



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

STUDY GUIDE

Faith Sexism and Justice

A Call to Action

Leader's Welcome

Welcome to the study guide for the ELCA social statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*. Adopted by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, this document relies on the Gospel promise of abundance, justice, and new creation in Christ to name the ways the sins of patriarchy and sexism harm *all* people, particularly women and girls, whatever their age or racial or gender identity. Drawing on Lutheran theology, the social statement teaches that God's people are called to resist sexism and pursue gender justice for others and for themselves.

Faith, Sexism, and Justice is the culmination of a seven-year process across the ELCA. Led by a national task force and supported by synod-based volunteers, the process of the social statement was like a long conversation among ELCA members. The social statement is designed to help people hear God's promise of abundant life and call for justice, see the complex harm caused by sexism, and pursue gender justice through personal and collective actions.

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

**—John 10:10b, cited in
Faith, Sexism, and Justice, p. 15**



Leader's Welcome

THE CONTENT OF THE *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE: A CALL TO ACTION* STUDY GUIDE

The six sessions in this study guide follow the path laid out in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Session One:

All Are Called to Lives of Justice and Abundance

In this session participants hear the Scriptures' promise that God intends all people to experience justice and abundance in their lives.

Session Two:

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

In this session participants study sin from a Lutheran perspective and examine how the sins of patriarchy and sexism intertwine with other forms of oppression and injustice.

Session Three:

Language and Images for God Matter

In this session participants learn about the variety of images for God in the Scriptures and explore how inclusive and expansive language and images for God are consistent with Lutheran insights.

Session Four:

Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

In this session participants hear the Scriptures' affirmation of the diversity of all of God's creation and the New Testament's promise that the body of Christ is made up of members with a wide range of gifts, identities, and experiences.

Session Five:

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

In this session participants explore four Lutheran insights—theology of the cross, justification, Christian freedom, and neighbor justice—that empower ELCA members to resist sexism and work for gender justice.

Session Six:

God Calls Us to Action in Community

In this session participants connect neighbor justice to issues in their communities and discern how they might act in the public sphere for gender justice.

Though it is better to complete all six sessions in sequence, they can be completed in any order. If your community is engaging two sessions, starting with session one will introduce participants to the vision of the social statement.



Leader's Welcome

GUIDING HEALTHY CONVERSATIONS

As Lutheran Christians, we recognize that the Holy Spirit is present among us when we gather. We celebrate that God speaks to us through Word and Sacrament—through the Scriptures, the preached Word, baptism and holy communion, and through our words to one another. When we gather to study *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, we trust that God is moving among us as we encounter new ideas and share our beliefs and hopes for justice for neighbors and ourselves.

As you encounter new information and see Lutheran teachings brought to bear on issues related to patriarchy and sexism, pay close attention to how you feel. You might feel curious, anxious, or empowered. Encourage participants to be patient and compassionate as you share your views with others. The study guide addresses complex issues that may affect people in a variety of ways. Several of the sessions refer to difficult topics, such as gender-based violence, homophobia, and racism, which many people have experienced and may reexperience as they use the study guide materials. While leading these sessions, please be attentive to participants' discomforts and needs.

Here are some tips for leading the sessions:

- Speak only for yourself and avoid language that sounds accusatory or lumps people together, such as “those people” or “anyone who believes ...”
- Rather than defend your opinion, listen carefully to others and ask questions that help them express what they're thinking, such as “What's your perspective on ...?” or “How do you understand this?”
- You can also ask people to clarify what they've said by using statements such as “What I heard you saying is ...” or “Is that correct, or what you intended to say?”
- You may ask participants to honor the session as confidential and not share what others said.

Being attentive to your own feelings and listening closely to others will deepen the conversation and create an honest environment where a diversity of voices can be heard.

You may encounter terms that are new to you. Explore the glossary at the end of the social statement for definitions of the terms. (The glossary begins on p. 75.)



Leader's Welcome

DETAILS FOR LEADERS REGARDING THE STUDY GUIDE

Handouts: A handout is included for each session and can be found at the end of each session. A PDF containing all six handouts is available [here](#).

In-person or Virtual Gatherings: The six sessions in the study guide were developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a way of making the study guide available remotely and for a wide variety of people, the activity section of each session can be offered in one of three ways. The session can be offered in person. Or you may use an online meeting platform for discussion only. Finally, you may use an online meeting platform that allows participants to post, view, and discuss their typed comments. If you offer the session virtually, it is a good idea to have an assistant manage the technology and the participants' posts so that you can focus on leading the activity or discussion. For tips on leading online sessions, see, for example, [Tips-for-Using-Zoom.pdf](#) (globallearningpartners.com).

Presenting the Digital Slides:

- To display the study guide slides, which are in PDF format, you will need to use a free PDF reader. Adobe Reader can be found at <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>.
- If you are using Windows 10, you can download a general PDF reader from the Windows store.
- With a PDF reader installed, download the study guide and double-click the file (in your "Downloads" folder) to open it.
- Then, display the slides so that one slide appears on the screen at a time. You may have to select full screen

mode or slide show from the "View" menu selection at the top left to configure this.

- The slides should then display so that either one mouse click or a tap of your space bar will advance to the next slide.

Reading Faith, Sexism, and Justice: Inspired by Martin Luther's Small Catechism and Large Catechism, the text was written in a dual format with a "short statement" and a "full statement." The full statement explains the content of the short statement with insights from Lutheran theology, the Scriptures, and current research to support the vision and content of the social statement.

Session Structure: The basic form of each study session should take about 45 minutes. The six sessions follow a similar structure and involve prayers, hearing from the social statement itself, watching and discussing a video, actively engaging the content of each session, and asking participants how they will live out the insights they have gained from the session. Each session also includes an optional Bible study and an optional conversation. The sessions can be extended to 60 or 90 minutes.

Spanish Resources: The social statement is [available](#) in Spanish (*Fe, sexismo y justicia: Un llamado a la acción*). A Spanish version of this study guide is expected on the ELCA website in the future. For the time being, if you are leading a session, please guide any Spanish-speaking participants to the Spanish version.

Videos for the Sessions: Each session has a video. The link for each video is in the individual session.

Citations and Sources: At the time of publication of this study guide in 2021, the URLs provided were live.



Session 4

Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

GETTING READY

In session three, participants explored *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action's* call to use inclusive and expansive language and images for God. In session four we hear the Scriptures' affirmation that God's creation is beautifully diverse. And we listen to the New Testament's proclamation that the body of Christ is made up of members who possess a variety of gifts. The social statement also calls God's people to recognize and resist the harm that sexism and patriarchy cause for all people, including persons who have been historically marginalized (as well as those individuals and communities who are actively minoritized).

The full text of the social statement can be found here: in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

MANAGING THE TIME TOGETHER

The basic version of each session should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

If your group has 60 or 90 minutes, you can use the extra 15 or 30 minutes to do one or two of the following.

You can:

- explore the passages from the Scriptures, or
- engage the In the Coming Week activity, or
- reflect on the Continuing the Conversation prompts.

If the session is offered during a regularly scheduled 45-minute education gathering but you want to meet for a longer time, pause at 45 or 60 minutes and give people the chance to quietly leave the session.

ESTIMATED TIMELINE FOR THE BASIC 45-MINUTE SESSION

Welcome, Opening Prayer, Session Objectives, and Context (4 minutes)

Gender Injustice Quiz (4 minutes)

Optional: Encounter the Scriptures (10-15 minutes)

Explore *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: The Diversity of Creation and the Diversity of the Body of Christ* (4 minutes)

Sharing Stories Video: "Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ" (10 minutes)

Discuss the Video (7 minutes)

Engage the Diversity of Creation and the Diversity of the Body of Christ in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* (9 minutes)

Live Out the Social Statement's Call to Action (5 minutes)

Optional: In the Coming Week (10 minutes)

Optional: Continuing the Conversation (10-15 minutes)

Closing Prayer (2 minutes)



Session 4

Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

OPTIONAL: SING TOGETHER

If you have 60 or 90 minutes, consider beginning and ending each session with a hymn. Try singing part of the hymn at the opening of the session and conclude with the rest of the hymn.

The hymns can be found in the following sources: *All Creation Sings (ACS)*, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)*, *Libro de Liturgia y Cántico (LLC)*, and *This Far by Faith (TFF)*.

The following hymns resonate with the themes of session four:

- Commonwealth Is God's Commandment, ACS 1036
- For the Beauty of the Earth, ELW 879
- God, We Gather as Your People, ACS 1038
- In Christ There Is No East or West, ELW 650
- Open My Heart, ACS 1079
- Somos uno en Cristo / We Are All One in Christ, LLC 470, ELW 643
- Vamos todos al banquete / Let Us Go Now to the Banquet, LLC 410, ELW 523

DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY SECTION

This session has three different options for the section titled Engage the Diversity of Creation and the Diversity of the Body of Christ in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*. You can use the in-person, hands-on activity. Or you may use an online meeting platform for discussion only. Finally, you may use an online meeting platform that allows participants to submit and discuss their typed comments.



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS ARE NEEDED FOR THE IN-PERSON SESSION:

- Bibles
- Access to hymns
- Print handouts for the participants, found at the end of this session. These include Bible references, quotes from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*, and other necessary materials.
- All the session handouts are also in one document at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/FSJ_Study_Guide_Session_ALL.pdf.
- Sharing Stories Video: The URL for the video is provided in the session.
- Each participant needs a pen or pencil to complete the quiz.

If your group chooses to encounter the Scriptures, consider four different methods to read the Bible: devotional, historical, literary, and Lutheran theological. For more on this fourfold approach to the Scriptures, see https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Book_Of_Faith_4_Methods.pdf.

LEADER'S PREPARATION AND MATERIALS

Read the welcome to the **entire** study guide.

Read this study guide session.

You may want to have a paper copy with you when you lead the session.

Read p. 9 (articles 31 and 32), pp. 15-18, 24, 33-36, and 47-48 (article 20) in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Preview the video. Sister Clare Josef-Maier served on the task force for *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*. In this video, she discusses the diversity of creation and the diversity of the body of Christ.

If you know who the participants will be before the session meets, consider sending them a welcome email. You can encourage participants to read articles 2, 4, 5, 9, and 12 on pp. 1-5; and article 24 on pp. 7-8; and article 36 on p. 10 in *Faith Sexism, and Justice*.

Finally, you could ask participants to view the short video "What Do Lutherans Say About ... Gender Justice," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWIEKGleQa0>.

Set up the space so that everyone can see the screen, and test the audio to be sure everyone can hear the Sharing Stories video.

Consider sending an email to participants a few days after the session to encourage them to complete one of the In the Coming Week activities.



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

WELCOME AND CONTEXT (4 MINUTES)

The leader reads the following introduction to ELCA social statements.

ELCA social statements help us make sense of complex social and ethical concerns in our communities and the world, like education and peace. These statements provide scriptural, theological, and contemporary insights about social issues. They govern the institutional witness of the ELCA and its teachings on social questions. ELCA social statements help communities and individuals think about, discuss together, and discern paths forward as we participate in God's work in the world. Many ELCA members are involved in creating social statements, and they are adopted by a two-thirds vote of an ELCA churchwide assembly.

OPENING PRAYER

The leader reads the following prayer aloud.

God, grant us wisdom and the words and ways to be with our siblings in Christ who differ from us. Encourage us to watch and listen so that we may encounter our neighbor as they want to be known. Help us notice when the Holy Spirit enlivens our bones to grow. In the body of Jesus, we pray. Amen.



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

SESSION OBJECTIVES

Someone reads aloud.

We will explore *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*'s rejection of harmful sex and gender stereotypes and the statement's affirmation that all persons are equal members of the body of Christ.

We will learn how sexism (and heterosexism) harm LGBTQIA+ persons as well as others who reject stereotypical views of sex and gender.

We will envision how we can live out the call to gender justice in our own lives.

(In the 60 or 90 minute session, we will encounter the Scriptures' witness that creation is wonderfully diverse.)

“We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”

(Romans 12:4-5)



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

OUR CONTEXT FOR SESSION FOUR

The leader reads aloud.

In session three, participants explored *Faith, Sexism, and Justice's* call to use expansive and inclusive language and images for God. In session four we hear the Scriptures' affirmation that God's creation is beautifully diverse. And we listen to the New Testament's promise that the body of Christ is made up of members who possess a variety of gifts. The social statement also calls God's people to recognize and resist the harm that sexism and patriarchy cause for women and girls, men and boys, and families.

Continued on next page.

“Studies of humans reveal rich diversity, showing that individuals do not neatly fall into two categories.”

(FSJ, p. 32)



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

Continued from previous page.

In session four, we also hear that the diversity of God’s creation includes a wonderful variety of families, human bodies, and those individuals whom some churches have historically excluded (and whom some churches currently minoritize). These include persons with disabilities, people of color, and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and gender non-conforming (LGBTQIA+). (See the *FSJ* glossary for definitions.) *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* recognizes that sexism and heterosexism may affect individuals differently due to a person’s race, age, class, or abilities. The social statement uses this concept of intersectionality to describe “the ways different forms of discrimination and systemic oppression affect each other and shape the lives of individuals and communities in distinct ways.” (*FSJ*, p. 77)



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

GENDER *INJUSTICE* QUIZ (4 MINUTES)

If meeting in-person, distribute the handouts that contain the quiz.

Ask participants to read and answer the quiz questions. The correct answers will be shared after hearing from the social statement and viewing a video.

Circle the correct answers.

1 How many **more** hours a week does the average 35- to 44-year-old woman spend caring for children and maintaining the home when compared to the housework and childcare performed by the man in the same home?¹

A 1.5 hours **B** 2 hours **C** 3.5 hours **D** 5 hours

2 What percentage of LGBT persons have experienced discrimination at work?²

A 15% **B** 20% **C** 27% **D** 41%



Session 4

Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

- 3** What percentage of transgender individuals report that a doctor has refused to see them because of their identity?³
- A** 8% **B** 12% **C** 21% **D** 29%
- 4** In 2021, 145 ELCA congregations had a weekly attendance of 500-plus people. Of these large congregations, what percentage were led by a pastor who is a female?⁴
- A** 8% **B** 10% **C** 13% **D** 17%
- 5** How much more likely are lesbian, gay, or bisexual youth to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers?⁵
- A** none; the rates are the same **B** 1.5 times as likely
C twice as likely **D** three times as likely



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

OPTIONAL: ENCOUNTER THE SCRIPTURES (10-15 MINUTES)

Someone reads aloud.

The author of this psalm celebrates the diversity of God's creation. Read Psalm 104:1, 10-11, 14-15, and 20-24.

Someone else reads aloud.

In his letter to the Christians at Corinth, the apostle Paul teaches that the members of the body of Christ are diverse and interdependent. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-18.

Spend one minute in silence, reflecting on these passages from the Scriptures.



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

Choose two of the following questions and discuss them for 10 minutes. You may want to break people into groups of three or four to give everyone the chance to contribute.

- A** What demands or challenges do I hear in these passages?
- B** What is God up to in these Scripture readings?
- C** What does the diversity of the Body of Christ sound or feel like in these Scripture passages?
- D** What do I hear God saying to my community or to me about gender justice in these readings from the Scriptures?



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

EXPLORE *FAITH, SEXISM AND JUSTICE: THE DIVERSITY OF CREATION AND THE DIVERSITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST (4 MINUTES)*

Someone reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

“The Scriptures reveal the diversity and interconnectedness of creation. ... We believe God creates humanity in diversity. Scientific research in conversation with the Christian tradition shows that this diversity encompasses a wide variety of experiences, identities, and expressions, including sex (human biology), gender (how humans understand and express themselves), and sexuality (sexual attraction).” (*FSJ*, p. 17)

Someone else reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

“In baptism, all Christians are unified in Christ and are equal members of the body of Christ. The apostle Paul ... wrote that Christians are united in the body of Christ, that this body has many diverse parts, and that the members of the body need one another. (See Romans 12:4-5 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-18.)” (*FSJ*, p. 24)



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

Someone else reads aloud from *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

“We must continue to embrace our unity and diversity so that we welcome and uplift people of every sex (biological) and gender—indeed, every body—in our work together as the body of Christ in the world. God’s love feeds the body of Christ so that it might live in love. The sacramental promise that God is present in water, bread, and wine, along with the good news that God became human, leads this church to treasure, hold, and advocate for the embodied lives of all people.” (FSJ, p. 48)

Spend one minute in silence to reflect on the words from the social statement.

Heterosexism is the oppression of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, or gender non-conforming.



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

SHARING STORIES VIDEO:

"CREATION IS DIVERSE, AS IS THE BODY OF CHRIST" (10 MINUTES)

The link to the video for this session is <https://vimeo.com/468338842/ccd6955883>.

DISCUSS THE VIDEO (7 MINUTES)

After viewing the video, discuss one of the following questions. You may want to break into groups of three or four to give everyone the chance to contribute.

- A** At what point in the video were you most engaged, and why?
- B** What is your response to the ELCA's affirmation of biological sex and gender diversity in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*?
- C** Where have you experienced or seen sexism or heterosexism in your home, school, work, community, or church?



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

ENGAGE THE DIVERSITY OF CREATION AND THE DIVERSITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST IN *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE* (9 MINUTES)

In-person Activity

Begin by sharing the correct answers to the quiz questions, in the box at right.

Discuss one of the following questions in pairs.

- A** Which quiz answer was the most surprising to you, and why?
- B** Share a personal experience related to one of the quiz questions.
- C** How does affirming the diversity of creation and of the body of Christ shape the way you think about gender justice for women and girls, for men and boys, or for LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming persons?

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 C.** Women perform 3.5 hours more work than men.
- 2 C.** 27% of LGBT persons experience workplace discrimination.
- 3 D.** 29% of transgender persons report that a doctor refused to see them.
- 4 C.** 13% of large ELCA congregations in 2021 were led by a pastor who is a female.
- 5 C.** LGB youth are twice as likely to attempt suicide.



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

Virtual Activity

The leader should moderate the discussion to ensure that everyone gets the chance to contribute. Participants can be put in small groups of three or four.

Using a shared electronic document or online meeting platform, ask each participant to post their answers to the following prompts. You may use a chat function, or a shared document, or a platform to have participants post their responses.

- A** Which quiz answer was the most surprising to you, and why?
- B** Share a personal experience related to one of the quiz questions.
- C** How does affirming the diversity of creation and of the body of Christ shape the way you think about gender justice for women and girls, for men and boys, or for LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming persons?

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 C.** Women perform 3.5 hours more work than men.
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- 4 C.** 13% of large ELCA congregations in 2021 were led by a pastor who is a female.
- 5 C.** LGB youth are twice as likely to attempt suicide.



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

Virtual Discussion Questions

The leader should moderate the discussion to ensure that everyone gets the chance to contribute.

Engage one of the prompts below.

- A** Which quiz answer was the most surprising to you, and why?
- B** Share a personal experience related to one of the quiz questions.
- C** How does affirming the diversity of creation and of the body of Christ shape the way you think about gender justice for women and girls, for men and boys, or for LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming persons?

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 C.** Women perform 3.5 hours more work than men.
- 2 C.** 27% of LGBT persons experience workplace discrimination.
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Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

LIVE OUT THE SOCIAL STATEMENT'S CALL TO ACTION (5 MINUTES)

During the Session

Choose one of the following activities to work on in pairs.

- A** Perhaps you know someone who would have enjoyed today's session. What will you tell them is the most important thing you learned today? Share your friend's first name and what you will tell them with your discussion partner. (Be sure to contact your friend in the coming week.)
- B** Does your congregation have a public welcome statement that invites all kinds of people into your community? If yes, is it easy to find? If not, what conversations need to occur for your congregation to craft its own welcome statement?
- C** During today's session, did you become aware of how your own beliefs, assumptions, or attitudes prevent you from pursuing gender justice for self or others? What step could you take to unlearn or lay aside those beliefs?



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

OPTIONAL: IN THE COMING WEEK (10 MINUTES)

Take a few minutes to read the optional activities below. Next, select one of these activities that you will pursue. Then reach out to another participant and agree to check in later in the week to discuss what you did to affirm the diversity of creation and of the body of Christ.

- A** Contact a friend and ask them to take the quiz on gender injustice. Review your answers together. Then discuss what steps you can take to promote gender justice for women and girls and for LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming people.
- B** Track the hours you and your partner spend on housework, childcare, or eldercare in the coming week. Does one of you perform more work than the other? What assumptions about sex and gender might lead to this inequity?
- C** Implementing Resolution #15 calls the ELCA to oppose discrimination and renew its efforts to welcome, care for, and support LGBTQIA+ persons (*FSJ*, p.83). What could your congregation do to pursue gender justice and to identify and support individuals and groups as they work for gender justice in the ELCA? Consider discussing this with your congregational leaders or with others in your congregation.
- D** Explore the resources in the Explore section at the end of this session.



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

OPTIONAL: CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION (10-15 MINUTES)

Discuss two of the prompts below.

- A** What fills me with hope or delights me in this session about the diversity of God's creation?
- B** What challenges me or confuses me in this session about the diversity of God's creation and the diversity of the body of Christ?
- C** In your community and congregation, who are the neighbors who need to hear the good news that God's creation is diverse and that the body of Christ encompasses a wide variety of experiences and identities?
- D** Where do you see God at work as the ELCA affirms the diversity of God's creation and the diversity of the body of Christ?
- E** What information in the quiz or in the response to the quiz would you like to discuss further?



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

CLOSING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

Compassionate God, we thank you for this time to reflect on the wondrous diversity of your creation. Guide us as we listen and grow and move and change. Prepare us to step boldly in the world as members of the diverse body of Christ. Amen.



End Notes

URLs were accessed between June and December 2021.

Session One:

All Are Called to Lives of Justice and Abundance

1. “Gender-based Violence” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2015), 18, https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Gender_Based_Violence_SM.pdf.
2. “Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America,” Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, April 2018, <https://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VoYC-LGBTQ-Brief-Chapin-Hall-2018.pdf>.
3. “Racial and Ethnic Disparities Continue in Pregnancy-Related Deaths,” Center for Disease Control, September 5, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0905-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html>.

Session Two:

Patriarchy and Sexism Cause Injustice for Everyone

1. *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, (1991), <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Church-in-Society>.
2. Johnson, Allan G., “The Tree as Metaphor,” *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), <https://www.agjohnson.us/essays/tree>.
3. “45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women: Executive Summary—Clergy Questionnaire Report 2015” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2015), https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/45th_Anniversary_of_the_Ordination_Women_Ordained_Full_Report.pdf.
4. “Thursdays in Black,” World Council of Churches, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black>.

Session Three:

Language and Images for God Matter

1. Luther, Martin, “Against Latomus, 1521,” LW 32:196.



End Notes

Session Four:

Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

1. Hess, Cynthia, et al., "Providing Unpaid Household and Care Work in the United States: Uncovering Inequality," Institute for Women's Policy Research, <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IWPR-Providing-Unpaid-Household-and-Care-Work-in-the-United-States-Uncovering-Inequality.pdf>.
2. Sears, Brad, and Christy Mallory, "Documented Evidence of Employment Discrimination and Its Effects on LGBT People," UCLA School of Law Williams Institute, July 2011, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/employ-discrim-effect-lgbt-people/>.
3. "Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People From Accessing Health Care," Center for American Progress, Jan. 18, 2018, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2018/01/18/445130/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/>.
4. ELCA Office of the Secretary, August 2015.
5. "Suicide and Violence Prevention," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/suicide-violence-prevention.htm>.

Session Five:

Lutheran Insights Promote Gender Justice

1. Parish, Anja, "Gender-based Violence Against Women: Both Cause for Migration and Risk Along the Journey," Migration Policy Institute, Sept. 7, 2017, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/gender-based-violence-against-women-both-cause-migration-and-risk-along-journey>.
2. Wallace, Beverly R., "Silent Voices, Still ... but Faith ... Lifting Up the Voices of the Daughters of Hagar in 'Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action,'" *Currents in Theology and Mission*, April 2020, <http://currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/235/260>.

Session Six:

God Calls Us to Action in Community

1. "Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Pregnancy-Related Deaths—United States, 2007-2016," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sept. 6, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6835a3.htm>.



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Androcentric: Male-centered, focused on men.

Binary (Gender Binary): The concept that there are only two genders, man or woman, which are inherently distinct and “opposite.”

Complementary/Complementarity: The belief that God gave men and women inherently different roles and purposes that complement each other to mutual benefit. Men’s roles have often related to leadership and decision-making; women’s roles have included obeying males and caring for others. These roles are informed by the structural dynamic of dominance (male) and submission (female). The imbalance of power in the relationship contributes to male privilege.

Domestic violence: See entry for “Gender-based violence.”

Equality: The idea that people have the same rights and should receive the same resources. Equality can refer to the equal worth of all people or to people having equal experiences of their rights and their potential in life.

Equity: Fair treatment of people according to their needs.

The principle of equity takes into account that people exist on inherently uneven playing fields due to poverty, sexism, racism, etc. Because of these different contexts, individuals or groups may require different resources and support to ensure that they have the same rights and abilities to make choices as others do (such as having a choice of quality doctors, careers, neighborhoods, etc.).

The goal of equity is to ensure each person receives what each person needs to flourish and is not disadvantaged.

Ex. A simple example of equality in public restrooms would be having changing tables in all restrooms, because male caregivers may also need a space to change diapers. A simple example of equity in public restrooms would be putting more stalls in women’s restrooms in order to serve the specific needs women have.

Expansive language: Language (or imagery) referring to God that is not limited to humanity or human categories: water, a rock, a hiding place, a mighty fortress, etc. See “inclusive language.”

Gender: Identities, roles, behaviors, and attributes that cultures, societies, and individuals shape, most often linked to femininity and masculinity. The most common gender identities are woman/girl and man/boy, but other identities exist. For more, see “gender non-conforming.”

Gender identity: How a person understands one’s own gender; one’s internal sense of one’s gender.

Gender justice: Gender justice is expressed through equality and balanced power relations for people of all genders to live into their individual callings. Gender justice is sought by eliminating power imbalances among people at individual and societal levels, as well as eliminating discrimination against women and people who do not adhere to stereotypes associated with men and women.



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Gender non-conforming, Non-binary, Genderqueer:

Words that people who do not identify as “men” or “women” use to describe their gender (not sexuality). Their gender identity and/or biological characteristics may not completely fit with the dominant and expected ways of acting as, or being, a man or woman or a boy or girl. Each term might be used differently by different people, as an umbrella term or as a specific label for their gender identity. This document uses all three terms in an effort to be inclusive. (Terminology will change over time. Readers are referred to contemporary communities for up-to-date language.) For more, see “gender,” “intersex,” “transgender,” and “queer.”

Gender-based violence: Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or other personal harm inflicted on someone for gender-based reasons, including but not limited to intimate-partner violence and domestic violence. This can include such things as catcalling women or bullying boys who are not perceived as “man enough.” Perpetrators commit gender-based violence to assert power over someone.

Genderqueer: See “Gender non-conforming, Non-binary, Genderqueer.”

Hierarchy: A system in which groups are ranked and certain groups have power over other groups. Sometimes this power over others leads to more value being assigned to the group or individuals with dominance.

Human trafficking: Coercion, abduction, and/or imprisonment of people for forced labor, often of a sexual nature. This problem is pervasive around the world, including in the U.S. Also known as modern-day slavery.

Inclusive language: Language that includes all genders when referring to humanity or God, for instance, using humans or humankind to talk about humanity, rather than man or mankind. See “expansive language.”

Intersecting, intersectionality: Humans have multiple aspects to their identities, including gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, social class, etc. These aspects of human identities are tied to systemic privilege and oppression; gender is tied to sexism, ethnicity is tied to racism, etc. Intersectionality describes the ways different forms of discrimination and systemic oppression affect each other and shape the lives of individuals and communities in distinct ways. All human identities and all forms of privilege and oppression are made up of many intersections.

Ex. A woman of African descent may have a Ph.D. and make a healthy salary, but she will still suffer from racism and sexism. However, she would experience that racism and sexism differently from how a man of African descent, a white woman, or an impoverished person might experience them. The injustices she faces, therefore, may have solutions different from those for other people.



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Intersex: As described by the Intersex Society of North America, a term for a variety of conditions people are born with: physical characteristics, anatomy, and/or genes that vary from standards set by doctors' expectations for being "female" or "male." The term refers to the fact of biological variation among humans. Some people identify as intersex, rather than using the term solely to refer to a condition; others may also identify as gender non-conforming or a similar term.

Justice: Generally, justice refers to an underlying sense of fairness, right treatment, and reciprocity. This statement emphasizes the aspects of justice that include fair and equal treatment under the law, ending oppression based on power differences, and, as emphasized in the Bible, a right relationship with God and within community.

Neighbor justice: A term proposed in this social statement that is rooted in the biblical directive to "love your neighbor as yourself." This term expresses the idea that faith is active in love and love necessarily calls for justice in relationships and in the structures of society. Neighbor justice is meeting neighbors' needs across the globe and in our local communities.

Non-binary: See "Gender non-conforming, Non-binary, Genderqueer."

Objectification: Thinking of or portraying people as objects, erasing their humanity, emotions, and rights.

Ex. Catcalling, advertisements that use sexualized images to sell merchandise, and stories in which female characters exist only as props for male characters.

Patriarchy: A social system that enables men to have more power than, and power over, women and people who do not conform to socially accepted gender roles. A patriarchal social system is dominated by men, identified with men, and centered on men's actions, voices, and authority. In various ways, this kind of social system operates to control women, girls, and people who do not fit society's predominant ideas of maleness and masculinity.

Privilege: This term refers to the relationships between groups of people in society, to the social advantage or special treatment of a group or persons in a group. This advantage is unearned and results from how a group's identity is perceived as "normal" or "better." Privilege is lived out on an individual and societal scale. Privilege is not something a person deliberately opts into or out of, nor is it experienced by everyone in the same ways.

Ex. A man benefits from male privilege when his opinion is subconsciously valued more highly in a meeting, when he is paid more for equal work, or when he walks down a street without harassment or fear of sexual assault. White people benefit from white privilege when they can shop without being followed or monitored by staff who think they may shoplift, or when the majority of heroes in textbooks and movies look like them. For a white male, the combination of white privilege and male privilege can work together. A white man may have fewer risk factors for some stress-related illnesses such as Type 2 diabetes, while his complaints of pain are more likely to be taken seriously by his doctor. For more, see "intersectionality."



Glossary from Faith, Sexism, and Justice

Queer: Umbrella term regarding sex, gender, and sexual orientation, often used by individuals who identify as somehow “other” from society’s sexual, romantic, or gender norms.

Although historically used in a derogatory manner, the term has since been reclaimed as a positive label by some members within that community.

Rape culture: An environment in which the objectification of and assault on human bodies, particularly in a sexual way, is normalized and tolerated. Rape culture primarily harms women and girls. Blaming rape victims for their assaults and maintaining a biased justice system are both parts of rape culture and how it is propagated.

Reproductive health care: Health services related to the reproductive system at all stages of life for all genders, including the menstrual cycle, fertility, and cancer.

Sex (biological): A scientific label assigned at birth that describes an individual’s reproductive organs and whether they have XX chromosomes (female) or XY chromosomes (male). People whose biology varies from standards set by doctors’ expectations of being “female” or “male” are typically called “intersex.” Biological sex characteristics and traits of people who are said to be female or male are also variable.

Sexism: Refers to what supports male privilege and reinforces prejudice and discrimination against women and girls due to their gender and against people who do not conform to socially accepted gender roles. Human actions and speech can be sexist, as can institutions, policies, and practices.

Sexuality: A complex individual and social concept. Individually, sexuality includes the romantic and/or sexual feelings and desires that a person experiences. People’s sexuality is also influenced by the social and cultural forces in which they find themselves.

Toxic masculinity: Refers to forms of masculinity that emphasize aggression, power, and control and sometimes violent or unhealthy sexuality. It deemphasizes weakness, caring, and vulnerability. Masculinity itself is not harmful; however, it is described as toxic when these forms of masculinity cultivate harm to self, others, and society. Toxic masculinity limits the humanity and compassion of men.

Transgender: Describes a person whose gender is different from the sex assigned or identified at birth. Some transgender individuals identify as men or as women; others don’t identify with one of those words. Some people use this term to describe their identity; for others it serves as an umbrella term. Over time its meaning may change as language evolves. See “gender non-conforming.”



Acknowledgements

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Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

EXPLORE FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE: A CALL TO ACTION

Faith, Sexism, and Justice celebrates the diversity of God's creation. "The Scriptures reveal the diversity and interconnectedness of creation. God creates a teeming universe filled with plants and animals ... and humans—all remarkably diverse. We believe God creates humanity in diversity. Scientific research in conversation with the Christian tradition shows that this diversity encompasses a wide variety of experiences, identities, and expressions, including sex (human biology), gender (how humans understand and express themselves), and sexuality (sexual attraction)." (FSJ, p. 17).

The social statement affirms that all Christians are equal members of the body of Christ. "In baptism, all Christians are unified in Christ and are equal members of the body of Christ. The apostle Paul compared the early Christian community to the human body. He wrote that Christians are united in the body of Christ, that this body has many diverse parts, and that the members of the body need one another." (FSJ, p. 24).

Faith, Sexism, and Justice affirms LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming persons as equal members of the body of Christ. "We must continue to embrace our unity and diversity so that we welcome and uplift people of every sex (biological) and gender—indeed, every body—in our work together as the body of Christ in the world." (FSJ, p. 48).

Read pp. 9, articles 31 and 32; pp. 15-18; 24; 33-36; and 47, article 20 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

ENCOUNTER THE SCRIPTURES

Psalm 104: 1, 10-11, 14-15, and 20-24

The author of this psalm celebrates the diversity of God's creation.

1 Corinthians 12:1-18

In his letter to the Christians at Corinth, the apostle Paul teaches that the members of the body of Christ are diverse and interdependent.

RESOURCES

Documents and history for *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* can be found at <https://www.elca.org/womenandjustice>.

Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action can be found at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Faith_Sexism_Justice_Social_Statement_Adopted.pdf.

Fe, sexismo y justicia: Un llamado a la acción can be found at https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Fe_sexismo_y_justicia.pdf.

The study guide for *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action* can be found at <https://www.elca.org/fsjstudyguide>.

The video for session four, "Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ," can be found at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8989135/video/468338842>.

"Women, girls, and people who identify as non-binary must not be deprived of their human or civil rights."

(FSJ, p. 9)



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

IN THE COMING WEEK

- A** Contact a friend and ask them to take the quiz on gender injustice. Review your answers together. Then discuss what steps you can take to promote gender justice for women and girls and for LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming people.
- B** Track the hours you and your partner spend on housework, childcare, or eldercare in the coming week. Does one of you perform more work than the other? What assumptions about sex and gender might lead to this inequity?
- C** Implementing Resolution #15 calls the ELCA to oppose discrimination and renew its efforts to welcome, care for, and support LGBTQIA+ persons (FSJ, p. 83). What could your congregation do to pursue gender justice and to identify and support individuals and groups as they work for gender justice in the ELCA? Consider discussing this with your congregational leaders or with others in your congregation.
- D** Investigate the resources in the Explore section at the end of this session.

If You Want to Know More About the Diversity of Creation and the Diversity of the Body of Christ,

EXPLORE ...

... the diversity of creation in the Scriptures.

See Genesis 1-2; Psalm 8; Psalm 104; Job 38-39; Acts 2; and Galatians 3.

... the New Testament's description of the body of Christ. See Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; 1 Corinthians 12; and Ephesians 4. In *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* see pp. 24, 42-46, and 57.

... the stories of LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming Lutherans. Read the article "Equal Participants in the Body of Christ" by Sarah Carson, published in *Living Lutheran* (February 2017), <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2017/02/equal-participants-body-christ/>.

... the ELCA's 2009 social statement on human sexuality. See *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, <https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/SexualitySS.pdf>.

... how biological sex and gender are viewed in Faith, Sexism, and Justice. Read the article "A New Creation: Sex and Gender in 'Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action'" by Mary Elise Lowe, published in *Currents in Theology and Mission* (April 2020), <https://www.currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/230/266>.

... queer theology by and for queer people of color. Read Patrick S. Cheng's book *Rainbow Theology: Bridging Race, Sexuality, and Spirit*, published by Seabury Books, 2013.

... the terms lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and gender non-conforming. Refer to the [glossary](#) of *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*. And explore the GLAAD Media Reference Guide, 10th edition, for more on these preferred terms at <https://www.glaad.org/reference>.

... the ELCA's social statement on race and ethnicity. See *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*, <https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/RaceSS.pdf>.

... more about bodies, violence, and gender justice. Read Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar's article "Mapping Patriarchal Patterns in Violence: Some Lessons for a Theology of Gender Justice," published in *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* in September 2013, <https://learn.elca.org/jle/mapping-patriarchal-patterns-in-violence-some-lessons-for-a-theology-of-gender-justice/>.

... ELCA resources for advancing justice for persons with disabilities. See the ELCA's social message "A Message on People Living With Disabilities," https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/People_with_DisabilitiesSM.pdf.



Creation Is Diverse, as Is the Body of Christ

GENDER INJUSTICE QUIZ (4 MINUTES)

Circle the correct answers.

- 1 How many **more** hours a week does the average 35- to 44-year-old woman spend caring for children and maintaining the home when compared to the housework and childcare performed by the man in the same home?¹
 - A 1.5 hours
 - B 2 hours
 - C 3.5 hours
 - D 5 hours
- 2 What percentage of LGBT persons have experienced discrimination at work?²
 - A 15%
 - B 20%
 - C 27%
 - D 41%
- 3 What percentage of transgender individuals report that a doctor has refused to see them because of their identity?³
 - A 8%
 - B 12%
 - C 21%
 - D 29%
- 4 In 2021, 145 ELCA congregations had a weekly attendance of 500-plus people. Of these large congregations, what percentage were led by a pastor who is a female?⁴
 - A 8%
 - B 10%
 - C 13%
 - D 17%
- 5 How much more likely are lesbian, gay, or bisexual youth to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers?⁵
 - A none; the rates are the same
 - B 1.5 times as likely
 - C twice as likely
 - D three times as likely

1. <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IWPR-Providing-Unpaid-Household-and-Care-Work-in-the-United-States-Uncovering-Inequality.pdf>
2. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/employ-discrim-effect-lgbt-people/>
3. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2018/01/18/445130/discrimination-prevents-lgbtq-people-accessing-health-care/>
4. This data is from the ELCA Office of the Secretary in August 2021.
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/suicide-violence-prevention.htm>

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 C. Women perform 3.5 hours more work than men.
- 2 C. 27% of LGBT persons experience workplace discrimination.
- 3 D. 29% of transgender persons report that a doctor refused to see them.
- 4 C. 13% of large ELCA congregations in 2021 were led by a pastor who is a female.
- 5 C. LGBT youth are twice as likely to attempt suicide.

