



July 28 – August 2
PHOENIX, ARIZONA



Plenary Session One

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) convened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 6:30 p.m. (all times Pacific Daylight Time unless otherwise noted). The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), called the assembly to order. The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 6:14 p.m., 730 voting members had registered. The chair declared that a quorum was present.

The Roll of Assembly Members was accepted without objection as the organization of the assembly.

Consideration of the Rules of Organization and Procedure

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I, Rules of Organization and Procedure

A motion was brought from the Church Council to adopt the proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure.

Moved;

[Seconded]: **To adopt the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that are already in force).**

A voting member requested separate consideration of “Part Three: Moving the Previous Question” of the Rules of Organization and Procedure for consideration of additional language.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

ACTION

YES-707; NO-51

CA25.01.01 To adopt the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly (exclusive of quoted and highlighted constitutional provisions and bylaws that are already in force).

A voting member introduced a motion to amend the Rules of Organization and Procedure, “Part Three: Moving the Previous Question” by addition.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

ACTION

YES-543; NO-217

CA25.01.02 To amend the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” by addition as follows:
Moving the Previous Question

....

A motion to move the previous question shall be a debatable motion, in which no more than three people on each side may speak for no more than 60 seconds each on the merits of continuing or ending debate.

In accordance with the adopted rules, Presiding Bishop Eaton declared the committees of the assembly authorized and constituted.

Consideration of the Order of Business

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I, Order of Business

A motion was brought from the Church Council to adopt the proposed Order of Business.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-771; NO-2

CA25.01.03 To approve the Order of Business as the agenda of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in keeping with the

provisions of the “Rules of Organization and Procedure” for calling items of business before the assembly.

Elections: First Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V, Election of the Presiding Bishop

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 8:40 p.m., 791 voting members had registered to cast ballots. Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the first ballot for presiding bishop.

A voting member introduced a motion to suspend the Rules of Organization and Procedure to extend the deadline for submission of forms originally set for 9:15 p.m. on July 28, 2025.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

ACTION

YES-623; NO-141

CA25.01.04

To suspend the Rules of Organization and Procedure to extend the deadline for submission of:

Separate consideration (removal from *en bloc*) of responses to synod memorials

Substitute responses to synod memorials

Separate consideration (removal from *en bloc*) 2025 archival of certain social policy resolutions

Separate consideration (removal from *en bloc*) of the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions

Proposed changes to the amendments to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions

Proposed amendments from the floor to the constitutions, bylaws, and continuing resolutions

until 9:35 p.m. on July 28, 2025.

Plenary Session One adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Deadlines for Tuesday, July 29, 2025

12:15 p.m. Withdrawal from Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Questions for Presiding Bishop Question-and-Answer Forum

Nominations from the Floor

Proposed amendments to the Recommended Proposed Social Statement on *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All* and implementing resolutions

6:15 p.m. Proposed amendments to the 2026–2028 Budget Proposal



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Legislative Update: Tuesday, July 29, 2025

Plenary Session Two

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 10:16 a.m. (all times Pacific Daylight Time unless otherwise noted). The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), called the assembly to order.

Elections: Results of First Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X:1, Report of the Elections Committee

Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel for the ELCA and chair of the Elections Committee, presented the initial results of the first ballot for presiding bishop. Of the 667 legal ballots cast, none of the nominees received the 501 votes necessary for election. Those who received votes were able to withdraw their names from the second ballot. The list of names from the first ballot can be found in the ELCA Guide app under “Section X, Report of the Elections Committee.”

Plenary Session Two adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

Plenary Session Three

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 2:00 p.m. Presiding Bishop Eaton called the assembly to order.

En Bloc Action on Social Policy Resolutions

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section V:5, Archiving of Certain Social Policy Resolutions

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-773; NO-13

CA25.02.05 To archive the social policy resolutions identified in the “2025 Archiving of Certain Social Policy Resolutions” document, in accordance with the “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018).

Elections: Second Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 3:06 p.m., 800 voting members had registered to cast ballots. Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the second ballot for presiding bishop.

Report: Memorials Committee

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee; Supplemental Report of the Memorials Committee

The Rev. Emily K. Hartner and Mr. Noah F. Roux, co-chairs of the Memorials Committee, noted that synod assemblies had addressed 87 memorials to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. The memorials were sorted into 35 categories. The committee proposed four recommended responses to categories of memorials for separate consideration, with the remaining 31 recommended responses to be considered *en bloc*. Voting members removed an additional two recommended responses from *en bloc*.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-729; NO-49

CA25.02.06

To approve *en bloc*, with the exception of those memorials considered separately, the following responses to 2023, 2024, and 2025 synod memorials printed in the Report of the Memorials Committee (2025 *Bulletin of Reports*, Section VII, pages as listed).

The assembly began consideration of responses to categories of memorials removed from *en bloc*.

Category A3:

The chairs moved the recommended response of the committee:

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-779; NO-7

CA25.02.07

To receive with gratitude the memorials on “Indian Boarding School Remembrance” from Alaska Synod, Montana Synod, Sierra Pacific Synod, Southwest California Synod, Pacifica Synod, Western North Dakota Synod, Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Saint Paul Area Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Northern Illinois Synod, Central-Southern Illinois Synod, Western Iowa Synod, Northeastern Iowa Synod, Northern Great Lakes Synod, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Greater Milwaukee Synod, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Southeast Michigan Synod, North/West Lower Michigan Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and the Florida-Bahamas Synod;

To address the legacies of this church’s role in Indian boarding schools through the following actions:

1. Encourage and equip all congregations, synods, and ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA to observe the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually on or near September 30th;
2. Urge Augsburg Fortress and the Service and Justice unit, in consultation with other appropriate churchwide organization home areas, to create adult and children/youth educational programs and materials concerning Christian and Lutheran roles in Indian boarding schools to broaden and deepen awareness at congregations, synods, and ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA; and to consistently publish articles in all of this church’s publications;
3. Provide on-going recognition of and support for the growing network of lay people and rostered ministers volunteering their time in the work of the ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative on Indian Boarding Schools (see www.elca.org/IndianBoardingSchools) to locate all known records related to the ELCA’s predecessor bodies’ involvement with Indian boarding and day schools and to educate others about Indian boarding schools;
4. Encourage ministries affiliated with or related to the ELCA to commit to learning the truth of their involvement with Indian boarding schools, in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative and to responsibly create paths to healing and repair;
5. Organize and care for all information in the ELCA’s possession that was recorded about Indian boarding and day schools and the students who attended them, forcibly or otherwise; carry out this work in partnership with the ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative and the ELCA Archives; recognize that this information belongs to and is a source of healing for student survivors, their descendants, communities, and Tribal Nations;

- and ensure that the records and research are made accessible to Indian boarding school survivors and their families in a responsible manner; and
6. Direct the churchwide organization to identify the revenue source(s) to sufficiently support research and organizing efforts, and to sufficiently support digitization and labeling of all Indian boarding school records in the ELCA Archives.

Category B14:

The chairs moved the recommended response of the committee:

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-646; NO-144

CA25.02.08

To receive with gratitude the memorials on “Consideration of Recommendation 1 of the CRLC” from the Pacifica Synod, Metropolitan New York Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod;

To acknowledge the importance of accountability in addressing racism within all structures of the ELCA;

To affirm the work of the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity Advisory Team and request that the Church Council continue to work with the team to clarify the nature of mutual accountability as referenced in Recommendation 1 of the CRLC Report;

To direct the Church Council to add a timeline to its actions taken in response to CRLC Recommendation 1 and to provide progress updates to this church with a final report by Fall 2027, including possible constitutional changes, and

To recommend that if this work is not accomplished by Fall 2027, the Church Council consider calling a special meeting of the Churchwide Assembly to enact necessary revisions to the governing documents of this church.

Elections: First Common Ballot

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section VIII, Report of the Nominating Committee; Supplemental Report of the Nominating Committee; Section X, First Common Ballot

The Elections Committee provided instructions for electing members of the Church Council, churchwide committees, and boards of separately incorporated ministries. There were 110 tickets for action. The deadline to return ballots is 1:45 p.m. July 30, 2025.

Elections: Results of Second Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Mr. Cuniff presented the initial results of the second ballot for presiding bishop. Of the 791 legal ballots cast, none of the nominees received the necessary 594 votes for election. The list of names from the second ballot can be found in the ELCA Guide app under “Section X, Report of the Elections Committee.”

Plenary Session Three adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Deadlines for Wednesday, July 30, 2025

10:45 a.m. Non-germane Resolutions

Proposed amendments to Recommended Proposed Edited Social Statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009)

1:45 p.m. First Common Ballot



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Legislative Update: Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Plenary Session Four

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 9:17 a.m. (all times Pacific Daylight Time unless otherwise noted). The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), called the assembly to order.

Report: Memorials Committee

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee; Supplemental Report of the Memorials Committee

The assembly continued consideration of responses to categories of memorials removed from *en bloc*.

Category B4:

The chairs moved the following substitute response on behalf of the committee:

Moved;

[Seconded];

To receive with gratitude the memorials on “Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine” from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Witness in Society Advocacy Team, to write to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives calling on the U.S. government:

- to recognize and work to end the genocide against the Palestinian people, to halt military assistance to Israel used to devastate Gaza, and to investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law;
- to redouble its efforts to end human rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank, focusing on the most egregious and ongoing violations, including: indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing of Gaza resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of children, women and men; deprivation of adequate access to drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity; destruction of buildings—including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools—and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival; and, the detention of hostages and political prisoners;
- to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state, and support Palestine’s full membership in the United Nations, and

- to reject proposals to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, to address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and to work to end the rampant settler violence and vandalism against Palestinians in the West Bank;

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Sumud initiative, and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

A voting member offered an amendment.

Moved;
Seconded;
Carried:

Yes-752; No-22

To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Witness in Society Advocacy Team, to write to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives calling on the U.S. government:

- to recognize and work to end the genocide against the Palestinian people, to halt military assistance to Israel used to devastate Gaza, and to investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law;
- to redouble its efforts to end human rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank, focusing on the most egregious and ongoing violations, including: indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing of Gaza resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of children, women and men; deprivation of adequate access to drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity; destruction of buildings—including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools—and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival; and, the detention of hostages and political prisoners;
- to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state, and support Palestine's full membership in the United Nations, and

- to reject proposals to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, to address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and to work to end the rampant settler violence and vandalism against Palestinians in the West Bank;

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative "Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel," initiative, and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

A voting member offered an amendment.

Moved;
Seconded;
Carried:

Yes-502; No-274

To receive with gratitude the memorials on "Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine" from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, while maintaining the right and sovereignty of the State of Israel to exist, and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Witness in Society Advocacy Team, to write to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives calling on the U.S. government:

- to recognize and work to end the genocide against the Palestinian people, to halt military assistance to Israel used to devastate Gaza, and to investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law;
- to redouble its efforts to end human rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank, focusing on the most egregious and ongoing violations, including: indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing of Gaza resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of children, women and men; deprivation of adequate access to drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity; destruction of buildings—including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools—and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival; and, the detention of hostages and political prisoners;

- to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state, and support Palestine’s full membership in the United Nations, and
- to reject proposals to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, to address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and to work to end the rampant settler violence and vandalism against Palestinians in the West Bank;

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA’s commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative “Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel,” and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the Orders of the Day.

Elections: Third Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 10:00 a.m., 802 voting members were registered and present. Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the third ballot for presiding bishop.

Elections: Results of Third Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel for the ELCA and chair of the Elections Committee, presented the initial results of the third ballot for presiding bishop. Of the 801 legal ballots cast, none of the nominees received the 534 votes necessary for election. The list of names from the third ballot can be found in the ELCA Guide app under “Section X, Report of the Elections Committee.”

A voting member introduced a motion to suspend the rules.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

CA25.03.09 To extend the deadline for completion of the First Common Ballot until 6:30 p.m. on July 30, 2025.

Plenary Session Four recessed at 11:05 a.m.

Plenary Session Five

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 2:02 p.m. Presiding Bishop Eaton called the assembly to order.

Following the responses of nominees for presiding bishop to the three questions posed to them, a voting member introduced a motion to suspend the rules.

ASSEMBLY**ACTION****TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED****YES-678; NO-120****CA25.03.10**

Following the results of the fourth ballot, if there is no election, we ask the two nominees to share a scripture story or verse or aspect of Christ which shapes and sustains them—with two minutes for each response.

Elections: Fourth Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 3:00 p.m., 803 voting members were registered and present.

A voting member introduced a motion to suspend the rules.

Moved;***Two-Thirds Vote Required*****Seconded;*****Yes-514; No-278*****Defeated:**

To suspend the rules to allow all three nominees to speak on their personal response to scripture and faith prior to the fourth ballot.

Elections: Fourth Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the fourth ballot for presiding bishop.

Elections: Results of Fourth Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Mr. Cunniff presented the results of the fourth ballot for presiding bishop. Of the 803 legal ballots cast, none of the nominees received the 482 votes necessary for election.

Yehiel Curry	436
Kevin Strickland	193
Tracie Bartholomew	174

Elections: Fifth Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the fifth ballot for presiding bishop.

Elections: Results of Fifth Ballot for Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Mr. Cunniff presented the results of the fifth ballot for presiding bishop. Of the 799 legal ballots cast, a nominee received the necessary 400 votes for election.

Yehiel Curry	562
Kevin Strickland	237

Elections: Election of the Presiding Bishop

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:2, Election of the Presiding Bishop; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Mr. Cunniff declared the election of the Rev. Yehiel Curry as presiding bishop of the ELCA.

ASSEMBLY**ACTION****CA25.03.11**

To elect the Rev. Yehiel Curry to a six-year term, commencing on the first day of the third month after election, as presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Elections: First Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 4:51 p.m., 803 voting members were registered and present. Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the first ballot for secretary.

Plenary Session Five recessed at 5:18 p.m.

Plenary Session Six

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 7:00 p.m. Presiding Bishop Eaton called the assembly to order.

Consideration: 2026–2028 Budget

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section V:6, 2023–2025 Proposed Budget

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, to present the recommendation of the Church Council for the 2026–2028 budget. There being no discussion, Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-774; NO-10

CA25.03.12

2026 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2026 current fund spending authorization of \$61,500,000;

To approve a 2026 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$21,550,000;

and

To authorize the Church Council to revise the spending authorizations after periodic review of revised income estimates.

2027 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2027 current fund income proposal of \$56,915,000;

To approve a 2027 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$21,300,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

2028 Budget Proposal

To approve a 2028 current fund income proposal of \$56,320,000;

To approve a 2028 ELCA World Hunger income proposal of \$21,050,000; and

To authorize the Church Council to establish a spending authorization after periodic review of revised income estimates.

Report: Memorials Committee

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section VII, Report of the Memorials Committee; Supplemental Report of the Memorials Committee

The assembly continued consideration of the response to memorials in Category D4.

A voting member offered an amendment.

Moved;

Seconded;

Yes-579; No-198

Carried:

To receive with gratitude the memorials on “Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine” from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, while maintaining the right and sovereignty of the State of Israel to exist, and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To recognize the rights of the State of Israel and a sovereign State of Palestine to exist side by side, as per the ELCA's historic stated position, and per existing UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 2334;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Witness in Society Advocacy Team, to write to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives calling on the U.S. government:

- to recognize and work to end the genocide against the Palestinian people, to halt military assistance to Israel used to devastate Gaza, and to investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law;
- to redouble its efforts to end human rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank, focusing on the most egregious and ongoing violations, including: indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing of Gaza resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of children, women and men; deprivation of adequate access to drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity; destruction of buildings—including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools—and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival; and, the detention of hostages and political prisoners;
- to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state, and support Palestine's full membership in the United Nations, and
- to reject proposals to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, to address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and to work to end the rampant settler violence and vandalism against Palestinians in the West Bank;

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA's commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative "Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel," and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the vote.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.03.13

YES-742; NO-38

To receive with gratitude the memorials on “Stand for Palestinian Rights and End to Occupation of Palestine” from the Northwest Washington Synod, Oregon Synod, Rocky Mountain Synod, Nebraska Synod, Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Southeast Michigan Synod, New England Synod, Delaware-Maryland Synod, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, and Southeastern Synod;

To encourage ELCA members, congregations, synods, and appropriate churchwide units to advocate for human rights, justice, and peace for all Palestinians and Israelis and support policies that bring an end to the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, while maintaining the right and sovereignty of the State of Israel to exist, and promote a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

To recognize the rights of the State of Israel and a sovereign State of Palestine to exist side by side, as per the ELCA’s historic stated position, and per existing UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 2334;

To reaffirm our deep commitment to justice, peace, and the sanctity of every human life, and join the call of the World Council of Churches for an immediate end to the mass killing in Gaza. With grief and moral urgency, we recognize the profound human toll of the violence and displacement against Palestinian civilians, which constitutes a crisis of international conscience. As we lament this unfolding tragedy, we acknowledge a distinction between our Jewish siblings and the policies of the present government of Israel. We reaffirm our unwavering opposition to antisemitism and Islamophobia in all their forms;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Witness in Society Advocacy Team, to write to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the majority and minority leaders of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives calling on the U.S. government:

- to recognize and work to end the genocide against the Palestinian people, to halt military assistance to Israel used to devastate Gaza, and to investigate the use of U.S. military aid to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international human rights law;
- to redouble its efforts to end human rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank, focusing on the most egregious and ongoing violations, including: indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing of Gaza resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of children, women and men; deprivation of adequate access to drinking water, food, medical care, and electricity; destruction of buildings—including hospitals, places of worship, homes, and schools—and the destruction of electricity, sewage and water infrastructure essential for survival; and, the detention of hostages and political prisoners;
- to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state, and support Palestine’s full membership in the United Nations, and
- to reject proposals to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, to address the catastrophic living conditions that could force Palestinians to leave, and to work to end the rampant settler violence and vandalism against Palestinians in the West Bank;

To encourage prayerful response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank and encourage individuals, congregations, and synods of the ELCA to pray for Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims, who work to create a future of justice, equality, reconciliation, and peace for all, including our siblings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Augusta Victoria Hospital operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the World

Council of Churches/Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC/EAPPI) who offer comfort, support, accountability, and relief, and

To reaffirm the ELCA’s commitment to amplifying the voices of ELCA partners in Palestine and Israel and their language of justice for their own people; and the urgency and importance of the advocacy, awareness building, and accompaniment work of the ELCA through the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Desk, the Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries Desk, the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), the ELCA initiative “Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel,” and the Witness in Society (WiS) public policy team.

Elections: Results of First Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Ms. Jennifer E. Trom, chair of the Elections Committee, presented the initial results of the first ballot for secretary. Of the 640 legal ballots cast, none of the nominees received the 480 votes necessary for election. Those who received votes were able to withdraw their names from the second ballot. The list of names from the first ballot can be found in the ELCA Guide app under “Section X, Report of the Elections Committee.”

Plenary Session Six recessed at 8:42 p.m.

Deadlines for Thursday, July 31, 2025

12:15 p.m. Withdrawal from Ballot for Secretary



July 28 – August 2
PHOENIX, ARIZONA



Legislative Update: Thursday, July 31, 2025

Plenary Session Seven

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 10:30 a.m. (all times Pacific Daylight Time unless otherwise noted). Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president of the ELCA, called the assembly to order.

Proposed Amendments to the Constitutions of the ELCA Considered *En Bloc*

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section V:4, Amendments to the Constitutions of the ELCA

The assembly was reminded that four amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* recommended by the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church and by the Church Council were removed from *en bloc*. On behalf of the Church Council, a motion regarding the *en bloc* amendments was brought forward.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

ACTION

YES-753; NO-16

CA25.04.14

To adopt, *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, certain amendments recommended by the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church to the Articles of Incorporation and *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, and other amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make appropriate changes in the *Constitution for Synods* and the *Model Constitution for Congregations* congruent with the ELCA Constitution as amended.

Amendments to the Constitutions of the ELCA Removed from *En Bloc*

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section V:4, Amendments to the Constitutions of the ELCA; Section IX, Report of the Reference and Council Committee

The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King and Mr. Mitch S. McCartney, chairs of the Reference and Counsel Committee, introduced consideration of amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* that had been removed from *en bloc*, beginning with consideration of provision 5.01.e.

Motion A: Proposed amendments to constitutional provision 5.01.e.:

ASSEMBLY

YES-637; NO-141

ACTION

CA25.04.15

To refer Motion A to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council, the proposal to amend 5.01.e. in the *ELCA Constitution* and all model constitutions.

Motion B: Proposed amendments to constitutional provision 5.01.e. and a portion of bylaw 12.41.11.e.3.:

ASSEMBLY

YES-492; NO-279

ACTION

CA25.04.16

To refer Motion B to the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee of the Church Council, proposed amendments for both 5.01.e. and 12.41.11.e.3.

Motion C: Constitutional provision 22.11.b.:

The committee moved amendment of provision 22.11. as recommended by the Church Council.

Moved;

[Seconded]: To amend provision 22.11.b. as recommended by the Church Council:

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

....

- b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly.

A voting member proposed an amendment to the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b.

Moved;

Seconded: To amend the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b. by deletion:

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

....

- b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly ~~or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly.~~

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called for the orders of the day.

Plenary Session Seven recessed at 12:00 p.m.

Plenary Session Eight

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 2:00 p.m. Presiding Bishop Eaton called the assembly to order.

Elections: Results of First Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Ms. Jennifer E. Trom, chair of the Credentials Committee, reported the results of the first ballot for secretary. Results are posted in Section X: Report of the Elections Committee.

Elections: Second Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 2:00 p.m., 803 voting members were registered and present. Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the second ballot for secretary.

Reception of Common Statement on the *Filioque*

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section V:9, Reception of the Common Statement on the *Filioque*

On behalf of the Church Council, Presiding Bishop Eaton introduced a motion to receive the “Common Statement on the *Filioque*.”

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-748; NO-15

CA25.04.17

WHEREAS, 2025 is the 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea, and a year in which we will celebrate a common date for Easter, which presents a unique opportunity for reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christianity; and

WHEREAS, the end-result of the Council of Nicaea—later expanded in 381—was the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which has served as a common confession of faith for Christians around the world ever since; and

WHEREAS, the addition to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of the *filioque*—meaning “and the son”—by the Latin Church in an attempt to resolve a dispute, resulted in the division between the Eastern and Western churches in the year 1054; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, talks between the ELCA and the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas arrived at “A Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity,” coming to a shared understanding of history and the emphases of each tradition with regard to the creed; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, the ELCA Church Council adopted “A Lutheran-Orthodox Common Statement on Faith in the Holy Trinity,” and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* was published with a footnote to the Nicene Creed that says it is appropriate to confess the creed without the phrase; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is a member church of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the LWF has been in dialogue with the Orthodox Church for more than forty years; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, at the Eighth LWF Assembly in Curitiba, the LWF approved omitting the *filioque* clause in ecumenical services when the Orthodox Church is present, setting a precedent later adopted by other world communions; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, the Joint International Commission on Theological Dialogue between the LWF and the Orthodox Church affirmed a “Common Statement on the *Filioque*,” affirming that the *filioque* is not a church-dividing issue and encouraging renewed theological reflection on the Trinity and the role of the Holy Spirit, which was adopted by the LWF Council that June; and

WHEREAS, this Common Statement presents a ground-breaking opportunity to understand our history in light of our dialogue with the Orthodox, and to begin to heal millennium-old divisions in the body of Christ; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the ELCA prayerfully engage in commemorating the 1,700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council at Nicaea, and the common date of Easter,

as an opportunity for continued theological reflection on the Trinity and the role of the Holy Spirit and reconciliation between the Western and Eastern churches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 2025 Churchwide Assembly prayerfully receive the 2024 Lutheran-Orthodox “Common Statement on the *Filioque*,” understanding such reception to be an intention to lean into a fuller understanding of this issue and the promise of greater unity in the Body of Christ.

Elections: Report of the First Common Ballot

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

The Elections Committee reported elections on all 109 tickets of the first common ballot for the Church Council, Committee on Appeals, Committee on Discipline, Nominating Committee, and boards of the Board of Pensions (Portico Benefit Services), Mission Investment Fund, Endowment Fund of the ELCA (ELCA Foundation), and the Publishing House of the ELCA (1517 Media).

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.04.18 To declare elected all those who received a majority of votes cast on the first common ballot.

Elections: Second Common Ballot

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section VIII, Report of the Nominating Committee; Section X, Second Common Ballot

Because Ticket 13, the election of a lay man Church Council member from the Metropolitan New York Synod, was declared invalid the previous day, the Elections Committee called for an electronic vote on that single ticket as the second common ballot. The result is posted in Section X: Report of the Elections Committee.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.04.19 To declare elected all those who received a majority of votes cast on the second common ballot.

Report of the Elections Committee

Ms. Trom reported a problem with the second ballot for secretary and introduced a motion to invalidate and revote the ballot.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

ACTION

YES-702; NO-54

CA25.04.20 To declare the second ballot for secretary invalid and revote the second ballot for secretary.

Elections: Second Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 4:10 p.m., 803 voting members were registered and present. Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the second ballot for secretary once again.

Report: Reference and Counsel Committee

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section IX, Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

The assembly returned to consideration of the proposed amendment.

Moved;

Seconded: To amend the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b. by deletion:

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

....

- b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly ~~or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly.~~

A voting member introduced a motion to suspend the Rules of Organization and Procedure.

Moved; *Two-Thirds Vote Required*
Seconded; *Yes-501; No-281*
Defeated: **To suspend the rules to allow a visitor to address the assembly.**

The assembly then returned to the motion to amend.

Moved; *Yes-396; No-386*
Seconded;
Carried: **To amend the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b. by deletion:**

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

-
- b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly ~~or a subsequent two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly.~~

The assembly turned to consideration of the amended motion:

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

-
- b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~ Churchwide Assembly.

A voting member asked to introduce an additional amendment to the recommended amendment. Presiding Bishop Eaton called for a vote on whether to allow consideration of additional amendments after the deadline.

ASSEMBLY
ACTION *YES-485; NO-287*
CA25.04.21 **To allow proposal of additional amendments to the recommended amendment to 22.11.b. after the deadline.**

A voting member introduced a motion to amend the recommended amendment by addition.

Moved;
Seconded: **To amend the recommended amendment to provision 22.11.b. by addition.**

22.11. This constitution may be amended only through either of the following procedures:

-
- b. An amendment may be proposed by 25 or more members of the Churchwide Assembly. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee of Reference and Counsel for its recommendation, following which it shall come before the assembly. If such an amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, such an amendment shall become effective only if ~~adopted~~ ratified unchanged by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at the next ~~regular~~

Churchwide Assembly or the amendment may be provisionally effective by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church Council taken within 12 months of adoption by the Churchwide Assembly. The provisional status will be removed only by ratification of the amendment by the Churchwide Assembly. If the Churchwide Assembly fails to ratify, the provisional effective status of the amendment shall be revoked.

A voting member introduced a motion to refer.

Moved;

Seconded: To refer consideration of amendment of provision 22.11. to the Office of the Secretary.

A voting member introduced a motion to postpone consideration of the motion to refer.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-644; NO-119

CA25.04.22 To postpone consideration until the next Report of the Reference and Council Committee.

Motion E: 14.32.01.:

The committee recommended adoption of the proposed amendment.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

ACTION

YES-765; NO-11

CA25.04.23 To approve amending bylaw 14.32.01. by striking “four-year” and inserting “three-year” in its place.

14.32.01. The Church Council shall have as liaison members nine synod bishops, each elected by the Conference of Bishops to one ~~four-year~~ three-year term. One bishop shall be elected from each region.

Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the orders of the day.

Elections: Results of Second Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Ms. Trom reported the results of the second ballot for secretary. Of the 768 legal ballots cast, none of the nominees received the 576 votes necessary for election. Results of the election can be found in Section X: Report of the Elections Committee.

Plenary Session Eight recessed at 5:57 p.m.



July 28 – August 2
PHOENIX, ARIZONA



Legislative Update: Friday, August 1, 2025

Plenary Session Nine

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 9:02 a.m. (all times Pacific Daylight Time unless otherwise noted). The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order.

Elections: Third Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 9:55 a.m., 803 voting members had registered to cast ballots. Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the third ballot for secretary.

Elections: Results of Third Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:7, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel for the ELCA and chair of the Elections Committee, presented the results of the third ballot for secretary. Of the 682 legal ballots cast, none of the nominees received the necessary 512 votes for election. The results of the third ballot can be found in Section X.

Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life and Its Implementing Resolutions

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section V:7, Recommended, Proposed Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life & Its Implementing Resolutions

Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, moved adoption of the social statement “Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All.”

Moved;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

[Seconded];

To adopt the proposed social statement “Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All” as a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with the “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018).

The Rev. Anthony Bateza and Ms. Phyllis Johnson, chairs of the Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All Social Statement *Ad Hoc* Committee, introduced the proposed social statement.

Amendment A1:

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to amend the proposed social statement.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Yes-747; No-24

Carried:

Article 4, at line # 342, insert a new sentence as follows, renumbering accordingly:

“It is sin when the power in social structures, such as government, is distorted so that it is not used for the common good of neighbors and creation (Matthew 22:36-40). For instance, the individual domination of one person by another became multiplied in the social structure of slavery, which was supported by laws, policies, religious beliefs, and cultural practices in the United States. In our contemporary context, this church recognizes that white supremacy, in both its historical and present-day forms, is a structural sin that has shaped civic life, governmental institutions, and religious structures. Such systemic sins are particularly horrendous because the things done and left undone dramatically deepen the oppression of other people.”

And Article 38, at line # 1478, insert “supremacy” for “superiority”:

“This privileging of white, U.S.-born Christians is connected to our country’s violent practices of white supremacy, such as Jim Crow laws or the hundreds of years of Black African slavery.”

Amendment A2:

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to amend the proposed social statement.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Yes-741; No-29

Carried: Article 4, lines #332-334, Substitute for the sentence beginning “Sin can also...” and insert footnote, renumbering accordingly:

“Sin can also take the form of an inordinate self-hatred or the inability to appreciate one’s own giftedness and agency. Sin can also take the insidious form of self denial and a lack of self love. This happens when, for example, a person diminishes their own contributions to human life or denies that they possess the dignity and value of every human being created in God’s image.”¹⁰”

fn. 10: This reference to sin addresses cases where individual and systemic patterns have perpetuated great harm through internalized inferiority of different kinds, especially among those who have been marginalized in our society because of their race, class, gender or sexual identity, to name but a few categories. As a result of our broken trust in God, human relationships also become broken and distorted. This reference is not directed at cases of diminished self-worth that are all too familiar to anyone who has experienced depression, anxiety disorders, or cared for someone with a mental illness. For more guidance in these complex cases, see the social messages “The Body of Christ and Mental Illness” (2012) and “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action” (2019).

Amendment A3:

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to amend the proposed social statement.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Yes-733; No-29

Carried: Article 38, line 1497, to replace the word “rejects” with “repudiates.”

“For theological reasons, the ELCA repudiates Christian nationalism as a distortion of the Christian faith that crosses the line into idolatry.”

Amendment A4:

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to amend the proposed social statement.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Yes-755; No-18

Carried: Proposed Amendment, reflecting the amender’s intent: Article 44, Line #1708, add the following sentences and footnote, renumbering accordingly:

“Civic participation cannot be fully realized without confronting the structural barriers that limit access for many.”⁸⁴ These barriers, which function to silence voices and restrict public engagement, disproportionately affect already marginalized communities, both democratic ideals and the biblical call to seek justice for our neighbors.”

Fn. 84: “Many recognize that poverty, systemic racism, immigration status, limited language access, and lack of affordable transportation and childcare, are obstacles to equitable access to civic life. This church supports the work of advocacy, accompaniment, and the reimagining of public systems so that all people, especially those historically excluded, may share in shaping the life we hold in common.”

Amendment A5:

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to amend the proposed social statement.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Yes-732; No-36

Carried: Article 45, line 1732, Insert “This church recognizes that” to replace “Many view”, thus revised to read:

“This church recognizes ~~Many view~~ the political relationship between the U.S. government and its unincorporated territories as problematic because of the inherent inequality between the territories and the states.”

There being no more amendments, the assembly turned to consideration of adoption of the proposed social statement “Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All,” as amended, as a social statement of the ELCA.

ASSEMBLY**ACTION****TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED****YES-762; NO-16****CA25.05.24**

To adopt the proposed social statement “Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All,” as amended, as a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with the “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018).

The assembly turned to consideration of the implementing resolutions for the newly adopted social statement.

Amendment B1:

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to amend the implementing resolutions.

Moved;**[Seconded];****Yes-742; No-19****Carried:****Add a new implementing resolution as #5, at Line #2139, and renumber accordingly:**

“5. To urge members of this church to pray, participate in, and advocate for civic life in the United States by supporting efforts to increase voter registration and access to polling places, and to help dismantle structural barriers to the ballot box and to civic participation more broadly, all as a part of the church’s faithful civic witness.”

Amendment B2:

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to amend the implementing resolutions.

Moved;**[Seconded];****Yes-747; No-23****Carried:****Add a new implementing resolution as #12, at Line #2159, and renumber accordingly:**

“12. To direct the churchwide office, including but not limited to the Office and the Presiding Bishop and churchwide organization teams such as Witness in Society and Building Resilient Communities, to live out this church’s commitments to racial justice and civic engagement in accordance with the best practices of the church. This includes centering the voices of people most impacted by injustice, working for equitable representation in leadership, and assessing the impact of its public witness on historically marginalized communities.”

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs moved adoption of the proposed implementing resolutions associated with the social statement “Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All.”

ASSEMBLY**ACTION****TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED****YES-761; NO-13****CA25.05.25**

To adopt the recommended proposed implementing resolutions from “Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All,” as amended, as resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in accordance with the “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018).

1. To urge members of this church to pray for, participate in, and advocate for civic life in the United States that reflects God’s activity and call, seeking the well-being of all people and creation marked by justice and peace;
2. To encourage members to draw inspiration from the ELCA social message on “Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in a Democracy,” which highlights the call to embrace daily our baptismal vocation through active participation in self-governance;
3. To reaffirm and encourage use across this church of other existing social teaching and policy documents that promote robust and wise civic

participation, such as those that address matters of voting, campaign finance, public service, nonviolent protest, and the like;

4. To recognize with deep appreciation the commitments and efforts by those in this church—including but not limited to churchwide organization teams such as Witness in Society and Building Resilient Communities, as well as the many church-related social ministry organizations and educational institutions—that contribute to healthy civic life through service, advocacy, or education;
5. To call upon all members of this church to intentionally evaluate the dangers of polarization and the threats posed by disregard for democratic practices and self-government;
6. To encourage ELCA worshiping assemblies and ministries to build bridges, foster reconciliation, practice communal discernment, provide opportunities for difficult conversations, and address polarization constructively in their communities;
7. To encourage synod leaders, in collaboration with other appropriate bodies, to explore creating or expanding state public policy advocacy in their domains as part of the ELCA Witness in Society network, similar to those already existing in several states;
8. To direct the churchwide organization, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, theologians and ethicists, and rostered ministers, as well as elected lay leaders, to develop guidelines and protections consistent with this social statement regarding the roles in civic life of representatives of this church with official responsibility to preach, teach, and lead on behalf of this church;
9. To call upon the publishing and educational ministries of this church, including but not limited to Augsburg Fortress Publishers, to consider the need for civics education curricula, civic participation guidance, and related theological reflection, and to create these in multiple formats, including multimedia and online;
10. To call upon the publishing and educational ministries of this church, including but not limited to Augsburg Fortress Publishers, to explore the need for resources dedicated to nonviolent resistance and peaceful engagement in civic life, with special concern for materials dedicated to religious and political histories, liturgical guidance, and training for rostered and lay leaders;
11. To direct the Witness in Society team of the churchwide organization and call upon all expressions of this church in their advocacy efforts to support and advocate for policies and laws consistent with this social statement and to give sustained attention to the fresh convictions and commitments found here in its creation of programs and projects;
12. To direct the Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop to share this statement as a resource for dialogue, discernment, and collaboration with ecumenical and inter-religious partners toward the well-being of all people and creation from within the U.S. context;
13. To urge faculty, staff, and administrators of ELCA-related colleges, universities, and seminaries to renew and emphasize education toward callings in public service and to model and encourage dynamic civic participation among their students;
14. To direct appropriate units in the churchwide organization, coordinated by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to establish or oversee processes for implementation of these resolutions, with an initial report to the Fall 2027 meeting of the Church Council.

Report: Reference and Counsel Committee

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section IX, Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee

The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King and Mr. Mitch S. McCartney, chairs of the Reference and Counsel Committee, introduced consideration of amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* that had been removed from *en bloc*, beginning with consideration of a proposed amendment to continuing resolution 5.01.E19.

Motion D:

On behalf of the committee, the chairs introduced a motion to amend continuing resolution 5.01.E19.

Moved;

[Seconded]:

To amend 5.01.E19. to increase the percentage goal of youth and young adult voting membership of Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees from 10 percent to 20 percent, as follows:

5.01.E19. *It is the goal of this church that at least 20 ~~10~~ percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.*

and

To direct the Church Council to develop and present a plan for implementation of this continuing resolution at its April 2026 meeting that also addresses barriers to youth and young adult participation.

Presiding Bishop Eaton called for the orders of the day.

Elections: Third Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 11:34 a.m., 803 voting members had registered to cast ballots. Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the third ballot for secretary.

Elections: Results of Third Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Ms. Jennifer E. Trom, chair of the Elections Committee, presented the results of the third ballot for secretary. Of the 788 legal ballots cast, none of the nominees received the 526 votes necessary for election.

Plenary Session Nine recessed at 11:57 a.m.

Plenary Session Ten

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 2:01 p.m. Presiding Bishop Eaton called the assembly to order.

Elections: Fourth Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

The Credentials Committee reported that, as of 1:55 p.m., 803 voting members had registered to cast ballots. Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the fourth ballot for secretary.

Elections: Results of Fourth Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Ms. Trom presented the results of the fourth ballot for secretary. Of the 784 legal ballots cast, none of the nominees received the necessary 471 votes for election.

Matthew Riegel	316
Lucille “CeCee” Mills	311
Josh Tatum	157

Elections: Fifth Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Presiding Bishop Eaton called on the assembly to cast the fifth ballot for secretary.

Elections: Results of Fifth Ballot for Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Ms. Trom presented the results of the fifth ballot for secretary; there were 782 legal ballots cast. The results are as follows:

Lucille “CeCee” Mills	404
Matthew Riegel	378

Elections: Election of the Secretary

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section I:2, Rules of Organization and Procedure; Section V:3, Election of the Secretary; Section X, Report of the Elections Committee

Ms. Trom declared the election of the Rev. Lucille “CeCee” Mills as secretary of the ELCA.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.05.26 To elect the Rev. Lucille “CeCee” Mills to a six-year term, commencing on the first day of the third month after election, as secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

A voting member introduced a motion to suspend the rules to allow consideration of Motion D from the Reference and Counsel Committee prior to consideration of the revised social statement.

Moved;

Seconded;

Defeated:

Two-Thirds Vote Required

Yes-427; No-307

To suspend the Rules of Organization and Procedure to allow consideration of Motion D from the Reference and Counsel Committee prior to consideration of the revised social statement.

Recommended, Proposed Edited Social Statement, *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section V:8, Recommended, Proposed Edited Social Statement Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust

Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, moved adoption of the edits to *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* recommended by the ad hoc committee.

Moved;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

[Seconded];

To adopt the identified changes to the social statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009) as an editorial update to bring wording up to date, to clarify, and to bring it into congruence with subsequent social teaching, as authorized by 2022 Churchwide Assembly action CA22.01.07.

Amendment A1:

The Rev. Keats Miles-Wallace and the Rev. Joel Benson, chairs of the *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* Editorial Ad Hoc Committee, offered a motion on behalf of the committee to amend the proposed edits to the social statement.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Yes-739; No-19

Carried:

In lines 137-142, insert “such as” at end of first sentence and combine remaining sentences into single sentence, with necessary technical adjustments to the wording.

“While Lutherans hold various convictions regarding marriage between individuals of diverse sex, gender, or sexuality, this church is united on many critical issues, such as:⁵ ~~It~~ opposes ~~ing~~ all forms of verbal or physical harassment and assault based on actual or perceived sex, gender, or sexuality; ~~It~~ supports ~~ing~~ legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public services; ~~and~~ ~~It~~ has called ~~ing~~ upon congregations and members to welcome, care for, and support all couples and their families and to advocate for their legal protection.”⁵”

Amendment A2:

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to amend the proposed edits to the social statement.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Yes-732; No-35

Carried:

In line 266, delete “single or unmarried” and to replace this deletion with “unmarried or single;” to add a footnote referencing quantitative data on gender disparity of single-parent headed households in the U.S.; and to adjust numbering of subsequent footnotes accordingly.

“Millions of households in the U.S., and many in our church, are headed by ~~single or unmarried~~ unmarried or single parents, whether widowed, divorced, or never married.”¹⁴”

fn 14: “In 2023, 8.242 million single-parent households with children—over 80 percent of single-parent households with children in the U.S.—were maintained by single mothers, while single fathers maintained 2.037 million households with children. U.S. Census Bureau, “Table FG5. One-Parent Unmarried Family Groups with Own Children Under 18, by Labor Force Status of the Reference Person: 2023.” America’s Families and Living Arrangements: 2023, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2023/demo/families/cps-2023.html>, accessed on July 30, 2025.” The U.S. Census data do not reflect the many single, non-parent adults who maintain households with children across the U.S. and within this church.”

Amendment A3:

On behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to amend the proposed edits to the social statement.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Yes-720; No-44

Carried:

In line 151, delete “The historic Christian tradition has recognized marriage...” Replace with “The Christian tradition has historically defined marriage...”

“The ~~historic~~ Christian tradition has ~~recognized~~ historically defined marriage to be a covenant between a man and a woman, reflected in the language of Genesis 1:27; 2:23-24.”

A voting member introduced a motion to further amend the social statement.

Moved;

Seconded;

Yes-552; No-211

Carried: To amend lines 151–152 by substitution.

“The Christian tradition has historically defined marriage ~~to be a covenant between a man and a woman, as~~ reflected in the language of Genesis 1:27; 2:23-24.”

There being no more proposed amendments, on behalf of the *ad hoc* committee, the chairs offered a motion to adopt the identified changes to the social statement, as amended.

ASSEMBLY

TWO-THIRDS VOTE REQUIRED

ACTION

YES-724; NO-46

CA25.05.27

To adopt the identified changes to the social statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009), as amended, as an editorial update to bring wording up to date, to clarify, and to bring it into congruence with subsequent social teaching, as authorized by 2022 Churchwide Assembly action CA22.01.07.

Report: Reference and Counsel Committee

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section IX, Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee; Supplemental Reports of the Reference and Counsel Committee

The assembly returned to consideration of amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* that had been removed from *en bloc*. The motion before the assembly was consideration of a proposed amendment to provision 5.01.e.

Motion D:

On behalf of the committee, the Rev. Gwendolyn S. King and Mr. Mitch S. McCartney, chairs of the Reference and Counsel Committee, introduced a motion to amend continuing resolution 5.01.E19.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-530; NO-236

CA25.05.28

To amend 5.01.E19. to increase the percentage goal of youth and young adult voting membership of Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees from 10 percent to 20 percent, as follows:

5.01.E19. *It is the goal of this church that at least 20 ~~10~~ percent of the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees be youth and young adults. The Church Council shall establish a plan for implementing this goal. For purposes of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA, the term “youth” means a voting member of a congregation who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of election or appointment for service. The term “young adult” means a voting member of a congregation between the ages of 18 and 30 at the time of election or appointment for service.*

and

To direct the Church Council to develop and present a plan for implementation of this continuing resolution at its April 2026 meeting that also addresses barriers to youth and young adult participation.

Motion C:

The assembly returned to consideration of the motion that was postponed from plenary session 8, Motion C.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-692; NO-73

CA25.05.29

To refer amendment of 22.11.b. to the Office of the Secretary for further study.

Motion I:

The chairs introduced consideration of a proposed amendment to provision 7.31.02.a.8).

Moved;

Seconded:

That bylaw 7.31.02.a.8. strike “embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations.” And replace it with the following language: “embracing and welcoming members of historically underrepresented groups.”

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

...

8) working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and ~~embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations~~ embracing and welcoming members of historically underrepresented groups.

and

To make parallel substitution in the following provisions and bylaws: 7.61.02.c., †S14.12.a.8., †S14.32.c., *C9.03.a.8., *C9.23.c.

A voting member introduced a substitute motion.

Moved;

Seconded;

Yes-390; No-312

Carried:

To substitute for Motion I the following substitute motion to amend.

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

...

8) working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and ~~embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations~~ unifying and reconciling the diverse body of Christ into which we are baptized, giving special honor to members of historically underrepresented groups.

and

To make parallel substitution in the following provisions and bylaws: 7.61.02.c., †S14.12.a.8., †S14.32.c., *C9.03.a.8., *C9.23.c.

The assembly turned to consideration of the substitute motion.

Moved;

Seconded;

Two-Thirds Vote Required

Defeated:

To amend 7.31.02. as follows.

Yes-53; No-702

7.31.02. Responsibilities. Consistent with the faith and practice of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,

a. Every minister of Word and Sacrament shall:

...

8) working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, and ~~embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations~~ unifying and reconciling the diverse body of Christ into which we are baptized, giving special honor to members of historically underrepresented groups.

and

To make parallel substitution in the following provisions and bylaws: 7.61.02.c., †S14.12.a.8., †S14.32.c., *C9.03.a.8., *C9.23.c.

Plenary Session Ten recessed at 4:52 p.m.



July 28 – August 2
PHOENIX, ARIZONA



Legislative Update: Saturday, August 2, 2025

Plenary Session Eleven

The 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) reconvened in Hall E of the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz., at 11:00 a.m. (all times Pacific Daylight Time unless otherwise noted). The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, called the assembly to order.

Report: Reference and Counsel Committee

Reference: 2025 Bulletin of Reports: Section IX, Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee; Supplemental Reports of the Reference and Counsel Committee

The assembly returned to consideration of proposed amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*.

Motion F:

On behalf of the committee, the Rev. Gwendolyn S. King and Mr. Mitch S. McCartney, chairs of the Reference and Counsel Committee, introduced a motion to add proposed bylaw 13.22.03. to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Defeated:

To amend the constitution by addition as follows.

Two-Thirds Vote Required

Yes-102; No-540

13.22.03. The presiding bishop shall serve no more than two terms.

The chair announced that the motion had been defeated.

Motion G:

The committee chairs introduced a motion to add proposed bylaw 13.42.03. to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA*.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Withdrawn:

To amend the constitution by addition as follows.

Two-Thirds Vote Required

13.42.03. The secretary shall serve no more than two terms.

The maker of the motion asked that the motion be withdrawn, and the assembly assented.

Motion H:

The committee chairs introduced a motion to amend bylaw 19.04.02.a. by deletion.

Moved;

[Seconded];

Defeated:

To amend bylaw 19.04.02.a. by deletion.

Two-Thirds Vote Required

Yes-404; No-211

19.04.02.a. For purposes of nomination to and service on the Church Council, a committee of the churchwide organization, or a board of a separately incorporated ministry, “synod membership” shall be defined as follows:

- a. A layperson shall be recorded in the synod that includes the congregation in which such a person holds voting membership, ~~with the recognition that such a person shall reside within the territory of the synod or in an area immediately adjacent to the territory in the case of border areas.~~

The chair announced that the motion had been defeated.

Motion J:

The committee chairs introduced a motion to refer a resolution addressing use of artificial intelligence to the Church Council.

Motion J: Resolution on AI in the Church

Submitted by: William Platnick [Upstate New York, 7D]

Whereas, we believe that “God created humankind in [God’s] image” (Genesis 1:27) and that every human being bears the *imago Dei*, endowed with intrinsic dignity, creativity, and moral responsibility;

Whereas, the ELCA’s social message *Faith, Science and Technology: Environment, Medicine, and Genetics* reminds us that “God works through human creativity,” and calls the church to exercise wise stewardship of all God-given gifts;

Whereas, artificial intelligence (AI)—broadly defined as computer systems capable of tasks once thought to require human intelligence—has seen rapid advances in areas such as language processing, decision-making, and pattern recognition, with profound implications for work, relationships, worship, and public life;

Whereas, AI raises urgent ethical and theological questions around human dignity, agency, bias, privacy, justice, the nature of vocation, and the safe deployment of powerful new tools—especially for those most vulnerable to technological displacement or surveillance;

Whereas, AI-driven automation threatens to displace workers across industries, exacerbating economic inequity and calling the church to stand in solidarity with those affected;

Whereas, congregations, rostered leaders, and church institutions increasingly encounter AI-driven tools in pastoral care, education, administration, and global mission, yet lack consistent frameworks to discern where such tools may augment human ministry—and where they risk undermining the Gospel and human flourishing;

Whereas, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly has called for ongoing socio-ethical reflection on emerging technologies and directs its Division for Church in Society to resource this church in engaging public policy, advocacy, and education;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. Affirms that human beings alone—created by God, redeemed in Christ, and guided by the Holy Spirit—remain the ultimate bearers of moral responsibility; no AI system can replace the vocation, compassion, or discernment entrusted to God’s people.
2. Directs the ELCA Division for Church in Society, in partnership with the ELCA Advocacy Office and the seminary network, to develop and publish by March 2026:
 - A concise “AI and Faith” study guide for small groups and adult forums, with discussion questions rooted in Lutheran theology.
 - Ethical and Safe-Use Guidelines for AI in worship planning, pastoral care tools, educational settings, administrative functions, and social ministry programs—emphasizing transparency, accountability, data privacy, bias mitigation, and safeguards against unintended harm.
3. Encourages all ELCA councils (congregational, synod, and churchwide) to utilize the following Values Framework—originally adopted by the PC(USA) 226th General Assembly—in order to interpret and apply the Ethical and Safe-Use Guidelines (see 2) as they arise in new or unanticipated contexts, while more comprehensive policy is under development:
 - a. Recognize the fundamental, inherent dignity of every human.
 - b. Ensure no human or human community is subjected to harm at any stage in the AI lifecycle, and mitigate disruptive impacts.
 - c. Acknowledge AI’s potential to assist at every stage of the human life cycle.
 - d. Insist on preservation, promotion, and expansion of fundamental freedoms and rights for individuals and communities in AI-assisted contexts.
 - e. Implement environmental and ecosystem safeguards to ensure the flourishing of creation.
 - f. Foster participative and enabling roles for all actors, in building peaceful and just societies.
 - g. Promote peace, inclusivity, justice, equity, and interconnectedness throughout the AI lifecycle.
 - h. Commit to engaging AI’s broader implications in a theologically responsible manner.
4. Encourages ELCA seminaries and partner institutions to establish or expand interdisciplinary courses and research initiatives at the intersection of theology, ethics, computer science, and social justice—preparing future rostered ministers and church professionals to navigate AI’s challenges faithfully and safely.
5. Urges the ELCA to:
 - Advocate, with ecumenical and interfaith partners, for public policies that protect workers displaced by automation, uphold data privacy, prohibit lethal autonomous weapons, and promote responsible innovation.

- Partner with global companion churches to ensure AI-enabled tools (e.g., translation, health diagnostics, educational platforms) advance the gospel, human well-being, and equitable access, rather than entrench existing inequities.
6. Requests that by the 2028 Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council report on progress made, lessons learned, and recommend any further actions needed to ensure ELCA ministries remain rooted in the Gospel, responsive—and safe—in an age of rapid technological change and ecological challenge.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

YES-584; NO-15

CA25.06.30 To refer Motion J to the Office of the Presiding Bishop (Theological Discernment) and to the Service and Justice unit (Advocacy), in consultation with the Office of the Treasurer (Information Technology), and to request a progress report to the Church Council by its Spring 2026 meeting.

Courtesy Resolutions:

The committee chairs introduced a series of motions thanking those who served this church during the assembly and over the past three years. The motions were approved as a group by acclamation.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31a We, the members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, give thanks to God for the members of the Church Council who will be concluding their six-year terms at this Assembly. We wish to thank these 22 individuals for their dedicated service to this church during their terms, and to acknowledge that their service included membership on task forces, *ad hoc* committees, attendance at synod assemblies, and representation of this church in global, national, and local forums:

- Mr. Kevin Anderson
- Ms. Tracey Beasley
- The Rev. Benjamin Bergren
- The Rev. Marcus Bigott
- The Rev. Nick Billardello III
- Ms. Susan Kingrey Boxberger
- The Rev. Bill Callister
- Divine
- The Rev. Joanne Engquist
- Ms. Kerry Fehrman
- The Rev. Emily Hartner
- The Rev. Pamela Hoh
- Ms. Cherrish Holland
- Mr. David Lenz
- The Rev. Tara Lynn
- Mr. Ethan Miller-Perez
- Mr. Keoni Newman
- Mr. Noah Roux
- Ms. Valerie Shaw
- Ms. Andraine Sinaga
- Mr. Loren Solberg
- Ms. Loni Taylor

We appreciate their tireless work of renewing and growing the church's mission. We continue to keep them and their work, which is our work, in prayer.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31b

The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in Phoenix, Arizona, thank the churchwide organization and staff for their hard work and dedication to the mission of Christ in this church. We thank God for their willingness to serve as a part of the everyday lifeblood of this church both here in the United States and globally.

We thank each of the offices and units of the Churchwide organization:

- Office of the Presiding Bishop
- Office of the Secretary
- Office of the Treasurer
- Christian Community and Leadership
- Service and Justice
- Innovation

We are church together in Christ because of this churchwide organization's willingness to continue renewing and growing our church in both acceptance of others and what it means to truly live the Gospel.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31c

Giving glory to God, and acknowledging the presence of the Spirit, we the members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, gathered in Phoenix, Arizona, give thanks to God for you, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, for your leadership as our presiding bishop for the past twelve years (2013-2025), the first woman ever to guide and direct the ELCA in its journey with God. You have served with distinction as its pastor, preacher, faithful servant, and minister of Word and Sacrament.

We thank you for leaving a legacy of four foundational pillars—"we are church; we are Lutheran; we are church together; we are church for the sake of the world"—which will move with us into our future, as church, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We thank you for your encouragement to read Luther's Small Catechism and spend time with the Word of God and in prayer.

We thank you for your faithful ambassadorship for Jesus Christ and on our behalf in national and worldwide arenas; with our ecumenical and interfaith siblings; in sickness and in health, especially noting our celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation with events in Washington, D.C., and the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification with our Roman Catholic siblings; your vice presidency for the North American Region of the Lutheran World Federation from 2017-2023; updating the 1994 Declaration to the Jewish Community and its 30th anniversary celebration; and your address to the Parliament of World Religions.

We give thanks for your humor and quick wit, especially in tense or difficult situations, not just at this assembly, but also in other settings, giving us a chance to laugh, breathe, and gain perspective.

We give thanks to the Rev. T. Conrad Selnick, your husband and our Episcopal brother, and to your family for their patience, sacrifices, and support over these past twelve years. It has been a gift and blessing to us.

We wish you well in your retirement and ask God's continued blessings upon you and your family and hold you in prayer as you journey.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31d We, the members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, give thanks to God for the service of Vice President Imran Siddiqui. We thank him for his dedicated service to this church, his willingness to answer this call, and his tireless leadership and guidance in renewing this church and lifting up the role of lay leaders and lay members (henceforth also known as “under-cover agents for the gospel”). We continue to keep him, and his work, in prayer.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31e Giving glory to God and acknowledging the presence of the Spirit, we the members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, give thanks to you, Secretary Sue Rothmeyer, and give thanks to God for your leadership as secretary of the ELCA for the past six years (2019-2025). As the first woman and deacon to head the Office of Secretary in the ELCA, you have done so with distinction and grace.

We thank you for your attention to detail. Your vocational commitment to serve God and the gospel through your administrative skills and abilities has been a blessing to us.

We thank you for your stewardship and care of the governing documents, history, records, rosters, and policies of this church, the ELCA. With excellence as your hallmark, you have helped us in the ELCA tell the story of our witness and vocational callings. The wise advice you offer related to the ELCA *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions*, as well as legal matters, has helped many a congregation and we thank you.

We thank you for your astuteness in parliamentary procedure. As a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians, your understanding and knowledge of the “latest” in *Robert’s Rules of Order* have kept us in order when we have gathered in assembly, and as the Church Council, congregation councils and meetings, committees, boards, task forces, etc. of the ELCA in all three of its expressions. Your guidance as we elected synod bishops, other officers, and representatives helped to forge positive relations between the churchwide and synod expressions.

We thank you for your insight, thoughtfulness, kind heart, strong sense of hospitality, passion for campus ministry, and for sharing your extraordinary singing voice and that “Iowan Spirit”, with us over the past 30 years of your service in the churchwide organization. We thank your family and friends for sharing you with us, and we acknowledge their sacrifices in support of your position as secretary.

We wish you well in your retirement and ask God's continued blessings in this next chapter of your life. As you journey forth, receive our prayers and gratitude.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31f The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America give thanks to God for the service of Treasurer Lori Fedyk. We thank her for her dedicated service to this church, her financial guidance and expertise, her dedication to explaining financial concepts in language that non-

financial people can understand, and her attention to the stewardship of the resources of this church. We continue to keep her, and her work, in prayer.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31g The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in Phoenix are grateful for the work of the Holy Spirit moving among us as we deliberated, voted, listened, discerned, prayed, and finally celebrated the elections of our Presiding Bishop-Elect Yehiel Curry and Secretary-Elect Lucille “CeCee” Mills. We commit to holding them and those around them in prayer as they transition to their new calls serving the ELCA

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31h The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in Phoenix, Arizona, thank all those who put their names forward for election at this assembly. We thank God for their willingness to consider taking on important roles within our church. From those nominees for the offices of presiding bishop and secretary to those who stood for Church Council, and all those who stood for other churchwide committees and boards of separately incorporated ministries, we give thanks. We are church together because of those willing to place their names forward and serve our church in this way.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31i The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gathered in Phoenix, Arizona thank all those who served on the committees of this assembly. We thank God for those individuals that gave of their time and talent to ensure the work of this assembly could be carried out.

We thank each of the committees and their members of this assembly for their work:

- Churchwide Assembly Planning Committee;
- Credentials Committee;
- Elections Committee;
- Local Arrangements Committee;
- Memorials Committee;
- Minutes Team;
- Nominating Committee;
- Reference and Counsel Committee;
- *Ad Hoc* Committee for Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust Reconsiderations;
- *Ad Hoc* Committee for Faith and Civic Life;
- Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church Task Force;
- Hosts of pre-assembly hearings; and
- Worship Committee and our worship leaders and musicians.

We also extend our deep gratitude to all those volunteers that worked tirelessly throughout the assembly with such good humor and hospitality.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31j The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in assembly gives thanks to God for the presence and partnership of our ecumenical guests and those who

gathered with us for the AMMPARO Prayer Vigil. The assembly has been blessed by their participation in this assembly, and we give thanks for their contributions to our life together as the Church. They embody the global nature of the Church and remind us how we are connected globally as the people of God. We give thanks to God for these ecumenical and global partners who have joined with us this week at this assembly either in person or by sharing video greetings.

Furthermore, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in assembly gives thanks to God for the presence and partnership of our inter-religious guests. Their participation in this assembly reminds us of our commitment to love our neighbor and to deepen our commitment to seek mutual understanding with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews. May their presence continue to assist us on the road with our neighbors of other religions and worldviews as instruments of God's justice and peace.

We give thanks to God for the presence this week of all ecumenical, inter-Religious, and global guests:

- Dr. Funmi Adeyemi, Moderator and President, Evangelical & Pentecostal Family, Christian Churches Together in the USA
- Rev. Eddy Alemán, General Secretary, Reformed Church in America
- Bishop-elect Imad Mousa Dawood Haddad, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL; a member church of The Lutheran World Federation) *
- Rev. Dr. David Bennett, President, Moravian Church Northern Province
- Rev. Dr. Anne Burghardt, General Secretary, The Lutheran World Federation
- Bishop Guadalupe Cortez, Salvadoran Lutheran Church (ILS; a member church of The Lutheran World Federation)
- Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi, Executive Director of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers; Co-Founder, Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign
- Rev. Rock Fremont, President, Arizona Interfaith Movement
- Bishop-elect Imad Mousa Dawood Haddad, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL; a member church of The Lutheran World Federation)
- Ms. Julia Ayala Harris, President, House of Deputies, The Episcopal Church (U.S.A.)
- Ms. Danielle Hickman, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relationships Manager, United Church of Christ
- Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President, Union for Reform Judaism
- Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC; a member church of The Lutheran World Federation)
- Rev. Protopresbyter Dr. Nicolas Kazarian, Director, Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
- Bishop Denis J. Madden, Titular Bishop of Baia; Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; co-chair, Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue in the United States*
- Rev. Russell McDougall, Executive Director, Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, President and General Secretary, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
- Rev. Jihyun Oh, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

- Rev. Hilja Ndatala-Eenyofi Nghaangulwa, Bishop, Eastern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN; a member church of The Lutheran World Federation)

The Assembly also gives thanks to the ethnic associations of the ELCA, who have joined us in friendship and supported us in many ways throughout the week.

- African Descent Lutheran Association
- American Indian Alaska Native Association, Inc.
- Asociación de Ministerios Latinos - ELCA
- Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
- Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders
- ELCA Association of White Lutherans for Racial Justice

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31k The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in assembly gives thanks to God for the presence and partnership of our separately incorporated ministries, including Augsburg Fortress, the ELCA Foundation, Portico Benefit Services, the Women of the ELCA, and the Mission Investment Fund and the ELCA Federal Credit Union as well as our Independent Lutheran Organizations, including the Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association. Their generosity and presence have made our time together enjoyable and sociable.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31l The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America meeting in assembly would like to give thanks to God and to the representatives present from our ELCA colleges, universities, and seminaries. We recognize and appreciate the value of educating and fortifying the present and future leaders in our church. We are especially grateful for the time, energy, and conversations that representatives from these institutions of higher education had with our youth and young adults about discerning their futures on Tuesday evening over ice cream. We are so grateful.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31m It is a gift to be able to gather together in Word and Sacrament. The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly give thanks to the Worship Committee, and the many leaders, preachers, musicians, and volunteers who helped us gather together in worship throughout the assembly. We give thanks for messages shared by the preaching ministers: Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, Rev. Nelson Rivera Garcia, Rev. Imad Mousa Dawood Haddad, Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, and Rev. M. Wyvetta Bullock.

The assembly would also like to thank Dr. Chad Rimmer for his powerful theological reflection and online Bible study leaders Willie Korboi, Deacon Clare Josef-Maier, and Rev. Atahualpa Hernández Miranda for grounding us in scripture and the Living Word of God as we prepared to act “for the life of the world.” We also express our gratitude to our floor prayer team and music team for preparing our hearts with Spirit-filled prayer and song as we did our work together.

ASSEMBLY

ACTION

CA25.06.31n

As we conclude our fellowship together this week, we acknowledge that we have assembled on the original and ancestral homelands of the Hohokam, O’odham, and Piipaash peoples. We give thanks for their presence on the land since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call the land their home. Let us remember the Indigenous peoples and tribal nations who were the first to love, pray, grow, celebrate, cry, drum, dance, and sing upon the lands.

The members of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America deeply thank the City of Phoenix, the Grand Canyon Synod, and Region 2 for hosting this assembly, for their hospitality, assistance, warmth, generous spirit, and for all things “prickly pear.” We acknowledge the tremendous support and work of Bishop Hutterer and the synod staff.

We give thanks to the Indigenous leaders of the Phoenix area who led, taught, inspired and gathered us for a Powwow experience, a first for many members of the assembly.

We give thanks for AMMPARO and the local migrant rights and ecumenical leaders who led us in prayer and advocacy at the prayer vigil on behalf of those whose inherent human dignity is being negated in our communities.

We give thanks for the numerous volunteers whose invaluable work has welcomed, assisted, supported, and enabled us to participate in and conduct this assembly in an efficient, enjoyable and caring manner.

We give thanks for the Phoenix Convention Center for their accommodations, for their assistance in helping us assemble together in prayer and business, facilitating our ability to worship boldly, and for serving as a focal point in the work of this church. We thank especially those hospitality staff, servers, catering, and security personnel who have kept us fed, safe, comfortable, and warmly greeted throughout our time.

We give thanks for the Hyatt Regency, Hilton Garden Inn, and Sheraton hotels for giving us a place to rest and reflect on our time together and acknowledge the privilege we have in a comfortable, climate-controlled, safe space.

We also give thanks to the hotel staff, restaurant, and transportation workers of Phoenix for their hard work and gracious hospitality.

The City of Phoenix embodies a beautiful expression of what it means to be church, and we thank them for welcoming us into their city so warmly.

Plenary Session Eleven and the 17th Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adjourned at 12:39 p.m. on Aug. 2, 2025.