasing size (along with declining churchwide resources), may become even more difficult to support financially, manage administratively and monitor appropriately.

A report on new ministries in the ELCA (covering 1995 to 2005) was completed in 2007 and at that time, the data available for analysis was in need of significant improvement. Since 2007, considerable progress has been made, but some records continue to be incomplete (lacking reports of worship attendance, for example). Despite this, it is possible to construct a reliable overview of the progress of many new ministries in the ELCA. This report covers the time period of 2006 to the present, with primary focus on the years 2006 to 2009. These ministries have been under development long enough to have a substantive record.

New Ministries

From 2006 to the present, 481 new ministries have been under development. Between 1995 and 2006, 394 new ministries were under development, so the pool of new ministries under development has increased. In any particular year, work at a site may begin, begin again, continue or come to an end.

¹⁹ *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, 16.12.A10.

²⁰ The goal for new ministry development in the *ELCA Churchwide Operational Plan 2011-2013* is 75 new ministries per year.

Work at a site ends either because a ministry is closed due to insufficient progress or because the ministry has been received as an organized congregation by a synod in the ELCA.

Success or Failure

There are no widely shared or accepted criteria for assessing the success or failure of a new ministry.²¹ Stetzer and Bird note that undocumented statistics for church-plant failures are widely reprinted "such as those indicating an 80 percent failure rate for new church plants" but these figures "seem to have no basis in actual research". The problem with establishing a failure rate has to do with the number of new ministries that continue under development before or after any specified time period. If work has begun in a site and continues, a chance of success remains even if the work has continued for years without transitioning to a self-sufficient, organized congregation. There are alternatives, however, to calculating a failure rate, which are described below.

Conversion Rates

One approach is to calculate a conversion rate for new ministries. There are two similar variations of this approach.

The first variation is to calculate a conversion rate for an entire pool of new ministry starts. For this study, the pool includes 481 ministries which were under development at one time or another between 2006 and the present. At this point, 66 percent (N=318) of this pool remains under development, while 11 percent (N=54) have officially organized as congregations. Twenty-three percent (N=109) of the ministries in the pool have closed. Based on this approach, the rate of conversion for new ministries to organized congregations is just over 10 percent.

A second variation is to focus on the proportion of ministries being closed or organized each year as a percent of the sites added each year. These data are presented in Table 2 and Figure 4. For example, in 2006, a total of 38 new ministries came under development, while 19 were closed and 11 were organized as congregations. These yearly figures are then summed and a percent is calculated for the whole time period. Based on this approach, the ELCA typically begins work each year on 43 new ministries while it closes 15 (36%) and receives eight (18%). Based on this approach, the conversion rate is just under 20 percent.

Table 2: Ministries Received and Closed as a Percent of Ministries Coming Under Development by Year

year	new sites added	closed		organized	
		%	N	%	N
2006	38	50%	19	29%	11
2007	58	17%	10	19%	11
2008	30	27%	8	20%	6
2009	33	33%	11	9%	3
2010	55	55%	30	16%	9
2011	50	38%	19	16%	8
2012	38	32%	12	16%	6
	302	36%	109	18%	54

²¹ These two reports are somewhat helpful: 1. Ed Stetzer and Phillip Connor, "Church Plant Survivability and Health", the Center for Missional Research, North American Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, 2007 and 2. Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, "The State of Church Planting in the United States: Research Overview and Qualitative Study of Primary Church Planting Entities" LifeWay Research (Southern Baptist Convention), 2009, p.4.

Figure 4: The Number of Sites Coming Under Development, Closed, and Received Each Year since 2006

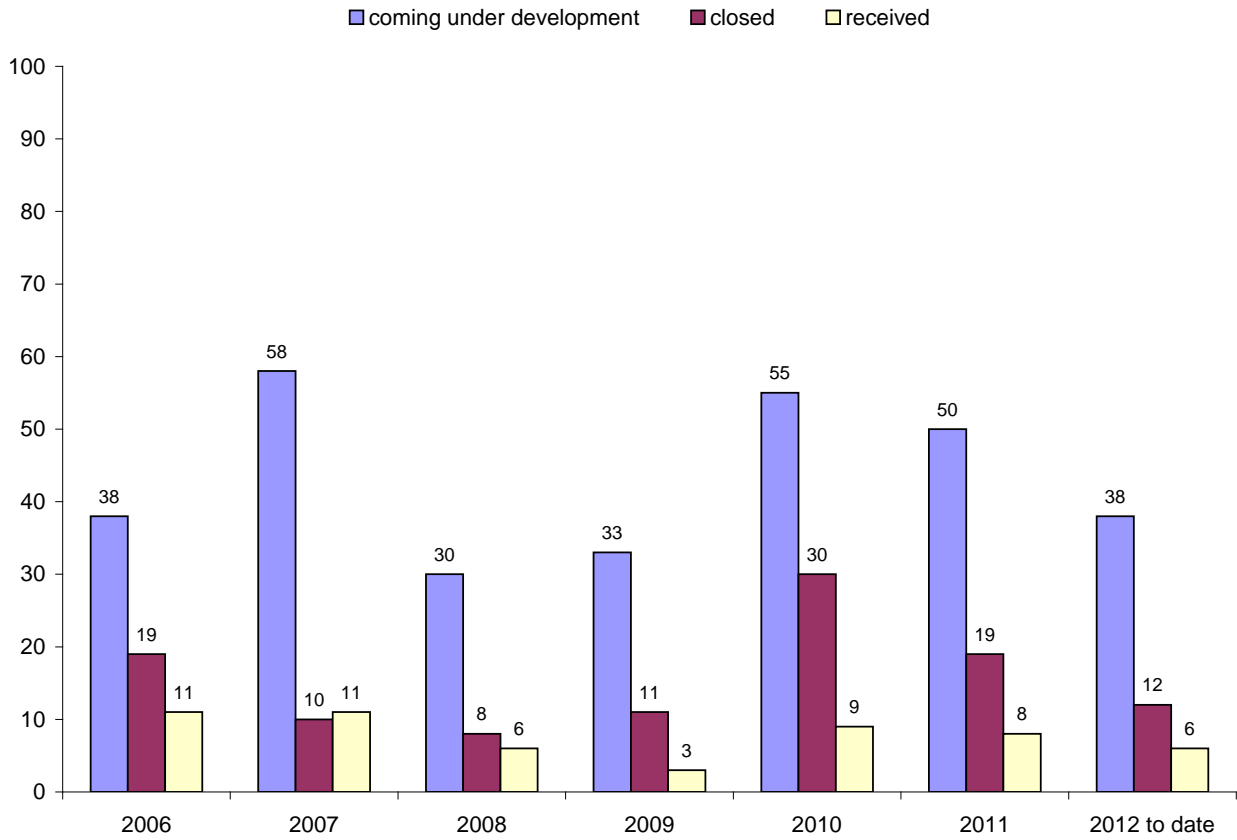


Table 3 presents a comprehensive view of the activity of the pool of 481 ministries. As of January 1, 2006, there were 179 ministries already under development. In 2006, 38 new sites were added, 19 ministries were closed and 11 were organized as congregations. Given the ratio of sites added to closures/organizations, the size of the pool under development increased by 8 in 2006. Table 3 shows a significant increase in the pool between 2006 and 2012—an increase of 78 percent.

Table 3: Changes in the Size of the Pool of Ministries Under Development by Year

year	pool under development	new sites added	closed	organized	change in the size of the pool		ratio new to closed or organized
					net	cumulative	
2006	179	38	19	11	8	8	1.27
2007	187	58	10	11	37	45	2.76
2008	224	30	8	6	16	61	2.14
2009	240	33	11	3	19	80	2.36
2010	259	55	30	9	16	96	1.41
2011	275	50	19	8	23	119	1.85
2012	298	38	12	6	20	139	2.11
present	318	302	109	54			1.85

Self-sufficiency in Four Years

A second approach to gauging success, which is taken by Stetzer and Bird (2009), is to focus on sites 4 years after a start date.²² Stetzer and Bird expect congregations to be self-sufficient in 4 years and they report "around 68 percent of church plants still exist 4 years after having been started". For the ELCA, 253 (84%) of the 300 ministries begun before September 2008 continue to exist. On the other hand, the median time under development for ministries that have been organized as congregations is 7.4 years, which suggests it takes considerably longer than 4 years for new ministries in the ELCA to become self-sufficient.

Worship Attendance in Four Years

A third approach to gauging success is to set a standard based on worship attendance. The common standard is an average of 70 in worship at 48 months.²³ Olson notes "reaching a critical mass of more than 70 in attendance has proven crucial for new churches. Once they reach this benchmark, new churches find that growth comes more easily".

Worship attendance data exist for 190 of the 300 ELCA's new ministries under development before September 2008. The average worship attendance for these new sites is 72 after 48 months. For the ministries included in their review, Stetzer and Bird report average worship attendance of 84 after 48 months. The average for the ELCA is significantly inflated by the success of a few rapidly growing new starts. (This is also likely the case for the Stetzer and Bird figure.) The median number of worship attendees after 48 months for ELCA ministries is 50. That means half of the ELCA ministries are worshipping fewer than 50 people after 48 months. Twenty-eight percent have reached 70 or more in attendance after 48 months.

To make steady progress, a new ministry needs to add about 18 in worship per year and about 27 percent of new ministries are doing so. Figure 5 shows the percent of new ministries growing by 18 in worship by region. Nearly half the new ministries in Region 3 are growing by 18 in worship per year followed by 41 percent of the new ministries in Region 5. In Regions 3 and 5, two factors come together. First, there are a significant number of Lutherans in both these regions and there is a moderately strong correlation ($r=.50$) between new ministry growth and the number of Lutherans in the territory served by a

²² The 2007 review by Stetzer and Connor included the following groups: Southern Baptists, Sovereign Grace Ministries, Baptist General Conference, General Baptists, Wesleyan, New Thing Network, Assemblies of God, Evangelical Free Church, Foursquare Gospel, Christian Church, and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. It is less clear who participated in the 2009 study by Stetzer and Bird. They (2009:1) mention 200 church-planting churches and 45 church planting networks.

²³ David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2008, p. 150.

new ministry. Second, these regions continue to have moderate levels of population growth. The rate of growth for new ministries in other regions is slower (with several predominantly Latino ministries being an exception). This is because one of the two factors is missing. In Regions 6, 7, and 8 (with the exception of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod), the proportion of Lutherans in the population is significant but the population itself is growing slowly or not at all. In Regions 1, 2, and 9, the population growth is significant, but the proportion of Lutherans in the population is low.

Figure 5: Percent of Ministries Growing by 18 or more Worship Attendees Per Year by Region (Based on the 300 New Ministries Begun before September 2008)

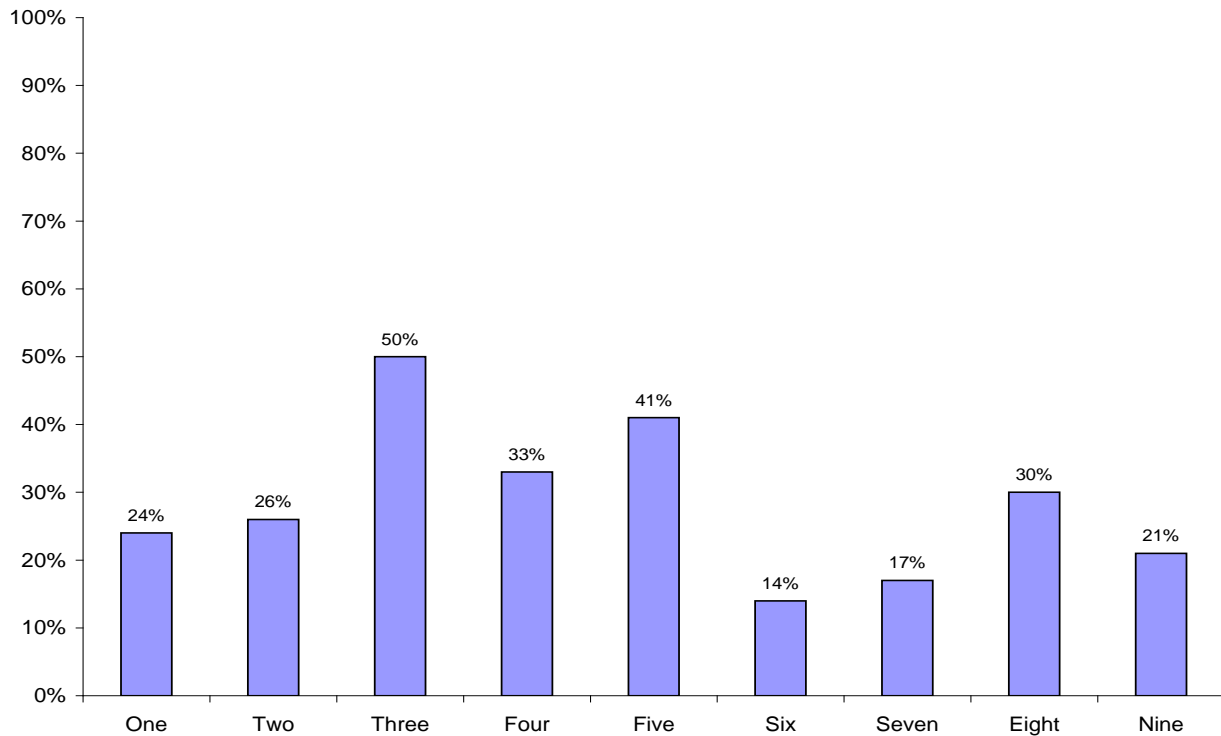


Table 4 shows the percent of new ministries with a gain of 18 or more per year in worship by the predominant racial/ethnic make-up of the congregations. The percent of African National (33%) and Latino (34%) ministries that are gaining 18 or more in worship is very close to the percent of predominantly white congregations (34%). Gains in predominantly white ministries account for 51 percent of all gains, followed by Latino ministries with 27 percent of the total gains.

**Table 4: Gains in Worship Attendance for the 300 Ministries
 Under Development since September 2008**

	% at 18 yearly gain	total gain	% of all gains
African American/Black	20%	481	3%
African National	33%	1,630	9%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%	190	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7%	1,102	6%
White	34%	9,012	51%
Latino	34%	4,687	27%
Multi-racial	11%	518	3%
		17,620	100%

Summary of the Success of New Ministry Starts

There are no widely shared or accepted criteria for assessing the success or failure of a new ministry. The problem with establishing a failure rate has to do with the number of new ministries that continue under development before or after any specified time period. One approach is to calculate a conversion rate which compares the number of places new ministry work is begun each year and to that of the number of ministries that become organized congregations. Based on this approach, the conversion rate for ELCA new ministries is just under 20 percent.

A second approach is to focus on the number of congregations which are self-sufficient in four years. The median time under development for ministries in the ELCA which have been organized as congregations is 7.4 years, which suggests it takes considerably longer than four years for new ministries in the ELCA to become self-sufficient.

A third approach is to set a standard based on worship attendance. The common standard is an average of 70 in worship at 48 months. Twenty-eight percent of new ministries in the ELCA have reached 70 or more in attendance after 48 months.

Finally, the *2003 ELCA Evangelism Strategy*, adopted by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly, called for a pattern of starting 200 new congregations a year by 2010. If this is the criteria of success, then the efforts of the whole church (congregations, synods and the churchwide organization) have fallen far short.

The one place there is some limited progress is with ethnic-specific ministries, but it is slow and pushed primarily by the churchwide organization.

There is no evidence we are aware of which shows other denominations or religious groups to be consistently more successful than the ELCA in starting new ministries. At the same time, the failure rate is substantial and of concern. The rate demands a new and wider discussion about the future direction of evangelism and outreach in this church. This church cannot rely on new ministries as its primary evangelism strategy. This is true despite the fact there is ample opportunity for new ministry development and, as noted earlier in this review, ELCA Lutherans have a theological point of view with considerable potential in the wider culture.²⁴

²⁴ The inclusion of new congregations in the ELCA's 25th Anniversary Campaign makes a conversation about the future even more important. Again, there are many, many places across the United States and the Caribbean where there is little Lutheran presence and those communities deserve attention. The material for *Congregations* in the Campaign is well-designed precisely because it emphasizes the distinct contribution Lutherans can make. It notes "today, many Americans are facing life's challenges without hearing words of God's love and forgiveness" and our goal is to invite others to hear the good news. We simply need to do this "inviting" with more regular success.

Contributing to the Conversation on the Role of New Ministry Development in this Church

Why does the ELCA do new ministry development work? We began this report with the premise that the basis for all Christian mission is God’s desire to bless and save the world, and Lutherans are called to invite and encourage people to come to faith in God and to understand the power of the Gospel in their lives. Lutherans believe that the goodness of God sets us free and through this freedom—this confidence in the goodness of God—people become happy, secure and content. When Lutherans give themselves in service to the neighbor, lives are changed and communities are restored. The belief is the church should expect to grow as people hear the Gospel and encounter its power. This growth can be accomplished in many ways and primarily through the work of existing congregations and members, through synods and through the churchwide organization. What is the appropriate place of new ministry development? How important is it?

The Organized Congregations

When it comes to membership growth, the new ministries organized in the ELCA play an important but small part. The ELCA has organized 54 new congregations since 2006 as a result of its development efforts. These 54 congregations account for less than 1 percent of the congregations in the ELCA and they have a total worship attendance of about 7,500. This is less than 1 percent of those worshipping in the ELCA on a typical Sunday.

Table 5 shows the distribution of the active participants in the newly organized congregations by race/ethnicity (N=50).²⁵ The table shows some progress toward diversity. Five percent of the participants in ELCA congregations are people of color or language other than English, compared to 22 percent of those in these newly organized congregations. On the other hand, these congregations account for less than 1 percent of the active participants in the ELCA.

Table 5: Active Participants in the Newly Organized ELCA Congregations

	Active Participants	Percent
African American	369	3.4%
African National	222	2.1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	131	1.2%
Arab/Middle Eastern	4	0.0%
Asian	181	1.7%
Multi-ethnic	115	1.1%
Caucasian	8,426	78.3%
Other	59	0.5%
Latino	1,253	11.6%
Total	10,760	100.0%

Growth as an Outcome

Many of those who write about starting new congregations are adamant about their importance to the growth of denominations and, over the years, these advocates have created a popular, pro-new start apology. (See, for example, Stetzer and Bird, 2009 or Olson, 2008.) The apology maintains a strong commitment to church planting is central to the growth of religious groups. Olson (2008) argues that the growth or decline of a religious group is a direct result of starting new congregations. He (2008:146)

²⁵ Data was collected on active participants beginning in 2009. Data was available for 50 of the 54 newly organized congregations.

writes (with emphasis): "every group with less than a 1 percent planting rate—less than one new church for every 100 established churches—is declining numerically in attendance". This point positions new ministries as a primary causal factor in growth, but there are other key sources of growth and other possible alternatives for denominations.

First, taken as a whole, new ministries do play a role. Table 6 shows the growth rate between 2006 and 2011 of all ELCA congregations by their year of origin. The congregations established before 2000 declined by about 13 percent, while the congregations established after 2001 increased by 74 percent. These figures, however, are heavily influenced by the numerical decline in the vast majority of older congregations. But not all the older congregations declined. For example, about 18 percent of the congregations established before 2000 experienced an increase in worship attendance between 2006 and 2011. Together, the growing congregations, no matter when they were founded, added 49,780 new worship attendees between 2006 and 2011. Of this total, the growing, pre-2000 congregations contributed 83 percent compared to 17 percent for the growing congregations established after 2001. The average contribution per congregation is certainly higher for newer congregations, so congregations established after 2000 are important to the growth of the ELCA, but the vast majority of growth is produced by older congregations. There are areas of the country where the ELCA should sponsor new ministries but a churchwide strategy focused on maximizing growth as an outcome might allocate its resources differently. For example, providing additional funding to already growing congregations has shown considerable promise.

Table 6: Sources of Growth with a Focus on Growing Congregations by Year of Origin

the congregation's year of origin	all ELCA congregations		growing congregations		
	growth rate	percent growing	total increase in worship attendance	average per congregation	percent contribution to the whole
before 1900 (N=834)	-14%	19%	16,677	20	34%
1901 to 1950 (N=412)	-14%	17%	7,048	17	14%
1951 to 2000 (N=515)	-12%	19%	17,635	34	35%
2001 to 2011 (N=100)	74%	68%	8,420	84	17%
			49,780		100%

A second issue related to the role of new ministries is more complex both theoretically (the preconditions for starting a new congregation) and strategically (how decisions are made about what to do in developing a new ministry).

Recognizability and the Demand for New Ministries

The apology for new ministries is premised on the idea new ministries **cause** membership growth in denominations. Perhaps instead, new ministries are readily subject to the interaction of larger trends or forces in the wider society. One way to think about this is to hold that starting new congregations is a function of the perceived value of a religion's beliefs and actions in the wider culture. Put differently, if the social recognizability of a religious group is a key factor, then a successful new development is as much a **result** as cause. This would explain how mainline churches during the post-World War II baby boom could successfully start so many new ministries. A cultural milieu characterized by growing nuclear families, upward mobility, and middle-class respectability, created an environment which heightened the recognizability and perceived "fit" of mainline religious groups. Because mainline churches fit well (moderate, circumspect, respectable), mainline religious groups were able to start record numbers of new ministries. In contrast, in the present context, a wide segment of the culture knows little to nothing about mainline churches and particularly ELCA Lutheran churches. This is a significant

dilemma for Lutherans who believe their theology, especially in the current cultural context, has the potential to be highly recognizable.²⁶

Every two years, the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago conducts a random sample national survey. In 2010, they interviewed 4,900 individuals. Table 7 presents the responses to the question, “If you have a religious preference what specific denomination is that, if any?” Twenty-three percent of the sample said they did not have a religious preference and another 23 percent said they were Roman Catholic. Eighteen percent indicated they were Baptist, 11 percent indicated they were part of one of the small denominations not listed on the table. Near the middle of the table is the first grouping of Lutherans which is the 1 percent who said they were Lutheran but did not know which Lutheran group. Then comes the Missouri Synod followed by the ELCA at 0.8 percent. Then, there are nearly as many Lutherans who responded the American Lutheran Church (0.4%) or the Lutheran Church in America (0.3%), neither of which has existed for 25 years. Table 7 suggests two things. First, one should expect people to know little about Lutherans because there are so few of them and second, there are a significant proportion of those who understand themselves as Lutheran who are confused about what kind of Lutheran they happen to be.

Table 7: General Social Survey 2010 Denominational Affiliation of the U.S. Sample

Roman Catholic	22.8%
doesn't apply	22.7%
other specified not listed below	11.1%
nondenominational	9.9%
Baptist, don't know which	8.3%
Southern Baptist	7.1%
United Methodist	4.4%
a specific Baptist group (not including Southern Baptist)	3.0%
Episcopal	1.9%
a specific Presbyterian group	1.4%
Presbyterian, don't know which	1.4%
Lutheran, don't know which	1.1%
Methodist, don't know which	1.1%
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	0.9%
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	0.8%
don't know which denomination	0.4%
American Lutheran Church	0.4%
traditional African American denomination	0.3%
Lutheran Church in America	0.3%
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod	0.3%
other Methodist	0.2%
other Lutheran churches	0.1%

²⁶ For those interested in pursuing this line of thought, a clear statement is Richard Michael Brown’s dissertation, “Missional Renewal Resources for Evangelizing Lutheran Congregations in Postmodern North American Culture” submitted to the faculty of the School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, January, 2013.

The question then becomes what has contributed to these social circumstances for ELCA Lutheranism and what can be done about it? Unless this church can deal with its unrecognizability, starting new congregations will continue to be slow and challenging work.²⁷ We know growing congregations exhibit two specific characteristics. Growing congregations have a widely shared desire to positively engage their local community, and they are willing to change to have an impact. Another way to put this is growing congregations more readily recognize where God is at work, and they want to be part of it and are eager to change to do so. It is this willingness to change, not theologically or in terms of identity but in terms of strategy or methodology, that separates growing congregations from those which are not.

Olson (2009:148) reports church planting rates for the religious groups included in Table 8.²⁸ (These rates are based on data before 2008.) Membership change rates have been added to Table 8 for 2001-2005 and for 2006-2010. These membership change rates show a continued decline in the ability of mainline churches to be recognizable and this makes it very challenging for them to start new ministries. Put differently, when the recognizability rate is so low, it is more difficult, costly, and time consuming to start new ministries because the conditions have first to be created that facilitate their very capacity to be recognizable.

Table 8: Planting Rates and Membership Change Rates by Denominational Group

denominational group	new ministries planting rates (before 2008)	membership change	
		2001 to 2005	2006 to 2010
Assemblies of God	2.2%	7.8%	7.3%
Church of the Nazarene	1.9%	0.0%	3.6%
Episcopal Church	0.3%	-3.7%	-9.4%
Evangelical Covenant Church	2.5%	16.8%	-3.1%
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	0.4%	-4.9%	-10.5%
International Pentecostal Holiness Church	6.2%	44.5%	8.8%
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	0.5%	-3.9%	-5.8%
Presbyterian Church (USA)	0.4%	-10.3%	-10.6%
Reformed Church in America	0.5%	-5.5%	-7.0%
Southern Baptist Convention	1.9%	1.4%	-1.0%
United Methodist Church	0.3%	-2.7%	-5.3%
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod	0.5%	-0.8%	-2.2%

Table 8 also suggests a decline for conservative evangelicals is underway and potentially a pending decline for Pentecostals. The problem for mainline churches is that they are invisible. The problem for conservative evangelicals has become their pervasiveness and the wider culture is perhaps concluding it does not like what it sees. If perception drives the equation, then Stetzer (2011) is mistaken when he argues:²⁹

²⁷ Earlier in this report it was noted that new ministries grow fastest where there are already a significant number of Lutherans and there is at least moderate population growth. This is, at least in part, because where there are Lutherans, the recognizability of Lutheran churches is higher.

²⁸ David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2008, p. 148.

²⁹ Ed Stetzer, "First Person: The State of Church Planting in the SBC, Baptist Press, July 20, 2011. Available at <http://www.bpnews.net/BPFirstPerson.asp?ID=35792>.

So why should everyone in the SBC (Southern Baptist Convention) be concerned about church planting... ? As I mentioned, the Baptist General Conference is planting churches at a much higher rate than Southern Baptists—and guess what?—they have almost doubled the size of their denomination. In case you are wondering, the SBC potentially would have 30 million members right now if we had the same focus.

The point Stetzer neglects is that the demand for Southern Baptist religion in American culture is likely well below 30 million and as a result the SBC rate for new plants has fallen from 1.9 percent in 2008 to just below 1.7 percent in 2010. The decline in the planting rate has not produced the drop in Southern Baptist membership from 16.3 million to 15.9 million. Instead, the SBC may be encountering its cultural saturation point. In other words, there is a limit in the society of those who can or will perceive Southern Baptist religion in a positive light.

Another, but different example is the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC). Among the groups noted by Olson (2008), they have the highest planting rate. On their website they note that their church "is experiencing the favor of God! With His favor, He has given a clear direction and His timing is now".³⁰ The church may well be experiencing the favor of God, and the timing for this church is clearly now. In 2000, there were 35.3 million Latinos in the United States. Estimates for 2015 are 56.3 million or an increase of 59 percent. According to Althoff³¹, religious affiliation among Latinos is very high, and about 28 percent of all Latinos are Pentecostal or charismatic. If this is the case, the number of Latino Pentecostals will have increased by nearly 6 million from 2000 to 2015. This would mean the ability to be recognized for Pentecostal churches is quite high. The International Pentecostal Holiness Church reports that in 2008, 20 percent of their congregations were Latino, but their goal for 2012 is 28 percent or an increase of approximately 300 congregations. Whether this goal is achievable is questionable, but its achievability is considerably more likely given the current demographic and cultural religious trends than if the IHPC were pursuing young, upwardly mobile Caucasians. On the other hand, as the social and economic status of Latinos climbs, Pentecostalism will become less and less viable and the number of new ministry starts in the IPHC will drop accordingly.

A Clearly Defined Goal

What is a realistic and appropriate goal for new start ministries in the ELCA? In a time when everything seems increasingly complex, it is more difficult, but ever more important to be clear. The *2003 Evangelism Strategy* called for new **congregations** and given the language of the section in the report, it is difficult to draw the conclusion that the Task Force had anything in mind but 200 newly organized, Word and Sacrament ministries capable of self-sufficiency including the capacity to call a pastor. In contrast, the *ELCA Churchwide Organizational Operation Plan 2011-2013* sets as one of its objectives the active support of new congregations or **communities of worship**. The objective adds "including helping them become sustainable". The *2003 Evangelism Strategy* refers to "strengthening partnerships" but it leans heavily on the capacity of the churchwide organization to achieve a set of tasks that no other expression of the ELCA is positioned to accomplish including "developing and implementing a comprehensive plan for establishing vital new start congregations", "researching and publicizing alternative funding sources for starting and renewing congregations", and "increasing the purchase of advance church sites". The language of the churchwide *Operational Plan* is considerably more modest with its "active support" and "helping" new ministries to become sustainable. The goal for the *Operational Plan* is not 200 but 75. This modesty reflects the diminishing resources of the churchwide organization. But, perhaps most significantly, the *Operational Plan* does not refer exclusively to new congregations. It adds the category of "communities of worship". Synodically

³⁰ See <http://iphc.org/evangelism>.

³¹ See <http://www.calvin.edu/henry/archives/lectures/althoff.pdf>, p.7.

Authorized Communities of Worship (SAWC) can be many things from the remnant of a former congregation to a seasonal or recreational ministry. SAWCs can also be "an opportunity" to "test the potential of a new development" or a "former ministry under development" which "may not have developed sufficiently for formal organization as a recognized congregation".³² The introduction of the SAWC alternatives, however legitimate, redefines the widely accepted understanding of the goal expressed in the 2003 *Evangelism Strategy*.

This is clearly reflected in the comments about SAWCs made by a DEM.³³

We currently have two SAWCs and have had others that have either moved to CUD (congregation under development) or ceased to exist. We, too have encountered problems when moving from SAWC to CUD. In our experience the most important discernment is on the front end. We have found that we need to trust our initial hunches that led us to want to seek SAWC status, rather than CUD. With SAWCs we are taking advantage of a missional impulse to test Word and Sacrament ministry in a new way that does not fit the categories for our thinking about a "congregation." Or, we are partnering with a group who, for a variety of reasons, would never become sustainable with a called and ordained salaried pastor. Regarding funding, with SAWCs you have a bit more flexibility as to how the funds may be utilized within the ministry, but you have access to less funding. When we have a rather nimble, creative, small ministry seeking some kind of formal expression or blessing, we usually look first to SAWC status.

Perhaps it is time to open up the discussion and to think in a different way about the goal(s) behind the efforts of this church to start new ministries. What if the primary goal was increasing the number of people in the wider culture who know something about ELCA Lutheranism, and starting new ministries becomes a secondary goal reflecting the church's success in heightening its visibility?

³² "Policy on Criteria for Synodically Authorized Worshiping Communities" adopted by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 6, 2003.

³³ Source: DEM ELCA list serve.

SECTION 3

A Response to the Resolution and the Role of the Churchwide Organization in Starting New Ministries

A resolution to the April 2012 ELCA Church Council Executive Committee (EC12.04.12) from the Southwest California Synod called for a comprehensive review of the strategies used by CSM in assessing mission development pastors, along with its financial support strategies and assessment practices. The resolution also called for long-term development and support for the pastor developers, including additional psychological and behavioral assessments and a mentoring program. Finally, the resolution asked the ELCA to look toward its full-communion partnerships for alternative methodologies and analytic tools.

In responding to this resolution, the following is clear:

1. The role of new ministry development in the ELCA is very important and of concern to the whole church. This church continues to spend millions in new ministry development and because it cares deeply about its stewardship, it must be clearer about what it hopes to accomplish through this work and/or potentially shift its strategy. It also must better assess what is being accomplished and learn more systematically from its experience. This also means those who are involved in new ministry development must be open to accounting for their progress and the monitoring it requires, as well as contributing to the body of knowledge about new ministry development.
2. CSM currently conducts behavioral interviews to assess the potential of mission developers and our review of the process found the following results.

The primary question the review sought to address was: Are those who have been interviewed and recommended more successful than those who have not been interviewed or recommended? The answer is “yes”.

The review involved analysis of 387 interviews. Of this pool, 278 (72%) received recommendations as mission developers. As of November 2012, 318 new ministries were under development in the ELCA. Eighty-one of these new ministries (29%) were being served by individuals who had received a recommendation based on an interview while 243 of the new ministries were being served by pastors who had not been through the interview process. The vast majority of these developers became developers before the interviewing process was in full use or because they are serving SAWCs. Those serving SAWCs are interviewed only if and when the SAWC changes status to a new congregation under development.

Of the 318 new ministries under development, worship attendance figures were available for 174 new ministries (using the records for the last three years). Twenty-nine of these new developments are served by a pastor who was interviewed. This is a small sample but the results in Table 9 are suggestive.

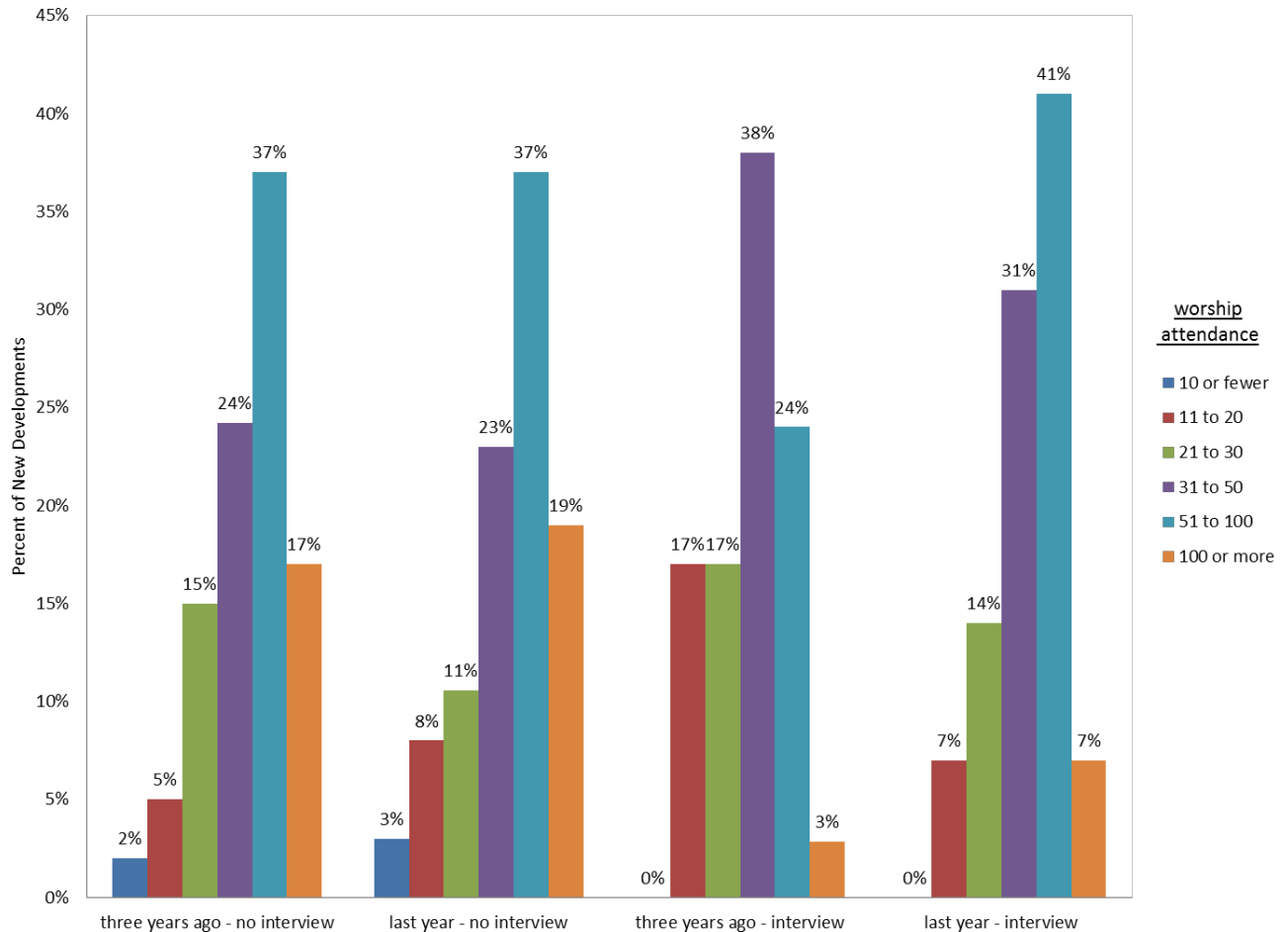
Table 9 shows the new ministries served by those who were interviewed tend to be smaller (based on worship attendance). This is primarily because these new ministries have been under development a shorter length of time. While they are smaller, the new ministries served by those who were interviewed and recommended are growing at a faster rate.

Table 9: Average Worship Attendance in Three Last Years by Interview Type

interview	three years ago	two years ago	last year	percent change
no (N=145)	76	81	88	15.8%
yes (N=29)	45	50	55	22.2%

Figure 6 shows the number of new developments by worship attendance over the last three years for those pastors who were interviewed and those who were not. For those who were not interviewed, the number of developments with 51 or more in worship moved from 54 percent to 56 percent. For those who were interviewed, the percent with 51 or more in worship moved from 27 percent to 48 percent.

Figure 6: Distribution of Worship Attendance Last Year and Three Years Ago by Pastors With and Without Interviews



The number of interviews being conducted demands a significant investment of time and staffing. In a typical year, there are 50 or more interviews, each of which last several hours. As a result, the interviewing process is heavily dependent upon a network of volunteers who invest their time in being trained and then in conducting interviews. On the other hand, the stakes are considerable. The amount of time and money invested in a failed mission development is substantial.

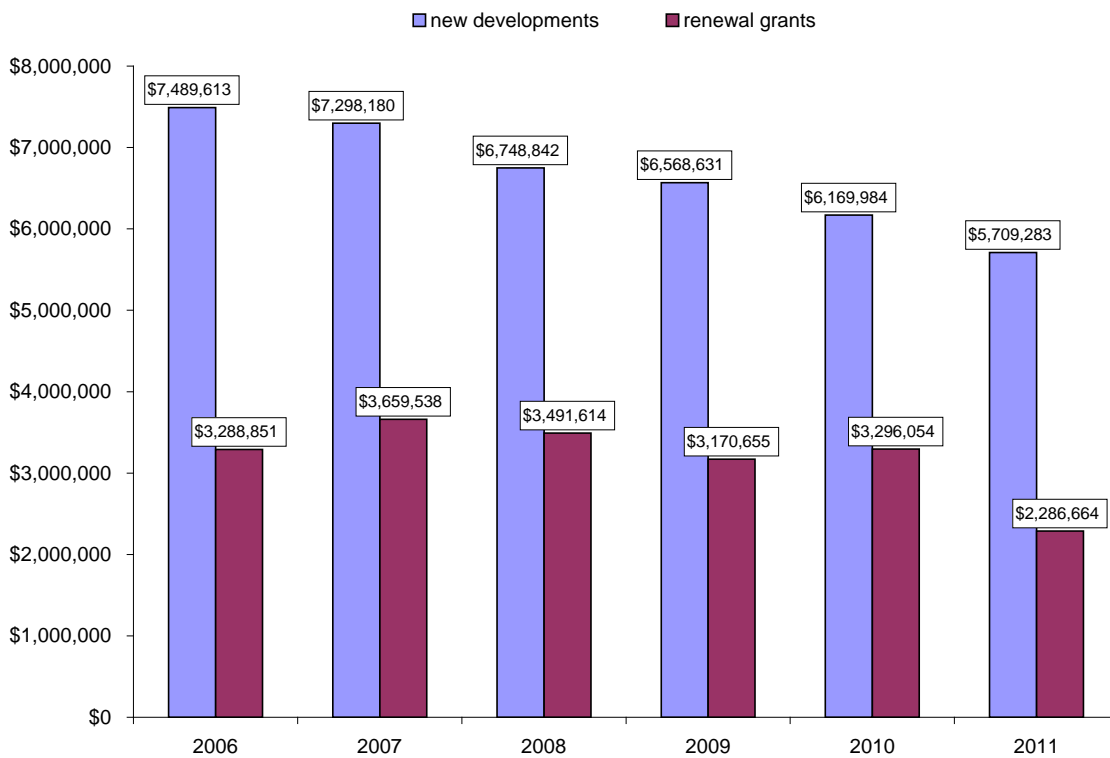
Based on conversations with several interviewers, there is confidence the interviews identify and weed out candidates who are least likely to succeed. Typically, candidates are proposed by the DEMs. The interviews provide an important opportunity for additional assessment. The assessment shows, however, the experience of the interview teams can vary considerably. Half of those conducting interviews had participated in two or fewer interviews. Because conducting 50 or more annual interviews is considerably beyond the capacity of Chicago-based churchwide staff, this church relies on a large cadre of volunteers. It was not clear whether some interviewers might be better than others in identifying individuals who will be most successful at mission development. What is clear is this church needs a smaller group of semi-professional interviewers with more experience and expertise.

It is also interesting to note despite an active roster of 7,800 congregational clergy, this church routinely looks outside its ranks to find developers. Thirty-four percent of those who were approved for mission development were not yet rostered in the ELCA.

3. CSM seeks to provide coaches for all mission developers. A full review of this program has not yet been conducted. The development of a cadre of semi-professional coaches would also be an important development in contributing to more successful new ministries.
4. The role of the churchwide organization through CSM in monitoring or assessing new ministries is a partnership with synods, and CSM's capacity to act alone in starting or ending new ministry developments is quite limited. There is no doubt the majority of new ministries are not successful, and it is likely that continued attempts to improve the selection, training, and accountability processes for mission developers could increase, at least somewhat, the number of new ministries that are self-sustaining after three years. At the same time, a significant proportion of new developments in the ELCA, particularly with people in poverty and in ethnic-specific communities, call into question self-sustainability as a realistic goal. Second, the primary premise of the resolution from the Southwest California Synod appears to be that more efficient strategies and methodologies are both readily available and applicable. This review of the literature and the experience of the ELCA in starting new ministries found little evidence that other denominations or religious groups had found and effectively applied strategies or methodologies that significantly improve their results (with the exception of behavioral interviews and coaching, both of which are in use in the ELCA). Currently, the churchwide organization does not have a hierarchical system of control, in part because it does not have the resources and, in part, because the church is, for better or worse, an interdependent partnership between local congregations, synods and the churchwide organization.

In terms of capacity, Figure 7 shows total churchwide funding for new ministries and redevelopment ministries (renewal grants) from year 2006 through 2011. The funding for new ministries has declined by 24 percent while the funding for renewal grants has declined by 30 percent. Mission support to the national church peaked in the ELCA in 1987 at \$78.7 million. In 2012, mission support was \$49.9 million. This means that mission support has declined by 37 percent in actual dollars and adjusted for inflation, the decline in mission support is 69 percent. At the very least, because of diminishing resources and the interdependence of this church, the churchwide organization must rely on strategies other than hierarchical control to effectively steward its resources, especially when it comes to starting new ministries. Put differently, the changes adopted by CSM over the last years are less technical and more focused on initial discernment than those suggested by the resolution.

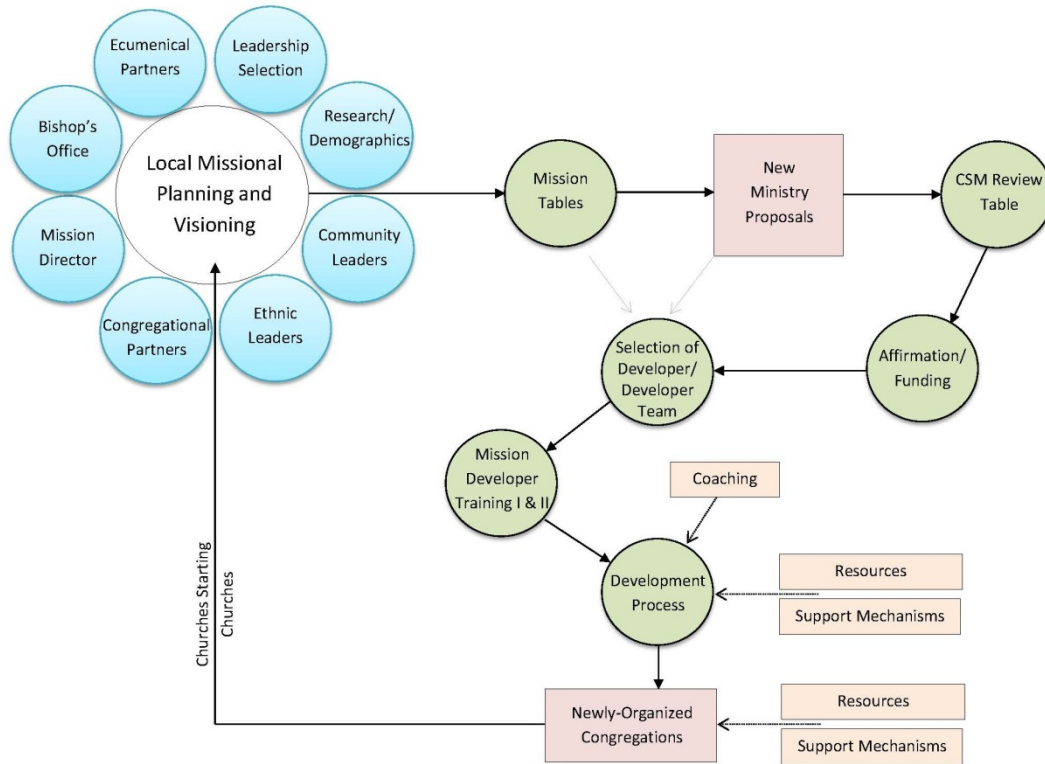
Figure 7: Total Churchwide Funding for New Ministries and Redeveloping Ministries (Renewal Grants)



5. These changes include the following:
 - a. The churchwide deployment of the DEMs in synods was a significant change designed, in part, to improve the selection of sites, developers and the oversight of new ministries. There is ongoing work with the DEMs to improve their ability to do this work, but the amount of turnover with DEMs is a significant issue. Also, DEMs are selected with considerable synodical input. Some DEMs have skills while others have great potential for developing those skills.
 - b. New ministries now originate almost exclusively on a local basis and are approved by a review table which includes representatives from the various regions of the ELCA. The DEM is responsible for working with synod lay and clergy leaders to develop local mission plans. These plans include ecumenical partners. The local teams or “tables” are responsible for the selection of new ministry leadership, for reviewing demographic data, for consulting with local community leaders and the leaders of local congregations, for arranging local financing and for local ministry

coaching support. (See Figure 8.) Ministry assessment is also an interdependent partnership between the local table and CSM.

Figure 8: The ELCA New Ministry Development Process



- c. The goal of these changes is to minimize the number of new ministries coming into existence without strong local support. The effectiveness of this communal approach in improving the success rates is yet to be determined.
- d. The increasing use of SAWCs as ministry probes to explore the potential of a site is also designed to improve stewardship.
- e. It appears significant progress has been made in the use of behavioral interviewing, and additional changes designed to improve the process are being proposed (revisions in the instrument and in the way it is administered).

Recommendations

1. This church should give considerably more attention to raising its public profile as a distinctively Lutheran church. The coming 500th anniversary (in 2017) of Luther's posting of the 95 Theses provides significant opportunities which should not be missed.
2. The recent LIFT-based effort to encourage congregational mission planning should be continued with an effort to shift from planning to acting on those plans. Mission planning is discernment involving the Three Great Listenings, but acting on those plans means important congregational work in local communities. (See Guiding Principles for Congregational Mission Planning, Appendix C, as well as <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Discipleship/Mission-planning.aspx>)
3. This church needs an all-out effort to develop missionally focused, highly adaptive leaders positioned for the future of the ELCA. It should strongly encourage the synods, seminaries, and lay schools for mission of this church to give special attention to identifying and improving the training of new missional leaders, particularly developers and redevelopers and lay evangelists for this church. This effort should include a special focus on raising up a cadre of leaders from within our ethnic-specific and immigrant communities and providing intensive, conversational language training for others who may want to serve in these communities. The church should allow and encourage the recruitment of bi-vocational or multi-vocational leaders. The newly appointed Theological Education Advisory Council should give significant attention to this issue as they do their work.
4. CSM should be encouraged to do the following Strategic Visioning work:
 - a. Work with synods to develop a strategic approach to new start and redevelopment work, establishing clear goals for what this church hopes to accomplish through this work.
 - b. Work closely with synods to find ways to reduce the high turnover rate in the Director for Evangelical Mission (DEM) position. The missional partnership between the churchwide organization and the synods requires stability and continuity. A positive working relationship between the synod bishop and the DEM is a key success factor.
 - c. Encourage DEMs to invite broad participation at synod mission tables to include the larger ecology of the ELCA, such as colleges and universities, seminaries, social ministry organizations, outdoor ministry organizations, and campus ministries, for the purpose of exploring missional opportunities that go beyond the traditional view of congregations.
 - d. Continue to work on the development of criteria with synods to organize and fund Area Ministry Strategies which build on the strategic vision of the local mission table.
 - e. Look for opportunities to more closely align the work of new and renewing congregations with the domestic hunger grant process in each synod.
 - f. Invest in congregations that are growing. Consider the development of a special grant program to extend their growth and increase their ability to start or support new ministry initiatives in other locations.
 - g. Encourage continued creativity and experimentation that advances and promotes learning for the whole church. Mission development and redevelopment work should be viewed as the primary way this church does "research and development" in the domestic mission context.
 - h. Continue to work closely with Research and Evaluation to pilot the next phase of the Congregation Assessment Tool. Learn from the pilots projects underway in in the Upstate New York, Western North Dakota, and Rocky Mountain Synods.
 - i. Expand educational events in regions and synods which give opportunities to build a common understanding and vision of what it means to be a missional church.

5. CSM should be encouraged to do the following Interpretation and Communication work:
 - a. Work closely with the Mission Advancement (MA) unit to develop clear and consistent messages around the terms and goals of “mission development”, “intentional redevelopment” and “congregational revitalization,” especially as support materials are developed for the 25th Anniversary Campaign.
 - b. Work closely with MA to invite the whole church into the mission development effort, helping existing congregations and individuals to learn about expanded opportunities to support new start and renewal efforts.
 - c. Be clear in its interpretation that a significant percentage of congregations receiving “renewal” funding will not be self-sufficient in the short term. These are sustaining grants for congregations in communities where the ELCA is committed to continued mission and ministry, especially as we seek to live out our commitments to ministry among persons living in poverty and to ethnic-specific and multicultural communities. (For more on Congregational Revitalization in the ELCA, see Appendix B.)
6. CSM should be encouraged to do the following Process Improvement work:
 - a. Continue to work on process improvements in relation to the new start and renewal grant review process, especially working with MA and Information Technology (IT) staff to develop and utilize more user-friendly web applications and communication tools. Encourage churchwide staff to pilot new process improvements and seek regular evaluative input from the DEMs working in synods.
 - b. Develop and support a cadre of semi-professional interviewers to conduct the behavioral interviews for mission developer and redeveloper candidates.
 - c. Work more aggressively to develop a cadre of semi-professional coaches to work with each new mission developer and redeveloper. Begin to research and document what we are learning from these coaching efforts.
 - d. Provide increased support and training for the DEM position in the skills needed for successful new and renewing ministry development, including the ongoing work of healing racial tension and building healthy relationships as we live into the church’s multicultural goals.
 - e. Require and help to fund regular continuing education experiences for all mission developers and redevelopers. This would build on the initial training that CSM already provides when the developer/redeveloper begins and again six months later when they return with a core group of lay partners in ministry. Partner with Portico Benefit Services to offer personal wellness education for developers and redevelopers.
 - f. Consider issuing term calls for all new pastor developers and redevelopers, with regular assessment of their effectiveness in ministry being conducted by the DEM, in consultation with the synod bishop.
 - g. Work with synods to develop situation-specific criteria and expected outcomes in order to determine the ongoing viability of a particular new start or redevelopment ministry. Develop a clear “exit strategy” if it is determined that the ministry is no longer viable.

Appendix A
Mission and Ministry Models

Approved Sites

a ministry proposal which has been approved but has not yet started

Congregation Under Development

the result of a new ministry profile that has a developer and has started, working toward becoming an organized congregation

Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community

a ministry approved by the synod, affirmed by CSM that is exploring a particular ministry field
While there are some SAWCs that are part time (snow birds, etc.), most are intended to become congregations under development or move to organization.

Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community Probe

the beginning stages of exploration of a particular field, usually part-time, no gathered community at this stage

Alternate Worshiping Community

a new ministry started within an existing congregation

This may be a ministry developed by the "host" congregation or the "host" congregation may agree to host the new ministry while they determine if they will become one ministry or stay separate as two ministries. A good example of this is when a congregation hosts an African National ministry. They start as two ministries with two budgets, two leadership teams, etc.

Alternate Worshiping Site

When a congregation starts a new ministry in a different location, essentially a church starting a church, but the two are still connected and may have one budget, one staff, etc., or they may work toward the new ministry becoming independent.

Appendix B

Congregational Revitalization in the ELCA

The churchwide organization of the ELCA through its Congregational and Synodical Mission unit (CSM) is responsible for working with synods, congregations, and partners in “making congregations vital centers for mission...Its work includes creating and revitalizing congregations” (C16.12A10.). The goal for renewed evangelizing congregations is communities of faith that are growing, vibrant and diverse, with more worshippers supporting and engaged in the ELCA’s local and global mission. The focus is for existing congregations to grow and diversify in ways that reflect their communities and contexts.

Re-rooting in the Community: Mission Strategy

The 2011 Churchwide Assembly asked [CA11.04.21] each congregation to develop a **mission plan**. There are many different and contextual approaches to this discernment for mission. CSM and its grassroots collective of directors for evangelical mission creatively began sharing resources and worked together on the development of “Guiding Principles for Mission Strategy.” At the heart of these guiding principles are “The Three Great Listenings” in which mission leaders commit, with as many partners as possible, to listening: To God in Scripture, prayer, and witness (spiritual renewal); To the community through strategic relational meetings and demographics; and To leaders within this church and its partners.

A sampling of significant re-rooting in community efforts follows:

- The formation of the CSM Implementation Team, consisting of people from across this church following the 2011 Churchwide Assembly, focuses attention on the long-term institutional change of making mission planning part of the ongoing life of the ELCA. This team has developed six guiding principles for congregational mission planning and made them available to synods as a customizable tool. In addition, the team has overseen the creation of the [www.ELCA.org/MissionPlanning website](http://www.ELCA.org/MissionPlanning) to share existing congregational mission planning resources from across this church and surveyed congregations through the 2012 Annual Congregational Report to obtain data on which congregations are currently engaged in mission planning activities. The team has also partnered with Research and Evaluation to pilot a **Congregational Missional Vitality assessment tool** in three synods. *The Mission Table*, a book on the theological and biblical foundations for mission planning, authored by the Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, is a product of the work of this implementation team and will be available through Augsburg Fortress Publishers.
- CSM identified three locations—the Kansas City Metropolitan area; Racine, Wisconsin; and Portland, Oregon—to partner with local **Area Ministry Strategy** efforts by providing the coaching and consulting services of an experienced church renewal consultant. A strategy team has also mapped existing and future possibilities for partnering with synods in developing Area Ministry Strategies across this church. In addition, CSM has developed a category description and application process to pilot Area Ministry Strategy as a category for funding in the 2014 Renewal Partnership Support Review Table and crafted a plan for ongoing work including building capacity to lead Area Ministry Strategy efforts across this church and developing a suite of resources to be used by synods, congregations, and ministry partners as they work together to develop Area Ministry Strategies.

Congregational Renewal Training

In addition to the **mission planning** initiative and an evolving **Area Ministry Strategy** focus of the *ELCA Re-rooting in the Community: Mission Strategy*, synodical congregational renewal mission plans and strategies have long-term engagement with various congregational renewal training resources as strategic priorities for renewing congregations in synods. The development of **contextual, indigenous synodical congregational renewal training processes**, such as the Saint Paul Area Synod *Mission Renewal Process* and the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod Seeds for Growth is a common priority of synodical renewal mission tables. Synods often engage **para-church congregational renewal training processes** in recent years as well, including the *Partnership for Missional Church* of Church Innovations, Inc., as well as the training process resources of A Renewal Enterprise, and Vibrant Faith Ministries. The principal CSM Congregational Renewal training process that has been implemented for more than a decade in the ELCA is Transformational Ministry.

Transformational Ministry 2.0 is a train-the-trainer process that equips congregational transformation/renewal teams as a guiding coalition in a congregation to engage the community of faith in a journey for 'Yet Another Path' to become centered in its identity (*Who are we?*); discern its purpose (*Why are we here?*), and re-root in its context (*Who is our neighbor?*) leading to a congregational missional plan. The Transformational Ministry journey is designed to help the congregation think, perceive, and behave as a missional congregation. It is designed to create a sense of holy urgency leading the congregation into God's preferred future ('Yet Another Path') for its mission and ministry (missional vocation). *What is God calling, transforming, and sending the congregation to be and do?*

Whereas in the first generation of Transformational Ministry the process engaged teams of congregational rostered and lay leaders to be trained in national events as the Transformational Ministry teams to lead the process in their congregations, Transformational Ministry 2.0 has been evolving, with the leadership of the CSM Renewal Team, as a train-the-trainer model in recent years. Synod congregational renewal training leaders are equipped in train-the-trainer events to engage cohorts of congregational leadership teams in 1 ½ -3 years training processes with the following TM 2.0 goals: Spiritual Formation and Renewal (spiritual transformation), Contextual Relevance (re-rooting in the community), Purpose and vision, Missional Strategy (purpose, guiding principles/values, goals, sending transformation), Road Map (strategic mission plan), Discernment and Reflection (grounded in Bible study/work, prayer, and conversation/connectivity); Alignment (systemic and structural transformation), and Communication.

Partnership Support – Congregational Renewal

Historically, before the ELCA, in our predecessor bodies and today there has been a pattern and commitment to supporting and strengthening congregations through the interdependent ecology of the three expressions of this church. Facilitated by the synods and churchwide ministry in this chapter of the journey, CSM engages leadership for renewed evangelizing congregations and ministries. CSM is commissioned to provide leadership and support for the ELCA as it reaches out in witness to the Gospel in the areas served by the synods of this church. A principal CSM function is to provide assistance and support to synods for missional ministry and outreach planning, develop new congregations and offer support to existing congregations that are involved in renewal for the church through change and growth that leads to expanded capacity to serve their communities through outreach with the Gospel. Congregations that can demonstrate financial need and have a defined plan for outreach may apply for a partnership support grant from the unit through the synod. Grants must be used to directly address and meet the criteria for at least one of the unit's grant categories, in addition to general review table criteria for the Partnership Support program.

Four of the Partnership Support programs are organized for the purpose of the strategic renewal of congregations: 130-130 - Ministry Adjustment; 130-135 - Transformational Ministry; 130-140 -

Consolidation/Merger/Relocation; and 130-145 - Synodical Administration. A principal priority of this church are our commitments for the development of ethnic specific and multi-cultural ministry, with Partnership Support grant programs with existing ministries, including: 130-150 – African/American/Black (African Descent) Ministry; 130-155 – Hispanic/Latino Ministry; 130-160 – Asian Ministries; 130-165 – American Indian/Alaska Native Ministry; and 130-170 – Arab/Middle Eastern Ministry. This church particular commitments for ministry with people living in poverty, including Partnership Support programs: 130-180 – Ministry with the Poor/Word and Sacrament; 130-185 – Ministry with the Poor/Word and Service; and 130-190 Ministry with the Poor/Community Service and Organizing. In addition, this church supports a variety of specialized ministries, including ministries with people with disabilities (i.e. deaf and blind communities of faith) and prison ministries via Partnership Support Program 130-175 – Specialized Ministries. In FY 2014, CSM launches a pilot Partnership Support program to augment the area ministry strategies vision: Program 130-200 – Area Ministry Strategy.

In FY 2013, there are 163 ministries that are being supported with \$2,613,600 via CSM renewal Partnership Support ministry. The FY 2014 Congregational Renewal Partnership Support Allocations Process Review Table approved proposals for 155 congregations/ministries to be supported with \$2,573,600 in FY 2014 for renewed evangelizing congregations mission and ministry.

Table 1: Preliminary 2014 Partnership Support Allocations by Type

Number of Ministries	Allocation	Program Type
18	\$280,000	Ministry Adjustment
46	\$752,500	Transformational Ministry
3	\$53,000	Mergers/Consolidations/Relocations
2	\$35,000	Synodical Administration
22	\$444,000	African American/Black
16	\$220,500	Hispanic/Latino
5	\$63,000	Asian
16	\$297,000	American Indian/Alaska Native
1	\$20,000	Arab/Middle Eastern
6	\$87,500	Specialized Ministries
14	\$197,500	Ministry with the Poor-Word and Sacrament
2	\$31,000	Ministry with the Poor-Word and Service
2	\$25,000	Ministry with the Poor-Community Service/Organizing
2	\$67,000	Area Ministry Strategy
155	\$2,573,000	

Appendix C

Guiding Principles for Congregational Mission Planning

As people of faith, we trust that God is doing a new thing in the world and we long to be part of this work. Congregational mission planning is the process of discovering how each community of faith is called to live as the body of Christ.

Mission planning can be accomplished in many and various ways. In some congregations, mission planning is a regular and ongoing topic for conversation. In some, mission planning is a new way to think about the ministry of the church. In all situations, there are a few guiding principles that can help congregations think about how to proceed with developing a mission plan.

Mission planning involves three great listenings – listening to God through scripture and prayer; listening to the community outside our doors; listening within the household of faith.

*I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
– Ephesians 3:18-19*

What does this mean? Identifying what God is up to in the world and in the community and determining how we are called to be involved in God's work involves intentional and thoughtful listening. Mission planning is rooted in listening through scripture and prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance and direction. Mission planning also listens to the voices of people in the community – those within the faith community and those outside the doors of the congregation.

Mission planning is relational and fosters partnerships.

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. – Ephesians 4:15

What does this mean? We are part of an interdependent body. Planning connects us with the wider church through synodical resources and programs (through the director for evangelical mission, and other available resources), to other congregations in the community (Lutheran, ecumenical partners, or others), to area social ministry organizations (such as Lutheran Social Services agencies), to church educational partners (colleges and schools) or to global companions. Building relationships with these partners takes time, energy and intention.

Every congregation is uniquely gifted by God.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. – 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

What does this mean? God has gifted us greatly! Mission plans are grounded in the conviction that God has given us all we need in order to do what God calls us to do. Mission planning focuses on the assets, strengths, unique resources and opportunities that God has graciously shared with each congregation and

invites us to identify how we will steward what God has entrusted to us, set priorities and monitor progress.

Mission planning pays attention to context.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. – Acts 1:8

From one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being.” – Acts 17:26-28a

What does this mean? Congregational mission plans are contextual, taking into account the cultural realities of the congregation’s neighborhood and community, and being mindful of the socio-economic, ethnic-specific and multicultural dynamics of the congregation’s setting. These realities apply in our engagement in our global context as well. Through baptism God has formed us into the body of Christ and enabled us to love and serve our neighbor. Mission planning gets us outside of the walls of our church and into the world where we seek to learn how to love God through our neighbor.

Mission planning is a shared journey.

“...friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.” What they said pleased the whole community... – Acts 6:3-5a

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way.” – Luke 10:1-3a

What does this mean? Effective mission planning is the work of an entire congregation. There may be a small group of people involved in the hands-on work and planning activities, but the whole congregation is engaged through prayer, discernment and other forms of participation and support as well as sharing a commitment to the actions that emerge from the planning process.

Mission planning is ongoing.

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” – John 8:31-32

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” – Colossians 2:6-7

What does this mean? We are always in the process of discerning how God is calling us to live together as a community of faith as well as how we will set priorities and steward the resources God has entrusted to us. Ongoing attention to mission planning gives congregations the opportunity to be attentive to shifts in congregational, community or neighborhood dynamics and to remain focused on the ways that living out our baptismal call continually changes.

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Appendix D
Biblical Principles for Starting New Congregations:
A Paper to Ground Lutheran Mission in the Twenty-first Century

This paper has been written to respond to the request to state the biblical basis on which new ministries are begun within the ELCA as it moves forward in mission in North America in the twenty-first century. The paper includes four sections. The first is a brief summary of the changing context for mission in North America. The second is a summary of the key theological foundations for mission. A third, more extensive section, explores biblical material regarding mission in the New Testament. The final section articulates a list of principles that inform missional decisions as the ELCA moves forward.

Context

The Evangelical Lutheran Church serves in a rapidly changing context. The United States now is one of the most complex and highly unchurched mission fields in the world. Few nations have both the large population and the wide range of racial, ethnic and economic diversity that can be found in the United States in the 21st century.

An important factor is that much of the overlay of United States culture still appears to be Christian but that fabric is thin and often frail. More and more people in the United States have little or no church connection or background. Many new ethnic groups are arriving whose background may include Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and other religious traditions with which Lutherans are unfamiliar. Other immigrants bring deep Christian roots but from traditions that Lutherans have not encountered. Add the wide range of economic variables (Lutherans generally have experience in working class and middle class populations) and Lutherans are left wondering what happened to the world in which they once grew and flourished?

Since the 1970s, the ELCA and its predecessors have experienced a slow but steady decline in baptized membership as well as in worship attendance. This has led to an increasing need to start new ministries that reach out into diverse settings, in communities where Lutherans historically have not commonly been found. Rather than gathering or attracting Lutherans who have moved to a new place, the variety of congregations in all the communities, including African American/Black, American Indian-Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latino and Middle East Arab, find their primary evangelical mission is reaching out to unchurched people who in many cases have little awareness of Christianity or even the story of Jesus.

Missional Theology

The basis for all mission endeavors lies in the fact that God is already at work in the world and desires to bless and save the world.

The impetus to start new mission sites is found in the ELCA's mission statement:

Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered and sent for the sake of the world.

Starting new congregations is about inviting people to see God's claim on their lives and to live life beneath the cross of Jesus. In an increasingly pluralistic world, healthy and missional congregations may find themselves more and more being alternatives to dominant patterns within the culture as much as they have often reflected them in previous eras.

Mission starts are about communities of believers, all gifted and called to ministry, using their gifts to the fullest to best serve God in that place and through that local expression of the church. These people are sent out as ambassadors for Christ to minister in the world.

New congregational starts in the ELCA are a priority because they are one way in which the church can carry out its calling to participate in what God is doing in the world. They become vehicles for reaching new people with the gospel, inviting them into a life of faith, and calling them to join in doing God's work in the church and in the world. We are "claimed, gathered and sent..." in part so that God can use us as vehicles through which God claims others, gathers them for nurture, support, training and worship and also sends them forth as fellow missionaries and ambassadors in the work God is doing – not simply as objects of mission but as fellow members of the body of Christ.

Mission in the Early Church / New Testament

In seeking to fulfill the Great Commission God had given to it (Matt 28:18-20), the early church, as evidenced in the New Testament, used differing models for starting new missions:

1. Some models are unknown to us. How, for example, was the Christian message first brought to Rome? It was clearly there before Paul arrived (Rom 1:10-11, 15:20-24). There are various educated theories, but ultimately we simply do not know how it got there.
2. On other occasions the "mother" church in Jerusalem sent out missionaries (Acts 15:7, Gal 2:7-9). Exactly how they supported themselves financially (or were supported) we do not know.
3. At times the mission focused on entire households (Acts 16:15, 31; 1 Cor 1:16). At other times the mission centered on individuals, including situations in which one spouse came to believe and the other did not (1 Cor 7:12-16).
4. The most well-known early church missionary was Paul. People often think he was a solo operator, but in fact he worked closely with other missionaries (Barnabas, Timothy, Silas, Aquila, Priscilla, and many others). He also worked closely with the church in Antioch, Syria. It is of note that there are three missionary journeys of Paul outlined in Acts. Journey one (Acts 13:1-14:28) and two (Acts 15:36-18:22) begin *and* end in Antioch. Journey three (Acts 18:23-21:15) begins there, too. It does not end in Antioch because Paul was arrested in Jerusalem during the third journey; subsequently he was taken to Rome and executed. While our information is limited, the church in Antioch most likely provided him funds for travel. Once he was in a potential new mission site, he supported himself by his trade as a leather-worker.

Paul was very careful about finances. In the cultures in which he lived, direct gifts from a group of people to an individual teacher could easily be understood in terms of the patron-client relationship. In that relationship the patron provided material and other assistance to someone lower on the socio-economic scale and in return the client owed obedience and loyalty to the patron. For that reason Paul did not accept financial gifts from all congregations and when he did he used carefully crafted language to maintain his independence from the patron-client model (Phil 4:10-20).

At the same time Paul did accept funds. He even solicited funds for the mission of the church. For example, a delegation from Philippi brought a monetary gift to Paul while he was imprisoned (Phil 4:18), and he solicited aid to help with his travel and missionary expenses (Rom 15:24, 2 Cor 1:16).³⁴ He also expended great effort collecting money from the basically Gentile mission sites he had founded (2 Corinthians 8-9, Rom 15:25-28). The money was to be given to believers in the original or "mother" church in Jerusalem. Paul had two goals in gathering these funds: to alleviate suffering in Jerusalem, apparently caused by a famine, and to provide a powerful and tangible symbol of the unity of Jewish believers and Gentile believers within the one church.

³⁴ The references to monetary help are not immediately evident in English. The Greek term for *to be sent on* (*propempō*) is a technical term for providing monetary assistance and, in the case of the letter to the Romans, probably additional assistance in terms of personnel to accompany him to Spain.

What Paul did not have to do, when compared with a frequent goal of twenty-first century mission starts, was to raise money to build buildings. His own missionary work centered in his work place, which put him in contact with customers, other workers in his shop, and nearby shop-keepers and laborers. In addition, workers often lived behind or above the shops in apartment buildings or tenements. In cities the large majority of people lived in that kind of housing, which was often poorly built and was always crowded. The advantage for Paul's missionary work was the close proximity of many people, including the families of those with whom he worked. As his missionary work drew more believers, where to meet became a problem. Apartments could hold only a few people. Although on rare occasions Paul could preach in a public hall (Acts 19:9-10), growing discontent by opponents within his own native Judaism and by public officials made use of such facilities less and less attractive. Rental space cost funds Paul did not have and also provided a more public identity than was often helpful. Temples dedicated to the various gods of the ancient Mediterranean area were not available for "sharing" (in the way Jewish and Christian congregations sometimes do today), and Paul could not have theologically reconciled worshiping there, anyway. Synagogues rapidly closed to Paul and others who believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

Partly in response to what was not possible but also with a vision of what the gathered community of believers could be, Paul organized believers into house churches, that is, mission sites that met in the private home of one of the local believers (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Philemon 2; Col 4:15; Acts 2:46, 5:42). Paul likely looked to wealthier believers to host the local Christian gathering. The typical villa or *domus* of the wealthier person was designed for entertaining and could house twenty to forty people, a number few apartments could handle.

That means that the extremely important and frequent language Paul uses about building up the church (1 Cor 8:1, 10:23, 14:3-5, 14:12, 14:17, 14:26; Rom 14:19, 15:2; 1 Thess 5:11; 2 Cor 10:8, 12:19, 13:10; also Eph 2:21, 4:12, 4:16) refers not to the physical construction of a building but to the strengthening of the believers in their relationships with each other and with God as the body of Christ.

Biblical and Theological Principles for Mission

From the above material the following principles can be derived:

1. *Mission is at the core of what it means to be the church:* To tell others about Jesus and to gather them together to praise God, to learn, to baptize, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and to build up each other in the faith are part of the foundation, at the core of the Christian Church. Starting new ministries is a primary expression of this DNA replicating itself.
2. *Missional people are claimed and called:* Those sent forth in mission are claimed by God and called for this work. At the same time, they are vehicles through which God claims others and calls them to be co-workers in the kingdom of God.
3. *Missional people gather:* The Church is comprised of people of faith. In so doing it celebrates its identity as Christ's body in the world. This gathering is a time of teaching and equipping, celebrating what God is doing, re-orienting our lives toward the gospel, and supporting one another in our journey. This is a permeable gathering, not a clique, and gatherings are expected to invite and include new believers within the circle of faith. New starts provide new expressions of these gatherings and focus on reaching new people in new places.
4. *Missional people are sent:* Believers are sent by God to share the Good News about Jesus. The church is central in the discernment and response process.
5. *The Church parts are interdependent:* The biblical view assumes that ministry will be locally owned. At the same time, there is a clear sense of interconnection. It takes systems across the church to support new starts. Paul began his outreach in Antioch and returned there at the end of a mission trip. When there was a famine in Jerusalem, Paul urged others to see connections that meant giving in one

place to assist an extraordinary need in another. In addition, while Paul started many congregations and then moved on, his departure did not sever the relationship. In many cases, he continued to coach and to advise these congregations via letters and in some cases he or his companions were able to return to visit. Mission sites both received (in the person of the missionary and the gift of the Good News of Jesus) and gave to others (to the poor, to other parts of the church, and by providing new missionaries and financial support for further mission).

6. *Accountability is important:* Paul's journeys started at Antioch and the first two also ended in Antioch. This implies that the church in Antioch sent Paul and helped with travel expenses and people to assist him. When possible, Paul concluded his journeys and reported back on what he had done and how the work had gone. That the church in Antioch repeated its support for Paul's work implies that they were pleased with his previous work and viewed it as effective and worth supporting further.
7. *Local sustainability is necessary:* Early mission work was contextual, organically developed and primarily sustained locally. This does not mean there was no financial support for new churches; but it does mean that it was mostly in the form of seed money to get the missionary there and started. The long term health of the church depended on using a model that could be sustained within that setting. This meant that bi-vocational leadership and non-stipendiary leadership were common. People in mission selected vocations in which they could support themselves in ways that also enhanced the work. Paul, a leatherworker or tentmaker, is a prime example of this.
8. *Space for ministry will vary by mission context:* The idea of a permanent gathering space was not even considered in most biblical narratives. Early Christian gatherings usually took place in believers' homes. Biblical mission was concerned with providing space for people who needed places to meet more than about places to meet in order to attract people. From the experience of the early church, we learn that God is not confined to any one pattern of how to evangelize and how to gather and organize God's people. That Christians need to regularly gather for Word, Sacrament, and mutual upbuilding is clear. Exactly where and how the gathering occurs can vary from mission field to mission field.
9. *Leadership trains more leadership:* Biblically, the ministry of the church was grounded in the apostles' teaching and leadership. However, the apostles quickly needed to multiply and pass on the ministry to others. This began immediately at Pentecost when the addition of three thousand people meant meeting in dozens of homes and the need to identify and equip leaders for each group. Paul continued in this model as he started congregations and relied on others to sustain and continue his work. Multiplication of leadership was key to multiplying the church.
10. *Economic realities are contextual and should inform missional decisions and methods rather than drive them:* Economic life in the ancient Mediterranean world was organized very differently from that of the twenty-first century. The goal today cannot be to replicate first-century funding patterns. That would mean, for example, no full-time salaries for mission developers and no money from churchwide for salaries, land purchase, or construction loans. Rather, our financial goal in developing new mission sites should be to continue to discern how to work faithfully, wisely and justly within the economic system in which we live. We should develop financial models that fit our culture(s) in order that the Gospel message can be proclaimed and heard. This may mean being open to part time mission developers, bi-vocational mission developers, mission development teams that include lay volunteers, and non-stipendiary mission developers in addition to the full time salaried methods that were used by Lutherans almost exclusively during the second half of the twentieth century.

Appendix D was originally written September 19, 2006.

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