

Timeline of the ELCA Task Force on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* Social Statement Reconsiderations

2022

August ELCA Churchwide Assembly authorizes two reconsiderations—one editorial and one substantive—of the social statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*

2024

April Executive Committee of ELCA Church Council seats task force following extensive application and interview process

June Task force meeting #1

September Task force meeting #2

October *Public Comment and Survey Period Opens*

2025

January 31 *Public Comment Period Ends*

February Task force meeting #3—review and revision based on public comments and survey results; task force members sign off on proposed text

March Review of draft edits to social statement by Conference of Bishops

April 4-7 ELCA Church Council considers action to recommend proposed draft for adoption by ELCA Churchwide Assembly

July 28-Aug 2 ELCA Churchwide Assembly considers recommended, proposed text for adoption

September Task force meeting #4—work begins on second, substantive reconsideration

Fall/Winter Adopted text posted online

2026

January Task force meeting #5

Spring Study resources published and shared with synods and congregations

October Task force meeting #6

2027

January Task force meeting #7—task force signs off on draft text

March Draft text published and shared for public comment

Hearings hosted throughout across the ELCA to gather feedback

September Public comment period closes

October Task force meeting #8—review of public comments and survey results

2028

January Task force meeting #9—task force signs off on recommended text

February ELCA Conference of Bishops reviews recommended text

Recommended text published online

Mar. 30-Apr. 2 ELCA Church Council considers action to recommend proposed draft for adoption by ELCA Churchwide Assembly

August ELCA Churchwide Assembly considers recommended, proposed draft for adoption

October Revised social statement published online

Key Terms for Understanding the Timeline

ELCA social statements are teaching and policy documents that provide broad frameworks to assist in thinking about and discussing social issues in the context of faith and life. Social statements establish ELCA teaching and set policy for our church's social witness.

A **draft** of a social statement is exactly that, a draft of a social statement designed for feedback from church members. It does not represent the official teaching of the ELCA but provides a working document from the task force to generate comment and suggestions from throughout the church.

Hearings are gatherings during the Draft Comment period in which participants share their thoughts, comments, and suggestions in a group setting. Comments and suggestions about themes and specific wording are recorded and shared with the task force.

Listening events are forums led by task force members or Process Builders* designed to hear from members of the ELCA regarding their insights and concerns around the issues of church, state, and civic participation. It provides early feedback for the task force about hopes, fears, and expectations for the social statement that the task force will develop. These events tend to be local or online in nature.

Study resources may be created to help members of the ELCA probe and think about issues under discussion during the development process of a social statement. Most of these are brief, one-to-three session resources focusing on a specific topic. Each study resource includes a response form that can be completed and sent to the task force by individuals or groups who have used this study.

An **ELCA Task Force** (approximately 15 to 17 individuals) is seated by action of Church Council, to carry out the development of a social statement. Members are nominated or apply and are selected to bring to the table a wide range of skill sets, competencies, backgrounds, and perspectives in accordance with ELCA diversity commitments.