



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 6

God Calls Us to Action in Community

GETTING READY

In session five, participants explored how the Lutheran insights into a theology of the cross, justification, freedom, and neighbor justice inform the social statement's call for gender justice. This is the sixth session in the study guide on the ELCA's 2019 social statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*. In this session participants discern how their congregations, the whole church, and they as individuals might act in the public sphere for gender justice.

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)

Optional: Encounter the Scriptures (10-15 minutes)

Sharing Stories Video: "God Calls Us to Action in Community" (8 minutes)

Discuss the Video (7 minutes)

Explore *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: God Calls Us to Action in Community* (4 minutes)

Engage God Calls Us to Action in Community in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* (10 minutes)

Live Out the Social Statement's Call to Action (10 minutes)

Optional: In the Coming Week (10 minutes)

Optional: Continuing the Conversation (10-15 minutes)

Closing Prayer (2 minutes)



Session 6

God Calls Us to Action in Community

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 six:

- Here I Am, Lord, *ELW* 574
- Guide My Feet, *ACS* 987, *TFF* 153
- Let Us Enter In, *ACS* 985
- May the God of Hope Go With Us, *ACS* 984
- Send Me, Lord/Thuma mina, *ELW* 809, *TFF* 244
- Take My Life, That I May Be/Toma, oh, Dios, mi voluntad, *ELW* 583, 685; *LLC* 570
- The Lord Now Sends Us Forth/Enviado soy de Dios, *ELW* 538, *LLC* 415
- Touch That Soothes and Heals, *ACS* 939
- What Does the Lord Require of You, *ACS* 1057
- Will You Come and Follow Me, *ELW* 798

DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY SECTION

This session has three different options for the section titled “Engage God Calls Us to Action in Community” 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.



Session 6

God Calls Us to Action in Community

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. It includes 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.
- Pens or markers for each participant
- Red and green 3-by-3-inch sticky notes—enough for each participant to have at least three sticky notes
- If meeting in person, you will need a large map of your town or neighborhood and a photo or drawing of your statehouse and the U.S. Capitol.
- 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 [Microsoft Word - Book_Of_Faith_4_fold_Methods.docx](#) (elca.org)

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 pp. 59-68 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

Preview the video. Jennifer DeLeon serves as the ELCA's director for racial justice and previously worked in advocacy with Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. In this video, she frames advocacy as an expression of her Lutheran faith and as a part of her vocation to equip others to live out neighbor justice in the public sphere.

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 31-40 on pp. 9-11 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*. Participants may also skim pp. 59-68 in the social statement.

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.



God Calls Us to Action in Community

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, such as 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, help us be still and listen. As our senses adjust to new ways of being, nurture the changes in our hearts. Help us behold all of creation with the same delight and care that you have when you remember us. Sustain us to love our neighbors by acting in community for justice. Amen.



God Calls Us to Action in Community

SESSION OBJECTIVES

Someone reads aloud.

We will explore how *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* calls Lutherans to act for gender justice.

We will hear about the ways that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America engages in advocacy work for the common good.

We will identify at least one specific law, policy, or practice that we can work to change that will better serve women and girls.

(In the 60 or 90 minute session, we will encounter two ways the Scriptures describe working together with others.)



God Calls Us to Action in Community

OUR CONTEXT FOR SESSION SIX

The leader reads aloud.

Faith, Sexism, and Justice's final two sections focus on how this church can support women and girls by advocating for and working toward equitable laws, policies, and practices in church and society. For example, in the United States, women often do not have the power to choose what childcare arrangement makes most sense for their families. Some people feel called to be stay-at-home parents but can't financially afford to do so. Other people feel called to work outside the home, but childcare is so expensive they can't afford it.

Revising laws, policies, and practices could empower women to choose what works best for their families. In this example, that might be guaranteed parental leave after a child is born or adopted, as well as subsidized childcare. Without secure support, women's choices are limited.

Continued on next page.

Laws are authorized and enforced by governments.

Policies are how laws are applied in the public sphere.

Practices are how people and organizations do things.



God Calls Us to Action in Community

Continued from previous page.

The challenges related to parenting and childcare are made more complex when they intersect with other forms of injustice. For example, African American women, whether economically poor or wealthy, consistently have more severe pregnancy complications and premature births than white women.¹ *Faith, Sexism, and Justice* advocates for laws, policies, and practices that best allow each family to flourish.

Continued on next page.

Through the social statement, the ELCA as a church commits to advocate for:

- **Human rights.**
- **Ending gender-based violence.**
- **Equitable health care.**
- **Economic equity.**
- **Vocations free of gender stereotypes.**
- **Increased support for families.**
- **Safety for refugees and immigrants.**
- **Eliminating stereotypes in media.**
- **Increasing women's roles in leadership.**

To learn more about each one, look at pp. 59-68 of *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.



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This session will help you and your congregation discern the struggles women and girls experience in your community. Then, you will identify one or two unjust laws, policies, or practices that you or your congregation might have the power to influence or change. Through everyone working in their communities and at the state or national level, through small efforts or big, we can help foster God's vision of abundant life for all.



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OPTIONAL: ENCOUNTER THE SCRIPTURES (10-15 MINUTES)

Someone reads aloud.

Though this text is often used at weddings, the description of love and growth applies to our love for all others in Christ and goes beyond romantic love. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-13.

Someone else reads aloud.

The apostle Paul teaches the Christians in Rome how to live and work together. Read Romans 12:2; 15-17.

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



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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** Picture yourself working with people in your community for gender justice. Based on these readings, what would working together look like?
- D** Share one example of how you are “being transformed by the renewing of your mind” when it comes to gender justice. This change could be happening in your life or inspired by studying *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.



Session 6

God Calls Us to Action in Community

EXPLORE *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE*: GOD CALLS US TO ACTION IN COMMUNITY (3 MINUTES)

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

“The aim is for individuals in community to seek the most life-giving roles within the structures of church, family, work, or civil society. Toward this end, the ELCA urges that society’s laws, policies, and practices foster diversity and flexibility so that all may contribute their gifts to society, regardless of their gender.” (*FSJ*, p. 65)

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

“This church does not presume to have quick or easy solutions for the deeply rooted, intertwined, and complex problems that permeate earthly systems and structures. Time, study, effort, and discernment are required. Nevertheless, it is both a clear biblical teaching and a matter of neighbor justice that God’s people hold governing authorities and social structures accountable to their purpose, ensuring greater equity and justice for all. These commitments to advocate for and support social renewal express this church’s firm trust that God works to create improved social relations.” (*FSJ*, p. 60)

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



Session 6

God Calls Us to Action in Community

SHARING STORIES VIDEO: "GOD CALLS US TO ACTION IN COMMUNITY" (8 MINUTES)

The link to the video for this session is <https://vimeo.com/elca/review/590016824/206fd40223>.

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** In your life, who or what has shaped the way you think about advocating for justice in the public sphere?
- C** List the ministries your congregation already supports. The women in the video extended prison ministry into prison advocacy. How could you extend one or two of your congregation's ministries into advocacy that promotes just laws, policies, or practices?

"Social structures and institutions that fail to do justice are not fulfilling the purpose for which God created them. They must be challenged and held accountable; this is a matter of great urgency because human life depends upon them." (FSJ, p. 59)



Session 6

God Calls Us to Action in Community

ENGAGE GOD CALLS US TO ACTION IN COMMUNITY IN *FAITH, SEXISM, AND JUSTICE (10 MINUTES)*

In-person Activity

For this activity you need a preprinted map of your community (your neighborhood, town, or county, for example) to tape on the wall. Or you could use a projector. Next to your local map, tape up pictures of your state's statehouse and the U.S. Capitol. Depending on the size of your map, you could add, circle, or highlight other significant places for your community.

Split into two groups. One group needs green sticky notes and answers the question in Step One. The other needs pink sticky notes and answers the question in Step Two.

STEP ONE: Name Power. Post the names and locations of places of decision-making and power. Think about places such as city hall or employers.

STEP TWO: Name Need. Post the names and locations of places in your community that are failing to support and empower women and girls.

STEP THREE: Review. Take a moment to read what others have written.

STEP FOUR: Share. Share (orally or in writing) what surprises you about what others wrote. Do you notice any patterns?



Session 6

God Calls Us to Action in Community

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.

The leader will need to prepare a shared document that displays a map of your community or town or share their screen and display the map. Everyone will need to view the map at the same time. This activity asks people to view the map and answer the prompts in the chat or shared document. Post these questions one at a time and allow participants about two minutes to post their responses.

STEP ONE: Name Power. Post the names and locations of places of decision-making and power. Think about places such as city hall or employers.

STEP TWO: Name Need. Post the names and locations of places in your community that are failing to support and empower women and girls.

STEP THREE: Review. Take a moment to read what others have written.

STEP FOUR: Share. Share (orally or in writing) what surprises you about what others wrote. Do you notice any patterns?



God Calls Us to Action in Community

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** Where are the places of decision-making and power in your community? Think about places such as city hall or employers.
- B** Name the places and buildings in your community that are failing to support and empower women and girls.
- C** What surprises you? Do you notice any patterns?



God Calls Us to Action in Community

LIVE OUT THE SOCIAL STATEMENT'S CALL TO ACTION (10 MINUTES)

During the Session

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

- A** What resources or influence do you—as individuals and as a congregation—have to help empower women and girls? This might include resources such as people, time, space, or funding.
- B** Thinking about the resources you have as a congregation and the problem(s) you identified earlier in the session, what is one issue your group could act on in the weeks following this session?

***“Let us love,
not in word
or speech,
but in truth
and action.”***

(1 John 3:18)



God Calls Us to Action in Community

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 take action for gender justice.

- A** Select a date to reconvene everyone from today's discussion who is interested in working on a specific issue. During the meeting, discuss what you still need to learn about this issue and how you can connect with the people most affected.
- B** Look up who your elected officials are, using a tool such as <https://openstates/>. Reach out to one official about an issue related to gender justice.



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- C** Write a letter to your future self that outlines any insights or goals you have coming out of these sessions. Swap letters with a partner, set a calendar reminder to reread it, or use <https://futureme.org> to send an email to yourself in the future.
- D** Go to <https://ELCA.org/advocacy> to see how this church advocates for equitable laws across the country and in Washington, D.C. Sign up to receive email alerts when important bills need public input so that you can become part of the ELCA's advocacy in the public sphere.
- E** Explore the resources in the Explore section at the end of this session.



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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 advocating for gender justice?
- B** What challenges me or confuses me in this session about acting for gender justice?
- C** Recall the mapping activity. What cultural beliefs or attitudes contribute to one of the problems you named?
- D** What healing do members of your community need from past systemic injustices? What does your congregation need to do to support healing and reconciliation in the public sphere?



Session 6

God Calls Us to Action in Community

CLOSING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

Liberating God, tend to the way of our hearts. Nurture the seeds of new life stirring in us, pushing through doubts, fears, and wonder toward the sun. Show us the way of just action. Help us understand that the source of our power is the life, death, and resurrection of your Child, Jesus. 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.”



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God Calls Us to Action in Community

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

“The aim is for individuals in community to seek the most life-giving roles within the structures of church, family, work, or civil society. Toward this end, the ELCA urges that society’s laws, policies, and practices foster diversity and flexibility so that all may contribute their gifts to society, regardless of their gender.” (FSJ, p. 65)

“This church does not presume to have quick or easy solutions for the deeply rooted, intertwined, and complex problems that permeate earthly systems and structures. Time, study, effort, and discernment are required. Nevertheless, it is both a clear biblical teaching and a matter of neighbor justice that God’s people hold governing authorities and social structures accountable to their purpose, ensuring greater equity and justice for all. These commitments to advocate for and support social renewal express this church’s firm trust that God works to create improved social relations.” (FSJ, p. 60)

Participants are encouraged to read pp. 59-68 in *Faith, Sexism, and Justice*.

ENCOUNTER THE SCRIPTURES

1 Corinthians 13: 4-13: Though this text is often used at weddings, the description of love and growth applies to our love for all others in Christ and goes beyond romantic love.

Romans 12:2; 15-17: The apostle Paul teaches the Christians in Rome how to live and work together.

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 six, “God Calls Us to Action in Community,” can be found at <https://vimeo.com/Showcase/8989135/video/590016824>.



God Calls Us to Action in Community

IN THE COMING WEEK

- A** Select a date to reconvene everyone from today's discussion who is interested in working on a specific issue. During the meeting, discuss what you still need to learn about this issue and how you can connect with the people most affected.
- B** Look up who your elected officials are, using a tool such as <https://openstates.org>. Reach out to one official about an issue related to gender justice.
- C** Write a letter to your future self that outlines any insights or goals you have coming out of these sessions. Swap letters with a partner, set a calendar reminder to reread it, or use <https://futureme.org> to send an email to yourself in the future.
- D** Go to <https://www.elca.org/advocacy> to see how this church advocates for equitable laws across the country and in Washington, D.C. Sign up to receive email alerts when important bills need public input so that you can become part of the ELCA's advocacy in the public sphere.
- E** Investigate the resources in the Explore section at the end of this session.

If You Want to Know More About How God Calls Us to Action in Community,

EXPLORE ...

...the ELCA's teaching that God calls each of us to seek justice. See Genesis 1:28; Amos 5:4-24; Isaiah 65:17-25; Proverbs 3:27-35; Micah 6:6-8; Galatians 6:2-10; Philippians 2:2-8; Matthew 25:31-46; and 1 John 3:11-24.

...how to register to vote. Go to <https://vote.gov>. To learn about who your local, state, and federal representatives are, go to <https://openstates.org> and your city's website.

...how to advocate effectively and what issues need your support. Connect with the ELCA's Witness in Society ministry at <https://www.elca.org/advocacy>. For a great video introduction go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5bXlUXVixg>.

...a theological and practical guide to advocacy. Check out the ELCA Civic Engagement Guide: https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/ELCAvotes_civic_engagement_and_voter_education_guide.pdf.

...a Lutheran perspective on advocacy. Read Richard Graham's "A Lutheran Bishop's Reflections on the Church's Public Work of Advocacy," <https://learn.elca.org/jle/a-lutheran-bishops-reflections-on-the-churchs-public-work-of-advocacy/>.

...how to have conversations with people with diverse views and experiences in your community. Find out what your synod office or local council of churches recommends.

...what Lutheran Social Services ministries are in your area. Go to <https://www.lutheranservices.org/>.

...how Lutherans worldwide advocate for local change at the global level and how to become involved. See <https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-women-advocacy-handbook>.

...how to dig deeper into reaching out as a congregation to your neighborhood. Check out Augsburg University's Riverside Innovation Hub. It has a useful framework of accompaniment, interpretation, discernment, and proclamation. Access it at <https://web.augsburg.edu/acfl/RIH/RIH-Learning%20Report.pdf>.

...the journeys of ELCA members working with others for change. Explore the ELCA Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries website: [Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Ministries - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(elca.org\)](https://www.elca.org/Ethnic-Specific-and-Multicultural-Ministries).

...how to be intentionally intersectional. Check out the resource from the Council of Europe's European Youth Foundation and the Government of the Netherlands 2014 resource "Intersectionality Toolkit," [Inter-Toolkit.pdf \(iglyo.com\)](https://www.iglyo.com/inter-toolkit.pdf).

