

ELCA Study on Civic Life and Faith: Responses to Study Sessions
Final Report
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Overview

The Evangelical Church in America (ELCA) is currently conducting a study on Civic Life and Faith. As part of the process, ELCA members and leaders were invited to participate in a six session study about religious liberty, the proper role of the church in relation to government, and many other topics. The first session was a core introduction, and the remaining five sessions could be done in any order according to the interests of the group. Each session included a teaching video, prayers, hymn suggestions, Scriptures, group discussion questions, suggested resources, and case studies taken from everyday life. Participants were invited to complete a response form after each session. The feedback was then presented to the task force to inform the draft of the social statement.

The study curriculum and surveys were posted online in January 2023, and a Spanish version was made available in June 2023. Participants also had the option to print out a paper copy of the survey and mail it in. This final report includes the online and paper responses collected through December 15, 2023.

Survey Results

The study is divided into six sessions, and participants were asked to complete a response form after each session. (See Appendix A for a complete list of frequencies.)

Table 1 shows the response rates for each session.

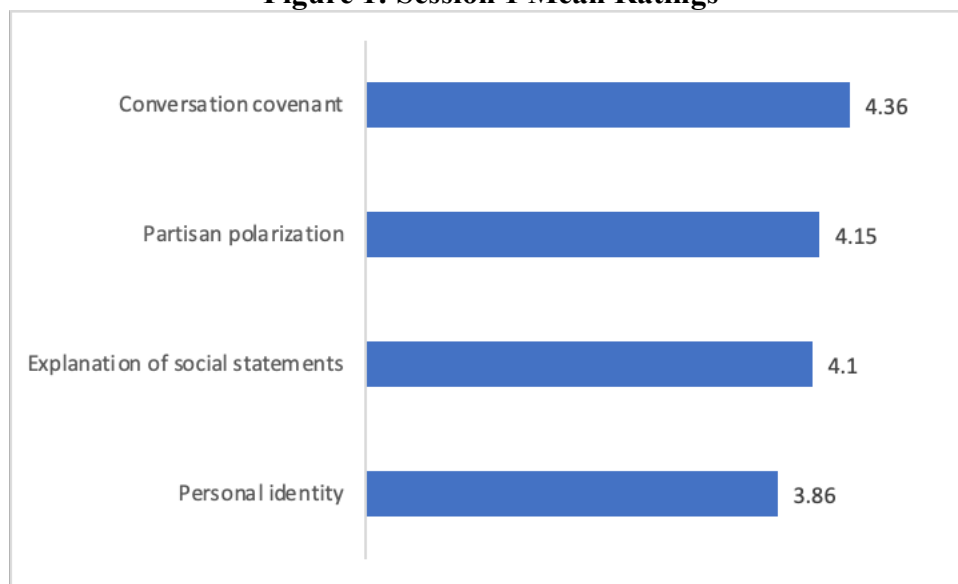
Table 1: Response Rates

Session	Number of Responses
1	444
2	330
3	328
4	252
5	237
6	207
Total	1798

Session 1 Responses: How is God's Invitation to Discipleship Lived Out in a Democracy?

In response to Session 1, participants were asked to rate how helpful they found several themes presented. Using a five-point rating scale, where 1 = “not helpful” and 5 = “very helpful,” over three-fourths of the participants felt “conversation covenant” was “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5; 84%), with an average rating of 4.36. (See Figure 1.) Similarly, “partisan polarization” was rated as “helpful” or “very helpful” by over three-fourths of the participants (76%), with an average rating of 4.15. Most of the participants also felt the “explanation of social statements” was “helpful” or “very helpful” (77%; average rating 4.10). The lowest ratings were found for “personal identity,” (average rating 3.86), with about 67 percent rating this topic as “helpful” or “very helpful.”

Figure 1: Session 1 Mean Ratings



Participants were also asked to rate the importance of the ideas from the session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not important” and 5 = “very important.” The large majority of participants felt the ideas were “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5; 82%), with an average rating of 4.29.

Each session had two or three open-ended questions where participants had the option to type or write their own comments. Responses to the open-ended questions were coded to find common themes. (See Appendix B for a complete list of comments.)

The first open-ended question asked participants to list the top two or three more important takeaways from the session. A total of 505 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was “respect for others' opinions and listening” (34%). Several participants listed “conversation covenant” (15%), while others listed “unity in Christian identity, not agreement” as an important takeaway (13%). A few participants listed the “definition of politics” as important (11%), while others felt “increased polarization, and the study on marriage across political parties” (7%) was an important takeaway from the session.

The second open-ended question asked participants if there was anything else they would like the task force to hear about the session. A total of 63 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was that they were “grateful for the opportunity to discuss and give feedback” (25%). Several participants said there were “too many topics to cover in the time allowed” (16%). A few participants felt the “video was confusing, too long, or boring,” (14%) and some would have liked a “discussion on ways Scripture aids discernment of faithful civic engagement” (10%). Finally, a few participants commented that “many potential voices are not engaged in this process” (8%), while others would have liked “an overview of what the ultimate goal of these conversations will be” (6%).

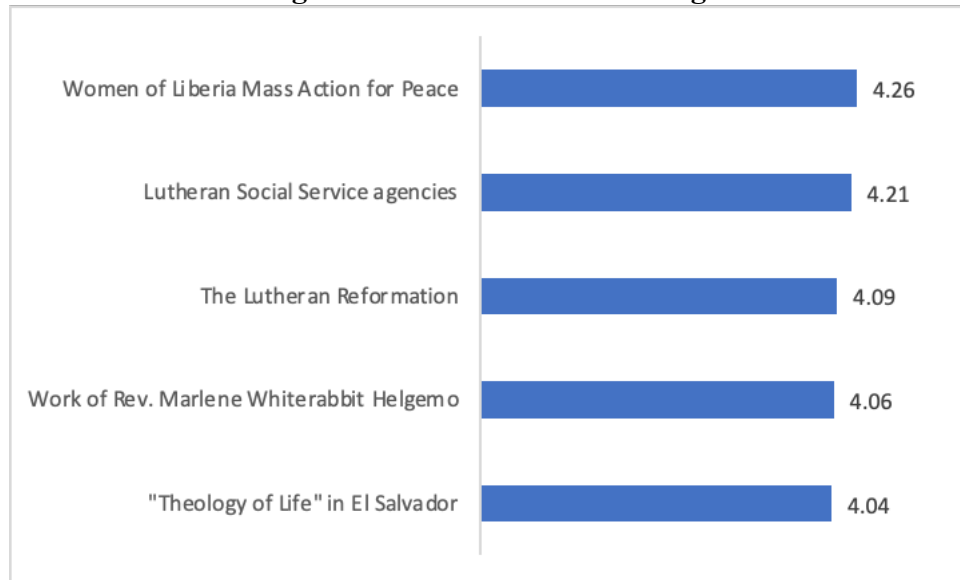
The large majority of the responses came from individuals (95%), with only five percent from a group. Of those who responded on behalf of a group, most were groups of two to five people or 11 to 20 people (both 33%). Fewer groups had six to ten people (29%), with only four percent reporting 21 or more people in the group.

Session 2 Responses: How Do Christians Address Controversial Civic Issues?

In response to Session 2, participants were asked to rate how new the ideas were to them, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not new” and 5 = “very new.” Over half of the participants rated it as “not new” or “a little new” (ratings of 1 or 2; 52%), with an average rating of 2.43. Participants were next asked to rate how helpful they thought the practice of communal moral deliberation was in talking about difficult topics, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not helpful” and 5 = “very helpful.” About 87 percent rated it as “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 4.46.

The next section asked participants to rate how valuable they found several examples of how the church has engaged controversial issues throughout history, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not valuable” and 5 = “very valuable.” The highest ratings were found for the example of “Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace,” with 73 percent of participants rating it as “valuable” or “very valuable” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 4.26. (See Figure 2.) About three-fourths of the participants felt the example of “Lutheran Social Service agencies” was “valuable” or “very valuable” (76%), with an average rating of 4.21. Slightly lower ratings were found for the example of “The Lutheran Reformation,” with about 76 percent of the participants rating it as “valuable” or “very valuable” (average rating of 4.09). Similar ratings were found for the “work of Rev. Marlene Whiterabbit Helgemo,” with about 64 percent rating it as “valuable” or “very valuable” (average rating of 4.06). Finally, the lowest average rating was found for the example of “Theology of Life’ in El Salvador,” with about 67 percent of the participants rating it as “valuable” or “very valuable” (average rating of 4.04).

Figure 2: Session 2 Mean Ratings



A final rating scale question for Session 2 asked participants to rate the importance of the ideas from the session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not important” to 5 = “very important.” The large majority of participants felt it was “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5; 87%), with an average rating of 4.40.

For the first open-ended question in Session 2, participants were asked what they thought were the top two or three most important takeaways of the session. A total of 348 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was to “listen and be open to other viewpoints” (32%). Several participants listed “the six aspects of moral deliberation” (21%), while other participants listed as most important “examples of Lutherans in action” (10%). A few participants said “the use of prayer and Scripture in discussions” (10%) and “controversial topics are important” (9%) were key takeaways.

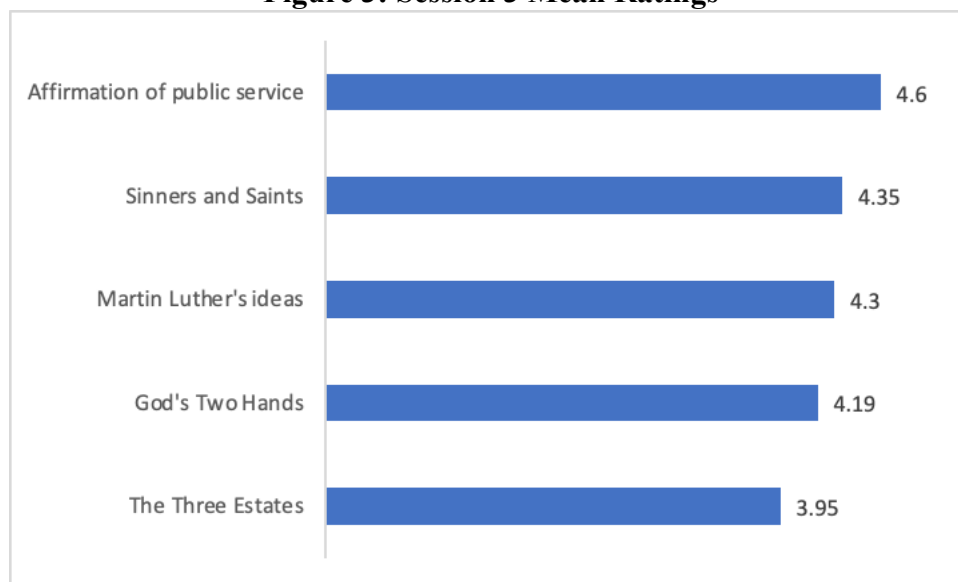
The second open-ended question asked if participants had anything they would like the task force to hear about this session. There were a total of 56 comments coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was there was “too much to cover in a one-hour study session” (29%). Several participants said they “appreciated the specific examples, and would like to spend more time on them” (18%). A few participants felt the “video was excellent” (11%), while others felt the session was “too intellectual and dense” (9%).

Similar to the first session, the large majority of participants were responding as individuals (95%), with only five percent representing a group. For those responding on behalf of a group, most were in a group of 11 to 20 people (41%), followed by six to ten people (35%). Fewer participants were in a group of 2 to 5 people (24%).

Session 3 Responses: What are Lutheran Views on Civic Life?

In Session 3, participants rated how important the topics in the session were in thinking about civic life, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not important” and 5 = “very important.” The highest ratings were found for “affirmation of public service,” with about 88 percent rating this topic as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), for an average rating of 4.60. (See Figure 3.) About 82 percent of the participants rated the topic “sinners and saints” as “important” or “very important,” with an average rating of 4.35. The topic “Martin Luther's ideas” also received high ratings, with about 86 percent rating it as “important” or “very important,” for an average rating of 4.30. Slightly fewer participants felt the topic “God's two hands” was “important” or “very important” (82%), with an average rating of 4.19. Finally, the topic “the three estates” received the lowest ratings, with about 66 percent of participants rating it as “important” or “very important” (average rating of 3.95).

Figure 3: Session 3 Mean Ratings



The next question started with a quote from the session: “At one extreme we fear overzealous and misguided movements, such as violent rebellions and war. At the other extreme we worry about passivity and excessive deference to those in authority.” We then asked participants which type of threat worries them more, misguided activity or passivity. Over half of the participants felt that both worry them equally (58%). About one-fourth of the participants were more worried about passivity (24%), while about 17 percent worried more about misguided activity. About two percent were unsure.

For those who chose either “misguided activity” or “passivity,” they were asked to explain why they worry more about that extreme. A total of 115 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was “misguided activity is more dangerous and violent” (36%). Several participants said “passivity can be seen as acceptance” (22%), and others felt “we need to speak out and voice our faith” (18%). A few participants said “passivity allows for more misguided activity” (17%), and a couple commented that “misguided activity is harder to overcome or control” (5%).

The next open-ended question asked participants to list two or three ideas they learned from the session about Lutheran theological and historical inheritance that help give them insight for the challenges we face today. A total of 301 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was “Luther's involvement in civic affairs, and we should do the same” (35%). Many participants listed “God's two hands or two kingdoms” (16%), followed by “saints and sinners” (12%). Several participants said they learned to “engage people in a positive way, with respect” (11%), and others learned about “the three estates” (10%).

The final rating scale question asked participants to rate the importance of the ideas from the session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not important” and 5 = “very important.” The large majority of participants (87%) rated the ideas as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 4.42.

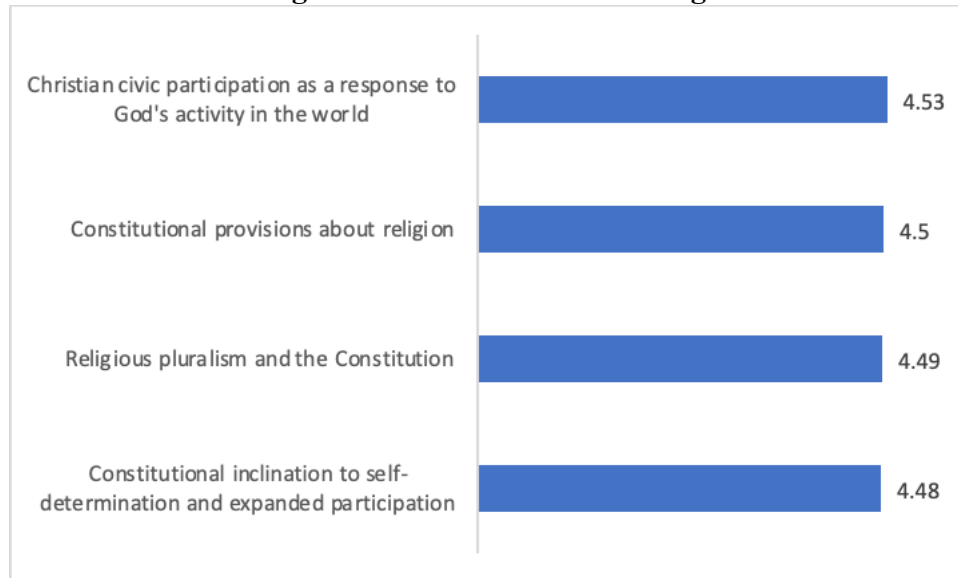
The final open-ended question of this session asked participants if they had anything else they'd like to share with the task force. A total of 49 comments were coded for this question. Several participants commented that the “video was excellent” (27%), while others felt the “video was too long, boring, or dense” (18%). A few participants felt there was “too much information for a one-hour session” (14%). Finally, a few participants commented that we “need to listen to others” (12%), and the “questions are too complicated and confusing” (10%).

Similar to previous sessions, the large majority of participants were responding as individuals (93%), with only seven percent responding on behalf of a group. Of those who were in a group, half were in a group of six to ten people (50%), while about one-third were in a group of 11 to 20 (36%). Fewer people were in a group of two to five (14%).

Session 4 Responses: What Are the Objectives of a Democracy in the United States?

The first set of questions asked participants to rate how valuable they found several parts of Session 4, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not valuable” and 5 = “very valuable.” The section on “Christian civic participation as a response to God's activity in the world” received the highest ratings, with 92 percent rating them as “valuable” or “very valuable” (ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 4.53. (See Figure 4.) Participants also gave high ratings for the section on “Constitutional provisions about religion,” with 90 percent rating them as “valuable” or “very valuable,” for an average rating of 4.50. The section on “religious pluralism and the Constitution” also received high ratings, with 89 percent rating it as “valuable” or “very valuable,” for an average rating of 4.49. Finally, slightly lower ratings were found for the section “Constitutional inclination to self-determination and expanded participation” (85% with ratings of 4 or 5), with an average rating of 4.48.

Figure 4: Session 4 Mean Ratings



The next rating scale question asked participants to rate the importance of the ideas from this session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not important” and 5 = “very important.” The large majority of participants rated it as “important” or “very important,” (ratings of 4 or 5; 93%), with an average rating of 4.67.

For the open-ended questions, participants were asked how the session has changed, deepened or confirmed their understanding of what the Constitution says about religious participation in the civic arena. A total of 202 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was that the session “reinforced what I already knew” (36%). Many participants said that it was a “reminder of my responsibility as a Christian citizen” (14%). Several participants said that the session “deepened my understanding of 'church and state'” (13%), while others said it was a “reminder of freedom of religion in the Constitution” (12%). Finally, a few of the participants said the session “clarified the difference between the 'Establishment' Clause and 'Free Exercise' Clause,” and gave them a “better understanding of how religion and the Constitution interact” (both 9%).

Similar to previous sections, participants were asked to list the two or three most important insights from the session. A total of 207 responses were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was “our faith should guide how we engage in civic life” (25%). Many participants listed a “better understanding of 'separation of church and state'” (22%), while others said an important insight was “respecting differing religious views” (21%). Several participants listed the “Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause” (9%), and others said “there are many ways to act civically as an individual” (5%) were key insights from the session.

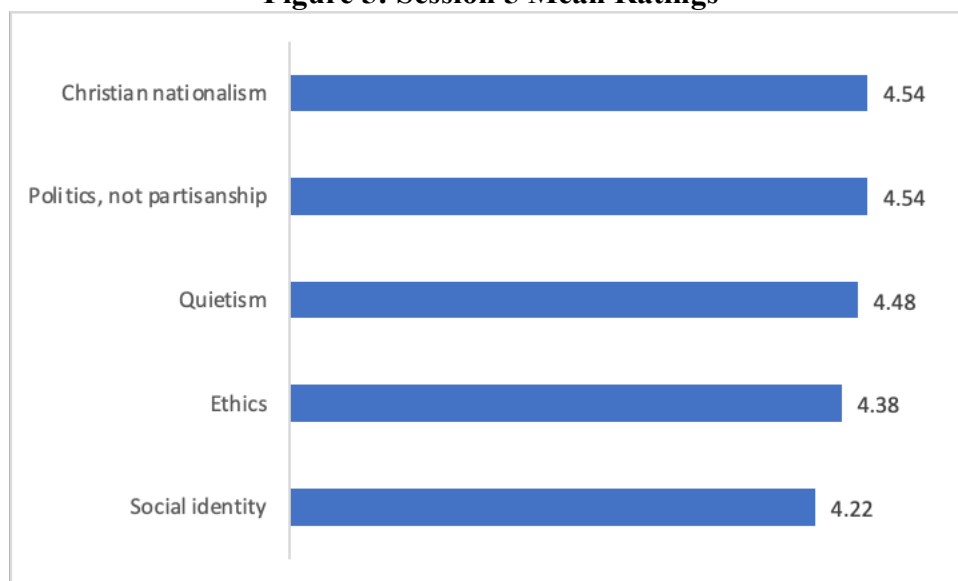
When asked if they would like to add anything else for the task force, 33 responses were coded. The most common responses were that this was the “best session so far,” and there was “too much to cover in one session” (both 33%). A couple participants would like “more concrete or current examples” (12%), while others pointed out that “we are a 'democratic republic,' not a democracy” (9%).

Similar to previous sessions, the large majority of participants responded as individuals (94%), with only six percent responding on behalf of a group. For those responding as a group, most were in groups of six to ten people (50%) or 11 to 20 people (25%). About 19 percent were in a group of two to five people.

Session 5 Responses: What's Faith-based Living Got to Do With Civic Life?

For Session 5, the first set of rating scale questions asked participants how helpful they found several discussion topics, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not helpful” and 5 = “very helpful.” The highest ratings were found for the discussion of “Christian nationalism” and “politics, not partisanship” with 91 percent of the participants rating them as “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5), both with average ratings of 4.54. (See Figure 5.) Participants also felt the discussion of “quietism” was “helpful” or “very helpful” (88%), with an average rating of 4.48. Slightly lower ratings were found for the discussion of “ethics,” with 83 percent rating it as “helpful” or “very helpful,” for an average rating of 4.38. Finally, about 82 percent of the participants felt the discussion of “social identity” was “helpful” or “very helpful,” for an average rating of 4.22.

Figure 5: Session 5 Mean Ratings



We next asked participants if they consider their calling as Christians to include civic engagement and participation in government. The large majority agreed (96%), with only one percent disagreeing and three percent were unsure. There was a follow-up question where participants could explain why they agreed or disagreed. A total of 180 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was “helping my neighbor in need and serving others” (43%). Many participants said “quietism will not change anything, and you need to get involved” (31%), while others listed “taking a stand against injustice” as part of their calling (14%). A few participants listed “working for the ‘common good,’ not the Christian good” (9%), while others thought it was important to “listen to all points of view” (4%).

The next open-ended question asked participants to list the top two or three most important takeaways from the session. A total of 302 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common was “it’s important for Christians to participate in civic engagement” (24%). Many of the participants listed “quietism can be harmful” (22%) and “Christian nationalism” (21%). Several participants said we should “listen and respect others’ opinions” (8%). A few participants felt “love your neighbors” and “politics and partisanship are not the same thing” were important takeaways (both 8%).

Similar to previous sessions, the participants were asked to rate the importance of the ideas from the session for inclusion in the social statement, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not important” and 5 = “very important.” The large majority of the participants felt it was “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5; 97%), with an average rating of 4.78.

The final open-ended question for Session 5 asked participants to share anything else they would like the task force to hear about the material from the session. A total of 57 comments were coded. Of those comments, the most common was that it was “one of my favorite sessions and a great video” (40%). Several participants said they liked the “emphasis of Christ’s central message to ‘love thy neighbor’” (12%), while others commented that the “study from Luther’s catechism was difficult to relate to” (11%). A few participants said “listen and respect others’ opinions, and encourage discussion” (9%). Finally, as with the previous sessions, participants were asked if they were responding as an individual or as a group. The large majority of participants were responding as individuals (92%), with eight percent responding on behalf of a group. For those representing a group, the most common was a group of six to ten people (75%), followed by two to five people (15%). Larger groups were less common, with only five percent representing groups of 11 to 20 or 21 or more people.

Session 6 Responses: How Do We Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord in Civic Life?

In Session 6, participants were asked to rate how helpful they found the discussion of worship and its relation to civic engagement, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not helpful” and 5 = “very helpful.” The large majority of participants rated it as “helpful” or “very helpful” (ratings of 4 or 5) (85%), with an average rating of 4.38. We next asked participants to rate the importance of the ideas from the session for inclusion in the social statement, using a five-point rating scale where 1 = “not important” and 5 = “very important.” Again, the large majority of participants rated it as “important” or “very important” (ratings of 4 or 5; 89%), with an average rating of 4.46.

The first open-ended question asked participants what two or three ideas they learned about the connection between worship and civic engagement. A total of 201 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common responses were “every aspect of worship relates to our response to civic life” (31%), and we should “listen to all points of view and respect others” (28%). Many participants listed “sending us out to serve in our daily life” (24%), while others commented that the “prayers of the people offer an opportunity to bring up social concerns” (7%). Several participants learned about the “difficulty pastors face in giving sermons on controversial issues” (6%).

Similar to the previous sessions, participants were asked if they had anything else they would like to share with the task force. A total of 67 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was we “need to do more than sit in the pew, we must take action” (31%), followed by “the video was excellent, great discussion” (19%). Several participants felt it was “too

much to cover in one hour” (12%). A few participants said we have “several ideas how we can expand to the rest of the congregation” and “it felt like a liturgy lesson with little connection to civic life” (both 10%).

Again, similar to previous sessions, the large majority of participants responded as individuals (94%), compared to only six percent responding on behalf of a group. For those in a group, over half of the participants were in a group of six to ten people (57%), followed by groups of 11 to 20 (29%). Smaller groups were less common, with only 14 percent in a group of two to five people.

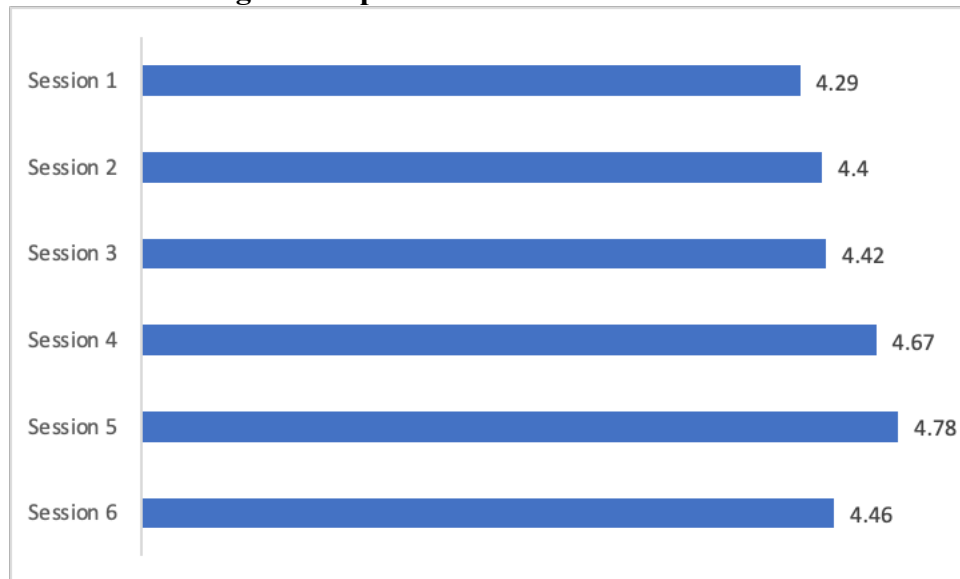
Overall Question about the Study

The last question asked about the study as a whole. Participants were asked to list the two or three most important topics to include in the social statement on civic life and faith. A total of 228 comments were coded for this question. Of those comments, the most common response was “serving the Lord in civic life and take action” (35%), followed by “listen to all points of view and respect others” (29%). Many of the participants listed “love your neighbor” (8%), while others felt “separation of church and state” (6%) was an important topic to include. Several participants listed “Session 2 on dealing with controversial issues” (6%), “Session 5 on ethics and civic life” (5%), and “Session 6 on worship and civic life” (5%) as important topics to include in the social statement.

Summary and Conclusions

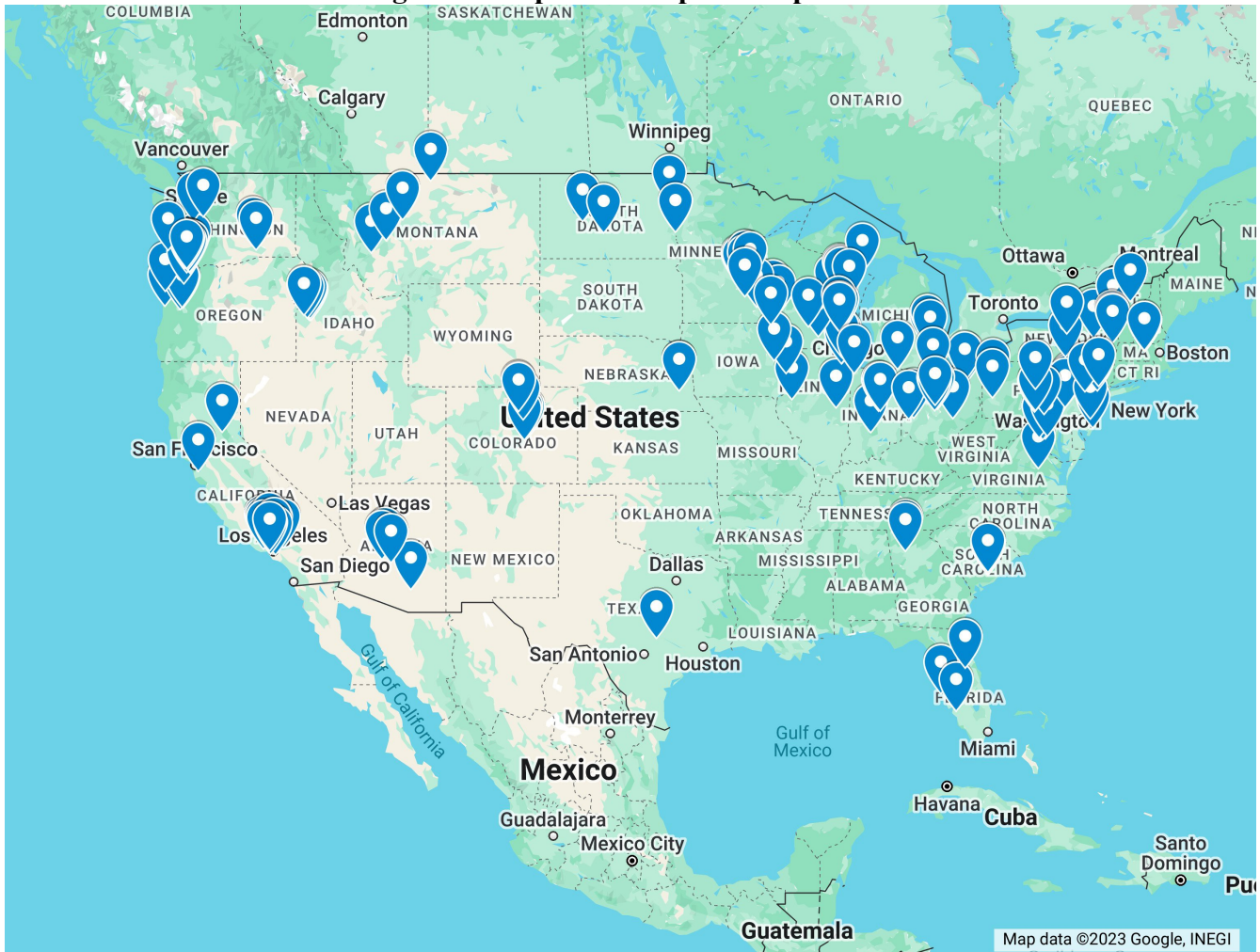
Overall, the responses to the ELCA study on civic life and faith were positive. All of the rating scale means were 3.86 or above on a five-point scale. When participants were asked to rate the importance of the ideas from each session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written, all of the average ratings were 4.29 or above on a five-point scale. (See Figure 6.) In addition, almost all of the participants (96%) consider their calling as Christians to include civic engagement and participation in government.

Figure 6: Mean Ratings for Importance of Ideas for Inclusion in Social Statement



The large majority of participants responded to the survey as individuals, ranging from 92 to 95 percent. For those responding on behalf of a group, the most common group size was six to ten people. Participants were spread throughout the country, with about 118 different congregations or organizations and 162 zip codes represented. (See Figure 7.)

Figure 7: Map of Participants' Zip Codes



There were several common themes found throughout the comments across all sessions of the study. First, many participants commented on the importance of listening to all points of view and respecting others. Another common theme was the idea that civic participation is a calling for all Christians, and people should take action. Many participants also commented on the importance of loving your neighbor. Several people felt there was too much material to cover in a one hour session. Finally, several participants were grateful for the opportunity to discuss the topics and provide feedback to the task force.

Session 2: How Do Christians Address Controversial Civic Issues? (n = 330)

1. How new to you were the ideas you heard about in Session 2?

<u>Not new</u>	<u>A little new</u>	<u>Moderately new</u>	<u>New</u>	<u>Very new</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
20.4	31.7	34.8	10.1	2.7	0.3	2.43

2. How helpful do you think the practice of communal moral deliberation is in talking about difficult topics?

<u>Not helpful</u>	<u>A little helpful</u>	<u>Moderately helpful</u>	<u>Helpful</u>	<u>Very helpful</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
0.3	1.8	7.6	30.2	57.0	3.0	4.46

3. How valuable did you find the examples of how the church has engaged controversial issues throughout history?

	<u>Not valuable</u>	<u>A little valuable</u>	<u>Moderately valuable</u>	<u>Valuable</u>	<u>Very valuable</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
A. The Lutheran Reformation	0.6	6.7	12.1	39.8	35.7	5.1	4.09
B. Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace	0.0	4.2	10.1	32.1	41.2	12.3	4.26
C. "Theology of Life" in El Salvador	1.6	4.6	11.7	37.5	29.0	15.6	4.04
D. Work of Rev Marlene Whiterabbit Helgemo	0.3	4.6	10.5	38.6	25.2	20.9	4.06
E. Lutheran Social Service agencies	0.6	3.5	11.2	37.2	39.1	8.3	4.21

4. What do you think are the top two or three most important takeaways from this session for you? (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

5. How would you rate the importance of the ideas from this session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written?

<u>Not important</u>	<u>A little important</u>	<u>Moderately important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
0.6	2.5	7.5	33.5	53.6	2.2	4.40

6. (Optional) If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly. (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

7. Is this response from an individual or on behalf of a group?

95.1 Individual

4.9 Group: how many people are in the group?

23.5	2-5	41.2	11-20
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35.3	6-10	0.0	21 or more
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8. What is the name of your congregation, school, group or organization?

9. What is the ZIP code?

Session 3: What are Lutheran Views on Civic Life? (n = 328)

1. How important did you find the following discussion topics of Session 3 in thinking about civic life?

	<u>Not important</u>	<u>A little important</u>	<u>Moderately important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
A. Martin Luther's ideas	0.9	2.8	9.4	38.6	47.3	0.9	4.30
B. God's Two Hands	0.6	4.4	11.0	41.2	40.3	2.5	4.19
C. The Three Estates	2.2	5.4	19.4	33.4	32.2	7.3	3.95
D. Sinners and Saints	0.6	3.4	9.7	30.1	51.7	4.4	4.35
E. Affirmation of public service	0.6	0.9	3.5	25.2	63.1	6.6	4.60

2. The presenter wrote: “At one extreme we fear overzealous and misguided movements, such as violent rebellions and war. At the other extreme we worry about passivity and excessive deference to those in authority. Which threat worries you more, misguided activity or passivity?
 16.8 Misguided activity
 23.5 Passivity
 58.1 Both worry me equally
 1.5 Not sure
 If you chose one, why do you worry more about that extreme? (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

3. What are two or three ideas you learned in this session about Lutheran theological and historical inheritance that help give you insight for the challenges we face today? (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

4. How would you rate the importance of the ideas from this session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written?

<u>Not important</u>	<u>A little important</u>	<u>Moderately important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
1.0	2.0	8.0	31.0	56.0	2.0	4.42

5. (Optional) If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly. (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

6. Is this response from an individual or on behalf of a group?
 93.2 Individual

6.8 Group: how many people are in the group?	
13.6 2-5	36.4 11-20
50.0 6-10	0.0 21 or more

7. What is the name of your congregation, school, group or organization?

8. What is the ZIP code?

Session 4: What Are the Objectives of Democracy in the United States? (n = 252)

1. How valuable did you find the following parts of Session 4?

	<u>Not valuable</u>	<u>A little valuable</u>	<u>Moderately valuable</u>	<u>Valuable</u>	<u>Very valuable</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
A. Christian civic participation as a response to God's activity in the world	0.4	1.6	5.6	29.4	62.3	0.8	4.53
B. Constitutional provisions about religion	0.0	0.8	7.9	31.0	59.1	1.2	4.50
C. Religious pluralism and the Constitution	0.0	2.8	4.8	31.1	57.4	4.0	4.49
D. Constitutional inclination to self-determination and expanded participation	0.0	1.6	8.8	27.2	57.6	4.8	4.48

2. How has this session changed, deepened or confirmed your understanding of what the Constitution says about religious participation in the civic arena? (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

3. Including your discussions, what are your two or three most important insights from this session? (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

4. How would you rate the importance of the ideas from this session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written?

<u>Not important</u>	<u>A little important</u>	<u>Moderately important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
0.0	1.2	4.8	19.7	73.5	0.8	4.67

5. (Optional) If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly. (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

6. Is this response from an individual or on behalf of a group?

94.3 Individual

5.7 Group: how many people are in the group?

18.8 2-5 25.0 11-20

50.0 6-10 6.3 21 or more

7. What is the name of your congregation, school, group or organization?

8. What is the ZIP code?

Session 5: What's Faith-based Living Got to Do With Civic Life? (n = 237)

1. How helpful did you find the following discussion topics in Session 5?

	<u>Not helpful</u>	<u>A little helpful</u>	<u>Moderately helpful</u>	<u>Helpful</u>	<u>Very helpful</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
A. Ethics	0.9	2.1	11.9	27.2	56.2	1.7	4.38
B. Social Identity	1.3	3.0	11.1	38.9	42.7	3.0	4.22
C. Politics, not partisanship	0.9	0.4	5.6	29.5	62.0	1.7	4.54
D. Quietism	1.3	2.1	6.4	26.2	61.4	2.6	4.48
E. Christian nationalism	0.4	1.7	5.2	28.6	62.8	1.3	4.54

2. Do you consider our calling as Christians to include civic engagement and participation in government?

95.8 Yes 0.8 No 3.4 Not sure

Why or why not? (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

3. What do you think are the top two or three most important takeaways from this session for you? (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

4. How would you rate the importance of the ideas from this session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written?

<u>Not important</u>	<u>A little important</u>	<u>Moderately important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
0.0	0.0	2.6	16.8	79.7	0.9	4.78

5. (Optional) If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly. (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

6. Is this response from an individual or on behalf of a group?

91.7 Individual

8.3 Group: how many people are in the group?

15.0 2-5 5.0 11-20

75.0 6-10 5.0 21 or more

7. What is the name of your congregation, school, group or organization?

8. What is the ZIP code?

Session 6: How Do We Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord in Civic Life? (n = 207)

- How helpful did you find the discussion of worship and its relation to civic engagement in Session 6?

<u>Not helpful</u>	<u>A little helpful</u>	<u>Moderately helpful</u>	<u>Helpful</u>	<u>Very helpful</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
1.0	3.9	9.3	27.8	57.6	0.5	4.38

- As a result of participating in this session, what two or three ideas did you learn about the connection between worship and civic engagement? (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

- How would you rate the importance of the ideas from this session for inclusion in the social statement that will be written?

<u>Not important</u>	<u>A little important</u>	<u>Moderately important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>Mean</u>
0.5	5.5	5.0	24.9	63.7	0.5	4.46

- (Optional) If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly. (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

Question about the whole study:

- Through your participation in this study, however many sessions you have used, what would you say are the two or three most important topics to include in the social statement on civic life and faith? (See Appendix B for comment frequencies.)

- Is this response from an individual or on behalf of a group?

94.1 Individual

5.9 Group: how many people are in the group?

14.3 2-5 28.6 11-20

57.1 6-10 0.0 21 or more

- What is the name of your congregation, school, group or organization?

- What is the ZIP code?

Appendix B
 Frequencies: Comments
 ELCA Study on Civic Life and Faith
 Final Report (N = 1,798)

Session 1: How is God's Invitation to Discipleship Lived Out in a Democracy?

2. What do you think are the top two or three most important takeaways from this session for you?

Comment	Frequency (n = 505)
Respect for others' opinions and listening	33.9% (171) ²
Conversation covenant	14.9% (75)
Unity in Christian identity, not agreement	13.1% (66)
Definition of politics	11.1% (56)
Increased polarization, study on marriage across political parties	6.9% (35)
Explanation of social statements/social message and input	5.7% (29)
Concept of mega-identity	5.1% (26)
Discussion on personal identity	4.8% (24)
Moral deliberation	2.4% (12)
Small group discussions	1.0% (5)
Too little time for discussion	1.0% (5)
Did not like the video, too polarizing	0.2% (1)

4. If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly.

Comment	Frequency (n = 63)
Grateful for the opportunity to discuss and give feedback	25.4% (16)
Too many topics to cover in the time allowed	15.9% (10)
Video was confusing, too long, boring	14.3% (9)
Discussion on ways Scripture aids discernment of faithful civic engagement	9.5% (6)
Many potential voices are not engaged in this process	7.9% (5)
Add an overview of what the ultimate goal of these conversations will be	6.3% (4)
We are in a very homogenous group	6.3% (4)
More on mega-identities	4.8% (3)
Talk about Christian identity beyond ELCA	3.2% (2)
An updated statistic on inter-party marriage	3.2% (2)

² Numbers shown in parentheses represent the number of people who wrote each comment.

Comment	Frequency (n = 63)
Add one body/many parts to discussion of unity	1.6% (1)
Cite sources for data/surveys/polls	1.6% (1)

Session 2: How Do Christians Address Controversial Civic Issues?

4. What do you think are the top two or three most important takeaways from this session for you?

Comment	Frequency (n = 348)
Listen and be open to other opinions/viewpoints	32.2% (112)
The 6 aspects of moral deliberation	20.7% (72)
Examples of Lutherans in action	10.3% (36)
Use of prayer and Scripture in discussions	10.3% (36)
Controversial topics are important	8.6% (30)
Talk to the experts, check the data	5.7% (20)
Civic engagement is a command from God	3.7% (13)
The importance of confession	3.4% (12)
God can and has changed His mind, interpretations change	2.6% (9)
Our backgrounds and family experiences shape our thinking	2.3% (8)

6. If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly.

Comment	Frequency (n = 56)
Too much to cover in one-hour study session	28.6% (16)
Appreciated the specific examples, spend more time on them	17.9% (10)
Video was excellent	10.7% (6)
Too intellectual/too dense	8.9% (5)
Thank you	7.1% (4)
More on Rev. Marlene Whiterabbit Helgemo and her work	7.1% (4)
Should have been in the first session, didn't add much	5.4% (3)
Should be asking, "where is the Gospel?"	5.4% (3)
Need to discuss how to interpret Scripture	3.6% (2)
Addressing comments from church members that the church is "becoming too political"	1.8% (1)
How to get those who disagree to participate	1.8% (1)
Incorporate other denominations	1.8% (1)

Session 3: What are Lutheran Views on Civic Life?

2. If you chose one (misguided activity or passivity), why do you worry more about that extreme?

Comment	Frequency (n = 115)
Misguided activity is more dangerous/violent	35.7% (41)
Passivity can be seen as acceptance	21.7% (25)
We need to speak out, voice our faith	18.3% (21)
Passivity allows for more misguided activity	16.5% (19)
Misguided activity is harder to overcome or control	5.2% (6)
Without misguided activity, passivity would not be a concern	2.6% (3)

3. What are two or three ideas you learned in this session about Lutheran theological and historical inheritance that help give you insight for the challenges we face today?

Comment	Frequency (n = 301)
Luther's involvement in civic affairs, we should do the same	35.2% (106)
God's 2 hands/kingdoms	15.6% (47)
Saints and sinners	11.6% (35)
Engage people in a positive way, with respect	11.0% (33)
3 estates	10.3% (31)
Take government back to its original purpose to help people to live together	3.0% (9)
Priesthood of all believers, all have a voice	2.7% (8)
The struggle with passivity vs. over-zealousness	2.0% (6)
Lutheran Social Services is positive and helpful	1.7% (5)
Augsburg Confessions	1.7% (5)
Allowance for ideas to evolve	1.7% (5)
Lutherans have been too passive on some issues	1.3% (4)
Luther's concept of vocation	1.0% (3)
Costly grace	1.0% (3)
The Reformation	0.3% (1)

5. If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly.

Comment	Frequency (n = 49)
Video was excellent	26.5% (13)
Video was too long/boring/dense	18.4% (9)
Too much information for a one hour session	14.3% (7)
Need to listen to others	12.2% (6)
Questions are too complicated/confusing	10.2% (5)
More info on 3 estates	8.2% (4)
Use more current examples	8.2% (4)
Don't need to spend so much time on conversation covenant	2.0% (1)

Session 4: What Are the Objectives of Democracy in the United States?

2. How has this session changed, deepened or confirmed your understanding of what the Constitution says about religious participation in the civic arena?

Comment	Frequency (n = 202)
Reinforced what I already knew	35.6% (72)
Reminder of my responsibility as a Christian citizen	13.9% (28)
Deepened my understanding of “church and state”	12.9% (26)
Reminder of freedom of religion in the Constitution	11.9% (24)
Clarified the difference between “Establishment” Clause and “Free Exercise” Clause	9.4% (19)
Better understanding of how religion and the Constitution interact	9.4% (19)
Better understanding of the First Amendment	3.0% (6)
Learned that the phrase “separation of church and state” is not in the Constitution	3.0% (6)
Made me think about all the benefits we get from the federal government	1.0% (2)

3. Including your discussions, what are your two or three most important insights from this session?

Comment	Frequency (n = 207)
Our faith should guide how we engage in civic life	25.1% (52)
Better understanding of “separation of church and state”	22.2% (46)
Respecting differing religious views	21.3% (44)
Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause	8.7% (18)
There are many ways to act civically as an individual	5.3% (11)
Christian nationalism movement problems	3.9% (8)
Self-determination	3.4% (7)
Concept of justice, Micah 6:8	3.4% (7)
Be informed, vote	2.4% (5)
We're not a Christian nation, example of Fri. night football and Sun. sports	2.4% (5)
Scripture never describes a democracy	1.0% (2)
Difference between equality and equity	1.0% (2)

5. If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly.

Comment	Frequency (n = 33)
Best session so far	33.3% (11)
Too much to cover in one session	33.3% (11)
Need more concrete/current examples	12.1% (4)
We are a “democratic republic,” not a democracy	9.1% (3)
Reference Jefferson's letter where “separation of church and state” came from	6.1% (2)
The justice system should be included, rulings of the Supreme Court	6.1% (2)

Session 5: What's Faith-based Living Got to Do With Civic Life?

2. (Do you consider our calling as Christians to include civic engagement and participation in government,) why or why not?

Comment	Frequency (n = 180)
Helping my neighbor in need, serve others	42.8% (77)
Quietism will not change anything, need to get involved	30.6% (55)
Taking a stand against injustice	13.9% (25)
Working for “the common good,” not the Christian good	8.9% (16)
Listen to all points of view	3.9% (7)

3. What do you think are the top two or three most important takeaways from this session for you?

Comment	Frequency (n = 302)
It's important for Christians to participate in civic engagement	24.2% (73)
Quietism can be harmful	21.5% (65)
Christian nationalism	21.2% (64)
Listen and respect others' opinions	8.3% (25)
Love neighbors	7.6% (23)
Politics and partisanship are not the same thing	7.6% (23)
Seek common good	5.6% (17)
Better understanding of the 8 th commandment	4.0% (12)

5. If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly.

Comment	Frequency (n = 57)
One of my favorite sessions, great video	40.4% (23)
Emphasis of Christ's central message, "love thy neighbor"	12.3% (7)
Study from Luther's catechism was difficult to relate to	10.5% (6)
More material than there was time for	10.5% (6)
Listen and respect others' opinions, encourage discussion	8.8% (5)
Encourage the ELCA to be socially active	5.3% (3)
The discussion topics were not easy to follow in the participants' printed material	5.3% (3)
Why do we as Lutherans often fall into the trap of quietism?	3.5% (2)
How does Artificial Intelligence fit into this, disinformation	1.8% (1)
This is not uniquely Christian	1.8% (1)

Session 6: How Do We Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord in Civic Life?

2. As a result of participating in this session, what two or three ideas did you learn about the connection between worship and civic engagement?

Comment	Frequency (n = 201)
Every aspect of worship relates to our response to civic life	30.8% (62)
Listen to all points of view, respect others	28.4% (57)
Sending us out to serve in our daily life	24.4% (49)
Prayers of the people offer an opportunity to bring up social concerns	6.5% (13)
Difficulty pastors face in giving sermons on controversial issues	5.5% (11)
Unity is a gift from the Holy Spirit	3.0% (6)
Many people spread false information	1.5% (3)

4. If you have anything else you would like the task force to hear about the material from this session, please share it here briefly.

Comment	Frequency (n = 67)
Need to do more than sit in the pew, take action	31.3% (21)
The video was excellent, great discussion	19.4% (13)
Too much material to cover in one hour	11.9% (8)
Several ideas how we can expand to the rest of the congregation	10.4% (7)
It felt like a liturgy lesson with little connection to civic life	10.4% (7)
Worshiping together helps create trust	4.5% (3)
Challenge for pastors to preach about politics	4.5% (3)
Chart on p. 27-28 is a great tool	3.0% (2)
More emphasis on the RIC certification	3.0% (2)
Need to include others outside the ELCA	1.5% (1)

Question about the Whole Study

5. Through your participation in this study, however many sessions you have used, what would you say are the two or three most important topics to include in the social statement on civic life and faith?

Comment	Frequency (n = 228)
Serving the Lord in civic life, take action	35.1% (80)
Listen to all points of view, respect others	28.5% (65)
Love your neighbor	8.3% (19)
Separation of church and state	6.1% (14)
Session 2 on dealing with controversial issues	5.7% (13)
Session 6 on worship and civic life	5.3% (12)
Session 5 on ethics and civic life	4.8% (11)
Combat Christian nationalism	3.1% (7)
Constitution	2.2% (5)
The supplemental On the Ground Case Studies were very helpful	0.9% (2)