



Office of the Secretary
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

November 20, 2012

TO: Bishops of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Vice Presidents of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Secretaries of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Members of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Administrative Team of the churchwide organization
Chief executive officers of separately incorporated ministries
Regional Coordinators

FROM: David D. Swartling, secretary

SUBJECT: Report of Responses by the Church Council to Synodical and
Churchwide Assembly Actions (November 9–11, 2012)

I. RESPONSES TO SYNODICAL RESOLUTIONS

A. Global Climate Change

Northeastern Ohio Synod (6E)

WHEREAS, God calls us to Care for Creation with Vision, Hope and Justice (1993 ELCA Social Statement on Caring for Creation), in ways that protect and preserve the viability of the Earth and the sustainability of human communities; and

WHEREAS, we are called to love our neighbors, which, broadly considered, includes future generations as well as those currently living; and

WHEREAS, a broad scientific consensus warns that humanity's historic and continuing emissions of greenhouse gases are contributing to global warming, and, under current business-as-usual policies global warming is expected to result in severe, disruptive changes to all of creation, including massive extinction of species, spread of diseases, disruption of food supplies, and displacement of human communities; and

WHEREAS, we wish to bequeath to our children and their descendants the Earth at least as beautiful and biologically diverse as the one we now enjoy; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has long been committed to addressing environmental issues as part of our call to justice, sustainability, and solidarity with affected communities, in conjunction with our partners in the Lutheran World Federation and Lutheran World Relief; and

WHEREAS, the steps taken to date to mitigate climate change are grossly inadequate, and the climate science points to the urgency of taking action to rein in global warming due to "the nearness of climate tipping points, beyond which climate dynamics can cause rapid changes out of humanity's control;" and

WHEREAS, delaying action will increase dramatically the costs of preventing dangerous climate change, while taking strong actions now, using existing technologies, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can help to mitigate the ultimate severity of the effects of global warming and provide a more hopeful future for humans and other-than-human species now living, and for all future generations; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly direct the Northeastern Ohio Synod Council to undertake appropriate actions to communicate to congregations the urgency of this issue; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly direct the Northeastern Ohio Synod Council to consider establishing a Creation Care Task Force having a mission to aid its member congregations in dealing with this serious issue; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly direct the Northeastern Ohio Synod Council to forward this resolution to the ELCA Church Council for consideration and possible action.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive with gratitude the resolution of the Northeastern Ohio Synod related to global climate change;
To acknowledge the continuing efforts and commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to address environmental issues as part of its call to justice, sustainability, and solidarity with affected communities, in conjunction with partners across this church; and

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

**B. ELCA Health and Benefits Program
Southeastern Minnesota Synod (3I)**

WHEREAS, both the North American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ are encouraging congregations, clergy, and laity to leave the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); and

WHEREAS, some clergy have violated the governing documents of the ELCA by encouraging their congregations to leave the ELCA; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2011 Southeastern Minnesota Synod in assembly request that the Church Council consider removing, from the health and benefits program of this church, clergy who have left the ELCA.

Church Council Action [CC11.08.59]

To receive with gratitude the resolution of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod related to ELCA Health and Benefits program;

To refer the resolution to the Board of Pensions in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Office of the Secretary and Office of the Treasurer;

To request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2011 meeting of the Church Council; and

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

Response from the ELCA Board of Pensions (November 2011)

The ELCA Board of Pensions thanks the Southeastern Minnesota Synod for sharing a concern relative to participation in the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Program (benefits program). Leaders and staff of the Board of Pensions understand the concern related to the manner in which some congregations, pastors and individuals have left the ELCA and have sought to draw others away from the ELCA. While we believe it is not appropriate for the Board of Pensions to make comments about specifics of this matter, we remain hopeful that all transitions from the ELCA and ongoing relationships will be respectful—even as this church, through the Board of Pensions, seeks to fulfill the mission of providing “retirement, health, and related benefits and services to enhance the well-being of those who serve through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other faith-based organizations.”

As a separately incorporated ministry of the ELCA, the Board of Pensions seeks to ensure that the benefits program remains an efficient, cost-effective source of benefits for this church. We believe one way to assist in doing this is through efforts to encourage participation of other faith-based organizations as allowed for in the governing documents. Greater participation in the program increases assets under management, broadens the health-risk pool and allows us to realize better economies of scale. We believe that such inclusive efforts help to provide for greater stability and efficiency for plan members sponsored in the benefits program.

Currently, we are doing further research to gain a fuller understanding as to the impact of participation levels, and as per a recent request from the ELCA Conference of Bishops we intend to share our findings with the Conference of Bishops, Churchwide leadership, and the Church Council.

Church Council Action [CC11.11.80]

To thank the Southeastern Minnesota Synod for its resolution related to the ELCA Health and Benefits Program; To receive the report of the ELCA Board of Pensions prepared in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Office of the Secretary and Office of the Treasurer;

To request that a report from the ELCA Board of Pensions on the impact of participation levels be brought to the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council; and

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

Response from Portico Benefit Services (November 2012)

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod has requested that clergy who have left the ELCA be removed from the health and benefits program of the church. This comes as a result of encouragement by some former ELCA congregations that have joined the NALC or LCMC that current ELCA congregations leave the ELCA. Portico Benefit Services (Portico) recognizes the challenges facing synods and congregations today brought on by the departure of many former ELCA congregations. We thank the Southeastern Minnesota Synod for sharing these concerns that some former ELCA congregations continue to act in this manner.

After considering the real and potential implications of this resolution, however, Portico believes its adoption would not be in the best interest of ELCA plan members, ELCA employers, and this church. We arrive at this position from two perspectives—the direction given to Portico in the ELCA governing documents and from examining the potential impact on the cost of benefits for members and employers participating in the ELCA benefit plans.

As a unit of the ELCA, Portico is bound by the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, as adopted at various churchwide assemblies (17.20.A11. *Responsibilities of the Board of Pensions*). The following, taken from this document, provides direction to the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (dba Portico Benefit Services) relating to its ministry. As part of its ministry, Portico has responsibility to:

- “manage and operate the Pension and Other Benefits Program for this church and plans for other organizations operated exclusively for religious purposes, and shall invest the assets according to fiduciary standards set forth in the plans and trusts.”
- “provide retirement, health, and other benefits exclusively for the benefit of eligible members working within the structure of this church and other organizations operated exclusively for religious purposes.”
- “be self-supporting...with all costs being paid from the administrative and management charges to the employers and members utilizing the plans and from investment income.”
- “manage its finances in a manner that assures an efficient and effective administration of the plans for retirement and other benefits.”
- “manage assets, as requested, for the ELCA and other organizations operated exclusively for religious purposes.”

Portico understands this language as a directive to serve the ELCA and other faith based organizations in an inclusive, yet prudent manner, following sound and efficient business practices. The ELCA has a history of ecumenism, and Portico has a long history of working cooperatively with other denominational church plans to solve common benefit problems relating to clergy and lay church workers. One of the more notable examples of this has been the preservation of the manner in which housing allowance is treated under the tax laws. Prohibiting individuals from staying in our plans seems to run counter to this cooperative, inclusive history.

From an insurance and business perspective, more lives enrolled in the benefits program and more assets under management create efficiencies from which all plan members share. Instead of prohibiting membership, we should be doing all we can to retain and grow our membership. The following examples provide some relevant background information:

- Each ELCA Retirement Plan participant pays a portion of the internal costs required to administer the plan through a charge against the investment returns on his or her account balance. Total internal administrative costs incurred by Portico to manage the ELCA Retirement Plan are generally “fixed” in nature. These costs do not vary significantly by the number of plan participants. Thus, if a segment of current plan members is prohibited from participating in the retirement plan, the rest of the plan members will be charged the cost otherwise attributed to the departing plan participants. As of August 31, 2012, the ELCA Retirement Plan held assets of \$70 million owned by 253 former ELCA clergy who have joined either the NALC or the LCMC. These 253 account holders will absorb about \$525,000 of annual administrative costs that would have to be paid by the remaining plan participants if the resolution is adopted, thus reducing future investment returns, future account balances, and future retirement benefits for all remaining plan participants.

In addition, Portico engages professional external organizations to manage certain asset funds, and the benefit trusts are charged a contractually specified fee for the services rendered. The fees are realized as a charge against fund earnings, and therefore as a reduction in the investment return of each participant in the ELCA Retirement Plan. The fee charged is dependent on the magnitude of the assets under management. As asset fund balances grow (fall), the asset management fee as a percent of asset falls (rises). At specified asset balance levels, the fee changes automatically and the magnitude of such changes could have a meaningful impact on individual plan member retirement account balances. For example, a current fee of 15-20 basis points could increase as much as 10 basis points resulting in lower accumulation balances for active members, and lower annuity adjustments for retired/annuitized members.

- The long-term financial viability of the ELCA Medical-Dental Benefits Plan and the ELCA Disability Benefits Plan rely on the existence of a broad cross-section of medical risks. The current average age of plan members is about 53. Health costs and disability incidence rates increase with age, especially after age 50. We estimate the average medical costs of an individual in the age group 55-59 to be about 20% higher than that of the 50-54 age group. If the average age of plan members increases over time because younger plan members leave the plans, or because they are prohibited from staying in the plans, then the cost of ELCA health and disability benefits is likely to increase faster than otherwise expected. A 15-20% increase in the cost of the ELCA health plan translates into about \$20 million of ELCA resources that could have otherwise gone to ministry.
- Portico pays administrative fees to external benefit partners, e.g. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota and Delta Dental, on a per-household basis. While it may seem logical that fewer covered lives would result in lower costs, the service contract of each benefit partner includes a provision that allows it to raise the cost per household if membership decreases below specified levels. Higher administrative fees translate into higher plan contributions for no additional service benefits to members.

Working in partnership across denominational lines has saved ELCA employers millions of dollars collectively in the form of negotiated discounts on pharmacy benefit costs. Cost efficiencies and financial soundness are most likely to be achieved by increasing the size of our risk pool, not decreasing it. The pharmacy cost savings (over \$4 million per year for the ELCA) would not have been possible without these partnerships.

For the reasons cited above, Portico respectfully asks the Church Council not to adopt this resolution.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive the response and report from Portico Benefit Services on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America health and benefits program;

To express appreciation to the Southeastern Minnesota Synod for sharing the concerns and challenges faced by synods and congregations brought on by the departure of many former ELCA congregations;

To affirm the recommendation of Portico Benefit Services that clergy plan members who have left the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America not be removed from the health and benefits program of this church; and

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

C. Analysis, Assessment, and Measurement of New Mission Starts and Congregations in Redevelopment Southwest California Synod (2B)

WHEREAS, since 2004, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) has spent \$80,627,031 on new and renewing congregations. According to outside statistics, of the \$80 million invested over the past eight years, \$36 million has not produced lasting viable congregations; and

WHEREAS, in the past decade, no Southwest California Synod mission start has become self-sustaining; and

WHEREAS, within the territory of the Southwest California Synod, the level of investment through 2011 for existing mission starts and redevelopments was \$1,292,281, and, of that amount, \$145,700 went to new congregations that have, as yet, failed to organize; and

WHEREAS, the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit has expressed a need to reduce financial support for five mission start congregations in the Southwest California Synod; and

WHEREAS, overall, Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church have raised and spent over one trillion dollars on domestic ministry during the past two decades, yet there has been no measurable increase in one of the primary expressed purposes of the Church: to lead people to Christ and have them commit their lives to him; and

WHEREAS, the churchwide organization does not keep failure statistics but current inter-denominational statistics show, at worst, the failure rate of mission developments and redevelopments as an 80 percent failure rate over a 10- year period, and at best, within the first four years, the failure rate is over 45 percent. These percentages lead one to the conclusion that the ELCA has a 55 percent success rate for mission developments, inferring that, of every dollar being invested in mission starts, 45 cents has no return. Most organizations would understand these numbers to be a sign of poor stewardship and flawed methodology; and

WHEREAS, studies indicate that mission starts that have more than three set years of funding have a declining opportunity for viability and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, coaching is seen as “the most effective means of empowering missional leaders in a changing world.” Furthermore, mission developers that have met with a mentor weekly have congregations that are more than twice the size of mission developers that did not have mentors; and

WHEREAS, research shows that pastors who experience a traumatic failure in their first mission start never overcome that experience; and

WHEREAS, mission developers with a clear picture of the process, risks, possibilities, goals, and expectations have a 400 percent increased chance at successful development; and

WHEREAS, mission developers that have clear modes of accountability from their denomination, their local network (i.e., synod) within the areas of finances, entrepreneurial leadership, mentorship, and call expectations have an increased opportunity toward viability by over 563 percent. Where assessment is done early and often, by year four those communities are 27 percent larger than communities where little to no assessment was done; and

WHEREAS, three of our Synod Goals focus on intentional outreach and two other Goals focus on development of new congregations and the transformation of existing congregations; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod Council request that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America direct the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to create a research design using appropriate methodology and standardized measurement scales for mission starts and redeveloping congregations, specifically looking at early qualitative and quantitative assessments of mission development pastors, realistic financial support strategies, concurrent assessment practices, and further diversification of church planting strategies, including concepts for further long-term development and support for developing pastors, inner-city, and ethnocentric specific mission start strategies and early viability and sustainability assessments; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church use additional psychological and behavioral standardized assessment tools in the process of identifying mission developers; and to implement a mentoring program for every mission developer; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this church looks toward our full-communion partnerships for alternative methodologies and analytical tools, for direct partnerships and for church developer peer support teams.

Executive Committee Action [EC12.04.12]

To receive the resolution of the Southwest California Synod Council related to new mission starts and congregations in redevelopment;

To refer the resolution to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2012 meeting of the ELCA Church Council; and

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

Response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

We addressed this request with the Program and Services Committee of the Church Council at the April 2012 meeting. At that time, Kenneth Inskip of Research & Evaluation worked with the CSM unit on a process for this study. After an initial review of the literature and additional conversation with CSM and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Research and Evaluation is proposing a comprehensive review of the actions of this church with regard to new mission starts and congregations. Over the years, both the environment for starting new missions and the increasingly participatory approach to new mission development have added to the complexity of evaluation. The important and significant involvement of synods and local congregations deserves attention and this takes time. We also want to more fully explore the strategies of other religious groups. A preliminary report, which gives initial results of the church’s actions from 2006 to the present, will be available by the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council, but we are requesting additional time to fully engage developers, synods, congregations, and other religious groups in the review. We are proposing a full report be made to the November 2013 meeting of the Church Council.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To acknowledge and affirm the ongoing work of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit;

To anticipate a full report and possible recommendations to the November 2013 meeting of the Church Council; and

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

D. Electronic Notification for Congregations Southwestern Washington Synod (1C)

WHEREAS, delivery of documents and notification of meetings can be effectively accomplished at a lower economic and environmental cost by email and other electronic means; and

WHEREAS, an increasing proportion of congregation members prefer to receive documents and notification via email and other electronic means; and

WHEREAS, the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America requires at *C6.05., *C16.03., *C17.01., and *C17.04. and recommends at C10.03. that documents and notifications be provided by mail; and

WHEREAS, the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America makes no provision for providing such notifications and documents by email or other electronic means; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly request that modifications to the Model Constitution for Congregations be prepared and recommended to the Churchwide Assembly to allow for prudent use of email and other electronic means to provide notice and documents to congregational members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly direct the Southwestern Washington Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council's Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

Executive Committee Action [EC12.07.22b]

To receive the resolution from the Southwestern Washington Synod requesting modifications to the "Model Constitution for Congregations" regarding electronic notifications for congregations;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Secretary with a request that a report and possible recommendations be brought to the November 2012 meeting of the ELCA Church Council; and

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

Response from the Office of the Secretary

The Office of the Secretary welcomes suggestions from all sources for updates to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. After thoroughly considering potential changes, it forwards to the Church Council in the fall of each year prior to a Churchwide Assembly a list of potential amendments. The Church Council reviews that list carefully and then decides whether to recommend the potential amendments to the Churchwide Assembly for adoption.

Among the potential amendments this year are the following, which address the concerns of the Southwestern Washington Synod. The proposed changes are consistent with changes that have been made to the constitution of the ELCA as well as to the *Constitution for Synods* and have been shared with the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. No change is being proposed to *C6.05 because it concerns the process of the termination of the relationship between a congregation and the ELCA.

C10.03. Notice of all meetings of this congregation shall be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law, to all [voting] members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. The posting of such notice in the regular mail, with the regular postage affixed or paid, sent to the last known address of such members shall be sufficient. Electronic notice of meetings may be provided in addition to notice by regular mail.

C12.13. The Congregation Council and its committees may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, and, to the extent permitted by state law, notice of all meetings may be provided electronically.

***C16.03.** Changes to the bylaws may be proposed by any voting member, provided that such additions or amendments be submitted in writing to the Congregation Council at least 60 days before a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation's members by mail of the proposal with the council's recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the Congregation Meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C17.01.** Unless provision *C17.04. is applicable, those sections of this constitution that are not required, in accord with the *Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, may be amended in the following manner. Amendments may be proposed by at least _____ voting members or by the Congregation Council. Proposals must be filed in writing with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by this congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for that purpose. The Congregation Council shall notify the congregation’s members by mail of the proposal together with the council’s recommendations at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. Notification may take place by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law.

***C17.04.** This constitution may be amended to bring any section into conformity with a section or sections, either required or not required, of the Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as most recently amended by the Churchwide Assembly. Such amendments may be approved by a simple majority vote of those voting members present and voting at any legally called meeting of the congregation without presentation at a prior meeting of the congregation, provided that the Congregation Council has submitted by mail or electronic means, as permitted by state law. notice to the congregation of such an amendment or amendments, together with the council’s recommendations, at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Upon the request of voting members of the congregation, the Congregation Council shall submit such notice and call such a meeting. Following the adoption of an amendment, the secretary of the congregation shall submit a copy thereof to the synod. Such provisions shall become effective immediately following a vote of approval.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive with gratitude the resolution of the Southwestern Washington Synod requesting modifications to the “Model Constitution for Congregations” regarding electronic notifications for congregations;

To receive the response of the Office of the Secretary to the synod for the modifications and acknowledge the potential amendments proposed to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

To request the secretary inform the synod of this action.

**E. A Call to Peaceful Resolution of the Conflict with Iran
Southern Ohio Synod (6F)**

WHEREAS, we are living in fearful, unstable times, when the drumbeat of war and the rhetoric against Iran is escalating and the leaders of this nation are tempted toward militarism as a solution to the conflict over nuclear proliferation, much as they were in conflicts with Afghanistan and Iraq a decade ago; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is called to be a public church, giving witness to the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, in the public square; and

WHEREAS, the Holy Scriptures are very clear about the Judeo-Christian call for peace, the Old Testament prophets envisioned the kingdom of God as characterized by peace (e.g., swords beaten into plowshares, nation not lifting up sword against nation, and no more war [Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3–4]), and Jesus taught peace (e.g., blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God [Matthew 5:9], love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you [Matthew 5:44], all who take the sword will perish by the sword [Matthew 26:52], peace I leave you, my peace I give to you [John 14:27]); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statement, *For Peace in God’s World*, says, among other things, “We confess that too often we have fallen short in our responsibility for peace. . . . When the Church fulfills the mandates of its divine calling, it helps in word and deed to create an environment conducive to peace. . . . The Church is a disturbing presence when it refuses to be silent and instead speaks the truth in times when people shout out, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace’ (Jeremiah 6:14). . . . As citizens we are to seek to influence our nation’s actions for peace among the nations We also affirm that governments should vigorously pursue less coercive measures over more coercive ones: consent over compulsion, nonviolence over violence, diplomacy over military engagement, and deterrence over war First and foremost, love of neighbor obligates us to act to prevent wars and to seek alternatives to them, especially in view of modern weapons and their proliferation;” and

WHEREAS, the public demonization and caricature of the people of Iran mitigates seeing them as created in the image of God with the same hopes for opportunity, peace, and the possibility of abundant life that U.S. citizens have; and

WHEREAS, our growing national debt magnifies the need for a “peace dividend” (i.e., “swords into plowshares” theology); and

WHEREAS, a policy of containment toward nations that are nuclear threats has proven successful in resolving international conflict, for example, the Cold War containment of the Soviet Union and its allies for more than 40 years; and

WHEREAS, the pursuit of peace is less about what happens after war breaks out than it is about what should happen long before war begins, therefore, time is of the essence in order to avoid war; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southern Ohio Synod Assembly memorialize the 2013 Churchwide Assembly and ask the Synod Council of the Southern Ohio Synod to urge the Church Council to direct the appropriate churchwide units to contact the President of the United States of America and the Congress urging the United States and its allies to work with the leaders of Iran for a peaceful resolution to the conflict over nuclear proliferation. Included in this memorial would be communication of an express prohibition of a United States first strike against Iran, and acceptance of military engagement as a last resort only after every effort of sustained, direct, bilateral, and comprehensive talks with Iran on the nuclear issue and other issues of mutual concern have been exhausted; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southern Ohio Synod Assembly likewise direct the Southern Ohio Synod Council to contact Ohio's U.S. Senators, as well as all members of the United States Congress serving districts in the geography of the Synod, asking them to support working with the leaders of Iran for a peaceful resolution to the conflict over nuclear proliferation. Such communication would include an express prohibition of a United States first strike against Iran, and acceptance of military engagement as a last resort only after every effort of sustained, direct, bilateral and comprehensive talks with Iran on the nuclear issue and other issues of mutual concern have been exhausted; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southern Ohio Synod Assembly encourage Bishop Holloway and all rostered leaders of the Synod to be a public voice for peaceful resolution to the conflict with Iran through personal and congregational prayer, teaching, and public communications, including editorials in newspapers.

[The Office of the Secretary has determined that the Southern Ohio Synod Assembly memorial, "A Call to Peaceful Resolution of the Conflict with Iran," is a resolution that more properly should have been forwarded to the Synod Council. This resolution will be transmitted to the Church Council through its Executive Committee.]

Executive Committee Action [EC12.07.22c]

To receive the resolution from the Southern Ohio Synod regarding a call for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Iran;

To refer the resolution to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Public Policy Procedures Group, with a request that a report be brought to the November 2012 meeting of the ELCA Church Council; and

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

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop

The Office of the Presiding Bishop consulted with the Public Policy Procedures Group to assist in this response. The Public Policy Procedures Group (PPPG) is convened by a member of the Office of the Presiding Bishop and includes staff from all three program units of the churchwide organization as well as additional staff from the Office of the Presiding Bishop. One of the intentions of the group is to consider how the churchwide organization helps in word and deed to achieving just, peaceful and sustainable livelihoods for impoverished and vulnerable people and communities. We are grateful to the Southern Ohio Synod for their concern that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America be a public voice for peaceful resolution to the conflict with Iran.

After reviewing the request from the Southern Ohio Synod, the PPPG recommended a letter be written acknowledging the work of the current White House administration and encouraging a position consistent with the Southern Ohio Synod's resolution. This letter will be signed by the executive directors of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit and the Global Mission unit. Furthermore, PPPG also recommended that copies of the letter be sent to the U.S. Senators and relevant Representatives from the state of Ohio. Due to the presidential election, the letter will be sent after the election cycle is completed in early November 2012. If new leaders are elected, it is recommended that the letter be sent to the new leaders as they prepare their administration and offices for public service.

The Office of the Presiding Bishop supports these recommendations.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive the response provided by the Office of the Presiding Bishop related to the resolution of the Southern Ohio Synod regarding a call for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Iran;

To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop continue with the recommendations proposed by the Public Policy Procedures Group; and

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

II. RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

Previously referred to units by Church Council or Executive Committee

A. Bullying, Harassment, and Related Violence

Memorials Category A1: Churchwide Assembly Action [CA11.03.13]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Alaska, Eastern Washington-Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountain, Eastern North Dakota, Northwestern Minnesota, Northeastern Minnesota, Southwestern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, Saint Paul Area, Southeastern Minnesota, Central States, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, Metropolitan Chicago, Northern Illinois, Central/Southern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Northeastern Iowa, Northern Great Lakes, Greater Milwaukee Area, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Southern Ohio, New Jersey, New England, Metropolitan New York, Upstate New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Allegheny, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida-Bahamas synods related to bullying, harassment, and related violence;

To encourage new partnerships among the churchwide organization, synods, congregations, campus and outdoor ministries, Lutheran School Associations, Lutherans Concerned/North America, Lutheran Social Services organizations, public schools, counseling centers, and other governmental organizations in order to support the prevention of bullying, harassment, and other related violence, especially with higher-risk populations;

To encourage these partnerships to create or join with existing preventative programs that:

- a. utilize positive, inclusive, empowering and developmentally appropriate materials;
- b. raise participants' awareness about the issue;
- c. focus on prevention;
- d. seek to change bystander behavior into ally behavior;
- e. create partnerships between youth and adults; and
- f. address the use and abuse of social media and technology as they are used to bully and harass others;

To encourage these partnerships to seek funding for these efforts from existing and/or new funding sources not otherwise accessible individually, such as foundation grants, synod and other Lutheran organizational grants, and private and governmental funding sources;

To refer these memorials to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in order to facilitate and communicate these efforts in collaboration with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Men in Mission, and Lutheran Services in America, with the request that ELCA-related educational, social service, and youth and young adult networks continue to expand their ministries in support of new partnerships to prevent bullying, harassment, and related forms of violence against high-risk groups and to support and publicize such efforts throughout this church; and

To request that the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit report to the ELCA Church Council at its November 2012 meeting.

Response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

ELCA early childhood education centers and schools provide safe environments that teach and model ethical and just living for children, educating students to reject behaviors such as bullying. A leading example is the annual peace day celebrations at Leif Ericson Day School (pre-school through grade 8) in Brooklyn, New York, through which students re-commit themselves to peace and non-violence within their families and communities.

ELCA colleges and universities stand against harassment of all forms, including bullying, both by policy and through educational programs. Many educational programs are part of regular student orientation sessions. Occasional programs address more specific concerns, such as ensuring that bullying behavior is absent from fraternity and sorority recruitment or induction practices. Recent examples of anti-bullying efforts include: (1) California Lutheran University has added bullying specifically to its harassment policy; (2) Wartburg College is implementing a robust bystander intervention program to complement its Project Respect training, available to all students, faculty and staff; and (3) Wittenberg University is hosting this fall documentary film maker, Lee Hirsch, who was recently featured in the New York Times for his latest work, *Bully*, which "arrives at a moment when bullying, long tolerated as a fact of life, is being redefined as a social problem."

Bullying was addressed at the 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering, most prominently from the main stage in the Superdome. On one evening, the program included four different monologs that covered multiple aspects of bullying, including body image, sexual orientation, disability, and immigration or heritage. The monologues were delivered by four students, Josiah Williams, India Mayer, Kelly Wallace, and Eric Hoelzl, who also helped to write them. After the completion of the monologs, Bishop Hanson offered a word of confession, forgiveness, and invitation to the entire

gathered community. We specifically wanted Bishop Hanson to speak to the pain of bullying, our inaction through our silence, and our ability as individuals and as the body of Christ to stand up and speak up to end bullying. On another night, Jamie Nabozny, whose story of severe harassment by his peers was made into a documentary called “Bullied,” told his story from the main stage at the Gathering. In addition, the Women of the ELCA sponsored a workshop at the Gathering, on identifying and preventing bullying.

Utilizing social media to provide ongoing training, The Pacific Violence Prevention Institute is presenting “Prepare Us to be A Sanctuary,” a 5-part webinar online training program for pastors, youth directors, and other adults working in religious communities to create a safer and more supportive space for their youth. The dates and times of the webinar are:

- January 9, 8 pm (EST): Recognizing Bullying Behavior in your Community
- January 16, 8 pm (EST): Recognizing and Responding to Social Constructs that Contribute to Bullying Behavior
- January 30, 8 pm (EST): Promoting Ally Behavior
- February 6, 8 pm (EST): Supporting Victims on Bullying and Harassment
- February 13, 8 pm (EST): Putting Information into Action: Creating Effective Programming for Youth.

Registration information on participating in this webinar will be circulated throughout the CSM & LSS networks. Information about the on-line training program can be found at www.pvpi.org/onlinetraining.

Response from Lutheran Men in Mission

In response to the memorial on bullying, Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) will continue assisting men to build strong, healthy friendships. LMM, recently developed the I-Go model for older and middle age men to develop friendships, especially, with younger men. The model involves identifying, inviting and investing a younger man in your life, invite into friendship and invest time in him. This resource is found in the book “Coming of Age.”

The LMM One Year to Live Retreat also creates a safe place for men to honestly open up and begin to develop life changing relationships. Visit the website www.lutheranmeninmission.org and learn more about these resources.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive with gratitude the responses of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit and Lutheran Men in Mission regarding bullying, harassment, and related violence;

To acknowledge the reports as the response of the Church Council to the action of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly; and

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

B. Immigration Reform

Memorials Category A6: Churchwide Assembly Action [CA11.04.26]

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod in support of immigration reform and the DREAM Act (The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act), which would provide a path for citizenship for undocumented high school graduates;

To affirm the commitment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to support comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act;

To request that the presiding bishop of this church communicate to the president and members of Congress the support of the ELCA for comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act; and

To encourage all ELCA synods, congregations, and members to add their voices in support of comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act.

Church Council Action [CC11.11.83e]

To request that the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit, in collaboration with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, bring to the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council a report on its activities associated with its support of comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act.

Response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

In November 2011, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson sent a letter to Congress and President Obama in support of comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act. This letter was a direct result of the memorial on Immigration

Reform passed at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly. The letter was also sent to all rostered leaders, some of whom were able to use the letter in their own ministry work with migrants. One such example is the West Berks Mission of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod's approval of a motion proposed by the Rev. Bruce Osterhout of St. Luke's/Christ Partnership Parish in Reading, Pa., to allocate funding to improve local immigration services.

A memorial on Confronting Injustice in State Immigration Initiatives was also passed at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly. Finally, in November 2011, 58 synod bishops of the ELCA signed a letter to Congress and the President opposing harsh state immigration laws and encouraging a fair and humane overhaul of the immigration system. The following provides a summary of related activities of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit (CSM), in partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), and other ELCA partners in support of fair and humane immigration reform and the DREAM Act.

Advocacy for Comprehensive Immigration Reform and National Solutions

The churchwide advocacy staff along with LIRS hosted the bishops of the Immigration Ready Bench in Washington, D.C., for an advocacy day with members of Congress and administration staff at the White House in November 2011.

The bishops encouraged members of Congress to take the following actions:

- Support comprehensive immigration reform.
- Oppose harmful proposals that would increase spending on immigration detention and prolong indefinite detention for certain migrants.
- Support legislation to extend vital assistance for refugee seniors and persons with disabilities.

The bishops encouraged President Obama to do the following:

- Continue to engage with Congress and the American public on the topic of immigration reform.
- Ensure that the implementation of new strict state immigration laws do not contradict the Administration's immigration priorities.
- Include immigration detainees in the deportation policy review process and expand the categories of immigrants eligible to benefit. While our immigration system certainly needs greater flexibility, the new policy unnecessarily excludes detainees and is too narrow.
- Implement a stateside waiver process for undocumented immigrants with pending family-based petitions. This would allow immigrants to begin this process in the United States rather than having to return to their home countries and face uncertainty and family separation.

LIRS and the ELCA welcomed an announcement from the Department of Homeland Security in January 2012 that it would take steps toward implementing the statewide waiver process for undocumented immigrant family members of U.S. citizens. This policy change would help uphold family unity and encourage many immigrants to come forward to obtain legal status. LIRS submitted a formal comment to the government in support of the government's proposed rule and led coalition efforts to ensure broad support for the change to take place.

In July 2012, the ELCA publicly expressed its support for the "Evangelical Statement of Principles for Immigration Reform," made by a group of ecumenical Christian leaders including Steven Bauman, president and CEO of World Relief, and Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals. The statement echoed some of the ELCA's own principles, such as respecting the God-given dignity of every person, upholding family unity, and establishing a pathway to legal status and citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

In August 2012, LIRS convened a second Lutheran Immigration Leadership Summit in Minneapolis, MN. Participants included the ELCA's Immigration Ready Bench, representatives from ELCA churchwide ministries, and local advocates. The gathering included site visits to an immigration court, a detention facility, and LIRS's new local Community-Based Support partners that provide legal and social services to migrants released from detention. LIRS staff briefed the participants on national and state immigration issues and opportunities to engage in advocacy with LIRS. Participants also dialogued about how to best advocate within their communities and ministries.

- In the absence of major legislative opportunities for immigration reform, LIRS also worked in 2012 to lift up the voices of Lutheran leaders on a number of advocacy efforts to protect migrant populations:
- Several Congressional spending proposals threatened to revoke from eligibility the Child Tax Credit for any individual who files taxes with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number. This would have the effect of denying a tax credit to working immigrant families, impacting 4-5 million children. In February 2012, LIRS encouraged 24

ELCA bishops and Lutheran social ministry executives to write letters to members of Congress opposing this proposed change.

- The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization has typically included protections for migrant survivors of domestic violence and serious crimes. While the Senate passed a version of the bill that would improve these protections, the House passed a version that would have significantly weakened them. Between February and May 2012, ELCA bishops and social ministry executives sent 17 letters to members of Congress urging support for migrant survivors.
- In September 2012, 16 ELCA leaders signed a faith leaders' letter to protect funding for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which provides integration and self-sufficiency services to refugees, asylees, victims of torture and human trafficking, and unaccompanied refugee and migrant children. Congress eventually passed a stopgap spending bill that increased this funding.
- CSM and other ELCA leaders offered stories and quotations for LIRS's work to extend the non-ministerial religious worker visa program. Legislation to renew the program for three years passed both houses of Congress and was signed into law in September 2012.

The DREAM Act and Protection for DREAMers

In the fall of 2011, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) encouraged congregations to hold DREAM Act Sabbaths to raise awareness about the experience of "DREAMers," young people who would be eligible for the DREAM Act, and encourage support for the DREAM Act. LIRS developed resources for congregations to connect the stories of DREAMers to Scripture, resources about the federal legislation, and the LIRS "Mythbuster" resource to clear up myths and facts about our broken immigration system. This campaign led to many such events at ELCA congregations and on-line advocacy actions in support of the legislation.

LIRS first called for DREAMers to receive deferred action, a temporary protection from deportation along with work authorization, in 2010. Growing frustration with failure to pass the DREAM Act and the Department of Homeland Security's enforcement actions led to greater calls to halt deportations for DREAMers. In June 2012, President Obama announced a decision to provide this protection for people who arrived in the United States before turning 16 and are younger than 30, do not have a criminal record, have lived in the United States for five years and have some educational achievement or military service. In August 2012, the Department of Homeland Security began to accept applications for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, the first large-scale legalization program in recent history. While LIRS and the ELCA applauded this action, which accomplishes some of the goals of the DREAM Act, much more work is needed to ensure that these young people have a path to permanent legal status.

In Maryland, LIRS has launched a campaign to educate Lutheran voters about a state-wide referendum in the November 2012 elections on the Maryland "DREAM Act," a law to provide in-state tuition to undocumented immigrant college students.

Arizona v. United States – Anti-Immigrant State Laws in the Absence of National Solutions

In the absence of comprehensive immigration reform, several states have passed harsh immigration enforcement laws intended to scrutinize every aspect of an undocumented immigrant's life. In April 2012, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments for the Department of Justice's lawsuit against the state of Arizona's harsh anti-immigrant law, SB 1070. LIRS and the ELCA joined an amicus brief with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Presbyterian Church-USA making the following arguments against the law:

SB 1070 impedes the considered and balanced judgment of federal immigration law. Specifically it undermines the federal goals of promoting family unity and human rights and dignity. The brief also argues that SB 1070 and laws like it threaten religious liberty by criminalizing so-called "harboring" and "transporting" of undocumented immigrants in such a way as to punish acts within the mission of religious organizations such as the provision of food, shelter, and care for all.

LIRS also joined an amicus brief with the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and other civil rights and humanitarian organizations. This brief documented the law's potential impact on U.S. citizens as well as immigrants with pending immigration claims such as asylum seekers.

In June, the Court struck down three of the law's four challenged provisions, specifically, those making it a crime for immigrants without work permits to seek employment; making it a crime for immigrants to fail to carry registration documents; and authorizing the police to arrest any immigrant they believe has committed a deportable offense. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court allowed Arizona to implement the so-called "papers-please" provision, which allows

law enforcement officers to verify the immigration status of anyone they detain if there is “reasonable suspicion” that the person is in the United States without proper documentation. The Court believed that it was too soon to rule on the provision but signaled openness to hearing future arguments on the provision’s constitutionality. LIRS and the ELCA hailed the decision as recognition that immigration law is a federal matter and an illustration of the need to act on immigration reform.

Bishop Stephen Talmage of the Grand Canyon Synod noted in July that the “exodus” of undocumented immigrants from Arizona had stopped after the Supreme Court’s decision. The Synod had passed a resolution in its synod assembly in May stating that the law was inconsistent with their “collective Christian belief and witness and harmful to the practical concerns and needs of Arizona.”

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive with gratitude the response of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit on its activities associated with its support of comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act;

To acknowledge this report as the response of the Church Council to the action of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly; and

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

C. Synodical Ratification Procedure

Southeastern Minnesota Synod (3I)

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod in assembly memorialize the 2011 Churchwide Assembly to direct the Church Council to present for consideration by the 2013 Churchwide Assembly a procedure that would require synodical ratification of social statements and amendments to churchwide governing documents.

Memorials Category B2: Churchwide Assembly Action [CA11.03.06c]

To receive with gratitude the memorial of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod concerning synodical ratification of social statements and amendments to churchwide governing documents;

To acknowledge that the issue of ratification has been considered many times in the life of the ELCA, most recently by the task force on Living Into the Future Together: Renewing the Ecology of the ELCA (LIFT);

To encourage further exploration of existing means of discussion and decision-making as well as new means, such as communal discernment and non-legislative gatherings, as recommended by the LIFT task force; and

To decline to institute synodical ratification of social statements and amendments to churchwide governing documents.

Church Council Action [CC11.11.83f]

To refer the third paragraph of the Churchwide Assembly’s action on Memorials Category B2: Synodical Ratification Procedure to the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

To request that a report and possible recommendations on that action be presented to the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop

The LIFT Advisory Committee has continued to explore ways that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in all its expressions furthers discussion and decision-making among its members. In their work they have noted that Global Events, Youth Gatherings and other large events in this church are excellent examples of non-legislative gatherings where leaders of the church could address missional issues, participate in theological study and reflection, foster leadership development, and enhance the interdependence of this church.

Conversations about better use of existing channels for discussion and discernment are also happening through the ongoing work of the Communal Discernment Task Force (CDTF). The members of the CDTF have provided a report to the Executive Committee of the Church Council regarding possibilities to facilitate discernment throughout this church in anticipation of churchwide officer elections at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly. They are also looking at ways to foster a culture and environment of trust for communal spiritual discernment and decision-making that engages not only rationality but also engages emotions in a positive and constructive way. Their suggestions have already been incorporated in recent meetings of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops.

The Addressing Social Concerns Review Task Force members are considering recommendations that will facilitate greater engagement in how this church addresses social concerns. One of the suggestions calls for enhanced communication, including the use of social media, both to distribute information and to receive feedback from members. Another suggestion is to identify and implement two different kinds of hearings regarding social statements, a hearing to introduce members to the issues and the proposed draft and a separate hearing intended to gather feedback from members about the draft. In addition, the task force is considering a broadened process of formal exploration of a particular social concern before a decision is made about the most appropriate way(s) to address the concern. One desirable outcome is to strengthen the awareness that the ELCA responds to social concerns in multiple ways, hopefully reducing the perceived separation between ministries of service and ministries of advocacy. This broadened process would also allow for the development of future social statements, when necessary, but not privilege social statements as the only way to truly address a social concern.

We recognize that the conversations and possibilities suggested thus far are not the end to this work. We are hopeful that they provide an impetus to engage even more fully in the ways that study and discussion of matters can increase the desired input into decision-making throughout this church.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive with gratitude the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop regarding ways that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in all its expressions, is exploring existing and new means of discussions and decision-making;

To encourage congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to continue to engage in opportunities for further study and discussion of matters important to the mission of this church;

To acknowledge this report as the response of the Church Council to the action of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly; and

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

D. Lutheran Campus Ministry

Memorials Category C1: Churchwide Assembly Action [CA11.05.39]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the Pacifica, Southwestern Minnesota, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Metropolitan Chicago, Northern Illinois, Central/Southern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Greater Milwaukee, Upstate New York, and South Carolina synods related to Lutheran Campus Ministry;

To acknowledge that ELCA campus ministry is a Lutheran ministry on campus, not just a ministry to Lutherans at more than 180 state and private colleges and universities, with cooperating congregations in campus ministry at an additional 400 campuses nationwide;

To recommend a liaison related to Lutheran Campus Ministry be established within the Conference of Bishops for consultation with representatives of Lutheran Campus Ministry-related constituencies, specifically students, Lutheran Campus Ministry staff, and synodical judicatories; and

To create a consultative protocol when any decisions proposed by the ELCA Church Council regarding Lutheran Campus Ministry are conducted with representatives of Lutheran Campus Ministry-related constituencies, specifically students, Lutheran Campus Ministry staff, and synodical judicatories.

Church Council Action [CC11.11.83g]

To refer Memorials Category C1: Lutheran Campus Ministry to the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit; in consultation with the Conference of Bishops and the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

To request that a report and possible recommendations be presented to the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

All matters related to the campus ministry program are handled by the New and Renewing Congregations Liaison Committee of the Conference of Bishops in consultation with CSM staff. The need for broader consultation on specific matters could be recommended by the liaison committee or the full Conference of Bishops.

CSM protocol for consulting with Lutheran Campus Ministry-related constituencies includes assigned responsibility as follows:

- Synod bishops - New and Renewing Congregations Liaison Committee meeting with CSM staff
- Regions, synods and local campus ministry advisory boards - Regional Coordinators
- Local campus ministry staff and students - CSM Executive Director and CSM campus ministry staff consult with the Campus Ministry Staff Advisory Committee which includes one local campus ministry staff person from each region. CSM relies on local campus ministry staff to consult with students and provide appropriate feedback.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive with gratitude the report of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in response to the memorial of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly related to Lutheran Campus Ministry;

To acknowledge this report as the response of the Church Council to the action of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly; and

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

E. Social Statement on Human Sexuality

Memorials Category E1: Churchwide Assembly Action [CA11.03.06h]

To receive with gratitude the memorials of the South Dakota, Metropolitan Chicago, Metropolitan New York, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C. synods, related to the social statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust;

To acknowledge both the sorrow and joy resulting from the decisions of the 2009 Churchwide Assembly;

To decline to reconsider this social statement; and

To request that the report to be prepared for the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council on the implementation of this social statement also be provided as information for the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Church Council Action [CC11.11.83i]

To request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop provide the report on the implementation of the social statement on human sexuality, which is due to the Church Council at its November 2012 meeting, to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly as information.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop

The Office of the Presiding Bishop acknowledges that the report on the implementation of the social statement on “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” was received and approved by the ELCA Church Council at the April 2012 meeting. [CC12.04.19c] We recommend that the full report received at that meeting be forwarded to the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as information.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop;

To forward the report on the implementation of the social statement on “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust” received in the April 2012 meeting of the Church Council to the 2013 Churchwide Assembly; and

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

F. Dialogue with the North American Lutheran Church

Motion D: Churchwide Assembly Action [CA11.05.32]

RESOLVED, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through the Office of the Presiding Bishop’s Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations invite dialogue with the North American Lutheran Church and to strive for a mutual relationship, where possible, for both the ELCA and the NALC.

Church Council Action [CC11.11.83i]

To request that the Office of the Presiding Bishop’s Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations staff bring a report and possible recommendations on Motion D: Dialogue with the North American Lutheran Church to the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop

Representatives of the ELCA and NALC met in Indianapolis, Indiana, on February 6–7, 2012. They agreed that the following summary would be the only official statement about the meeting.

In response to a resolution passed by the 2011 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), seeking conversation with the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), four representatives of each church body met on February 6–7, 2012 in Indianapolis, Indiana, for discussion of areas of disagreement, interest and concern.

The NALC representatives were: The Rev. Dr. David Wendel, Ministry Coordinator and Ecumenical Relations Officer; The Rev. Dr. Michael Tavella, Dean of the Atlantic Mission District; The Rev. James T. Lehmann, Dean of the Great Rivers Mission District; and Mr. Ryan Schwarz, Treasurer.

The ELCA representatives were: The Rev. Donald J. McCoid, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop: Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-religious relations; The Rev. Dr. Marcus Kunz, Assistant to the Bishop and Executive for Theological Discernment; The Rev. Dr. Marcus C. Lohrmann, Bishop of the Northwestern Ohio Synod; and The Rev. Kathryn Tiede, Pastor of Living Waters Lutheran Church and member of the Church Council.

In the 24 hours spent together, the representatives prayed, had Bible study and devotions, and engaged in cordial and candid conversation.

This meeting was not intended to, nor did the participants seek to, resolve issues between the two church bodies. Rather, the participants sought to share and clarify disagreements to improve mutual understanding.

Practical matters related to local mission and ministry were also significant topics of discussion, with hopes of future resolution.

This meeting, which was the first between the two bodies since the formation of the NALC in 2010, constituted an opening of lines of communication between the two churches. The representatives discussed the possibility of future meetings.

Donald McCoid and Marcus Kunz also attended the NALC Convocation at Golden Valley Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minnesota, on August 16–17, 2012. In addition, Marcus Kunz attended the Lutheran CORE convocation and theological conference that was held August 13-16 at the same location.

The Office of the Presiding Bishop has no recommendations at this time.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive the report of the Office of the Presiding Bishop in response to the memorial of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly on the dialogue with the North American Lutheran Church; and

To acknowledge the report as the response of the Church Council to the action of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

G. Congregational Offerings

Motion F: Churchwide Assembly Action [CA11.05.34]

To refer Motion F to the Mission Advancement unit, to be shared, along with other stewardship strategies, across this church, as appropriate.

Church Council Action [CC11.11.83m]

To request that the Mission Advancement unit present a report on its activities related to Motion F: Congregational Offerings to the November 2012 Church Council meeting.

Response from the Mission Advancement Unit

With thanks for the vision and generosity that inspired this proposal, the Mission Advancement unit determined that it would not be an effective strategy to put an emphasis on the 53 Sundays of 2012. While we hope that congregations will find that this occasion produces additional resources for mission and ministry, we recognize that the income and expense budget planning done by congregations and members is largely done on an annual basis that is not tied to the number of Sundays in a year. Given the complexities of budgets, the financial challenges of many congregations the past several years, and the relatively complex task of communicating this opportunity, the Mission Advancement unit felt it

would be more effective to pursue other strategies for inviting support of churchwide programs and encouraging and supporting strong stewardship practices within our congregations.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive with gratitude the report of the Mission Advancement unit in response to the memorial of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly on congregational offerings; and

To acknowledge the report as the response of the Church Council to the action of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

H. Youth-Related Matters

Motion H: Churchwide Assembly Action [CA11.05.36]

RESOLVED, that the 2011 Churchwide Assembly commend the churchwide and synodical expressions of the ELCA for beginning to implement continuing resolution 6.02.A09, adopted at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly, establishing a goal for this church that at least 10% of all churchwide and synodical assemblies, councils, committees, and boards be comprised of youth and young adults, and encourage the churchwide and synodical expressions to continue to find ways to involve youth and young adults in their governance structures; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA recognize the rich history of the Lutheran Youth Organization and affirm the work that it has accomplished since 1987; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly call upon the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit to maintain and strengthen a youth-led faith formation and leadership development organization based at the churchwide expression.

Church Council Action [CC11.11.83o]

To request that the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit present a report and possible recommendations on Motion H: Youth-Related Matters to the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

The Churchwide Assembly called upon CSM to “maintain and strengthen a youth-led faith formation and leadership organization based at the churchwide expression.”

At the time this resolution was passed in August 2011, CSM was already well along the way to reorganizing how the churchwide organization relates directly to youth. This process included members of the former Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) board, especially the executive committee, at every step in the planning process. Everyone involved in the process agreed that the LYO as it had functioned since the beginning of the ELCA was no longer working. A primary objective was to increase real youth participation in governance at all expressions of the ELCA. A second objective was to provide faith formation and leadership development opportunities for high school age youth. A third objective was to create and maintain a way for youth to provide on-going feedback and consultation with CSM and other churchwide staff moving forward.

In April 2012, the Church Council approved a reorganization plan for youth ministry including the dissolution of the LYO at the churchwide expression. The new organization for youth includes several strong elements. First, the ELCA Youth Gathering will continue as a major platform for youth engagement. While the Gathering event only takes place every three years, CSM is working in close cooperation with other partners in the ELCA youth ministry network to build on the critical relationships that were established in each synod to support the recent 2012 Youth Gathering program. The “Practice Discipleship” element of the Gathering program will be continued and supported by the churchwide organization in the next three-year Gathering cycle. This will provide a variety of faith formation resources for adults who work with youth in congregations.

Second, CSM is working closely with the Synodical Youth Ministry Band of Leaders (SYMBOL) and selected youth leaders to organize and sponsor an annual leadership development and faith formation event for youth in synodical leadership positions. Called, “The Event,” the first of these events will take place November 1-4, 2012 at Camp Carol Joy Holling in Nebraska. The Presiding Bishop will meet with this group.

Third, during the fourth quarter of 2012, CSM will accept nominations for and help to select a new 9-12 member youth Core Leadership Team. Members of the Core Leadership Team will serve for two years. This group will help to

plan “The Event” each year and also provide a way for CSM, other churchwide staff and the larger youth ministry network to hear directly from youth.

Finally, CSM is in the process of hiring a new Program Director for Youth Ministry. This person will have primary responsibility for developing and promoting healthy, cooperative relationships among all those who work toward building effective youth ministry programs in the ELCA.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive the report of the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit in response to the memorial of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly on youth-related matters;

To recognize with deep appreciation the ways that the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit maintains and strengthens a youth-led faith formation and leadership development organization at the churchwide expression; and

To acknowledge with gratitude the work of the church to actively involve youth and young adults in governance structures at the churchwide and synodical expressions, and to receive the report as the response of the Church Council to the action of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.

I. Native Americans and Alaska Natives

Motion J: 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 [CC11.11.83p]

To request that the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit bring a report and possible recommendations on Motion J: Native Americans and Alaska Natives to the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit

The Congregational & Synodical Mission unit is requesting an extension to our response to this Church Council motion until April 2013. This is due to the unexpected vacancy with our Program Director for American Indian/Native Alaska position in the CSM unit. We feel that the unit response would benefit from the leadership of the primary staff person who would be facilitating our response efforts as well as providing implementation and follow up. We are hoping that we would have staffing in place by the end of 2012.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

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 April 2013 meeting of the Church Council.

J. Mission Support

Motion L: Churchwide Assembly Action [CA11.05.38]

To refer Motion L to the Mission Advancement unit of the churchwide organization, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, for consideration consistent with other actions taken at this assembly.

Church Council Action [CC.11.11.83r]

To request that the Mission Advancement present a report on its activities related to Motion L: Mission Support to the November 2012 meeting of the Church Council.

Response from the Mission Advancement Unit

A Mission Funding Task Force was established to consider the question of how synods receive and distribute financial resources to support the whole ministry of this church, and to make recommendations for renewed, sustainable financial support. The Task Force work included discussion on the current guidelines for sharing mission support and consideration of new mission support models. A report of the Task Force is included in Exhibit G, Part 3.

Church Council Action:

[En Bloc]

To receive with gratitude the report of the Mission Advancement unit in response to the memorial of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly on mission support; and

To acknowledge the report and recommendations of the Mission Funding Task Force regarding the deep engagement and commitment to this issue as the response of the Church Council to the action of the 2011 Churchwide Assembly.