



Report of the Memorials Committee

Consideration of synod memorials

The proposed Rules of Organization and Procedure (2019 Pre-Assembly Report, Section I) define memorials as “proposals for action involving broad policy issues submitted by Synod Assemblies to the churchwide organization.” To assist the Churchwide Assembly in its task of responding to these proposals, its Memorials Committee reviews all memorials and proposes recommendations for assembly action.

The process for consideration of memorials outlined in this report is intended to assist the assembly in responding to a large number of memorials and will facilitate the scheduling of discussion. It also will make it possible to reproduce substitute motions for distribution to assembly members prior to debate.

The Memorials Committee may recommend that the 2019 Churchwide Assembly:

- vote separately on the proposed responses to certain synodical memorials, allowing the co-chairs to determine the order in which the recommendations are considered; and
- vote on the recommended responses to the remaining synodical memorials as a group (*en bloc*). Note that some memorials are included in this *en bloc* action because the subject matter will come to the floor of the assembly for discussion elsewhere on the agenda.

Recommendation of the Memorials Committee

To approve *en bloc*, with the exception of those memorials considered separately, the following responses to 2017, 2018 and 2019 synod memorials printed in the Report of the Memorials Committee (2019 Pre-Assembly Report, Section VII, pages as listed):

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For separate consideration

The Memorials Committee recommends that the Churchwide Assembly consider separately the following responses to 2017, 2018 and 2019 synod memorials:

Category C1: Church and State	42
Category D1: 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament	56

If a voting member desires the assembly to discuss a synod memorial or the Memorials Committee’s response that is proposed for *en bloc* consideration, she or he may request that it be removed from the proposed *en bloc* resolution, provided the member’s request is supported by 10 other voting members. The voting member must submit notification electronically or on a paper form to the secretary of this church or the secretary’s deputy no later than 9:45 p.m., Monday, August 5, 2019, on the memorials form. The form is available in the ELCA Guidebook app, and paper forms are available from the secretary’s deputy. The assembly then will consider separately the proposed response of the Memorials Committee.

A voting member who desires to offer an amendment or a substitute to a recommendation of the Memorials Committee must submit the memorials form electronically or as a paper form. The text of the proposed amendment or substitute also must be submitted on the motion form electronically or on a paper form to the secretary or the secretary’s deputy. Copies of the paper motion form may be requested from the secretary’s deputy. Amendments and substitute recommendations must be submitted to the secretary of this church or the secretary’s deputy no later than 9:45 p.m., Monday, August 5, 2019, as established in the Rules of Organization and Procedure for this assembly.

Consultation with at least one of the co-chairs of the Memorials Committee is *required* when a substitute to the response recommended by the Memorials Committee will be proposed. Consultation with one of the co-chairs is *recommended* when proposing an amendment.

Ms. Cheryl T. Chatman, *co-chair*
 Mr. Reid A. Christopherson, *co-chair*

Synod memorials: A word of explanation

According to the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the Churchwide Assembly shall “receive and consider proposals from synod assemblies” (ELCA 12.21.c.). To assist the assembly in carrying out this task, “A Memorials Committee, appointed by the Church Council, shall review memorials from synod assemblies and make appropriate recommendations for assembly action” (ELCA 12.51.02.).

A *memorial* is understood to mean an action of a Synod Assembly *specifically addressed to the Churchwide Assembly*, requesting that a particular action be taken by that body. (Note: *Resolutions* adopted by a Synod Assembly address the ELCA Church Council or a churchwide unit through referral by the Synod Council.)

Meeting in late June 2019, the Memorials Committee reviewed the 88 memorials received from 2017, 2018 and 2019 Synod Assemblies. The committee grouped those memorials that address the same topic or related concerns in order to facilitate the assembly’s consideration. In each part of this Report of the Memorials Committee you will find three components:

1. Memorials adopted by 2017, 2018 and 2019 Synod Assemblies

Memorials are listed by region and synod number, according to their constitutional designation. The year in which each memorial was adopted is listed in brackets. Where more than one synod approved the same or a similar memorial, the synods taking such action are listed together.

The memorials are reproduced here in the form in which they were submitted to the secretary of this church. The preamble (the “WHEREAS” clauses) provides information to assist readers in understanding the context of the synod’s discussion of the memorial. Attention should be focused, however, on the resolutions (the “RESOLVED” clauses), which make the actual request for action by the Churchwide Assembly.

2. Background information provided by the Memorials Committee

The Memorials Committee received information and advice from churchwide staff on the subjects addressed in the various synod memorials. In reporting its recommendations, the committee provides this background information, which voting members may find helpful in making decisions related to the memorials. The Memorials Committee may provide a rationale for its recommendations to the Churchwide Assembly where appropriate.

3. Recommendation of the Memorials Committee for action by the Churchwide Assembly

In each section, the committee’s recommendation for assembly action is printed in boldface type. In certain instances, the proposed action may be to affirm or to decline to approve the action proposed by the synod. In other instances, the committee may recommend referral to the Church Council or to a churchwide unit. In yet other instances, the recommendation may be to convey to the synod the material provided to the assembly as “background” as the assembly’s response to the memorial.

A synod memorial may address an issue that already is scheduled to be discussed by the assembly at an identified point on its agenda. Rather than suggesting that the Churchwide Assembly discuss an issue twice, the committee recommends that the assembly’s separate action on that issue also serve as the assembly’s response to the synod memorial on that topic.

The Memorials Committee will recommend that some memorials be considered *en bloc*. Action will be taken upon all of the memorials contained in the *en bloc* section by a single vote, without floor debate.

By **9:45 p.m., Monday, August 5, 2019**, voting members who wish to remove from the *en bloc* action the Memorial Committee’s response to a synod memorial must notify the secretary of this church or the secretary’s deputy. Likewise, persons intending to offer an amendment or substitution for the committee’s response must notify the secretary and submit a motion form with the text of the proposed amendment.

The Order of Business will indicate the times when the recommendations of the Memorials Committee are scheduled to be brought to the floor of the assembly.

NOTE: Synod assemblies also may adopt resolutions on churchwide issues that are *not* considered memorials since they do not address broad policy matters or the Churchwide Assembly directly. For example, a Synod Assembly may adopt a resolution addressed to a particular churchwide unit; the appropriate route for this action is through the Synod Council to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for appropriate referral to churchwide units. Those resolutions addressed to the Church Council will be considered by the Church Council at subsequent meetings. The reader, therefore, may not find in this report all Synod Assembly actions related to churchwide issues, since some are addressed through other channels.

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Section A Social justice concerns

Category A1: Gun Violence

1. Oregon Synod (1E) [2018]

WHEREAS, Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9); and

WHEREAS, the prophet Micah declares (as does Isaiah 2:4),

“God shall judge between many peoples,
and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore;
but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken” (Micah 4:3-4); and

WHEREAS, Lutherans are called, as are other Christians and those of other faith traditions, to be prophetic voices of vision and conscience while working for the common good; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, more than 30,000 people die annually through gun violence, creating a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, Oregon has been home to four mass shootings in recent history, at Thurston High School, Clackamas Town Center, Reynolds High School and Umpqua Community College, and semiautomatic guns were used in three out of those four shootings; and

WHEREAS, in the 20 years since the school shooting at Thurston High School in Springfield on May 21, 1998, the current generation of Oregon children and youth from preschool to high school have lived with the threat of gun violence and the threat of mass shootings in schools, theaters and malls; and

WHEREAS, Mary spoke with power as a young woman when called by God to risk everything, declaring, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord” (Luke 1:38) and, in the Magnificat that followed, “God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly” (Luke 1:52); and

WHEREAS, the prophet Jeremiah was called to be a prophet as a youth, and God said,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’;
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
says the LORD” (Jeremiah 1:7-8); and

WHEREAS, the voices of young leaders in our state and nation are speaking out with the same clarity and power as those before them, saying, “Enough is enough” and “Now is the time to end the gun violence”; and

WHEREAS, our young leaders’ number-one priority is to call on our nation to ban the sale of assault weapons, that they may be freed from fear; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod of the ELCA stand with Augustana Lutheran Church, Congregation Beth Israel, the Muslim Center of Portland, and a rapidly growing interfaith and secular network in answering the clarion call of our prophetic young leaders to work to ban the sale of assault weapons and large-capacity magazines and bump stocks in Oregon; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the churches of the Oregon Synod be encouraged to take action as they deem right in this time and in their context to support this effort through direct action and public dialogue, using scripture, church teachings, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s six principles for nonviolent direct action, and the excellent tools designed by the Oregon Synod’s Advocacy team; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod Assembly affirm and recommit itself to existing ELCA social teaching regarding community violence, gender-based violence, mental illness and suicide prevention, and to the advocacy to which the synod is called in these arenas; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod Assembly memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to join the call to ban the sale of assault weapons and large-capacity magazines in the United States in response to the prophetic voices of our young people through ongoing public action and the equipping of ELCA congregations to act locally on this issue for the public safety of the youth and all who reside in this land

2. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2019]

WHEREAS, the ELCA remains unalterably opposed to violence in communities and committed to the Christian role as peacemakers; and

WHEREAS, mass shootings have continued to increase in the United States since the last Social Policy Resolution on Gun Violence Prevention was passed in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States failed to pass the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2018; and

WHEREAS, individuals have watched a rising wave of young people and parents in the United States who are advocating for stricter gun regulation laws in order to create safe schools and safe neighborhoods, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to encourage bishops, pastors, deacons, and Lutheran leaders to urge Congress and state legislatures to pass an assault weapons ban to replace the assault weapons ban that expired in 2004, to include a ban on assault-like rifles and high-capacity magazines, to pass laws for strict background checks for all gun sales, including private sales; and to urge members of the ELCA to contact their elected leaders through phone calls, letters, emails, and petitions, urging them to pass such legislation.

3. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2019]

WHEREAS, deliberate acts to harm or kill innocent people are not God's intention for human community, as commanded in Exodus 20:13, "You shall not murder," and

WHEREAS, Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:38-39 to respond to violence in restorative ways: "If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other one also;" and

WHEREAS, gun violence in the USA has included recent mass shootings at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida; Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut; First Baptist Church in Southerland Springs, Texas; a music festival in Las Vegas Nevada; Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida; and many other places where the innocent were murdered with assault rifles;¹ and

WHEREAS, every day, 318 Americans are shot and 96 die from their wounds² with marginalized populations twice as likely to die from gun violence;³ and

WHEREAS, regarding the Second Amendment, which states that "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed," the Supreme Court has declared that "The Court's opinion should not be taken to cast doubt on longstanding prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms";⁴ and

WHEREAS, according to Lutheran theology, government is responsible under God to protect its citizens, and as citizens in a democracy, individuals have the responsibility to hold government accountable for this protection by seeking changes in policies and practices toward these ends;⁵ and

WHEREAS, in 1993 the ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution to "communicate to Congress and the president of the United States the urgent concern of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding the violence associated with the widespread availability of handguns and military assault weapons ... to call upon congregations, synods, and appropriate agencies to work for the passage and strict enforcement of local, state, and national legislation as appropriate, that rigidly controls the manufacture, importation, exportation, sale, purchase, transfer, receipt, possession of handguns, assault weapons, and assault-like weapons and their parts, excluding rifles and shotguns used for hunting and sporting purposes, for use other than law enforcement and military purposes;"⁶ and

WHEREAS, 25 years after the ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed CA93.06.10, more than 30,000 people die and more than 70,000 are injured by guns in the USA annually⁷ as gun violence continues to plague the nation, particularly as it relates to the disproportionate loss of life among those marginalized and the mass murders of the nation's most vulnerable citizens; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA advocate with lawmakers on a local and national level to adequately fund gun violence research by the Centers for Disease Control, and to create and pass gun laws that save lives, such as: banning semiautomatic weapons that fire high-velocity rounds, banning accessories that

¹ According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, an assault rifle is any of various intermediate-range, magazine fed military rifles (such as the AK-47) that can be set for automatic or semiautomatic fire; also: a rifle that resembles a military assault rifle but is designed to allow only semiautomatic fire.

² Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. 2018. "Key gun violence statistics." www.bradycampaign.org.

³ Ferdman, R.A. 2016. "The racial divide in America's gun violence." *The Washington Post*.

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution#District_of_Columbia

⁵ ELCA Conference of Bishops. 2018. Statement of support for March for Our Lives on March 24. www.elca.org.

⁶ CA93.06.10. 1993. Community Violence—Gun Control. Social Policy Resolution. www.elca.org.

⁷ Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. 2018. "Key gun violence statistics" www.bradycampaign.org

simulate automatic weapons, establishing a database of gun sales and universal background checks, closing gun show and secondhand sales loopholes, raising the firearm purchase age to 21, dedicating more funds to mental health research and professionals, increasing funding for school security, encouraging responsible gun ownership, and holding gun owners responsible when their weapons are used illegally due to their negligence; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA request the synod bishop to appoint a task force of rostered leaders and lay leaders, including representatives of particularly vulnerable communities and marginalized voices, that will convene to provide resources and guidance to congregations and other ministries on how to address gun violence and assist those who are victims of gun violence; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the ELCA memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adequately fund gun violence research by the Centers for Disease Control, and to advocate with lawmakers on a local and national level to create and pass gun laws that save lives, such as: banning semiautomatic weapons that fire high-velocity rounds, banning accessories that simulate automatic weapons, establishing a database of gun sales and universal background checks, closing gun show and secondhand sales loopholes, raising the firearm purchase age to 21, dedicating more funds to mental health research and professionals, increasing funding for school security, encouraging responsible gun ownership, and holding gun owners responsible when their weapons are used illegally due to their negligence.

Background

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been addressing the issue of violence in society—including gun violence—in multiple ways for many years. The 1993 Churchwide Assembly adopted a social policy resolution titled “Community Violence—Gun Control” [\[CA93.06.10\]](#) that calls upon all “congregations, synods, and appropriate agencies to work for the passage and strict enforcement of local, state and national legislation as appropriate, that rigidly controls the manufacture, importation, exportation, sale, purchase, transfer, receipt, possession or transportation of handguns, assault weapons, and assault-like weapons and their parts, excluding rifles and shotguns used for hunting and sporting purpose, for use other than law enforcement and military purposes.”

Thereafter, “Community Violence” was adopted as a social message by the Church Council in April 1994, calling on this church to confront a culture steeped in violence as a community of worship, a community of education and service, a community of advocacy and a community of ongoing deliberation. This message emphasizes the need for comprehensive address to violence while also advocating in favor of gun control and efforts to stem the proliferation of guns on the streets.

Since the adoption of “Community Violence,” the ELCA has devoted resources toward countering aspects of violence in the culture. For example, directed by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA participated in a decade of work with other denominations and organizations as part of the U.N.’s Decade of Non-Violence 2001–2010. Issues of violence also have been addressed in the [Journal of Lutheran Ethics](#).

Presiding Bishop Emeritus Mark Hanson addressed the societal problem of gun violence in a video in January 2013. At its meeting in March 2013, the Conference of Bishops, in a “Pastoral Letter on Violence,” renewed the call to ELCA congregations and members to engage the topic of violence “by listening: listening to God, to Scripture, and to each other.” The Conference of Bishops also issued a [“Statement in Solidarity With Our Children and Youth”](#) at its March 2018 meeting, supporting involvement in the March for Our Lives that occurred on March 24, 2018.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has addressed gun violence with public statements on the [Charleston shooting](#), the [Overland Park shooting](#), the [Orlando shooting](#), the [Pittsburgh synagogue shooting](#), the [Christchurch, New Zealand, shooting](#), and the [Chabad of Poway shooting](#). In May 2019, the ELCA launched [“A 60-Day Journey Toward Justice in a Culture of Gun Violence.”](#) a resource to guide education, communal discernment and advocacy.

These memorials call on the Churchwide Assembly to advocate with lawmakers to create and pass gun laws that could save lives, including the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, and to commit to advocacy to adequately fund gun violence research by the Centers for Disease Control.

Legislation to ban the sale, transfer, manufacturing and importation of hundreds of specifically named semiautomatic firearms, while excluding any weapon that is lawfully possessed at the date of the bill’s enactment, has been introduced without passage since the expiration of the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban. Current legislation includes S.66, the Assault Weapons Ban of 2019, introduced on January 9, 2019, and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. H.R.8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019, passed the House of Representatives in spring 2019 with no action expected in the Senate for the remainder of the 116th Congress. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) need congressional authorization and funding to research and report on the impact of gun violence in the United States to inform public policy debate. The CDC should be allowed to use appropriate research to make recommendations to the public about the reduction of gun violence.

Significant advocacy by every expression of the church will be required to move any legislation on military assault weapons. The ELCA Advocacy staff in Washington, D.C., continues to monitor federal legislation that would support those provisions and will provide opportunities for action on the end of gun violence with assault weapons.

This memorial furthers the ministry of the ELCA by being another tool to implement *Future Directions 2025* and supporting the teachings of several ELCA social statements and messages. It embraces goal four of *Future Directions 2025*: “A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.”

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Oregon, Delaware-Maryland and Greater Milwaukee synods concerning assault weapons and large-capacity magazines;

To reaffirm the 2016 Churchwide Assembly action [CA16.02.03] “to reaffirm this church’s commitment to addressing the broad issues of violence in society through worship, education, service, advocacy and ongoing moral deliberation as called for in the 1994 social message on ‘Community Violence,’ and the 2013 Conference of Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Violence; to reaffirm that ELCA social policy does not reject gun ownership or the recreational activities associated with guns as morally wrong; and to urge bishops, pastors and Lutheran leaders to communicate to members of Congress and state legislators this church’s sense of urgency to advocate with lawmakers to create and pass gun laws that save lives including the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (expired in 2004), including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013”; and

To advocate for adequate funding for gun violence research by the Centers for Disease Control.

Category A2: Peacebuilding

1. Sierra Pacific Synod (2A) [2017]

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, admonishes us with the words “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9); and

WHEREAS, Scripture calls us to pursue what makes for peace (Romans 14:19), peace in marriage (1 Corinthians 7:15), peace in our relationships with others (2 Corinthians 13:11), to strive for peace with all people (Hebrews 12:14); and

WHEREAS, the Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA in 1995 adopted the social statement “For Peace in God’s World” on the responsibility of this church to work for peace; and

WHEREAS, House Resolution 1111 (HR1111) would implement action in keeping with the goals stated in “For Peace in God’s World” by creating a Cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding that will work to reduce domestic and international violence, to gather and coordinate information and recommendations, to teach violence prevention, generosity, compassion and mediation to America’s school children, to treat and dismantle gang psychology, to rehabilitate prison populations and to support our military with complementary approaches to ending violence; and

WHEREAS, “There is a convergence of the ELCA’s peace-building priorities with the constitutive goals of a United States Department for Peace worthy of further exploration by the ELCA’s expressions and affiliated and related independent organizations” (November 2009 response of the Church in Society unit of the ELCA to a resolution of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod related to a Department of Peace within the U.S. government); therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod, meeting in assembly 2017, memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to endorse and advocate for HR1111 by calling on the Domestic Mission unit of the ELCA to notify the nationwide network of state public policy advocacy offices and the members of the United States House of Representatives of this church’s support for HR1111; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to endorse and advocate for HR1111 by calling on the Domestic Mission unit of the ELCA to encourage “affiliation” between The Peace Alliance/U.S. Department of Peace-building and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod, meeting in assembly, memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to call for the Strategic Communications team to provide ELCA congregation members and staff with information about HR1111 through all appropriate media, including but not limited to *Living Lutheran* magazine and the ELCA website; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Sierra Pacific Synod in assembly direct the Synod Council or its designee to communicate to member congregations of this Synod and to all other Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through their appropriate units the substance of this “peace initiative” by the distribution of the Delegate Packet entitled “Regarding: Creations of a Cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding in the U.S. Government

HR1111,” encouraging the study of its content, followed by the consideration of endorsement and advocacy of HR 1111 through all means available to those engaged.

Background

The Department of Peacebuilding Act (H.R. 1111, introduced in the 116th Congress with the same bill number as in the previous congress) seeks to establish a federal Department of Peacebuilding, which would be led by a cabinet-level Secretary of Peacebuilding. The department would be “dedicated to peacebuilding, peacemaking, and the study and promotion of conditions conducive to both domestic and international peace and a culture of peace.” In collaboration with others, the department would be charged with developing policies and programs to address personal and family violence, crime, punishment and rehabilitation; to reduce drug and alcohol abuse; and to create, through local community initiatives, peace projects that facilitate conflict resolution and healing of societal wounds. Furthermore, the bill would establish a peace academy, modeled after military service academies. The departments of Defense and State would be required to consult with the Department of Peacebuilding concerning nonviolent means of conflict resolution when a conflict between the U.S. and any other government or entity is foreseeable, imminent or occurring.

This legislation is not widely being discussed or actively supported in the ecumenical community. When it was introduced on Feb. 8, it was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. The online committee calendar does not show any hearings or meetings scheduled in the foreseeable future. It is uncertain how establishment of a U.S. Peacebuilding Department would impact peacebuilding programs and funding for peacebuilding initiatives already undertaken by the State Department or the existing United States Institute of Peace, a nonpartisan, national institute founded by Congress and dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical and essential for U.S. and global security. Also, it is not the ELCA’s practice to “affiliate” with governmental entities, in order to maintain institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction.

While this legislation presents an opportunity to promote ELCA teachings on peace and further the [church’s ministry](#) of justice, peace and reconciliation, the current lack of movement and support in Congress means it is improbable the bill will gain traction in the current session.

Significant advocacy by every expression of the church would be required to move any legislation forward. The ELCA Advocacy staff in Washington, D.C., continues to monitor federal legislation that would support peacebuilding.

This work of peacebuilding is supported by the teachings of several ELCA social statements and messages and embraces *Future Directions 2025*, goal four: “A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.”

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Sierra Pacific Synod concerning the creation of a U.S. Department of Peacebuilding but to decline to take action at this time.

Category A3: Ethiopian Suffering

1. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [2017]

WHEREAS, we believe in a God who loves and desires to heal the suffering of everyone on earth; and

WHEREAS, the current Ethiopian government:

- harasses people, in violation of their constitutional rights;
- confiscates and destroys homes, leaving residents helpless on the street;
- indiscriminately kills people; and
- deprives people of their human rights; and

WHEREAS, the current Ethiopian government imprisons persons simply for protesting against an unjust administration; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. government is providing military assistance to the current government of Ethiopia, that is reportedly being used to kill men, women and children; and

WHEREAS, the current Ethiopian regime uses martial law to subdue and control citizens, which prevents the development of the country; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the congregations and members of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod be encouraged to hold our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia in prayer and educate ourselves about their plight; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod direct its conferences and bishop to bring these concerns before legislative leaders; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the congregations and members of the Northeastern Minnesota Synod be encouraged to contact their elected state and federal leaders and the president of the United States, urging their elected leaders to demand:

- oversight of U.S. humanitarian aid to the hungry, sick and naked in Ethiopia;
- that the U.S. government stop any form of military aid to Ethiopia;
- an end to martial law in Ethiopia; and
- that political prisoners in Ethiopia be given fair trials under the observation of the international community, and that those found innocent are released; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to take similar action.

Background

Ethiopia is currently undergoing significant political, economic and social change. Since coming into office in April 2018, Ethiopia's prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, has implemented a range of reforms aimed at healing past divisions and political tensions. These include ending the state of emergency, releasing political prisoners and journalists, allowing human rights and civic organizations to do their work in the country and reaching out to opposition groups. At the same time, Ethiopia continues to face great challenges, including how to resolve the issue of interethnic violence—which has led to internal displacement of [over 2 million people](#).

Ethiopia received approximately \$900 million in assistance from the U.S. government in 2018. Most of this assistance addresses emergency/humanitarian needs: providing emergency food and nutrition assistance, medical care, shelter and safe drinking water, as well as improving sanitation and hygiene. In addition to appropriating funds for this assistance, the U.S. Congress also provides oversight to ensure that these resources are used as intended. Federal agencies responsible for the management and administration of such programs publish reports and provide congressional testimonies when called to do so. ELCA Advocacy staff have been advocating for robust funding of development and humanitarian assistance to low-income countries, including Ethiopia, and will continue this work in keeping with this church's commitment to work for a just, peaceful and reconciled world ([Future Directions 2025, goal four](#)). This work is also guided by this church's understanding of economic justice (see ELCA social statement [For Peace in God's World](#)).

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Northeastern Minnesota Synod concerning Ethiopian suffering;

To encourage ELCA synods, congregations, members and the churchwide organization to advocate for robust funding of humanitarian and development assistance programs to Ethiopia and other low-income countries; and

To direct the churchwide organization to encourage the U.S. government to support the Ethiopian government in its efforts to undertake political, economic and social improvements on behalf of its citizens.

Category A4: Earth Charter

1. Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod (4F) [2019]

WHEREAS it is clear that urgent action is needed to reverse the current course of environmental degradation and becoming a signatory to the Earth Charter will re-affirm publicly the commitment of the ELCA to act as stewards of God's creation; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Church in Society* calls people to support institutions, such as the Earth Charter Initiative, that serve the common good and further calls individuals to exercise their baptismal vocation to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well-being, and good order in public life, becoming a signatory to the Earth Charter will allow new avenues to pursue this vocation. The Earth Charter specifically promotes increased freedom, social and economic justice, a culture of peace, and respect and care for the community of life; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Caring for Health* indicates our enduring commitment to work for and support health care for all people, and it is clear that human health is very much dependent on the health of all creation; these goals are in concord with The Earth Charter call to ensure universal access to health care; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* states that human impoverishment is incompatible with the reign of God and calls for family planning and enhanced opportunities for women, reduction of overwhelming international debt burdens, and respect for the integrity and limits of the earth; and

WHEREAS these limits are being exceeded, and population growth is a major driver, and the Earth Charter specifically calls for support for family planning and greater opportunity for women, the eradication of poverty, and the empowerment of every human being with education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *For Peace in God's World* makes clear that we are all responsible to God for earthly peace, and the Earth Charter recognizes that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part; and

WHEREAS the ELCA social statement further states that humans are made for life in community—with God, with others, and with the rest of creation, so these statements are in concord, so that by becoming a signatory to the Earth Charter, the ELCA will become an even greater “presence for peace” by working with other signatories to pursue peace; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Caring for Creation* tells that people are called to care for the Earth as God cares for the Earth and to advance international acceptance of the principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability in resolving environmental issues; and

WHEREAS as a signatory to the Earth Charter, this synod can promote these principles because the Earth Charter aims to bring forth a sustainable global society, the equitable sharing of finite resources and the benefits of development, a shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world, in a spirit of solidarity: therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. To endorse the Earth Charter;
2. To encourage development of educational materials for all ages about the Earth Charter and its relationship to the ELCA's social statements;
3. To encourage members of ELCA congregations to pray for the whole of Creation, to respect the rights of all species, to acknowledge the integrity of all elements and to hold what God has entrusted to this generation in trust for future generations; and
4. To encourage ELCA synods, seminaries, colleges, congregations, members and other entities to join with other endorsers of the Earth Charter to promote its precepts and engage in collective action to accomplish its aims.

2. New England Synod (7B) [2018]

WHEREAS, it is clear that urgent action is needed to reverse the continuing course of environmental degradation and that this action is consistent with the commitments of the ELCA to act as stewards of God's creation made in the social statement *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice* (1993); and

WHEREAS, *Caring for Creation* states that this church is called to advance international acceptance of the principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability in resolving environmental issues and these principles are evident in the Earth Charter; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statement *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* (1991) calls this church to support institutions and efforts that serve the common good and further calls this church to exercise our baptismal vocation to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well-being and good order in public life. The Earth Charter specifically promotes this vocation; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statement *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor* (2003) indicates this church's enduring commitment to work for and support health care for all people, and it is clear that human health is very much dependent on the health of all creation and these goals are in accord with the Earth Charter call to ensure universal access to health care; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* (1999) states that human impoverishment is incompatible with the reign of God and calls for family planning and enhanced opportunities for women, reduction of overwhelming international debt burdens, and respect for the integrity and limits of the earth. These concerns are in accord with the Earth Charter; and

WHEREAS, these limits are being exceeded, and population growth is a major driver, and the Earth Charter specifically calls for support for family planning and greater opportunity for women, the eradication of poverty, and the empowerment of every human being with education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statement *For Peace in God's World* (1995) makes clear that we are all responsible to God for earthly peace, and the Earth Charter recognizes that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth and the larger whole of which all are a part; and

WHEREAS, ELCA social statements further state that humans are made for life in community—with God, with others and with the rest of creation—so these statements are in concord, so that by becoming a signatory to the Earth Charter the ELCA will become an even greater “presence for peace” by working with other signatories to pursue peace; and

WHEREAS, as a signatory to the Earth Charter, the ELCA could promote all of these principles because the Earth Charter aims to bring forth a sustainable global society, the equitable sharing of finite resources and the benefits of development, a shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world, in a spirit of solidarity; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. To endorse the Earth Charter;

2. To encourage development of educational materials for all ages about the Earth Charter and its relationship to the ELCA's social statements;
3. To encourage members of ELCA congregations to pray for the whole of creation, to respect the rights of all species, to acknowledge the integrity of all elements and to hold what God has entrusted to this generation in trust for future generations; and
4. To encourage ELCA synods, seminaries, colleges, congregations, members and other entities to join with other endorsers of the Earth Charter to promote its precepts and engage in collective action to accomplish its aims.

3. Upstate New York Synod (7D) [2019]

WHEREAS it is clear that urgent action is needed to reverse the current course of environmental degradation and becoming a signatory to the Earth Charter will reaffirm publicly the commitment of the ELCA to act as stewards of God's creation; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Church in Society* calls people to support institutions, such as the Earth Charter Initiative, that serve the common good and further calls individuals to exercise their baptismal vocation to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well-being, and good order in public life, becoming a signatory to the Earth Charter will allow new avenues to pursue this vocation. The Earth Charter specifically promotes increased freedom, social and economic justice, a culture of peace, and respect and care for the community of life; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Caring for Health* indicates our enduring commitment to work for and support health care for all people, and it is clear that human health is very much dependent on the health of all creation; these goals are in concord with the Earth Charter call to ensure universal access to health care; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* states that human impoverishment is incompatible with the reign of God and calls for family planning and enhanced opportunities for women, reduction of overwhelming international debt burdens, and respect for the integrity and limits of the earth; and

WHEREAS these limits are being exceeded, and population growth is a major driver, and the Earth Charter specifically calls for support for family planning and greater opportunity for women, the eradication of poverty, and the empowerment of every human being with education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *For Peace in God's World* makes clear that we are all responsible to God for earthly peace, and the Earth Charter recognizes that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part; and

WHEREAS our social statement further states that humans are made for life in community with God, with others, and with the rest of creation, so these statements are in concord, so that by becoming a signatory to the Earth Charter, the ELCA will become an even greater "presence for peace" by working with other signatories to pursue peace; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Caring for Creation* tells that people are called to care for the Earth as God cares for the Earth and to advance international acceptance of the principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency and sustainability in resolving environmental issues; and

WHEREAS as a signatory to the Earth Charter, this synod can promote these principles because the Earth Charter aims to bring forth a sustainable global society, the equitable sharing of finite resources and the benefits of development, a shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world, in a spirit of solidarity: therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Upstate New York Synod memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. To endorse the Earth Charter; and
2. To develop educational materials for all ages about the Earth Charter and its relationship to the ELCA's social statements; and
3. To encourage members of the ELCA congregations to pray for the whole of creation, to respect the rights of all species, to acknowledge the integrity of all elements, and to hold what God has entrusted to this generation in trust for future generations; and
4. To encourage ELCA synods, seminaries, colleges, congregations, members and other entities to join with other endorsers of the Earth Charter to promote its precepts and engage in collective action to bring out its aims.

4. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F) [2019]

WHEREAS it is clear that this action is consistent with the commitments of the ELCA to act as stewards of God's creation made in the social statement *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice*; and

WHEREAS *Caring for Creation* states that people are called to advance international acceptance of the principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability in resolving environmental issues and these principles are evident in the Earth Charter; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* calls people to support institutions and efforts that serve the common good and further calls individuals to exercise their baptismal vocation to work for freedom, justice,

peace, environmental well-being, and good order in public life, and the Earth Charter specifically promotes these same principles; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor* indicates the ELCA's enduring commitment to work for and support health care for all people, and it is clear that human health is very much dependent on the health of all creation and these goals are in accord with the Earth Charter call to ensure universal access to health care; and

WHEREAS the ELCA's social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* states that human impoverishment is incompatible with the reign of God and calls for family planning and enhanced opportunities for women, reduction of overwhelming international debt burdens, and respect for the integrity and limits of the earth; these concerns are in accord with the Earth Charter; and

WHEREAS the social statement *For Peace in God's World* makes clear that all people are responsible to God for earthly peace, and the Earth Charter recognizes that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part; and

WHEREAS ELCA social statements further state that humans are made for life in community—with God, with others, and with the rest of creation—so these statements are in concord, so that by becoming a signatory to the Earth Charter, the ELCA will become an even greater “presence for peace” by working with other signatories to pursue peace; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. To endorse and become a signatory of the Earth Charter; and
2. To promote the use of the ELCA's existing social statements and other available materials about the Earth Charter and its relationship to the ELCA's social statements; and
3. To encourage members of ELCA congregations to pray for the whole of creation, to respect the rights of all species, to acknowledge the integrity of all elements, and to hold what God has entrusted to this generation in trust for future generations; and
4. To encourage ELCA synods, seminaries, colleges, congregations, members and other entities to join with other endorsers of the Earth Charter to promote its precepts and engage in collective action to accomplish its aims.

Background

The [Earth Charter](#) “is a framework for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society. It seeks to inspire in all people a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the whole human family, the greater community of life, and future generations. It is a vision of hope and a call to action. The Charter acknowledges the interdependence of ecological protection, the eradication of poverty, equitable economic development, respect for human rights, democracy, and peace. The Charter's principles foster an integrated framework for transitioning to a sustainable future.” The [charter](#) was launched June 29, 2000, by the [Earth Charter Commission](#).

[Endorsement of the Earth Charter](#) means that the organization will support the charter's implementation, values and principles, and work with others toward the same goal. Endorsers are expected to: (1) contribute to the Charter Initiative and to charter-inspired action projects; implement the charter in its professional work; and agree with this endorsement statement:

“We, the undersigned, endorse the Earth Charter. We embrace the spirit and aims of the document. We pledge to join the global partnership for a just, sustainable, and peaceful world and to work for the realization of the values and principles of the Earth Charter.”

The current charter endorsees include the Episcopal Church, International Consortium on Religion and Ecology, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

This memorial furthers the ministry of the ELCA by being another tool to implement *Future Directions 2025* and by supporting the teachings of several ELCA social statements and messages. It embraces goal four of *Future Directions 2025*: “A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.” The charter's principle of ecological integrity is consistent with the social statement [Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice](#). The charter's principle on social and economic justice embraces the teachings of the social statements [Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](#) and [Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture](#) and the social messages [Human Rights](#) and [People Living With Disabilities](#). The Earth Charter principle of “democracy, nonviolence and peace” is consistent with the social message [Living in a Time of Terrorism](#) and the social statement [For Peace in God's World](#).

Many principles of the Earth Charter are found in the 2019 priorities of the ELCA Advocacy office. Full implementation of the memorial may require additional resources.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, New England, Upstate New York and Southeastern Pennsylvania synods concerning endorsement of the “The Earth Charter”;

To endorse the Earth Charter;

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to engage in creation care through principles of sufficiency, sustainability, solidarity and participation; and

To refer to the Domestic Mission unit for implementation consistent with this memorial.

Category A5: Carbon Fee (and Dividend)

1. South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K) [2019]

Whereas this synod became the first major religious denominational body to join the growing secular movement to address greenhouse gas emission causing climate change; with the landmark 2017 resolution endorsing Carbon Fee and Dividend; and

Whereas this synod’s advocacy continues with current congressional legislation for Carbon Fee and Dividend, HR 763, “The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act”; and

Whereas the urgency for action becomes ever more apparent for all of God’s creation—plants and animals, human lives, and entire ecosystems—especially on behalf of the most vulnerable; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage ELCA members to learn about and advocate for a national strategy for Carbon Fee and Dividend.

Background

The scientific community overwhelmingly agrees that increases in greenhouse gases (GHGs) released into the atmosphere impact the climate globally, resulting in [more frequent and intense extreme weather patterns](#) that destabilize the environment. This destabilization impacts everyone—contributing to forced migration, exacerbation of poverty, national security concerns, food insecurity, shifts in sea habitats, increased health risks and threats to ecosystems that could lead to the extinction of some species. Climate change mitigation measures must be implemented rapidly according to the 2018 [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) report in order to avoid irreversible damage. The 2018 fourth [U.S. National Climate Assessment](#) states that without sufficient mitigation efforts to achieve decarbonization, climate change will have significant impacts on the American economy and quality of life. One mitigation tool is a carbon-pricing mechanism, known as carbon fee or carbon tax. A [carbon fee or tax](#) is a policy tool that provides a financial incentive to reduce GHG emissions by attaching a price to emissions (CO₂ emissions or multiple GHGs) or their emission inputs, namely fossil fuels.

According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS) [March 2019 Report](#), “economic modeling indicates that a carbon tax would achieve emission reductions, the level of which would depend on which GHG emissions and sources are covered and the rate of the carbon tax.” A carbon tax would increase energy costs while producing significant revenue for the U.S.

Implementation of a carbon tax presents challenges relative to its design and implementation, consequences of the imposed taxes and how to distribute the generated revenue. [CRS](#) finds that “policymakers would encounter trade-offs among objectives. The central trade-offs involve minimizing economy-wide costs, lessening the costs borne by specific groups—particularly low-income households—and supporting a range of specific policy objectives.” Lower-income households tend to spend a greater portion of their income on energy needs. Also, those communities that depend upon fossil fuel energy would be disproportionately impacted. This memorial is supported by the social statement [Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All](#), which calls for “scrutiny of how specific policies and practices affect people and nations that are the poorest, and changes to make policies of economic growth, trade, and investment more beneficial to those who are poor.”

This memorial furthers the ministry of the ELCA by being another tool to implement goal four, objective five of *Future Directions 2025*: “Lead and participate in national and global advocacy efforts to advance gender justice, climate justice and human rights, and to alleviate poverty and hunger, engaging church networks and joining with ecumenical partners, leaders of other faiths and the global church.”

A carbon fee and dividend appears to be one of many potential mitigation policy tools to remedy the impact of climate change, but there are many challenges presented by implementation of such a policy tool. It is important for ELCA members to learn about the carbon fee and dividend and its implementation to make informed decisions to ensure the tax and potential dividend causes no harm to any sector, community or people. Research will be needed to develop education awareness of carbon pricing and the various avenues for distribution of dividends, and to evaluate what, if any, national advocacy strategy should be framed. Addressing carbon pricing is part of the 2019 ELCA Advocacy priorities and is not likely to require additional resources for educational awareness except for communication resources.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin concerning Carbon Fee and Dividend;

To reaffirm the commitment of this church to engage in advocacy that seeks sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all; and

To refer to the Domestic Mission unit for the development of a plan that promotes educational resources on Carbon Fee and Dividend to assist in forming the basis for any potential advocacy strategy.

Category A6: Poor People's Campaign

1. Oregon Synod (1E) [2019]

WHEREAS as members of the ELCA “we are freed in Christ to serve, love, and care for our neighbor, and in this work we strive to ensure that all people have a livelihood that is sufficient to meet their basic needs and is sustainable in creation”;¹ and

WHEREAS as members of the ELCA “we believe God is calling us into the world to serve together. Through our direct service, we aid immediate needs before us. Through our advocacy work, we impact systemic, long-lasting change”;² and

WHEREAS in 1967-68 the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders built a coalition called Poor People's Campaign and organized across barriers of race to work “against dehumanization, discrimination, and poverty wages in the richest country in the world”;³ and

WHEREAS in 2018, 50 years after Dr. King, the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival arose from years of organizing and listening across the U.S.;⁴ and

WHEREAS the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival recognizes that the “centrality of systemic racism in maintaining economic oppression must be named, detailed, and exposed empirically, morally, and spiritually”;⁵ and

WHEREAS the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is “committed to lifting up and deepening the leadership of those most affected by systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, and ecological devastation and to building unity across lines of division”;⁶ and

WHEREAS the ELCA Social Statement *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* states that the ELCA “is committed to defend human dignity, to stand with poor and powerless people, to advocate justice, to work for peace, and to care for the earth in the processes and structures of contemporary society [ref. 6];⁷ and

WHEREAS at least one hundred thirty-two other national, regional, and local organizations have signed on as endorsing partners of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, including ELCA full-communion partners the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Oregon Synod of the ELCA endorse the Poor People's Campaign and encourage its members to participate where appropriate in the organizing, advocacy, and actions of the campaign; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Oregon Synod of the ELCA memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to endorse the Poor People's Campaign and encourage its members to participate where appropriate in the organizing, advocacy, and actions of the campaign.

2. New England Synod (7B) [2019]

WHEREAS as members of the ELCA “we are freed in Christ to serve, love, and care for our neighbor, and in this work we strive to ensure that all people have a livelihood that is sufficient to meet their basic needs and is sustainable in creation”;¹ and

WHEREAS as members of the ELCA “we believe God is calling us into the world to serve together. Through our direct service, we aid immediate needs before us. Through our advocacy work, we impact systemic, long-lasting change”;² and

WHEREAS in 1967-68 the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders built a coalition called Poor People's Campaign and organized across barriers of race to work “against dehumanization, discrimination, and poverty wages in the richest country in the world”;³ and

WHEREAS in 2018, 50 years after Dr. King, the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival arose from years of organizing and listening across the U.S.;⁴ and

WHEREAS the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival recognizes that the “centrality of systemic racism in maintaining economic oppression must be named, detailed, and exposed empirically, morally, and spiritually”;⁵ and

WHEREAS the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is “committed to lifting up and deepening the leadership of those most affected by systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, and ecological devastation and to building unity across lines of division”;⁶ and

WHEREAS the ELCA Social Statement *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* states that the ELCA “is committed to defend human dignity, to stand with poor and powerless people, to advocate justice, to work for peace, and to care for the earth in the processes and structures of contemporary society [ref. 6];⁷ and

WHEREAS at least one hundred thirty-two other national, regional, and local organizations have signed on as endorsing partners of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, including ELCA full-communion partners the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Church of Christ, the Episcopal Church, and the United Methodist Church; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the New England Synod of the ELCA memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to endorse the Poor People's Campaign and to encourage its synods, congregations and members to participate where appropriate in the organizing, advocacy, and actions of the campaign.

3. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2019]

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to endorse the Poor People's Campaign and encourage its synods and congregations to participate where appropriate in the organizing, advocacy, and actions of the campaign.

Background

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival (PPC) is a grassroots movement that seeks to unite "people across the country to challenge the evils of systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and the nation's distorted morality" (from PPC's summary statement). Its tenets are provided in a collection of [Fundamental Principles](#) and [demands](#) expressed in *A Moral Agenda Based on Fundamental Rights*. As a movement, it draws connections with the 1968 Poor People's Campaign called by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

These memorials ask for the ELCA to be on record as endorsing the Poor People's Campaign. The Church Council was asked to do the same and adopted a resolution [CC11.18.23u] in which the ELCA did not explicitly endorse the PPC as a denominational signer.

ELCA social teaching is the basis on which ELCA leaders stand when expressing the corporate social witness as a networked church of churchwide, synod and congregations. In September 2018, ELCA staff engaged in conversation with leaders associated with the PPC to clarify what endorsement by the ELCA would mean. The PPC indicated endorsement meant official agreement with the campaign's goals, stated analysis, 12 principles, multiple demands, and request for organizational support for PPC staffing. A churchwide staff review indicated that, despite some shared vision and analysis, there was not sufficient basis for the ELCA to endorse all the tenets or commitments as a denomination. The ELCA as a body simply has not discerned or adopted enough of the PPC's key principles or extensive demands. In a few cases, there may be explicit contradiction.

Examples are given here; others could be listed.

Poor People's Campaign Fundamental Principles that the ELCA does not claim in any of its social teaching:

- "Moral revival is necessary to save the heart and soul of our democracy."
- "We believe in the ... transformation of the 'War Economy' into a 'Peace Economy.'"
- "We uphold the need to do a season of sustained moral direct action as a way to break through the tweets and shift the moral narrative."

Demands the ELCA does not have policy to support:

- "early voting in every state, same-day registration, the enactment of Election Day as a holiday, and a verifiable paper record"
- "statehood, voting rights and representation for ... Washington D.C."
- "immediate implementation of federal and state living wage laws that are commensurate for the 21st century economy, guaranteed annual incomes, full employment"
- "free tuition at public colleges and universities"
- "repeal of the 2017 federal tax law"
- "single-payer universal health care for all"

Analysis the ELCA has not discerned or settled upon

- "millions of poor people in the United States today are poor because the wealth and resources of our country have been flowing to a small number of people"
- There is an "extremist religious and Christian nationalist agenda deliberately divert[ing] attention from the key issues and challenges facing the majority of Americans"

The fundamental question for a denomination's endorsement is not whether the Poor People's Campaign's claims, principles and demands are true or attractive. The question is whether the ELCA has discussed together or adopted by vote a sufficient number of the tenets to support a public endorsement on behalf of the entire denomination. Other denominations have varied polities, but the historic Lutheran approach is to adopt written documents that express and guide its public commitments as a body. The ELCA identifies itself as a community of moral deliberation and develops official social teaching and policy through a standard protocol and proven means. Social teaching expresses one of the ways the ELCA is a networked church and accountable to each expression of this church.

The Church Council's decision to affirm the Poor People's Campaign's vision without official endorsement followed from the significant disparity with the PPC's fundamental principles and demands. It should be noted that it was a staff recommendation that a different action would have set an unprecedented departure from the standards of ELCA denominational endorsement. At the same time, the Church Council's action recognized the value of the PPC's basic concerns and those tenets that align with the ELCA's commitments to speak and act for justice and to work against systemic racism, poverty, economic justice and ecological devastation. The Church Council's action specifically encouraged the churchwide organization, synods, congregations and members to become involved with the issues as faithful witness to God's call to do justice and to show love for the neighbor.

ELCA members and congregations have and will continue to participate in Poor People's Campaign activities. ELCA Advocacy has actively engaged in raising awareness about the PPC through its advocacy blogs, highlighting ELCA member voices speaking to their involvement in local mobilizing and activism. Churchwide staff have and will continue to embrace opportunities to connect with the PPC that speak to systemic racism, economic injustice and ecological devastation, and to encourage grassroots involvement.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Oregon, New England and Metropolitan New York synods concerning the National Poor People's Campaign; and

To affirm the Church Council action [CC18.11.23u] recognizing "the importance of the Poor People's Campaign in bringing an end to systemic racism, economic injustice, ecological devastation and related injustices; to support the vision and goals of the Poor People's Campaign that are in alignment with this church's social teachings; to encourage the churchwide organization, synods, congregations and members to become involved with the issues as a faithful witness to God's call to do justice and show love for the neighbor."

Category A7: Immigrants and Refugees

1. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F) [2019]

WHEREAS, our faith calls upon us to welcome the sojourner, care for the most vulnerable among us, and reflect God's love for the stranger and "alien" in our land, and this is made clear in scripture (Matthew 25:35, Exodus 22:21); and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has researched Temporary Protected Status (TPS), granted by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to eligible foreign-born individuals, who are unable to return home safely due to conditions or circumstances preventing their country from adequately handling their return, and recommends this status as a humane and essential support for immigrants to our country; and

WHEREAS, TPS means that during a designated period, TPS holders are not removable from the U.S. and not detainable by DHS on the basis of immigration status, are eligible for an employment authorization document (EAD), and are eligible for travel authorization; and

WHEREAS, TPS provides these men and women the opportunity to rebuild their lives and raise a family in safety; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Church throughout its history has been a church with deep roots in migration, immigration, and care for the stranger and vulnerable among us; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourages its congregations to advocate for the protection of TPS holders and for temporary protected status for all those who are eligible; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod recommits to being an advocate and justice seeker for immigrants, and communicates the synod's concerns to members of Congress and other federal, state and local elected officials, and encourages all congregations and their members to express their love for immigrants to their elected officials; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourages its congregations to participate in Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) Migrant and Refugee Sunday activities and encourages its congregations to pray for immigrants, for just and humane governmental policies that reflect the nation's core values of welcome and inclusivity, and for a world where no one need flee their home for fear of violence, oppression, or economic hardship; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod encourages its congregations to discern ways to lift up World Refugee Day in worship and service; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA churchwide assembly to recommit to being an advocate and justice seeker for immigrants and communicate the church's resolute commitment to the protection of TPS holders to the president and members of Congress.

Background

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has a strong history of assisting and welcoming those forced to flee their communities and seek refuge outside their countries of origin. The commitment of the church to the protection of refugees has been strengthened by our relationships with companion churches and our partnership with Lutheran and faith-based organizations, particularly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) in the United States. Today, as the number of refugees globally is at its highest in recorded history, the ELCA continues to honor its immigrant roots by supporting efforts to assist refugees abroad and welcoming those seeking refuge to the United States.

LIRS and the ELCA have long advocated for the protection of unaccompanied children, refugees, asylum-seekers and trafficking victims with the United Nations and the U.S. government. This joint advocacy work requires a holistic response that includes attention to improving conditions outside the U.S. and ensuring that individuals who are fleeing persecution or violence receive protection in the U.S. and that their due process rights are respected. In moments of economic, human-security and environmental crisis in Central America that cause massive displacement, the ELCA has stood alongside affected communities and our companion churches. In 1989, the ELCA adopted a social policy resolution to extend hospitality and support to Central American refugees and to continue working with LIRS to provide asylum. More recently, after thousands of children and families were displaced from their communities, the ELCA developed a comprehensive, whole-church strategy to protect and welcome Central Americans forced to migrate: Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO). AMMPARO was developed to respond to the suffering of thousands of unaccompanied children and families that are displaced from their communities due to violence, lack of opportunities and environmental issues.

Lutherans across the U.S. have been eager to address the worldwide refugee crisis, in which one in every 122 humans is either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This includes an ever-increasing number of Syrian refugees as the six-year conflict in Syria has now displaced more than 11 million people, nearly five million of whom have crossed at least one border, confirming it as the world's single largest refugee crisis since World War II.

Another challenge to the resettlement program is that, over the last three decades, refugee populations arriving in the United States have changed significantly. With ongoing conflicts in almost every region of the world, LIRS and the ELCA are witnessing refugees with increased needs, including single-women-headed households, survivors of torture and trauma, and refugees with severe medical and mental health needs. However, the funding and infrastructure of the U.S. resettlement program has not kept pace with the program's evolving mandate and challenging refugee trends. ELCA congregants can [advocate through LIRS](#) for a flexible and welcoming resettlement program and robust funding that meets the needs of all vulnerable people.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a legal immigration status that allows citizens from other countries who are present in the U.S. during a catastrophe in their country to remain in the U.S. safely until conditions in their countries of origin change drastically. Lutheran social teaching promotes protection of the most vulnerable and keeping families together, and advocates for treating immigrants with dignity. This church has been working toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the United States.

ELCA [recently encouraged its constituents](#) to support [H.R.6](#) (the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019) in the House of Representatives, which, if passed into law, would provide a pathway to citizenship for qualifying Dreamers and for TPS and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders living in the United States. This bill is overwhelmingly positive since it has been expanded from just Dreamers to include protections for immigrants with TPS and [DED](#)—two temporary immigration programs. Supporters of H.R.6 would need to address their senators to pass this bill, which would allow Dreamers, TPS holders and DED recipients to receive a pathway to citizenship.

In April 2019, the ELCA welcomed news of the settlement agreement on the Central American Minors (CAM) Program, urging the Administration to protect vulnerable populations, especially those 2,700 Central American children that will have a chance to seek protection in the United States and be reunified with family members. In a press statement, ELCA Advocacy emphasized the importance of amplifying the CAM settlement in an effort to hold the administration accountable for actually processing these children fairly and equitably.

Last, ELCA participated in the development of a document on the effects of ending current TPS agreements. The online link can be found [here](#).

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod concerning advocacy for immigrants and refugees;

To recommit to advocacy for Temporary Protected Status extensions through ELCA Advocacy and Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO);

To reaffirm the ELCA’s partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in calling for fair and compassionate immigration policies and practices that keep families together and the joint work with AMMPARO; and

To encourage synods, congregations and members to advocate for legislation that welcomes the stranger to this country and to their communities through AMMPARO.

Category A8: Deportation

1. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2019]

WHEREAS, the Book of Leviticus states, “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God,” and

WHEREAS, the policy of the government of the United States has moved from acceptance of refugees to harassment, detention and deportation; and

WHEREAS, the brutality of this policy has been visited directly upon Betty Rendón, a student pastor in the Greater Milwaukee Synod, and her family; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to speak in opposition to the inhumane policies of harassment, detention and deportation implemented by the United States government, policies that are in opposition to the biblical teachings at the foundation of the church and that congregation members in the ELCA are encouraged to communicate to their elected officials to:

1. Protect migrants, refugees and those fleeing violence;
2. Stop separating immigrant or refugee families;
3. Increase the number of refugees we are willing to accept from the current historically low numbers, and
4. Remove practices that create unreasonable and insurmountable barriers to those seeking asylum.

Background

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has a strong history of welcoming the stranger. The commitment of the church to welcome migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and their families has been strengthened by this church’s relationships with companion churches and partnership with Lutheran and faith-based organizations, particularly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) in the United States and globally through the Lutheran World Federation.

Lutherans have a deep-rooted history in refugee and immigrant issues. After World War II, one in every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or displaced person. The strong immigrant roots and vibrant immigrant members led to Lutheran church bodies establishing LIRS in 1939 as the national organization to serve uprooted people. LIRS and the ELCA have long advocated for the protection of vulnerable populations and family unification in immigration policies.

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly affirmed this stance when it approved the Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO) strategy. [CA16.03.07] [AMMPARO](#) calls the whole church—congregations, synods and the churchwide organization—to assist migrant children and families fleeing humanitarian crises in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

Family unity and the acknowledgment that there is God-given dignity in all people has been a cornerstone of advocacy by the ELCA, its AMMPARO strategy and LIRS. Despite efforts, the number of migrants detained by immigration officials has skyrocketed in recent years due to policies that criminalize all migrants. These enforcement policies and practices can leave any noncitizen, including green-card holders, asylum seekers, trafficking victims, and torture survivors, at risk of detention and deportation.

[There were 10.5 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. in 2017](#), representing 3.2% of the total U.S. population that year, which is a drop from the peak of 12.2 million in 2007, when this group was 4% of the U.S. population. According to estimations by the Migration Policy Institute (2015), approximately 4.1 million U.S.-born children have undocumented parents. Children with parents that have been deported suffer economic and psychological consequences, including [“psychological trauma, material hardship, residential instability, family dissolution, increased use of public benefits and, among boys, aggression.”](#)

The Administration and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have announced they will continue to target undocumented migrants and work closely with [Immigration Control Enforcement agencies \(ICE\) to enforce](#)

[deportation](#). In response, the ELCA has strengthened its commitment through ministry with its global companion churches in Central America and with churches and agencies in countries of transit and in the U.S. In the ELCA, there are 133 welcoming and sanctuary congregations, and several members across the U.S. are court advocates through the [ELCA's Guardian Angels program](#).

The ELCA continues to honor its immigrant roots by our support of migrant ministries and advocating for laws that focus on love, family and welcoming the stranger.

On May 16, ELCA Advocacy issued an [action alert](#) calling on members to contact their lawmakers and speak out against immigration policies and enforcement that tear families apart and that support immigration deterrence strategies, which when implemented can have misguided and inhumane impact. The AMMPARO strategy calls instead for the U.S. government to keep families together while investing in programs that address the root causes of migration.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Greater Milwaukee Synod concerning deportations;

To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees and to the policy questions involved, as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO);

To call congregations, synods and the churchwide organization to speak in opposition to the inhumane policies of harassment, detention and deportation implemented by the U.S. government; and

To request that appropriate staff in AMMPARO and the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment around deportation.

Category A9: Sanctuary

1. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2019]

RESOLVED that Sanctuary not only means the provision of shelter but is a

- RESPONSE to raids, detentions, deportations, and the criminalization of immigrants and refugees; a
- STRATEGY to fight individual cases of deportation, to advocate for an end of mass detention and amplify immigrant voices; a
- VISION for what our communities and world can be; and a
- MORAL IMPERATIVE to take prophetic action of radical hospitality rooted in the ancient traditions of our faith communities; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod declare itself one of the first major metropolitan Sanctuary Synods of the ELCA ready to help protect refugees and undocumented people from arrest and deportation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers (ICE), in partnership with organizations like Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, The New Sanctuary Coalition, The New York Immigration Coalition, New York Legal Aid Society, and the ELCA's AMMPARO program by:

- Developing a network of sanctuary congregations
- Coordinating accompaniment trainings— being silent advocates during check-ins or hearings
- Creating a plan for awareness building around issues of immigration and refugees
- Advocating for just immigration policies, including fairness in admitting and protecting refugees; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod endorse, fully support, and help train congregations seeking to be sanctuary congregations, creating a network of sanctuary in our synod, whose work would include but not be limited to:

- Help congregations explore why and how to identify themselves as sanctuary congregations,
- Reach out to nearby immigrant congregations or communities,
- Expand or redevelop existing programs with a focus on reaching out to immigrants and refugees,
- Create and distribute “Know Your Rights Cards” to undocumented persons,
- Reach out and network with other sanctuary congregations to share support and information,
- Provide short-term respite sanctuary during immediate crisis,
- Train in and participate in accompaniment program,
- Participate in the ELCA's AMMPARO program for unaccompanied minors,
- Encourage participation in “Jericho Walks” around Federal Plaza, and
- Host Immigration Consultations with legal professionals for immigrants; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt a similar resolution for the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Background

Christians have offered sanctuary for two thousand years, continuing an ancient biblical practice in which cities and houses of worship provided refuge and asylum for people fleeing injustice. Beginning in the 1980s, the Sanctuary Movement was a faith-based initiative to protect Central American refugees fleeing civil war and seeking safety in the U.S. Today, the New Sanctuary Movement is a revived effort to protect undocumented migrants from needless jailing procedures and deportation, and addresses the dire situation within the Department of Health and Human Services that has resulted in the stripping of services to refugees and unaccompanied children. In contrast with the historic Sanctuary Movement, many of the migrants protected under sanctuary have lived in the U.S. for an extended period.

While there is no uniform or legally accepted definition of sanctuary, its overall purpose is to protect people from immigration laws that lead to the deportation of undocumented people who are part of our communities and may have U.S. citizen children. Part of what it means to provide sanctuary to immigrants seeking protection is having lawyers handling their cases. If they are hosted in a congregation, it is a temporary measure.

The ways in which sanctuary is provided varies by congregation, but it can include providing a physical shelter, inviting and welcoming all to worship regardless of immigration status, providing services to migrants such as “Know Your Rights” presentations, and assisting all regardless of immigration status. Moreover, actively advocating for migrants and for a fair and just immigration system is part of sanctuary.

In 2016, the Churchwide Assembly adopted the Strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO). AMMPARO invites congregations to become “Welcoming Congregations,” which means they commit to spiritually and physically accompanying migrants in their communities, pray for migrant children and families, and advocate for a just and humane immigration system. ELCA sanctuary congregations that host and support immigrants seeking protection do these same activities and have joined AMMPARO.

While these activities are completely legal, other activities such as knowingly concealing, harboring or shielding (or attempting to conceal, harbor or shield) an undocumented immigrant from detection by the authorities are not. Likewise, knowingly transporting or moving (or attempting to transport or move) an undocumented immigrant from one place to another, where the transportation helps the immigrant remain in the United States unlawfully, is illegal. Each congregation has its own theological reasons for taking part in the New Sanctuary Movement, but the call of our faith is universally seen as a way to protect human dignity in a system that not only seems to disrupt family reunification processes but also leans toward unjust immigration enforcement, detention and investigations.

Through the AMMPARO strategy, the ELCA already affirms the spirit of the sanctuary movement by encouraging congregations to serve and support the protection of migrants in their communities. Within AMMPARO, there are already self-determined ELCA sanctuary synods and sanctuary congregations that define and practice sanctuary differently. The ELCA sanctuary synods are Oregon, Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, New England and Metropolitan New York. All of these sanctuary synods, as well as many ELCA sanctuary congregations, already connect with the AMMPARO movement.

As a denomination, through AMMPARO, the churchwide organization provides educational and practical resources and information for congregations as they consider their role in providing sanctuary and joining their local sanctuary movement. As AMMPARO, staff have encouraged welcoming congregations to connect to their local sanctuary movement or other organizations that serve migrant communities. The ELCA Church Council action taken in November 2017 [CC17.11.33w] supported the spirit of the sanctuary movement and requested the churchwide organization to provide guidance and information.

In this memorial, the ELCA is being called to take specifically defined actions through its congregations, synods and churchwide expressions. These are concrete ways the ELCA can support migrants and refugees in our communities. None of the recommended actions by the Memorials Committee breaks U.S. law in any form and all contribute to the protection of vulnerable people in our midst.

Recommended for Assembly Action

**To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Metropolitan New York Synod concerning sanctuary;
To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees and to the policy questions involved, as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO);**

To recognize that the ELCA in congregations, synods and the churchwide organization are already taking the actions requested by this memorial; and

To request that appropriate staff on the AMMPARO team and the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units review the existing strategies and practices by the five current sanctuary synods and develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment around sanctuary.

Section B

Israel/Palestine

Category BI: Just Peace

1. Southeastern Minnesota Synod (3I) [2017]

WHEREAS, in regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, United States financial support and media coverage have favored Israel; and

WHEREAS, the Israeli government has: since 1948, in violation of international law, subjected Palestinians to human rights abuse and ethnic cleansing; daily intimidated and harassed the Palestinians by setting up check points, road blocks and curfews; demolished homes; confiscated land; and illegally arrested, beat, killed and confined Palestinians; and

WHEREAS, 4.5 million Palestinians remain in refugee camps in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan; and

WHEREAS, the wall built by the Israeli government inhibits the access of Palestinians to medical treatment, employment, and contact with family and friends; and

WHEREAS, many Jewish people and Jewish organizations, in Israel and the United States, defend and support Palestinians; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, in assembly,

1. encourage its members to learn about all aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
2. request its bishop to recommend resources for learning about this conflict;
3. support its members in urging their congressional representatives to work for a just and peaceful resolution of this conflict; and
4. memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to divest any church-related investments that support Israel until this conflict is resolved.

Background

Since its inception, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has taken up the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2005, a [Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine](#) (Strategy) was developed that summarized then-current policy and outlined proposed outcomes with respect to accompaniment, awareness-raising and advocacy. Among the Strategy's outcomes were:

- a. Israelis and Palestinians coexisting in justice and peace, as citizens of viable and secure Israeli and Palestinian states.
- b. A reduction in poverty and unemployment among Palestinians and access to basic services (e.g., health care, education).

Mid-range outcomes:

- An end to Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.
- An end to terrorism and violence by individuals, groups and states.
- The establishment of and international support for a viable, contiguous Palestinian state.

Short-range outcomes:

- An end to further expansion of the separation wall on Palestinian territory and the related appropriation of natural resources (e.g., water, farmland).
 - A cessation of all settlement activities and withdrawal from settlements on Palestinian territory to the 1967 boundaries.
- c. A negotiated, final status agreement, which includes a "shared Jerusalem" that can serve as a capital to both Palestine and Israel, with access by and full rights in the city for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The Strategy also sought "stronger advocacy by the ELCA and its members with the U.S. government that reflects the urgency of the situation in Israel and Palestine and provides a more effective voice for peace with justice in the region. This will be done, wherever possible, in partnership with ecumenical and other partners." ELCA staff participate in several ecumenical coalitions and interreligious dialogues where advocacy about the conflict is taken up.

To these ends, the ELCA established a "Peace Not Walls" campaign to achieve these and all the other desired outcomes in the Strategy.

Over the years, the ELCA has [supported](#) legislative and executive branch [initiatives](#) to achieve a negotiated final settlement, uphold Palestinian human rights throughout the West Bank and Gaza, promote freer movement and access for Palestinians in the occupied territories, halt all Israeli settlement activity in the territories, halt construction of the Wall/barrier outside the pre-1967 de facto border between Israel and Jordan, stop home demolitions and land confiscation, assist Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza as well as those residing elsewhere in neighboring countries, etc.

On the ground, however, the conflict has [worsened](#). In late May 2019, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process [said](#):

“The prolonged absence of a political horizon to resolve the broader conflict has coincided with a steady deterioration of the living conditions of Palestinians. This, coupled with violence, settlement expansion, demolitions of Palestinian property, and the persistent threat of further economic decline, are creating an explosive mix that could have serious security implications.”

Noting recent intense fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza, the UN Special Coordinator reiterated “the call by the Secretary-General who condemned in the strongest terms the launching of rockets from Gaza into Israel, particularly the targeting of civilian population centres and also call on Israel to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from using lethal force against protesters, except as a last resort.” A recent UN summary about Gaza [stated](#):

“The Gaza Strip faces an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, impacting the livelihoods and access to essential services by its two million residents. This crisis has been driven by over 11 years of an Israeli blockade and an unsolved internal Palestinian divide, exacerbated since March 2018 by the massive increase in Palestinian casualties in the context of demonstrations taking place near Israel’s perimeter fence, as well as limited escalations in hostilities.”

As in previous years, West Bank demolitions (of homes and other structures) and displacement continued in 2019. A recent UN report [stated](#), “April saw the highest number of demolitions in a single month in more than two years and over 50 percent of all demolitions this year occurred in East Jerusalem.” Between 2011 and 2018 more than 5,000 structures were demolished and more than 7,700 people displaced.

The Israeli human rights group monitoring violations in the occupied Palestinian territories, B’Tselem, [reports](#):

“From 1967 through 2017, over 200 Israeli settlements were established in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem); their current population is almost 620,000. Settlements impinge on Palestinian human rights throughout the West Bank as their influence far exceeds the boundaries of the lands seized to build them: checkpoints that limit Palestinian movement are erected based on where there are settlements; Palestinian[s] are denied access to farmland near settlements; the route of the Separation Barrier was placed inside the West Bank so as to leave as many settlements as possible to the west of it.”

Following the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, subsequent assemblies [continued](#) to address the issues.

Of particular relevance to this memorial from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod are at least two actions from 2007 and 2016 churchwide assemblies.

Part of the 2007 Assembly action was:

“To call upon the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to underscore the call for economic initiatives by this church and its members in the “Peace, Not Walls” campaign. Such initiatives, in consultation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, could include:

- *purchasing of products from Palestinian providers and*
- *exploration of the feasibility of refusing to buy products produced in Israeli settlements. Also to be explored is the entire investment activity by this church. Examination of investments would exclude the option of divestiture.”* [CA07.06.30]

In 2016, that Churchwide Assembly, among other things, voted:

“To direct the ELCA’s Corporate Social Responsibility review team to develop a human rights social criteria investment screen based on the social teachings of this church and, in the case of Israel and Palestine, specifically based on the concerns raised in the ELCA Middle East Strategy; ...” [CA16.06.31]

In November 2017, the Church Council adopted a [Human Rights social message](#) that was requested, in part, to assist in the development of the mandated human rights social criteria investment screen.

At its August 2018 board meeting, Portico Benefit Services’ board of trustees approved the ELCA Human Rights screen for future use in its Social Purpose investment portfolios. The [screen](#) states, “*The ELCA recommends not investing in corporations benefiting from the most egregious denial of the rights of humans as political and civic*

beings to have equal access and participation in legal and political decisions affecting them.” Implementation [began](#) in April 2019.

Currently, the ELCA has several [screens](#) that limit or prohibit investments in certain products and/or commercial activities: alcohol; environment; gambling; nuclear, biological or chemical weapons research and development or certain conventional weapons; pornography; private, for-profit prisons; and tobacco.

This memorial pertains to the ministry of the ELCA by being another tool to implement *Future Directions 2025* and supporting the teachings of several ELCA social statements and messages. It embraces goal four of *Future Directions 2025*: “A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.”

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod concerning “Support for the Palestinians: A Way to a Just Peace”;

To acknowledge the adoption of the human rights social message [CC17.11.26] and the human rights social criteria investment screen [CC18.04.12i] developed in part to address concerns related to investments; and

To commend and encourage Portico Benefit Services to continue its implementation of the human rights social criteria investment screen as it relates to investments in Israel and Palestine.

Category B2: Palestine (No Way to Treat a Child)

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2019]

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod, in assembly, memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting the assembly to urge the U.S. Congress to call on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law; ensure that operations are carried out in accordance with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, and call on the United States to fully enforce its own established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod, in assembly, memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request that Presiding Bishop Eaton contact the appropriate U.S. governmental officials, encouraging them to ensure that United States taxpayer funds do not support ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod, in assembly, memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request that the assembly encourage ELCA members and congregations to learn more about the experiences of Palestinian children held in the Israeli military courts and the lives of children in Palestinian Lutheran congregations and to contact their congressional representatives and senators; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod, in assembly, memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request that ELCA members contact their members of Congress to support legislation that prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used to violate the rights of Palestinian children, including any proposed 2019 bill which requires the secretary of state to certify that United States funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law.

2. Rocky Mountain Synod (2E) [2019]

WHEREAS the ELCA, in 2005, established an initiative, Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land, which seeks “peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land”; and

WHEREAS the ELCA, in its social statement *For Peace in God’s World* has committed to promote respect for human rights, especially for “groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children”; and

WHEREAS the ELCA is in a relationship of accompaniment with the six Palestinian Lutheran congregations and the seven schools and educational programs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS the ELCA Peace Not Walls initiative issued an action alert in December 2017, supporting HR 4391, “Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act”; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Rocky Mountain Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting the assembly to urge the U.S. Congress to call on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law; ensure that operations are carried out in accordance with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, and call on the United States to fully enforce its own established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that the ELCA presiding bishop, synod bishops, and staff of every ELCA synod advocate with elected officials, encouraging

them to ensure that United States taxpayer funds do not support ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Rocky Mountain Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request that the Peace Not Walls strategy consider creating a resource enabling congregations to learn more about the lives of Palestinian children—especially those living in the Occupied Territories; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Rocky Mountain Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that the assembly encourage ELCA members to contact their members of Congress in support of legislation that prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used in ways that violate the rights of Palestinian children, like H.R. 2407, introduced by Rep. Betty McCollum, which requires the secretary of state to certify that United States funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law.

3. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2018]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in its social message on “Human Rights,” adopted unanimously by the Church Council of the ELCA on November 12, 2017, affirms this church teaches that “human dignity is God’s gift to every person and that the commitment to universal rights protects that dignity.” Further the council “gives renewed attention to addressing human rights as a church. It also believes the time is right for more Christians to enter public conversation and take action to safeguard the dignity due to all children of God”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social message on “Human Rights,” also affirms, “ELCA social teaching is clear: ‘The God who justifies expects all people to do justice’”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social message on “Human Rights,” further states, “The ELCA affirms the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as ‘a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community’”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social message on “Human Rights,” further states, “Christians cannot be satisfied simply with responding to injustice that has already occurred. We also are called to take actions that prevent rights abuses from happening in the first place, whether by personal intervention in injustice or publicly addressing rights abuses. Support for legal protections and means of enforcement is also our responsibility”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in 2005, established [CA05.06.23] an initiative, “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land,” with three components—awareness building, accompaniment and advocacy—which seeks “peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land” (Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social statement *For Peace in God’s World* (1995), has committed to promote respect for human rights, especially for “groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women and children”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is in relationship with the six Lutheran congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, Israel operates two separate and unequal legal systems in the same territory. Military law has applied to Palestinians in the West Bank since 1967, when Israeli forces occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Jewish settlers, however, who reside within the bounds of the occupied West Bank, in violation of international law, are subject to the Israeli civilian legal framework; and

WHEREAS, Israel is the only country in the world that automatically and systematically prosecutes children in military courts that lack fundamental fair-trial rights and protections, detaining and prosecuting an estimated 500 to 700 Palestinian children in military courts each year; and

WHEREAS, Palestinian children detained in the Israeli military detention system commonly report being arrested in the middle of the night and typically arrive to interrogation bound, blindfolded, frightened and sleep-deprived, and often give confessions after verbal abuse, threats, physical and psychological violence that in some cases amounts to torture. Israeli military law provides no right to legal counsel during interrogation, and 96 percent of children have no parents present during interrogation; and

WHEREAS, Israel has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on October 3, 1991, which states in article 37(a), “No child shall be subject to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment”; and

WHEREAS, after 50 years of Israeli military occupation the situation for children living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) continues to deteriorate, making children increasingly vulnerable; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that the assembly call on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system, respect and ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law (specifically the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child), and call on the government of the United States to fully implement and enforce its own established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that the ELCA presiding bishop and the bishops and staff of every ELCA synod advocate with

elected officials, encouraging them to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds, including the over \$3 billion annual foreign aid to Israel, do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law, including but not limited to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, stress positions, hooding, death threats, coerced confessions, and denial of parents or legal counsel during interrogations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request that the Peace Not Walls strategy consider creating a resource enabling congregations to learn more about the lives of Palestinian children—especially the treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military courts, the Lutherans in the six congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and how Israel is spending U.S. foreign aid dollars; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that the assembly encourage ELCA members to contact their members of Congress in support of legislation that prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used in ways that violate human rights for Palestinian children, like H.R. 4391 (115th Congress), which requires the Secretary of State to certify that U.S. funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law.

4. Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2018]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in 2005, established [CA05.06.23] an initiative, “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land,” with three components—awareness building, accompaniment and advocacy—which seeks “peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land” (Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social statement *For Peace in God’s World* (1995), has committed to promote respect for human rights, especially for “groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women and children”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is in relationship with the six Lutheran congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, Israel operates two separate and unequal legal systems in the same territory. Military law has applied to Palestinians in the West Bank since 1967, when Israeli forces occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Jewish settlers, however, who reside within the bounds of the occupied West Bank, in violation of international law, are subject to the Israeli civilian legal framework; and

WHEREAS, the Israeli Defense Forces systematically prosecutes children in military courts which lack fundamental fair trial rights and protections, detaining and prosecuting an estimated 500 to 700 Palestinian children in military courts each year, and

WHEREAS, Palestinian children detained in the Israeli military detention system commonly report being arrested in the middle of the night and typically arrive to interrogation bound, blindfolded, frightened and sleep-deprived, and often give confessions after verbal abuse, threats, physical and psychological violence that in some cases amounts to torture. Israeli military law provides no right to legal counsel during interrogation, and 96 percent of children have no parents present during interrogation; and

WHEREAS, Israel has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on October 3, 1991, which states in article 37(a), “No child shall be subject to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment”; and

WHEREAS, after 50 years of Israeli military occupation, the situation for children living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (including the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip) continues to deteriorate, making children increasingly vulnerable; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA, to ask its members and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton to correspond with the U.S. President, the U.S. Department of State and members of Congress, asking them to urge the State of Israel to:

- 1) guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military system,
- 2) respect and ensure the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law, and
- 3) carry out its operations and procedures, from the moment of arrest, in accordance with international juvenile-justice standards, specifically the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, and urging the president, State Department and Congress to fully implement and enforce established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, by monitoring and tracking gross human rights violations committed by Israeli armed forces and police and ensuring that the U.S. military and financial assistance is provided to the government of Israel in accordance with existing U.S. law; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly urge its bishop and members of this synod to advocate with elected officials, encouraging them to:

- 1) ensure that the U.S. taxpayer funds, including the over \$3 billion annual foreign aid to Israel, do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international

law, including, but not limited to, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, stress positions, hooding, death threats, coerced confessions, and denial of parents or legal counsel during interrogations, and

2) support legislation that prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used in ways that violate human rights for Palestinian children, such as H.R. 4391 (115th Congress), which requires the Secretary of State to certify that U.S. funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly encourage its congregations to learn more about how Israel is spending U.S. foreign aid dollars to oppress the people of the Holy Land, especially Palestinian children, and about the treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention, using the website of the ELCA's partner, Defense for Children International Palestine, at <http://www.dci-palestine.org/>.

5. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [2019]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in 2005, established [CA05.06.23] an initiative, "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land," with three components—awareness building, accompaniment and advocacy — which seeks "peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land" (Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is in relationship with the six Lutheran congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, the (ELCA), in its social message on "Human Rights," adopted unanimously by the Church Council of the ELCA on November 12, 2017, affirms this church teaches that "human dignity is God's gift to every person and that the commitment to universal rights protects that dignity"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social message on "Human Rights," also affirms, "ELCA social teaching is clear: 'The God who justifies expects all people to do justice'; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social message on "Human Rights," further states, "Christians cannot be satisfied simply with responding to injustice that has already occurred. We also are called to take actions that prevent rights abuses from happening in the first place, whether by personal intervention in injustice or publicly addressing rights abuses. Support for legal protections and means of enforcement is also our responsibility"; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social statement *For Peace in God's World* (1995), has committed to promote respect for human rights, especially for "groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women and children"; and

WHEREAS, Israel operates two separate and unequal legal systems in the same territory. Military law has applied to Palestinians in the West Bank since 1967, when Israeli forces occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, while Jewish settlers, who reside within the bounds of the occupied West Bank, in violation of international law, are subject to the Israeli civilian legal framework (see U.S. Library of Congress control number: 2012382263); and

WHEREAS, per the UNICEF 2013 report on Children in Israeli Military Detention, Observations and Recommendations, Israel is the only country in the world, in violation of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, that automatically and systematically prosecutes children in military courts that lack fundamental fair-trial rights and protections, detaining and prosecuting an estimated 500 to 700 Palestinian children in military courts each year; and

WHEREAS, Palestinian children detained in the Israeli military detention system commonly report being arrested in the middle of the night and typically arrive to interrogation bound, blindfolded, frightened and sleep-deprived, and often give confessions after verbal abuse, threats, physical and psychological violence that in some cases amounts to torture, while Israeli military law provides no right to legal counsel during interrogation, and 95 percent of children in East Jerusalem having no parents present during interrogation; and

WHEREAS, Israel has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on October 3, 1991, which states in article 37(a), "No child shall be subject to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment"; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that, in the spirit of justice, the assembly call on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system, respect and ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law (specifically the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child), and call on the government of the United States to fully implement and enforce its own established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that the ELCA presiding bishop and the bishops and staff of every ELCA synod advocate with elected officials, encouraging them to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds, including the over \$3 billion annual foreign aid to Israel, do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, to request that the "Peace Not Walls" strategy consider creating a resource enabling congregations to learn more about the lives of Palestinian children—especially those living in occupied territories; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, requesting that the assembly encourage ELCA members to contact their members of Congress in support of legislation that

prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used in ways that violate human rights for Palestinian children; and to contact the president of the United States to request reinstatement of financial support to the Palestinian Authority, to be distributed to Augusta Victoria Hospital and other West Bank Hospitals providing critical health care to Palestinian children and their families.

6. South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K) [2019]

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in its social message on “Human Rights,” adopted unanimously by the Church Council of the ELCA on November 12, 2017, affirms that this church teaches that “human dignity is God’s gift to every person and that the commitment to universal rights protects that dignity.” Further, the council, in its adoption of this message, “gives renewed attention to addressing human rights as a church. It also believes the time is right for more Christians to enter the public conversation and take action to safeguard the dignity due to all children of God”; and

WHEREAS through the “Peace Not Walls” campaign, this church pledges accompaniment with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), whose Bishop, Ibrahim Azar, [in an interview](#) shortly after his installation, stated, “The church is concerned with the daily life of the people, their dreams and everyday struggles. . . . And what do the people need? They need security, hope and to be reassured that they are worthy of fundamental human rights”; and

WHEREAS the State of Israel operates two separate and unequal legal systems in the occupied territories—Israeli civilian law for Israeli citizens and military law for Palestinians, including children, and an increasing majority of children detained by the military [testify to abuse while in detention](#), a violation of human rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which both the United States and Israel have ratified; and

WHEREAS the United States gives \$3.8 billion in aid to Israel each year while the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act states “No assistance shall be furnished under this Act or the Arms Export Control Act to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the secretary of state has credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin Assembly memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage this church’s members, congregations, synods, agencies and the presiding bishop to call on their U.S. representatives, senators, the U.S. president and the U.S. Department of State to: urge the State of Israel to comply with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly in regard to Palestinian children, by guaranteeing basic due process and juvenile justice rights and by ensuring the prohibition of torture and abuse; and to fully implement and enforce the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act by monitoring Israeli military actions for human rights violations, especially in regard to Palestinian children; and by enacting into law a requirement that the secretary of state certify that United States foreign aid does not support human rights violations, including military detention, abuse or other treatment of Palestinian children that violates international human rights standards.

7. Southeast Michigan Synod (6A) [2019]

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request Presiding Bishop Eaton, on behalf of the assembly, to urge the U.S. president, secretary of state and Congress to call on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law; and ensure that operations are carried out in accordance with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request Presiding Bishop Eaton, on behalf of the Assembly, contact the appropriate U.S. governmental officials, encouraging them to fully enforce U.S. law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, to ensure that United States taxpayer funds do not support ill-treatment of Palestinian children; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request Presiding Bishop Eaton, synod bishops and ELCA members contact their members of Congress to support legislation that specifically prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used to violate the rights of Palestinian children and requires the secretary of state to certify that United States funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law.

8. New England Synod (7B) [2019]

WHEREAS, the ELCA has a long history of engagement with the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. In 2005, we established the initiative “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land” that seeks “peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land.” And

WHEREAS, the primary outcomes of the “Peace Not Walls” campaign are accompaniment, advocacy, and awareness raising about the context and situation of Palestinians. And

WHEREAS, the New England Synod has a companion relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), which has six Palestinian Lutheran congregations and four K-13 schools serving the youth of their communities regardless of gender, race, religion, or ability to pay. And

WHEREAS, one of the many concerns related to the ongoing struggle between the government of Israel and the Palestinians under occupation in Gaza and the West Bank has been the treatment of children held in detention by the Israeli Defense Forces. Israel operates two separate legal systems in the same territory—civilian courts for Israeli settlers and separate military courts for Palestinians that lack internationally accepted fair-trial rights and protections. After 52 years of Israeli military occupation the situation for children living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) continues to deteriorate, making children increasingly vulnerable. Each year Palestinian children are detained and prosecuted in military courts. And

WHEREAS, in December 2017, the ELCA Peace Not Walls initiative issued an Action Alert supporting the bill HR 4391, Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act, by Rep. Betty McCollum, and asking for its passage. This bill was never considered by the House in that session but similar legislation is anticipated in 2019; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to direct Presiding Bishop Eaton on behalf of the ELCA in assembly to express concern to the president, secretary of state and applicable legislators about the treatment of Palestinian children detained and prosecuted in military courts; about their basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; and about the violation here of both the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act that seeks to ensure United States taxpayer funds do not support such violations of human rights, as well as the clear violation of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to urge ELCA members to advocate for the rights of children under occupation by contacting their members of Congress to support legislation that specifically prohibits U.S. foreign aid from being used to violate the rights of Palestinian children, and requires the Secretary of State to certify that United States funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of Palestinian children in violation of international law.

9. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2018]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in its social message on “Human Rights,” adopted unanimously by the Church Council of the ELCA on November 12, 2017, affirms this church teaches that “human dignity is God’s gift to every person and that the commitment to universal rights protects that dignity.” Further the council “gives renewed attention to addressing human rights as a church. It also believes the time is right for more Christians to enter public conversation and take action to safeguard the dignity due to all children of God”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social message on “Human Rights,” also affirms, “ELCA social teaching is clear: ‘The God who justifies expects all people to do justice’”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social message on “Human Rights,” further states, “The ELCA affirms the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as ‘a common universal standard of justice for living with our differences, and they give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community’”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social message on “Human Rights,” further states, “Christians cannot be satisfied simply with responding to injustice that has already occurred. We also are called to take actions that prevent rights abuses from happening in the first place, whether by personal intervention in injustice or publicly addressing rights abuses. Support for legal protections and means of enforcement is also our responsibility”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in 2005, established [CA05.06.23] an initiative, “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land,” with three components—awareness building, accompaniment and advocacy—which seeks “peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land” (Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA, in its social statement *For Peace in God’s World* (1995), has committed to promote respect for human rights, especially for “groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women and children”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA is in relationship with the six Lutheran congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land; and

WHEREAS, Israel operates two separate and unequal legal systems in the same territory. Military law has applied to Palestinians in the West Bank since 1967, when Israeli forces occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Jewish settlers, however, who reside within the bounds of the occupied West Bank, in violation of international law, are subject to the Israeli civilian legal framework; and

WHEREAS, Israel is the only country in the world that automatically and systematically prosecutes children in military courts that lack fundamental fair-trial rights and protections, detaining and prosecuting an estimated 500 to 700 Palestinian children in military courts each year; and

WHEREAS, Palestinian children detained in the Israeli military detention system commonly report being arrested in the middle of the night and typically arrive to interrogation bound, blindfolded, frightened and sleep-deprived, and often give confessions after verbal abuse, threats, physical and psychological violence that in some cases amounts to torture, while Israeli military law provides no right to legal counsel during interrogation, and 95 percent of children in East Jerusalem having no parents present during interrogation; and

WHEREAS, Israel has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on October 3, 1991, which states in article 37(a), “No child shall be subject to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that, in the spirit of justice, the assembly call on the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system, respect and ensure the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law (specifically the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child), and call on the government of the United States to fully implement and enforce its own established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that the ELCA presiding bishop and the bishops and staff of every ELCA synod advocate with elected officials, encouraging them to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds, including the over \$3 billion annual foreign aid to Israel, do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, to request that the Peace Not Walls strategy consider creating a resource enabling congregations to learn more about the lives of Palestinian children—especially those living in occupied territories; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that the assembly encourage ELCA members to contact their members of Congress in support of legislation that prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used in ways that violate human rights for Palestinian children.

Background

In the Israeli-controlled occupied Palestinian territories (East Jerusalem and the West Bank), Israeli security forces utilize a military detention system to address alleged violations of the military law it has imposed. Nearly half of the Palestinian population in the West Bank is under the age of 18, but no distinction is made in how children are treated despite Israel being a state party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[Human Rights Watch](#) and [B'Tselem](#) have documented evidence of how children are treated; for example, being hand-tied, blindfolded, removed from their homes in the middle of the night, abused verbally, intimidated and/or forced to sign statements in Hebrew (of which few have knowledge), etc. Further background information was provided in several of the memorials.

These memorials further the ministry of the ELCA by being another tool to implement *Future Directions 2025* and supporting the teachings of several ELCA's social statements and messages. They embrace goal four of *Future Directions 2025*: "A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world."

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Northwest Washington, Rocky Mountain, Metropolitan Chicago, Southeastern Iowa, Western Iowa, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Southeast Michigan, New England, and Delaware-Maryland synods concerning protecting the human rights of Palestinian children;

To urge ELCA members and the presiding bishop to correspond with the U.S. president, the U.S. Department of State and members of Congress, asking them to:

- a) **urge the State of Israel to guarantee basic due process rights in the Israeli military court system; respect the absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international law; and carry out its operations and procedures, from the moment of arrest, in accordance with international juvenile justice standards; and**
- b) **fully implement and enforce established law, including the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, by monitoring and tracking gross human rights violations committed by Israeli armed forces and police and ensuring that the U.S. military and financial assistance is provided to the government of Israel in accordance with internationally recognized human rights standards;**

To request that the "Peace Not Walls" campaign create a resource enabling congregations to learn more about the lives of Palestinian children and how Israel is spending U.S. military assistance to detain Palestinian children; and

To urge the presiding bishop and the bishops and staff of every ELCA synod to advocate with federal elected officials, encouraging them to:

- a) **ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds not support military detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children, and**
- b) **support legislation, such as [H.R. 2407](#) (116th Congress), that prohibits U.S. foreign aid to be used in ways that violate human rights for Palestinian children.**

Category B3: Augusta Victoria Hospital

1. Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2019]

WHEREAS, followers of Christ are called by God in their baptismal covenant to work for justice and peace on the earth; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 ELCA Advocacy Policy Priorities includes a commitment to “work to build broad support for international development and humanitarian aid in Congress. Specifically, we will:

- Advocate to bolster funding levels to international poverty-focused programs as appropriate in the International Affairs budget;
- Oppose efforts by Administration or Congress to cut funds to these programs...⁸; and

WHEREAS, the United States government has historically provided direct aid to the Palestinian Authority, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other agents; and

WHEREAS, this aid was severely cut in 2018,⁹ and as a result of the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act legislation enacted in 2018,¹⁰ which amends that Anti-Terrorism Act.¹¹ The Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act as written may result in no aid being provided to the Palestinian people by the United States in the future and have a devastating effect on life-saving services affecting over 5 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank; and

WHEREAS, one of the institutions directly affected by the cuts is Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), a program of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which is a center of medical excellence in East Jerusalem, providing specialty care for all Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza that is not available in other hospitals; and

WHEREAS, for several years AVH and other East Jerusalem hospitals have been facing cash-flow problems because the Palestinian Authority has not been able to pay the bills of the patients which it refers to these hospitals, with total debt for the six hospitals at \$80 million as of March 1, 2019, with AVH debt of \$35 million;¹² and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2017, \$25 million in U.S. funding was appropriated by Congress for the hospitals but later repurposed by the Administration and therefore permanently lost to the hospital; and

WHEREAS, future funding is now in doubt because of restrictions placed on aid by the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly encourages ministers of Word and Service and ministers of Word and Sacrament to learn more about these issues; and to encourage congregation members to learn more and to engage in advocacy to request the president of the United States and all applicable legislators to amend the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 to remove legislative barriers to future funding of U.S. humanitarian assistance to West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem;

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and synodical bishops, to request the president of the United States and all applicable legislators to restore the fiscal year 2018 funding to the East Jerusalem Hospitals, and continue funding at 2018 levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved;

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and synodical bishops, to request the president of the United States and all applicable legislators to amend the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 to remove legislative barriers to future funding of U.S. humanitarian assistance to West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

2. Southeastern Iowa Synod (5D) [2019]

WHEREAS, followers of Christ are called by God in their baptismal covenant to work for justice and peace on the earth; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Advocacy Policy Priorities includes a commitment to “... work to build broad support for international development and humanitarian aid in Congress. Specifically, we will:

- Advocate to bolster funding levels to international poverty-focused programs as appropriate in the International Affairs budget;
- Oppose efforts by Administration or Congress to cut funds to these programs...¹³; and

WHEREAS, The United States government has historically provided direct aid to the Palestinian Authority, through grants to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other agents; and

⁸ <https://blogs.elca.org/advocacy/2019-elca-advocacy-policy-priorities/>, accessed 3/21/3029

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/14/world/middleeast/us-aid-palestinian-civilians.html>, accessed 3/21/2019;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/24/us/politics/trump-palestinians-aid-cut.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article®ion=Footer>, accessed 3/21/2019

¹⁰ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2946/text>, accessed 3/22/2019

¹¹ <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/2333>, accessed 3/22/2019.

¹² Questions and Answers, Augusta Victoria Hospital and the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network”, by Jerusalem Program, LWF World Service, March 15, 2019.

¹³ <https://blogs.elca.org/advocacy/2019-elca-advocacy-policy-priorities/>, accessed 3/21/3029

WHEREAS, U.S. financial support to UNRWA for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, was reduced in January of 2018, creating a fiscal crisis for the agency, and stopped altogether in fall of 2018;¹⁴ and

WHEREAS, the impact of these cuts will threaten “general education for 525,000 students, essential primary health care for 3 million patients and food assistance for 1.7 million refugees,”¹⁵ therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly encourages ministers of Word and Service and ministers of Word and Sacrament to learn more about these issues; and to encourage congregation members to learn more and to engage in advocacy to request the president of the United States and all applicable legislators to restore funding at 2017 levels or higher for fiscal year 2018 and beyond to the UNRWA for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved;

RESOLVED that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and synodical bishops, to request the president of the United States and all applicable legislators to restore funding at 2017 levels or higher for fiscal year 2018 and beyond to the UNRWA for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved.

3. Southeast Michigan Synod (6A) [2019]

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, member synods, and congregations to petition the president and all applicable legislators to restore funding to the East Jerusalem Hospitals in FY2018 and beyond and restore lost funds from FY2017, and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, member synods, and congregations to petition the president and all applicable legislators to restore funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in FY2018, and beyond, restoring lost funds from FY 2017, and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to request Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, member Synods, and Congregations to petition the President and all applicable Legislators to amend or repeal the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 in order to remove legislative barriers to future funding of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Authority.

4. New England Synod (7B) [2019]

WHEREAS, the ELCA has a long history of engagement with the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. In 2005, we established the initiative “Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land” that seeks “peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis and the continuation of the Christian witness in the Holy Land.” And

WHEREAS, the primary outcomes of the PNW campaign are accompaniment, advocacy, and awareness raising about the context and situation of Palestinians. And

WHEREAS, the Lutheran World Federation has operated the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) since 1950, providing a center of medical excellence in East Jerusalem that serves all Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. AVH has the following care centers and departments: Cancer Care Center, Hematology and Bone Marrow Transplantation Center, Kidney Care Center, Surgery and Ear, Nose and Throat Care Center, Community Care Department, Specialized Center for Child Care, Skilled Nursing and Long-Term Care Facility, Laboratory Medicine Department, and the Diagnostic Radiology Department. In 2018, AVH had 20,918 inpatient admissions, 21,064 dialysis sessions, 17,590 chemotherapy sessions, and 24,570 radiation sessions. And

WHEREAS, in 2017 the Lutheran World Federation in Assembly adopted a resolution to express “appreciation for the life-saving work of the Lutheran World Federation’s ministries, including the Augusta Victoria Hospital and calls upon the member churches, governments and intergovernmental bodies to continue to support these ministries in their humanitarian service to the Palestinian people.” And

WHEREAS, the United States Government has historically provided financial aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA), primarily through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). However, aid to both agencies was severely cut in 2018 by direct action of the U.S. Administration and as a result of legislation enacted in 2018. These actions could result in no aid being provided to the

¹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/31/world/middleeast/trump-administration-aid-palestinian-refugees-.html?module=inline>, accessed 3/21/2019

¹⁵ <https://www.un.org/unispa/document/unrwa-faces-greatest-financial-crisis-in-its-history-following-2018-funding-cuts-commissioner%E2%80%91general-tells-fourth-committee-press-release/>, accessed 3/22/2019.

Palestinians in any form from the United States in the future. This could have a devastating effect on life-saving services for over five million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. And

WHEREAS, for several years, AVH and other East Jerusalem hospitals have been facing cash-flow problems because the PA has been unable to pay the bills of the patients whom it refers to these hospitals. In December 2018, the total debt for AVH alone was \$38M. Foreign aid from the U.S., the European Union and others have contributed financially to the PA to help them pay the bills and avoid a mounting financial crisis, even collapse, of the hospitals. In FY2017, \$25M in U.S. funding was appropriated for the hospitals but not sent, because in September 2018, the Administration reprogrammed that funding along with another \$200M for bilateral aid to the PA. Funding for FY2018 and FY2019 is in doubt, due to stated Administration policy and the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 (ATCA), which makes any bilateral or economic aid illegal. And

WHEREAS, compounding the cuts to direct aid are similar cuts to UNRWA. U.S. funding to UNRWA in FY2018 was only \$65M, contrasted with \$359.3M in FY2017. The U.S. decision to end contributions could greatly affect UNRWA, which provides education, health care, and other forms of humanitarian assistance for about 5.4 million Palestinian refugees throughout the Middle East. The U.S. has been a major contributor to UNRWA since its establishment shortly after the 1948 Arab/Israeli War. U.S. funding provided approximately one-third of UNRWA's annual budget in 2017. And

WHEREAS, the ELCA "Peace Not Walls" initiative issued an Action Alert in January 2018 communicating to the members of the ELCA these drastic funding cuts and urging them to contact the Administration and their applicable legislators to advocate to restore funding for the hospitals; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and to likewise urge ELCA members, to request the president and their appropriate legislators to expend before the end of fiscal year 2019 all the bilateral assistance to the West Bank and Gaza that Congress appropriated for such assistance in fiscal year 2018, including funding for the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network, and to continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved. And be it further

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and likewise to urge ELCA members, to request the president and all applicable legislators to restore funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in FY2018, and to continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and likewise to urge ELCA members, to request the president and all applicable legislators to amend the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 to remove legislative barriers to future funding of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Authority so that regular payments can be made to the hospitals.

5. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2019]

Whereas, the Lutheran World Federation has operated the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) since 1950 and is a center of medical excellence in East Jerusalem, serving all Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza; and

Whereas, in 2017 the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in assembly adopted a resolution to express "appreciation for the life-saving work of the Lutheran World Federation's ministries, including the Augusta Victoria Hospital and calls upon the LWF member churches, governments and intergovernmental bodies to continue to support these ministries in their humanitarian service to the Palestinian people"; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the presiding bishop, and urge ELCA members, to request the president of the United States and appropriate legislators to expend before the end of fiscal year 2019 all bilateral assistance to the West Bank and Gaza that Congress appropriated for such assistance in fiscal year 2018, including funding for the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network, and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved; and be it further

Resolved, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct the presiding bishop, and urge ELCA members, to advocate to request the president and all applicable legislators to restore funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved.

Background

Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), is [a center of medical excellence](#) in East Jerusalem, serving the five million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. As one of the six hospitals in the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network, AVH offers specialized care not available in other hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza, including radiation therapy for cancer patients and pediatric hemodialysis.

AVH receives patients from the West Bank and Gaza referred by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Approximately 30% of the cancer patients treated at AVH are from Gaza. AVH, located on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, is accredited by the Joint Commission International for its outstanding quality and is also fully licensed by the Israeli Ministry of Health. AVH is supported by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and several other member churches of the LWF around the globe.

In the last decade the U.S. government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), invested nearly \$10 million in AVH to bolster its capacity as a cancer center. In addition, the U.S. government provided, over several years, tens of millions of dollars in aid to help cover the costs of the cancer patients and others referred to AVH and the other East Jerusalem hospitals by the Palestinian Authority.

For several years, AVH and other East Jerusalem hospitals have been facing cash-flow problems because of the inability of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to pay on a regular basis the bills of the patients it refers to these hospitals. From 2017 onward, the PA introduced regular monthly payments, but there is still a considerable debt to AVH and the other East Jerusalem hospitals related to the patient referrals. As of April 2019, the total debt owed to the six hospitals amounted to approximately USD 85 million and for AVH alone the PA debt was over USD 38 million. The accumulated PA debt makes it increasingly difficult to pay pharmaceutical suppliers for cancer medications, pay staff and avoid further interruption in the treatment of patients.

AVH and the five other East Jerusalem hospitals rely on funding each year from the U.S. and the European Union (EU) to cover approximately half of the costs of patients referred to these hospitals by the Palestinian Authority. The U.S. Congress approved USD 25 million for the financial years 2017 and 2018 to be paid to the PA to help cover the bills of the West Bank and Gaza patients that are treated in the East Jerusalem hospitals.

In 2018, the Administration cut the FY 2017 funding to the East Jerusalem hospitals, making it all the more urgent in the short-term to encourage the Administration to release the FY 2018 funding. Further background information can be found [here](#). In fall 2018, the ELCA Conference of Bishops issued a [statement](#) of concern. Subsequently, and on the basis of their shared concern for the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and Bishop Bill Gafkjen (chair, ELCA Conference of Bishops) were joined by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry of The Episcopal Church, and Bishop Joseph Bambera and Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in a similar [statement](#).

As noted by the [Congressional Research Service](#), “the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 became law on October 3, 2018. Congress passed the law in the wake of a U.S. federal court case dealing with past acts of terrorism by Palestinians.... The law amended the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) (at 18 U.S.C. 2334) by stating that a defendant consents to personal jurisdiction in U.S. federal court for lawsuits related to international terrorism if the defendant accepts certain types of U.S. foreign aid after the law has been in effect for 120 days. In December, Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah wrote to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that the PA would not accept aid that subjected it to federal court jurisdiction. Consequently, U.S. bilateral aid to the Palestinians ended on January 31, 2019.”

Since U.S. funding for AVH would normally pass through the PA as noted above, the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act is a further impediment to the restoration of U.S. funding of the East Jerusalem hospitals.

In late August 2018, the Administration eliminated all funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the U.S. having been the agency’s largest donor since its inception in 1949. The Administration said that the U.S. is “no longer willing to shoulder the very disproportionate share of the burden of UNRWA’s costs that we had assumed for many years” and that “the fundamental business model and fiscal practices that have marked UNRWA for years—tied to UNRWA’s endlessly and exponentially expanding community of entitled beneficiaries—is simply unsustainable.” Also, according to the Congressional Research Service, in response “UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl said that the responsibility for the protracted nature of the refugee issue ‘lies squarely with the parties and in the international community’s lack of will or utter inability to bring about a negotiated and peaceful resolution of the conflict,’ and that attempting to hold UNRWA responsible is ‘disingenuous at best.’” Further details are available [here](#).

These memorials further the ministry of the ELCA by being another tool to implement *Future Directions 2025* and supporting the teachings of several ELCA’s social statements and messages. They embrace goal four of *Future Directions 2025*: “A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.”

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Southeastern Iowa, Southeast Michigan, New England, and Lower Susquehanna synods concerning Augusta Victoria Hospital;

To request the presiding bishop, ELCA synods, and congregations to petition the U.S. president and all relevant legislators to release FY2018 funding intended by Congress to support the East Jerusalem hospitals in FY2018, and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved;

To request the presiding bishop, ELCA synods, and congregations to petition the U.S. president and all applicable legislators to restore FY 2018 funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and beyond, and continue funding at previous levels until the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is resolved; and

To request the presiding bishop, ELCA synods, and congregations to petition the U.S. president and all relevant legislators to amend the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 in order to remove legislative barriers to future funding of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Authority.

Category B4: Engagement in the Holy Land

1. Southwestern Texas Synod (4E) [2019]

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is committed to continuing its awareness-building, accompaniment, and advocacy on behalf of a peaceful and just resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine and on behalf of ending the occupation; and

Whereas, the ELCA in its three expressions continues to pray for and accompany the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (“ELCJHL”); and

Whereas, the ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment” states, “...we are called to love and be loved by those who are not like us, whom we might have to work quite hard to understand, or who may not understand us at all. God’s reconciliation is across borders and boundaries”;¹⁶ and

Whereas, the ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment” further states “God calls us to include everyone in the mission of reconciliation...In accompanying one another, we look to see who is excluded, and why, and commit to change community structures and habits that can exclude people without any deliberate intention.”¹⁷ Therefore, accompaniment of companion churches should not mean excluding people outside of the church; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Southwestern Texas Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to encourage this church’s members, congregations, synods, and churchwide office, including the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to expand relationships and dialogue beyond accompaniment with companion churches to engagement with those nonchurch groups and individuals in the Holy Land whose perspective may not yet be understood, including mainstream Jewish Israelis and Muslims, “to undo the boundary of strangeness or suspicion between us”¹⁸ while at the same time continuing to affirm the ELCA’s unique relationship with and accompaniment of Palestinian Christians and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).

2. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2019]

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is committed to continuing its awareness-building, accompaniment, and advocacy on behalf of a peaceful and just resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine and on behalf of ending the occupation; and

Whereas, the ELCA in its three expressions continues to pray for and accompany the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL); and

Whereas, the ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment” states “...we are called to love and be loved by those who are not like us, whom we might have to work quite hard to understand, or who may not understand us at all. God’s reconciliation is across borders and boundaries”;¹⁹ and

Whereas, the ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment” further states “God calls us to include everyone in the mission of reconciliation...In accompanying one another, we look to see who is excluded, and why, and commit to change community structures and habits that can exclude people without any deliberate intention.”²⁰ Therefore, accompaniment of companion churches should not mean excluding people outside of the church; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to encourage this church’s members, congregations, synods, and churchwide office, including the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to expand relationships and dialogue beyond accompaniment with companion churches to engagement with those nonchurch groups and individuals in the Holy Land whose perspective may not yet be understood, including mainstream Jewish Israelis, “to undo the boundary of strangeness or suspicion between us”²¹

¹⁶ ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment”, p. 5.

¹⁷ ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment”, p. 7.

¹⁸ ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment”, p. 7.

¹⁹ ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment”, p. 5.

²⁰ ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment”, p. 7.

²¹ ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment”, p. 7.

while at the same time continuing to affirm the ELCA’s unique relationship with and accompaniment of Palestinian Christians and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).

3. Upper Susquehanna Synod (8E) [2019]

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is committed to continuing its awareness-building, accompaniment, and advocacy on behalf of a peaceful and just resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine and on behalf of ending the occupation; and

Whereas, the ELCA in its three expressions continues to pray for and accompany the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (“ELCJHL”); and

Whereas, the ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment” states, “...we are called to love and be loved by those who are not like us, whom we might have to work quite hard to understand, or who may not understand us at all. God’s reconciliation is across borders and boundaries”;²² and

Whereas, the ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment” further states “God calls us to include everyone in the mission of reconciliation...In accompanying one another, we look to see who is excluded, and why, and commit to change community structures and habits that can exclude people without any deliberate intention.”²³Therefore, accompaniment of companion churches should not mean excluding people outside of the church; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Upper Susquehanna Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to encourage this church’s members, congregations, synods, and churchwide office, including the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to expand relationships and dialogue beyond accompaniment with companion churches to engagement with those nonchurch groups and individuals in the Holy Land whose perspective may not yet be understood, including, *but not limited to*, mainstream Jewish Israelis and Muslims, “to undo the boundary of strangeness or suspicion between us”²⁴ while at the same time continuing to affirm the ELCA’s unique relationship with and accompaniment of Palestinian Christians and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).

4. West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H) [2019]

WHEREAS, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is committed to continuing its awareness-building, accompaniment, and advocacy on behalf of a peaceful and just resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine and on behalf of ending the occupation; and

WHEREAS, The ELCA in its three expressions continues to pray for and accompany the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (“ELCJHL”); and

WHEREAS, The ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment” states, “...we are called to love and be loved by those who are not like us, whom we might have to work quite hard to understand, or who may not understand us at all. God’s reconciliation is across borders and boundaries”; and

WHEREAS, The ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment” further states, “God calls us to include everyone in the mission of reconciliation...In accompanying one another, we look to see who is excluded, and why, and commit to change community structures and habits that can exclude people without any deliberate intention.” As a result, accompaniment of companion churches should not mean otherwise excluding people outside of the church; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, that the West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to encourage this church’s members, congregations, synods, churchwide office including the Office of the Presiding Bishop to expand relationships and dialogue beyond accompaniment with companion churches to engagement with those nonchurch groups and individuals in the Holy Land, whose perspective we may not yet understand, including mainstream Jewish Israelis “to undo the boundary of strangeness or suspicion between us” while at the same time continuing to affirm the unique relationship with and accompaniment of Palestinian Christians and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).

Background

The ELCA’s 2005 [Churchwide Strategy](#) for Engagement in Israel and Palestine includes, in its section on awareness building, a call “to listen to the voices of Palestinians and Israelis through visits to the region in coordination with local partners.”

It is important to recall some additional excerpts from the strategy relevant to the memorials under discussion.

²² ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment”, p. 5.

²³ ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment”, p. 7.

²⁴ ELCA’s 2013 Glocal Mission Gathering document “Accompaniment”, p. 7.

Activities concerning building awareness and relationships will be “undertaken in close collaboration and cooperation with other churches and ecumenical and interfaith partners who share a similar commitment to peace in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

“The ELCA also has called upon its members to accompany Palestinians and Israelis in nonviolent efforts to end the occupation.”

The strategy’s “assumptions [that] undergird the ELCA’s commitment to intensify its work for peace with justice in Israel and Palestine” include:

“The relationship of the ELCA with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land is a primary relationship that will shape the ELCA effort, in tandem with ministries of the Lutheran World Federation, ecumenical partners, and the work of Jews and Israelis who share the goal of peace with justice.”

This is reinforced by commitment six in the recommended proposed “A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment,” which reads: “The ELCA will explore and encourage inter-religious friendship, accompaniment, and partnership with all who seek justice, peace, human wholeness, and the well-being of creation [ELCA Constitution, Chapter 4.03.f].”

Also, from the strategy:

“Balance. Effective ELCA action will be balanced in terms of its care for all parties in the conflict, but must address forthrightly imbalances of power as they play out in the lives of people in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.”

Among the foreseen Interfaith Outcomes, one is: “Increased cooperation and collaboration between the ELCA and Jewish groups in the U.S.—and with groups within Israel—that seek peace with justice in Israel and Palestine.”

The “Peace Not Walls” campaign staff have been carrying these (as well as other) aspects of the churchwide strategy as, in the context of accompaniment, it engages with persons who hold a range of perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is particularly true as staff suggest possible appointments for groups visiting the Holy Land.

In addition, when senior ELCA leadership visit the Holy Land, together with ELCJHL leaders, they meet with staff in the Israeli Foreign Ministry and with local rabbis. They also meet with Israelis who share the goal of peace with justice as noted above. Schedule constraints often do not allow for additional meetings with other Israelis. Church leaders have also met with representatives of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel who have participated in the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land.

The ELCA also participates in a national Christian-Jewish dialogue where information about the views of both American Jews and Israeli Jews (as well as those of others) about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are exchanged.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from Lower Susquehanna, West Virginia-Western Maryland and Southwestern Texas synods concerning engagement in the Holy Land; and

To reaffirm that the ELCA, in its various expressions, continue to listen to the voices of persons holding various perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Section C

Social teaching policy documents

Category C1: Church and State

1. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2019]

WHEREAS, the Lutheran tradition historically has been strongly supportive of the need for, and functions of, government; and

WHEREAS, the increasingly bitter politics of the past decade have generated much skepticism about, and hostility towards, the role of government in a free society—even calling into question the basic legitimacy of government; and

WHEREAS, the members of the ELCA could benefit from thoughtful exploration of the many issues concerned with the functions of government and civic engagement; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statements address the great social institutions of contemporary life, but have not yet addressed the nature and role of government, the call to civic engagement, or the relation of church to state in any churchwide document; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has significant resources to draw upon, including the statements of predecessor Lutheran bodies, recent publications, and members involved with government at all levels and from many perspectives; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to initiate the development of a social statement on the role of government, the nature of civic engagement, and the relationship of church and state.

Background

There is little question that the nature and role of government and civic engagement in the United States, once largely assumed, has become a contentious debate. The issues are many. A few examples include serious skepticism about government, the extent of political incivility, and the role of government regulation. Many thinkers suggest there is a crisis concerning the very nature of citizenship, democratic assembly and association. There also are sharp disagreements concerning the scope and meaning of the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof (First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution).

This memorial asks for the development of a social statement to address these social concerns. Social statements bring scripture and theology into dialogue with social analysis regarding broad social questions or the most controversial social topics. They are the means to address comprehensively the great social institutions of contemporary life such as systems of health care, sexuality, education and criminal justice. They are intended to provide theological and social frameworks that serve the ELCA as a public church and for moral discernment. The process is designed for and committed to finding shared convictions of this church through a lively conversation that takes into account difference and diversities of perspectives. <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Addressing-Social-Concerns>.

There are three questions involved in a request for a social statement: 1) Is a social statement the most appropriate vehicle necessary to address the concerns? 2) What precisely would be the costs involved? and 3) What is the capacity of this church at this time?

This memorial does not include an impact assessment, but a typical social statement involves a five-year process at approximately \$300,000 (program costs plus the hiring of a part-time contract staff). The amount of churchwide organization staff time dedicated to a specific process is difficult to determine in advance but involves a significant portion of the work of the director for Theological Ethics and a program coordinator. (This program coordinator simultaneously supports two other directors doing different work.)

The question of capacity involves not only budget and staff time but the commitments of this church to develop its social teaching and policy through broad participation from across this church. Budget dollars provide for a diverse task force and for three key participation points via listening events, feedback sessions on a study and hearings for a draft. The process also involves regular review and input from the Conference of Bishops and Church Council. Generally speaking, the ELCA has the capacity to develop one social statement at a time. It should be noted that at least four memorials to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly ask for authorization of a social statement.

Would a social statement on government be the appropriate means to add the issue? Several criteria indicate it would. It would address a broad and essential social institution of contemporary society on which there are multiple and urgent debates. There are central Lutheran theological understandings at stake, and it would help to develop significantly this church's social teaching. ELCA leaders in advocacy and justice ministries as well as some bishops and other church leaders have spoken to the vital need in terms of this church's social witness. Issues from immigration to economic policy to ecumenical collaboration on church-and-state issues depend on answers to the questions entailed.

The ELCA has not addressed concerns around government, civic engagement or church and state in a comprehensive manner. The statement *Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* or the social message “Human Rights” speak to elements, but the bulk of contemporary questions have not been discerned in ELCA social teaching. The Scriptures and Lutheran confessional material as well as Lutheran theological reflection provide tenets but do not offer sufficient guidance for contemporary questions or policy. There are significant resources to draw upon, including the statements of historical predecessor Lutheran bodies, recent publications and the expertise of members involved with government at all levels and from many perspectives.

This memorial furthers the ministry of the ELCA by providing for a social statement that supports *Future Directions 2025*, goal four: “A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.” Its development would aid significantly the ELCA as a public church and contribute a Lutheran perspective to the public square at a time of extended public debate about government.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Minneapolis Area Synod requesting a social statement on the role of government, the nature of civic engagement, and the relationship of church and state; and

To authorize the development of an ELCA social statement on government, civic engagement and the relationship of church and state in accordance with the “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018).

Category C2: Income Inequality

1. Rocky Mountain Synod (2E) [2018]

WHEREAS, recent advances in technology have resulted in a growing disparity of wealth that affects not only the poor but the middle class and establishes a barrier to the opportunity of upward mobility; and

WHEREAS, this church’s advocacy for government officials to consider theological and ethical guidance regarding public policy in the areas of education, employment, health and taxation (e.g., individual and corporate deductions) can be used to address and ameliorate the potential of widespread income loss and displacement of blue- and white-collar workers; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Rocky Mountain Synod meeting in assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to establish a churchwide study and social statement that:

- applies Luther’s teachings regarding the dignity, importance and role of work/vocation;
- considers public policy as applied to work/vocation in a transformative time;
- examines how income inequality affects urban, suburban and rural communities using a modern lens; and
- articulates theology-based legislative and public policy recommendations designed for the digital age.

Background

The social changes brought by the advance of technology, specifically digital advances, are widely acknowledged as the source of massive transitions in nearly every aspect of life within the U.S. and, indeed, across the globe. “Technology” certainly plays a role in growing income inequality, but the precise impact is a matter of significant political and economic debate, even while very personal for many communities and individuals.

The dramatic and increasing income and wealth disparity in the U.S. is clear. Between 1980 and 2014, the Congressional Budget Office estimates, after-tax incomes for the bottom 20% of earners grew about 69%. Meanwhile, over the same 34 years, the income among the top 1% increased 228%. This shift comes despite substantial volatility through the dot-com boom and bust of the 1990s and the Great Recession (see Chad Stone, Danilo Trisi, Arloc Sherman and Roderick Taylor, “[A Guide to Statistics on Historical Trends in Income Inequality](#),” *Center for Budget and Policy Priorities*, Aug. 29, 2018). It remains nonetheless an open question regarding the extent to which the growing disparity depends on the impact of digital advances.

This memorial lifts up these matters and requests the authorization of a social statement process that draws on Lutheran resources to probe and address them. On occasion, these concerns have been the subject of theological reflection among ELCA thinkers and have appeared within the ELCA’s broader work as a community of moral discernment. (See the April and June 2019 issues of the [Journal of Lutheran Ethics](#).) ELCA World Hunger offers educational materials about the income inequality in the United States that underlies widespread food insecurity. ELCA federal advocacy also confronts income inequality in supporting legislation to raise the federal minimum wage and to protect the rights of workers. ELCA state public policy offices in recent years have worked on and made gains in improved income-equality policy including expanding Medicaid, stopping wage theft and instituting a paid sick and safe leave law.

It is true that existing ELCA teaching and policy do not specifically examine or address topics regarding the digital age, growing income inequality or the effects on various communities. Yet the framework for ELCA teaching on economic questions is established in the 1999 social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*. Much of the guidance sought is available there, if not explicit, in the key themes for moral discernment regarding economic questions and those related to work and livelihood. Likewise, other social statements on education and health address economic questions such as mentioned in this memorial's Whereas.

A typical social statement development requires a five-year process involving churchwide organization staff and a budget implication of approximately \$300,000 (includes program costs plus the hiring of an additional part-time contract staff over the five years). The amount of churchwide organization staff time dedicated to any particular process is difficult to determine in advance but certainly involves a significant portion of the work of the director for Theological Ethics and of a program coordinator (This program coordinator simultaneously supports two other directors doing different work.).

The question of capacity involves not only budget and staff time but the commitments of this church to develop its social teaching and policy through broad participation from across the church by ELCA members. This includes three key points for all members via listening events, feedback sessions on a study and hearings for a draft. It also involves regular review and input from the Conference of Bishops and ELCA Church Council. Generally, the capacity of this church is the development of one social statement during a five-year process and one social message per year. It is the case that at least four requests for social statements are being brought to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Considering all the factors, this request does not seem to rise to the status of a social statement process. There would be significant costs entailed to engage the rather narrow matter of inequality in the digital age. Social statements are to address comprehensively the great social institutions of contemporary life.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Rocky Mountain Synod concerning work, vocation and income inequality in the digital age;

To recognize that the ELCA adopted the social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable, Livelihood for All* (1999), and this church continues to speak out on issues of income inequality; and

To decline to authorize a social statement process regarding work, vocation and income equality that addresses contemporary questions and dynamics.

Category C3: Migrants

1. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2017]

WHEREAS, warfare, economic distress, civil disorder and oppression in many parts of the world have displaced people from their homes in the highest numbers in human history—with 65.3 million displaced people in 2015—in addition to the regular flow of migrants around the world for other reasons; and

WHEREAS, it is a foundational and widely shared religious value to welcome the neighbor, to shelter the refugee and to build holy community with newcomers, as we are reminded in Leviticus 19:33-34: “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt”; and

WHEREAS, like the ancient Hebrew people who knew what it was to be “aliens in the land of Egypt,” Lutheran Christians around the world have known throughout the generations what it means to live as immigrants and refugees, and so Lutherans have dedicated themselves to supporting migrant peoples around the world and to welcoming them into their own communities, particularly but not solely through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran World Relief and The Lutheran World Federation; and

WHEREAS, rhetoric around migrants and refugees has become increasingly heated, polarized and politicized, a rhetoric often implicitly or explicitly connected with racism and religious bigotry, a rhetoric which is working to undermine the broad consensus among people of faith toward a broad, compassionate and grace-filled welcome toward migrants and refugees; and

WHEREAS, rhetoric which attempts to turn people against one another, to sow seeds of distrust, to label any human being “illegal” and to increase fear of the “other” dehumanizes our beloved neighbors and directly contradicts our Christian understandings, which hold that each person is created in the image of God with inherently good and equal ethical standing, which hold that we look to see Christ in the face of the stranger whom we welcome and which hold that the grace of God poured out for us in the person, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ transcends divisions of culture, language, legal status and national origin, such that we “are no longer strangers and aliens, but [we] are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19); and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its predecessor church bodies have consistently advocated in the public sphere for a more gracious, compassionate and just treatment of migrants and refugees in the United States and around the world, including through its Social Message on Immigration, no less than six statements or letters issued by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, and its Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and

Opportunities (AMMPARO) program working alongside migrant children from Central America and their families; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to begin a study process toward the preparation of a social statement on migrants and refugees.

Background

This memorial “Welcoming the Neighbor: Migrants and Refugees” draws particular attention to political and social rhetoric that contradicts the Christian understanding of every person as created in God’s image. While true in 2017 when memorialized, the description and rhetoric about migrants and refugees since has become even more heated, polarized and politicized.

As noted in the memorial, the ELCA and its predecessor church bodies have consistently addressed matters of migration and refugees in strategic planning and action, in social teaching and policy. In terms of action, the Lutheran community has practiced a long history of assisting and welcoming those forced to flee their communities and to seek refuge outside their countries of origin. The commitment of this church to the protection of refugees has been strengthened by our relationships with companion churches and partnership with Lutheran and faith-based organizations, particularly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) in the United States. Today, as the number of refugees and displaced people globally is at its highest in recorded history, the ELCA continues to honor its immigrant roots by supporting efforts to assist refugees abroad and continuing to support welcome for those seeking refuge to the United States.

Since 2014, after thousands of children and families were displaced from their communities, the ELCA developed a comprehensive, whole-church strategy to protect and welcome Central Americans forced to migrate: Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO), overwhelmingly adopted by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly [CA16.03.07]. This strategy is being successfully implemented, and the number of welcoming and sanctuary congregations and synods continues to increase.

In terms of teaching and policy for action and advocacy, no fewer than 14 different actions can be viewed on ELCA.org. The constant theme, as summarized by a substantive social policy resolution in 2009, has been generous and wise, compassionate and just treatment of migrants and refugees in the United States and around the world.

Throughout 2019, ELCA has led campaigns leading hundreds of congregants to call on their elected officials to promote policies and legislation that made a positive impact on the lives of migrants and refugees. Based on ELCA teaching consistent with human rights, many congregants have sought to challenge the Administration’s failure to uphold moral and legal obligations to welcome people seeking safety and to process all asylum seekers and others seeking protection in an equitable, timely, respectful and compassionate manner.

As an extension of this church’s commitments, this memorial seeks to authorize a study process toward the preparation of a social statement on migrants and refugees. It recognizes there are costs involved but does not specify those. A typical social statement requires a five-year process costing approximately \$300,000 (includes program costs plus the hiring of a part-time contract staff). The amount of churchwide organization staff time dedicated to any specific process is difficult to determine in advance but certainly involves a significant portion of the work of the director for Theological Ethics and of a program coordinator. (This program coordinator simultaneously supports two other directors doing different work.)

The question of capacity to do a social statement involves not only budget and staff time but the commitments of this church to develop its social teaching and policy through broad participation from across the church. Budget dollars provide for a diverse task force and for three key participation points via listening events, feedback sessions on a study and hearings for a draft. The process also involves regular review and input from the Conference of Bishops and ELCA Church Council (<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Addressing-Social-Concerns>). The development of one social statement during a five-year process matches this church’s capacity. It should be noted that at least four memorials to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly ask for authorization of a social statement process.

While the concern for addressing rhetoric is vital, it seems questionable whether the project of a social statement would shed new light or foster societal change significant enough to justify it. Additional tool(s) that provide for education and discernment directed toward political rhetoric and the accurate portrayal of migrants and refugee seem like a more immediate and appropriate response.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Delaware-Maryland Synod concerning migrants and refugees;

To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees and to the policy questions involved, as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy *Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO)*;

To encourage members of this church to review existing social teaching and policy and use these guides to take additional action toward addressing harmful political rhetoric against migrants and refugees; and

To request that appropriate staff in the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment specifically directed to political rhetoric and the accurate portrayal of migrants and refugees.

Category C4: Gender Identity

1. Sierra Pacific Synod (2A) [2019]

WHEREAS the ELCA adopted *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* as a social statement of this church by a two-thirds vote at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and

WHEREAS the ELCA intends to consider “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” as a social statement of this church at its upcoming 2019 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and

WHEREAS the proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” acknowledges people who identify as gender-nonconforming, nonbinary, queer, genderqueer, intersex, and transgender, while the document *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* does not, and

WHEREAS neither *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* nor “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” addresses the complexities of human sexuality and human sexual expression across the gender spectrum, and

WHEREAS society is undergoing a paradigm shift as it regards its understanding of biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, and

WHEREAS members of ELCA congregations and rostered ministers of the ELCA—as well as prospective members and prospective rostered ministers—identify across the gender spectrum; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to commission a study leading to a social statement on gender identity, gender expression, and human sexuality; and be it further

RESOLVED that this study should facilitate education among ELCA members so as to build awareness of the broad varieties of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation among God’s people, as well as provide pastoral care insights regarding concerns and issues of the transgender experience and gender nonconformity.

Background

Social debates in recent decades have increasingly contested the understandings and experiences of human sex and sexuality and understandings of how we know ourselves (gender identity), and how we express ourselves (gender expression). These debates affect social understanding and are debated in relation to public policy and federal, state and local laws. They also stem from and affect religious understandings as well as religious practice and institutional policies.

These questions also are matters of pastoral care and education because this church recognizes the importance of caring for all people, including people who identify within a complex dimension of sex and gender, as gender-nonconforming, nonbinary, queer, genderqueer, intersex and transgender. As such, the ELCA engages social questions mindful of its vocation to discern the meaning of God’s word as law and gospel as Christians and to discern what a Lutheran witness means in society.

From a simple and short view (speaking historically), it is often held that sex, gender and sexuality operate in a binary way, as simply opposites. However, a complex and longer view of history shows that debates and ongoing changes in human ideals and ideas are part of human history about the definitions and meaning of sex (biology), gender identity (self-understanding), and gender expression (expression of gender). Christian history in general and the ELCA’s short history itself document the evidence of these debates in multiple ways. The most visible evidence centers around the many discussions and actions prior to, during and after adoption of the social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*. It also includes concerns expressed by this church through the churchwide resolutions on gender questions adopted in 2013 and 2016.

This memorial requests the commission of “a study leading to a social statement on gender identity, gender expression, and human sexuality” with particular attention to education among ELCA members for the sake of awareness and pastoral care. A social statement process necessarily includes the development of educational materials and a comprehensive study, so the substantial request here is for the development of a social statement.

Such a request falls under the purview of [*Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns*](#) (2018).

As expressed there, social statements bring scripture and theology into dialogue with social analysis regarding broad social questions or the most controversial social topics. They are the means to address comprehensively the great social institutions of contemporary life such as systems of health care, sexuality, education and criminal justice in order to provide social frameworks for the ELCA as a public church and for moral discernment. The process is designed for and committed to finding shared convictions of this church through a lively conversation that takes into account difference and diversities of perspectives.

There are three questions involved in a request for a social statement: 1) Is a social statement the most appropriate vehicle necessary to address the concerns? 2) What precisely would be the costs involved? and 3) What is the capacity of this church at this time?

Questions two and three have standard answers. A typical social statement involves a five-year cycle with cost of approximately \$300,000 (program costs plus the hiring of a part-time contract staff). The amount of churchwide organization staff time dedicated to any specific process is difficult to determine in advance but involves a significant portion of the work of the director for Theological Ethics and a program coordinator. (This program coordinator simultaneously supports two other directors doing different work.)

The question of capacity involves not only budget and staff time but the commitments of this church to develop its social teaching and policy as a community of moral deliberation. Budget dollars provide for a diverse task force and for three identified participation points via listening events, feedback sessions on a study, and hearings for a draft. The process also involves regular review and input from the Conference of Bishops and Church Council. Generally speaking, the development of one social statement during a five-year process matches this church's capacity. It should be noted that at least four memorials to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly ask for authorization of a social statement.

The first question is more complex in relation to this request for a statement on gender identity, gender expression and human sexuality. To address the third element, "human sexuality," would require a resolution to reconsider the social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (HS:G&T). The demand for churchwide capacity in reconsideration is somewhat less than the development of a new social statement but remains significant. Either approach could also address at more length the questions of gender identity and expression that HS:G&T touches on but does not detail.

Social messages are the alternative tool for addressing social concerns in the ELCA, as also described in "Policies and Procedures for Addressing Social Concerns." Social messages are intended to speak to social topics narrower in scope and more quickly than matters involving social statements. They also may have a more deliberative character. A social message generally requires a one-year period for development.

Social messages depend on and are to be consistent with social statements and therefore employ a small consulting group rather than a large task force. However, the intensive one-year cycle is designed to invite attention to diverse perspectives and churchwide participation through online public comment. A message process requires standard review by the Conference of Bishops and Church Council.

Social message development costs about \$25,000-\$40,000 to prepare (program costs plus the hiring of a short-term, part-time contract staff), plus the staff time of the director for Theological Ethics. ELCA capacity generally stands at one social message per year, managed by the Church Council. Standard practice is for churchwide assemblies to request that the Church Council consider authorization of a social message on behalf of this church.

In light of these considerations and the importance of the topic, a social message seems the appropriate social teaching tool to request. This message would build from the framework provided by HS:G&T to explain and explore with care the complex dimensions and contemporary questions around gender identity and gender expression. As with all ELCA teaching, this address would be done in light of ELCA commitments to the Scriptures and Lutheran theological themes established in HS:G&T, and attentive to the well-established findings of contemporary science. The particular concern of this memorial for ongoing education could be fulfilled by the commitment to produce a study guide to the message for congregational use.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Sierra Pacifica Synod concerning development of a social statement on gender identity and gender expression;

To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop provide materials to facilitate education among ELCA members so as to build awareness of the broad varieties of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation among God's people, as well as to provide pastoral care insights regarding concerns and issues of the transgender experience and gender nonconformity; and

To request that the Church Council consider authorizing development of a social message on gender identity and gender expression.

Category C5: Call to Edit Sexuality Social Statement

1. Northwest Washington Synod (1B) [2017]

WHEREAS, in the time since the passing of the 2009 social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* marriage in the United States has become legally inclusive of same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran practice throughout the centuries has been to appreciate and support as gifts from God the life-enhancing actions of secular governments; and

WHEREAS, in the time since the passing of the 2009 social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* there has been rapid and widespread growth in understanding and support for people of all gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations in the United States, especially evident in negative public responses when discriminatory legislation is proposed or enacted (such as so-called “religious liberty” laws and bathroom bills), or when violence is visited upon members of the LGBTQ+ community (such as the disproportionate numbers of rapes and murders of transgender people of color); and

WHEREAS, such discriminatory legislation and violence do remain significant factors in the lives and deaths of people in the LGBTQ+ community in the United States, and persecution and violence toward the LGBTQ+ community in other parts of the world remain widespread and devastating (including, at the time of this writing, numerous countries with laws against same-sex sexual contact punishable by public whipping, long prison sentences and/or death, and reports in the press of the recent development of concentration camps for gay men in Chechnya); and

WHEREAS, such discrimination, persecution and violence remain largely grounded in the language, practices and traditions of faith communities; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is a faith community that has found its way to a different perspective on the LGBTQ+ community that is grounded in love for the neighbor and therefore can serve as a faith-based antidote to other faith-based messages that support discrimination, persecution and even violence; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Washington Synod resolved at its 2017 Synod Assembly to request that the Church Council of the ELCA initiate a review and edit of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* to reflect changes in laws and language, as well as the changing faith and secular perspectives on the wide variety of family structures included in this church and society, especially in relation to LGBTQ+ individuals and families; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Washington Synod further resolved at its 2017 Synod Assembly to request that the Church Council of the ELCA bring a reviewed and edited version of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* to the floor of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for a vote; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Washington Synod recognizes that the Church Council of the ELCA may feel it cannot or does not wish to undertake a review and edit of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* without the direction of a Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that, if the Church Council of the ELCA cannot or does not wish to act on the Northwest Washington Synod’s requests regarding a review, edit and 2019 Churchwide Assembly vote on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, that the Northwest Washington Synod Assembly then memorializes the Churchwide Assembly to direct the Church Council to undertake such a review and edit to be voted on at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northwest Washington Synod memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to urge rostered and lay leaders throughout this church, including the presiding bishop, to continue to publicly speak and act against legislation that discriminates against the LGBTQ+ community in this country and practices that persecute the LGBTQ+ community globally.

Background

Whatever one’s personal assessment of the changes, it is undeniable that social and religious norms around sex, gender and sexual orientation are contested and in flux. The U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2015 (legalizing same-sex marriage across the United States) represents the hallmark of social shifts regarding sexual orientation, even while religious liberty concerns continue to raise controversy. Questions around gender identity and gender expression also remain in flux and are highly controversial.

Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust (HS:G&T) addresses the social questions of its title, including the religious meaning and scope of sexuality and marriage. It explicitly speaks to the questions of same-sex orientation (called same-gender in the document) in relation to life-long, monogamous relationships and acknowledges that a new consensus has not emerged in this church. It then draws on a foundational Lutheran understanding of ethics that Christian freedom may permit a certain diversity of convictions and pastoral practices among God’s people who share the common purpose to love the neighbor. There are four sets of such convictions identified in *HS:G&T*. While not compelled by the social statement, four resolutions on ministry policy adopted by the 2009 Churchwide Assembly directed the establishment of practices that allow structured diversity within the ELCA regarding

ordination and the recognition of publicly accountable, life-long, monogamous same-sex relationships. [CA09.05.23, CA09.05.24, CA09.05.26, CA09.05.27] Since that time, same-sex marriage has been legalized.

While *Human Sexuality* holds open a marked range of deeply held convictions on the religious questions of marriage, it also makes clear that ELCA teaching and policy “opposes all forms of verbal or physical harassment and assault based on sexual orientation. It supports legislation and policies to protect civil rights and to prohibit discrimination.” This stance in the social statement codifies the ELCA position against discrimination and for civil rights from 1991 onward, one that has been updated as recently as 2016 by social policy resolutions to include rejection of [gender identity discrimination](#).

In light of contemporary social developments, this memorial requests two kinds of action. One would reaffirm ELCA teaching and urge renewed attention to issues of legal discrimination, persecution and violence. The second action memorializes the Churchwide Assembly to direct the Church Council to manage a review and edit of *Human Sexuality*, such edit to be voted on at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. This kind of request falls under the direction of “[Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns](#)” (2018), in the section on reconsideration of a social statement (p.18f). For the sake of voting member understanding, it seems important to sketch what that entails.

“Policies and Procedures” (P&P) does provide for reconsideration of a social statement of the kind requested: “the update of particular wording for the sake of accuracy and relevance to a contemporary social context but involving no change in substantive meaning.” (p.18f) The authorization of an edit requires a two-thirds vote by a Churchwide Assembly. (This is consistent with the adoption of a social statement by that same level of support.) An edit cycle is directed by staff in the Office of the Presiding Bishop but managed by the Church Council and is intended to bring a recommendation to the subsequent churchwide assembly. That three-year cycle uses standard protocol for social statements, such as the presence on the task force of diverse perspectives and review by the Conference of Bishops. The listening and study phases necessarily are constrained by time, but the process shall include at least one period of public comment on a draft of any proposed wording changes.

“Policies and Procedures” requires designation of what wording and sections are to be considered for editing. In this case the memorial’s concern is to “reflect changes since 2009 in laws and language regarding marriage and the wide variety of family structures, especially in relation to LGBTQ+ individuals and families.” Examples include the correction of “same-gender” with “same-sex” and the recognition of the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legally establishes marriage in place of publicly accountable, life-long, monogamous, same-gender relationship.

There are three questions involved in a request for edit of a social statement: 1) How would the edit support the church’s ministry? 2) What precisely would be the costs involved? and 3) What is the capacity of this church at this time?

The estimated cost for a social statement edit is between \$50,000-\$100,000 over the three-year period, depending on the extent of the work involved. Program costs include assembling a small task force and hiring part-time contract staff. The amount of churchwide organization staff time dedicated to any specific process is difficult to determine in advance but certainly involves a significant portion of the work of the director for Theological Ethics and the Theological Discernment program coordinator. (This program coordinator simultaneously supports two other directors with other portfolios.)

The question of capacity involves not only budget and staff time but also the commitments of this church as a community of moral deliberation. That is, the ELCA develops its social teaching and policy with broad participation from across this church and invites member participation as well as review and input from the Conference of Bishops and Church Council. (<https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Addressing-Social-Concerns>) An edit of this kind requires much less ELCA capacity than any other form of social statement development or reconsideration.

This memorial supports the church’s ministry under goal four of *Future Directions 2025* in two ways. It would reaffirm and clarify the position of the ELCA on questions of discrimination and urge renewed action by leadership and within congregations. It also would clarify the stance of the ELCA by updating the language and references in *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Northwest Washington Synod concerning the edit of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009) social statement to reflect changes in laws and language since 2009;

To reaffirm the ELCA’s opposition to all forms of verbal or physical harassment and acts of violence against any person, including those attributable to a person’s sexual orientation or gender variation;

To reaffirm the ELCA’s support for legislation and policies that protect civil rights for all people and to urge that rostered ministers and lay leaders throughout this church, including the presiding bishop, continue

to publicly speak and act against legislation that discriminates the LGBTQ+ community in this country and, where appropriate in ecumenical relations, to register concern about LGBTQ+ treatment elsewhere in the world;

To authorize a social statement editorial reconsideration of *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* to reflect changes since 2009 in laws and language regarding marriage and the wide variety of family structures in relation to sexual orientation in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns” (2018). While wording would be reviewed throughout, it would not affect the substance of the statement, the sections for close edit would include:

- **“Lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” section, p.18f.**
- **“Loving families: ground and source for social trust” section, p.21f.**

Category C6: Gun Policy

1. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2018]

WHEREAS, since its first Churchwide Assembly in 1989, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has spoken numerous times on gun violence and public policy on guns in social policy resolutions (e.g., “Ban of Military-Style Semi-Automatic Weapons” [1989], “Community Violence—Gun Control” [1993] and “Gun Violence Prevention” [2016]), in the social message on “Community Violence” (1994), in the social statement *Our Calling in Education* (2007) and through pastoral statements by the Conference of Bishops and by the presiding bishop; and

WHEREAS, the social message on “Community Violence,” despite mentioning gun violence and public policy on guns, is a broad statement about violence in community and, therefore, does not take into consideration the causes of, impacts of, and solutions to gun violence, nor does it provide members of this church with sufficient moral guidance to act as Christian citizens on the issues of gun violence and public policy; and

WHEREAS, since the adoption of the social message on “Community Violence” in 1994, important developments have occurred in the areas of gun violence and public policy on guns (e.g., an increase in mass shootings and suicides using guns, changes to open and concealed weapon carry laws, the proliferation of gun sales not subject to background checks, the expiration in 2004 of the Assault Weapons Ban, court decisions concerning the Second Amendment, and data on mental health as a factor in gun violence) that have rendered previous actions of the ELCA in addressing gun violence and public policy on guns inadequate; and

WHEREAS, recent mass shootings, especially in schools, have created an urgent need for a reevaluation of the issues of gun violence and the development of a more comprehensive and cohesive statement concerning gun violence and public policy on guns; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to develop study materials about gun violence and public policy on guns; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to encourage synods and member congregations to dedicate a time of study and exhortation to action on the issue of gun violence and public policy on guns; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to develop a social message on gun violence and public policy on guns that “point[s] to human suffering, grave injustice, pending danger, (and) social perplexity” that are part of this social issue (“Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns”).

Background

As acknowledged in the first Whereas of this memorial, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been addressing the issue of violence in society—including gun violence—in multiple ways since its first Churchwide Assembly in 1989. For a review of the entire history, visit the summary overview and its appendix on the website for [A 60-Day Journey Toward Justice in a Culture of Gun Violence](#). ELCA teaching and policy have consistently insisted on the complexity and interrelationships entailed in violence rather than focusing solely on the question of guns. For instance, it has affirmed the use of rifles and shotguns for hunting and sporting purposes.

In terms of gun violence, this memorial falls under the concerns of goal four of *Future Directions 2025*: “A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world.” It desires to strengthen the ministry of the ELCA by seeking additional tools based on existing teaching and policy but addressing contemporary developments. The 60-day journey referenced above anticipates those same concerns by providing basic study materials and urging reflection and action by synods and congregations.

The memorial seeks to extend the church’s address by asking for the development of a social message. It claims that developments since the early 90s have rendered inadequate the attention to gun violence and public policy in the

message “Community Violence” and other social policy resolutions. It also holds that existing documents do not provide members with sufficient moral guidance to act as Christian citizens on these issues.

Due to the lack of specificity on public policy priorities regarding gun violence in the existing social message, ELCA advocacy has been guided by Churchwide Assembly social policy resolutions calling for bans on assault weapons and for background checks. Further, there is an identified and urgent need for advocacy at the state and federal level to address gun violence. This follows from the dramatic increase in gun deaths and mass shootings—particularly in schools—and the lack of funding for the study of the impact of gun violence as a public health concern.

Taken together, these factors suggest an identifiable need for a more comprehensive foundation for advocacy and member discernment within the ELCA. Gun violence and public policy appropriately could be the focus of a social message, because messages are teaching and policy documents that address topics narrower in scope and complexity than social statements.

The development of any social message costs about \$25,000-\$40,000 to prepare (program costs plus the hiring of a short-term, part-time contract staff) and involve staff time of the Director for Theological Ethics. Standard practice is for churchwide assemblies to request that the Church Council consider authorization of a social message on behalf of this church. (Policies and Procedures 2018 <https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Addressing-Social-Concerns>)

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Metropolitan Chicago Synod concerning gun violence and gun policy;

To reaffirm the ELCA’s long-standing teaching, policy, and pastoral address to gun violence, public policy, and the complex issues of which they are a part;

To encourage synods and congregations to dedicate a time of study and exhortation to action on the issue of gun violence and public policy on guns; and

To request that the Church Council consider authorizing development of a social message on gun violence and public policy that points to human suffering, grave injustice, pending danger, public health and social perplexity.

Category C7: (In support of) “Faith, Sexism, and Justice” Recommended Proposed Social Statement

1. Oregon Synod (1E) [2019]

WHEREAS, all people are created in the image of God, and are therefore deserving of equality and equity in church and society; and

WHEREAS, God has made all One in Christ as Christian people, and as a public church the ELCA teaches that people are called to address significant social issues that affect the common good and seek to bring God’s justice to all; and

WHEREAS, sexism continues to exist in many forms throughout society and brings harm to all; and

WHEREAS, sexism continues to exist in many forms, even within this church as evidenced by the gender inequity in leadership roles and access to call for women who are rostered; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly voted to “develop a social statement on the topic of justice for women in church and society” [CA09.06.31]; and

WHEREAS, listening events, studies, and forums have allowed the whole church to participate and engage in the social statement development process with meaningful dialogue; and

WHEREAS, hearings on the draft version of the social statement have been held throughout the church body; and

WHEREAS, after review by the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, the proposed statement will be considered for adoption by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2019 Oregon Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the recommended proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations of the Oregon Synod be encouraged to pray, advocate, and work for justice for all who are affected by sexism and patriarchy.

2. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2019]

WHEREAS, all people are created in the image of God, and are therefore deserving of equality and equity in church and society; and

WHEREAS, God has made all one in Christ as Christian people and, as a public church, the ELCA teaches that people are called to address significant social issues that affect the common good and seek to bring God’s justice to all; and

WHEREAS, sexism continues to exist in many forms throughout society and brings harm to all; and

WHEREAS, even within this church, sexism continues to exist in many forms as evidenced by the gender inequity in leadership roles and access to call for women who are rostered; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly voted to “develop a social statement on the topic of justice for women in church and society” [CA09.06.31]; and

WHEREAS, listening events, studies, and forums have allowed the ELCA to participate and engage in the social statement development process with meaningful dialogue; and

WHEREAS, hearings on the draft version of the social statement have been held throughout the ELCA and around the Minneapolis Area Synod; and

WHEREAS, after review by the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, the proposed statement will be considered for adoption by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2019 Minneapolis Area Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the recommended proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action.”

3. Nebraska Synod (4A) [2019]

WHEREAS, all people are created in the image of God, and are therefore deserving of equality and equity in church and society; and

WHEREAS, God has made all One in Christ as Christian people, and as a public church the ELCA teaches that people are called to address significant social issues that affect the common good and seek to bring God’s justice to all; and

WHEREAS, sexism continues to exist in many forms throughout society and brings harm to all; and

WHEREAS, sexism continues to exist in many forms, even within this church as evidenced by the gender inequity in leadership roles and access to call for women who are rostered; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly voted to “develop a social statement on the topic of justice for women in church and society” [CA09.06.31]; and

WHEREAS, listening events, studies, and forums have allowed the whole church to participate and engage in the social statement development process with meaningful dialogue; and

WHEREAS, hearings on the draft version of the social statement have been held throughout the church body, including at the 2018 Nebraska Synod Assembly; and

WHEREAS, after review by the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, the proposed statement will be considered for adoption by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 2019 Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the recommended proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations of the Nebraska Synod be encouraged to pray, advocate, and work for justice for all who are affected by sexism and patriarchy.

4. Metropolitan Chicago Synod (5A) [2019]

WHEREAS, social statements are social teaching documents that “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12) by bringing into “dialogue the convictions of faith with the realities of the world and the experience of Christians living out their baptismal vocation”—and “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” is a comprehensive, creatively organized teaching document that will equip members and build up the church by clarifying biblical texts, utilizing scientific knowledge and human reason, and articulating Lutheran theology that speaks truth with charity; and

WHEREAS, social statements are intended to help members “discern God’s will for today,” offer moral direction on how to view an issue, foster moral conversation, and act justly as followers of Christ—and “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” sets forth ethical thinking and evaluation by: analyzing the complex effects of patriarchy and sexism on church and society, including on women and girls of color, the LGBTQ community, and gender-nonconforming people; introducing the concept of neighbor justice, intersecting forms of discrimination, and principles for creating and supporting justice; and calling the church to redress the wrongs of the past and present; and

WHEREAS, social statements are the result of extensive, participatory discussion throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and are shaped by careful listening to all quarters of this church, to society, as well as to other church bodies and ecumenical organizations*—and “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” has been a decade in the making that has consisted of: listening events in 2013, 2014, and 2015; the publication of study materials in 2014 and 2015; the production of the Church Council-approved social message “Gender-based Violence” (2015); the publishing of the study “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: Conversations Toward a Social Statement” (2016) with responses to it throughout 2017; the writing of the draft women and justice statement (2017) with responses to it as well as synodical hearings on it in 2018, including at last year’s Metropolitan Chicago Synod Assembly; interaction with other denominations and with the Lutheran World Federation; and review by the ELCA Conference of Bishops and Church Council; and

WHEREAS, social statements, as the ELCA’s primary social teaching documents, govern this church’s institutional life, its policies and practices, setting forth expectations for the church’s agencies and institutions, its advocacy to government and the private sector, and its ecumenical and interfaith relations*—and “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action,” in response to theological convictions and social analysis, calls the ELCA to commitments within its institutional life to honor and

support women and girls “in ways more consistent with life-giving theology and faith practices,” and to commitments in society to “seek justice in earthly relationships, structures, and systems”;^{**} therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Chicago Synod in assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the recommended proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” and all implementing resolutions.

*Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns, 2019.

**“Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action,” Short Statement, Articles 24 and 31, respectively.

5. Northeastern Iowa Synod (5F) [2019]

WHEREAS, all people are created in the image of God, and are therefore deserving of equality and equity in church and society; and

WHEREAS, God has made all One in Christ as Christian people, and as a public church the ELCA teaches that people are called to address significant social issues that affect the common good and seek to bring God’s justice to all; and

WHEREAS, sexism continues to exist in many forms throughout society and brings harm to all; and

WHEREAS, sexism continues to exist in many forms, even within this church as evidenced by the gender inequity in leadership roles and access to call for women who are rostered; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly voted to “develop a social statement on the topic of justice for women in church and society” [CA09.06.31]; and

WHEREAS, listening events, studies, and forums have allowed the whole church to participate and engage in the social statement development process with meaningful dialogue; and

WHEREAS, hearings on the draft version of the social statement have been held throughout the church body; and

WHEREAS, after review by the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, the proposed statement will be considered for adoption by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the 2019 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the recommended proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations of the Northeastern Iowa Synod be encouraged to pray, advocate, and work for justice for all who are affected by sexism and patriarchy.

6. South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K) [2019]

WHEREAS all people are created in the image of God, and are therefore deserving of equality and equity in church and society; and God has made all One in Christ as Christian people, and as a public church the ELCA teaches that people are called to address significant social issues that affect the common good and seek to bring God’s justice to all; and

WHEREAS sexism continues to exist in many forms throughout society and brings harm to all; even within this church as evidenced by the gender inequity in leadership roles and access to call for women who are rostered; and

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly voted to “develop a social statement on the topic of justice for women in church and society” [CA09.06.31]; and

WHEREAS listening events, studies, and forums have allowed the whole church to participate and engage in the social statement development process with meaningful dialogue; and

WHEREAS hearings on the draft version of the social statement have been held throughout the church body, including the 2018 South-Central Synod of Wisconsin-ELCA Assembly; and

WHEREAS recent actions by the Conference of Bishops and the Church Council, the proposed statement will be considered for adoption by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the 2019 South-Central Synod of Wisconsin-ELCA Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action”; and be it further

RESOLVED that congregations of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin-ELCA be encouraged to pray, advocate, and work for justice for all who are affected by sexism and patriarchy.

7. Upstate New York Synod (7D) [2019]

WHEREAS, all people are created in the image of God, and are therefore deserving of equality and equity in church and society; and

WHEREAS, God has made all One in Christ as Christian people, and as a public church the ELCA teaches that people are called to address significant social issues that affect the common good and seek to bring God’s justice to all; and

WHEREAS, sexism continues to exist in many forms throughout society and brings harm to all; and

WHEREAS, sexism continues to exist in many forms, even within this church as evidenced by the gender inequity in leadership roles and access to call for women who are rostered; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at its 2009 Churchwide Assembly voted to “develop a social statement on the topic of justice for women in church and society” [CA09.06.31]; and

WHEREAS, listening events, studies, and forums have allowed the whole church to participate and engage in the social statement development process with meaningful dialogue; and

WHEREAS, hearings on the draft version of the social statement have been held throughout the church body, including at the 2018 Upstate New York Synod Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the proposed statement will be considered for adoption by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the 2019 Upstate New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to adopt the recommended proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action”; and be it further

RESOLVED that congregations of the Upstate New York Synod be encouraged to pray, advocate, and work for justice for all who are affected by sexism and patriarchy.

Background

“Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” is the text of the proposed, recommended social statement for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Based on a Church Council recommendation and supported by memorials from four synods, the 2009 Churchwide Assembly directed [CA09.06.31] the development of “a social statement on the topic of justice for women in church and society.” If approved by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, it will be the 13th social statement of the ELCA. The text of the proposed statement and additional information regarding its development are available in “Section V: Recommendations of the Church Council” in the Pre-Assembly Report. In a separate action, the Church Council also recommended the accompanying implementing resolutions, which will be considered separately and can be found in Section V of the Pre-Assembly Report.

Social statements of the ELCA must be adopted by a two-thirds vote at a churchwide assembly. The memorials adopted by the synods recommend that the proposed social statement be adopted by voting members of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Oregon, Nebraska, Metropolitan Chicago, Northeastern Iowa, South-Central Synod of Wisconsin and Upstate New York Synods recommending adoption of the proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action;” and

To acknowledge the action of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to the memorials from these synods.

Category C8: Implementation of “Faith, Sexism, and Justice” Recommended Proposed Social Statement

1. Sierra Pacific Synod (2A) [2019]

WHEREAS, at its 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will consider the proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action”; and

WHEREAS, this proposed statement acknowledges that “humans live in a state of sin ... [and] collectively live out this [state of sin] through disobedience to God ... and acts against others”; and

WHEREAS, this proposed statement claims “Just as this church identifies patriarchy and sexism as sin. We confess that we are simultaneously liberated and sinful”; and “Our tradition’s complicity in patriarchy and sexism”; and confesses “that Christianity [including Lutheranism] has been complicit in the sins of patriarchy and sexism”; and

WHEREAS, this proposed statement asserts that “everyone knowingly or unknowingly participates in this patriarchal system” which “makes us complicit in maintaining systems of oppression”; and

WHEREAS, this proposed statement confesses that “we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves” and concludes “once we understand our own participation in this systemic harm we can identify it as sin, confess it, and ... begin to act differently”; and

WHEREAS, this proposed statement concludes: “The fundamental commitment needed is not to a particular program, practice, or process. Rather, we are called to repentance”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA has previously issued statements of repentance in such documents as the “Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community” in 1994 and the “Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery” in 2016; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Sierra Pacific Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to include among the implementing resolutions appended to “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” commitments to make a public statement of repentance for the sins of patriarchy and sexism, to establish a national day of confession and repentance for the sins of sexism and patriarchy, and to provide worship and educational resources to synods and congregations so as to equip this church to meaningfully embrace this call to repentance.

2. Sierra Pacific Synod (2A) [2019]

WHEREAS, at its 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will consider the proposed Social Statement *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: a Lutheran Call to Action*; and

WHEREAS, Lutherans believe in the paramount importance of Scripture as the inspired word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life; and

WHEREAS translations and interpretations of Scripture have been used to portray women as sinners and prostitutes as with Eve, Rahab, and Mary Magdalene, or written out of scripture as in the case of Junia; and

WHEREAS the proposed social statement asserts that language for and images of God in the Christian faith are often androcentric, and that the use of only male language leads us to forget the incomprehensible mystery of God, and therefore the statement commends all Christians to retrieve and reform theological language, images, and themes so that they support faithful proclamations of God's grace in Jesus Christ to all persons; and

WHEREAS the proposed social statement acknowledges that all people knowingly or unknowingly participate in the patriarchal system and that people are socialized to conform to these patterns of power, privilege, and prejudice making them complicit in maintaining social systems of oppression; and

WHEREAS the proposed social statement calls people to "new commitments and actions as a church" (A. IV, l. 1236ff); and

WHEREAS in the past the ELCA has responded to the need for increasingly inclusive and diverse worship materials (for example, by initiating the creation of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal and commending it for use in the ELCA); therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to create and initiate through various means the creation of commended resource materials for rostered ministers, lay leaders, and congregations to implement the goals of the proposed social statement. And, be it further

RESOLVED that the creation of materials intended to implement the goals of the proposed social statement will:

- Include more stories of women in scripture (e.g. Deborah, Ruth, Naomi, Mary Magdalene, Junia) and in our Christian tradition (e.g. the Desert Mothers) when developing future documents and resources relating to women, gender and justice; and
- Include the most current translations of biblical scholarship regarding stories of women in the Bible in any further documents and resources on gender and justice; and
- Endorse an inclusive language Bible; and
- Provide non-gender-biased and inclusive materials for worship including hymnody, adult education, confirmation, and Sunday school; and
- Use expansive language for God in ELCA worship resources (*Sundays and Seasons*, etc.); and
- Develop pastoral care resources for the care and healing of traumatized victims and survivors of sexism and patriarchy, and for the public acknowledgement of, and social dialogue about, the sins of sexism and patriarchy. These resources might include counseling information, healing services, etc. for victims and survivors of sexism and patriarchy; and
- Develop alternative scripture and worship, liturgy, and resource materials that address internalized misogyny (when women have been so conditioned to conform to the social system that includes patterns of male power, privilege, and prejudice that they work against their own interests often unknowingly); and
- Adopt intersectionality as a lens through which we see how institutionalized sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, classism, etc., are interconnected.

Background

Memorials have been received on the implementation of "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action" if it is adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. These memorials will be considered by the Ad Hoc Committee for the Social Statement as that committee is responsible for reviewing all proposed amendments to the social statement and its implementing resolutions.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Sierra Pacific Synod concerning the implementation of the proposed social statement "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action"; and

To acknowledge the action of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to the memorials from this synod.

Section D Ministry, structure, theology

Category D1: 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament

1. Oregon Synod (1E) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Oregon Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2025, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and

- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

2. Southwest California Synod (2B) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Southwest California Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southwest California Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods, candidacy committees and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

3. Western North Dakota Synod (3A) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Western North Dakota Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western North Dakota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

4. Northeastern Minnesota Synod (3E) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Minnesota Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Conference of Bishops in 2024 and to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

5. Minneapolis Area Synod (3G) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Minneapolis Area Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women’s ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization’s Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

6. Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Area Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God’s mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women’s ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;

- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women’s ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization to conduct a gender analysis in 2020 wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, the call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization’s Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

7. Nebraska Synod (4A) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Minnesota Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God’s mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women’s ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to call upon all synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in

this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts to celebrate and recognize the importance and contributions of ordained women; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by the outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct conversations and develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to call upon each synod to establish goals and strategies of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step at the Churchwide Assembly in 2025; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Nebraska Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

8. Central States Synod (4B) [2018]

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church; and
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

9. Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod (4C) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for rostered women comparable compensation with that of rostered men in all calls by 2024 and access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

10. Northern Illinois Synod (5B) [2019]

WHEREAS, in 1970 both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church in their national conventions voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and will recognize the 50th anniversary in 2020 of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, this synod expresses profound gratitude for the many and varied ways the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, this synod learned in the research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education²⁵; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, the church is called to reflect in church and society its roles of advocate and model for the respect, dignity, and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to urge all synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice; and be it further

²⁵ (<http://search.elca.org/Pages/Results.aspx?k=45th+anniversary+of+women%27s+ordination>)

RESOLVED, that the ELCA call upon seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to our church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this synod calls upon congregations throughout the Northern Illinois Synod to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women through worship services, bible studies and other efforts to celebrate and recognize the importance and contributions of ordained women; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly calls upon all members of the Northern Illinois Synod to examine their consciences, and confess their sins and complicity in circumstances whereby actions concerning women have involved creating barriers, discrimination, or perpetrating sexual harassment as women have prepared for and served as ordained women in this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly memorialize our churchwide organization at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to conduct a gender analysis in 2020, whereby strategies are developed to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call upon this Synod to establish goals and strategies for our congregations to achieve for ordained women, comparable compensation packages commensurate with that of ordained men in all calls within this Synod by 2025; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly call upon the Northern Illinois Synod to establish goals and strategies for achieving for ordained women, access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with an emphasis on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly request the Northern Illinois Synod's publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting-up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Northern Illinois Synod Assembly invite the prayers of all members of the Northern Illinois Synod for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

11. Southeastern Iowa Synod (5E) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Southeastern Iowa Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ is leading work to develop a social statement on women and justice; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education—some particularly acute for ordained women of color; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to urge synods and synod bishops to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women in their 2020 synod assemblies upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to urge the seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministry organizations, synods and congregations of the ELCA to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of the gifts the ordination of women has brought to this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to urge the Office of the Presiding Bishop to develop worship resource materials for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in the ELCA; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to urge congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts to celebrate and recognize the importance and contributions of ordained women; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to urge 1517 Media and all ELCA publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly encourage its congregations to study the draft social statement on women and justice, providing feedback to the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to request the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide updated research in 2025 on all matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

12. Western Iowa Synod (5E) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Western Iowa Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;

- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

13. North/West Lower Michigan Synod (6B) [2018]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in the actions of its predecessor church bodies, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church, when, in their national conventions in 1970, they voted to ordain women, and wishing to express profound gratitude for the many and varied gifts ordained women have contributed to God's mission in this church; and

WHEREAS, research has revealed some progress but also significant disparities for women, especially for women of color, in the areas of preparation for ministry including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles of advocate and model for respect, dignity, and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all synods in their 2020 assemblies include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women, especially women of color, access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, and develop strategies of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024; and
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to our church.

14. Northeastern Ohio Synod (6E) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches began ordaining women as soon as it was formed in 1976; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Northeastern Ohio Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Northeastern Ohio Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;

- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

15. New Jersey Synod (7A) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;

- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

16. New England Synod (7B) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the New England Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New England Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;

- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

17. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2018]

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;

- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

18. Upstate New York Synod (7D) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Upstate New York Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Upstate New York Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives

19. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (7F) [2018]

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church, urging all congregations to have an ordained woman preach and preside at a service in 2020;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;

- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organizations to use the social statement currently under development and its accompanying resources as a means of educating themselves about intersectionality and sexism;
- Urge all congregations, synods, candidacy committees and the churchwide organization in 2020 to develop strategies promoting and protecting gender equity and justice in all areas of their work and life, in light of the findings of the 45th anniversary research;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Conference of Bishops in 2024 and to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

20. Allegheny Synod (8C) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Allegheny Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon ELCA seminaries, colleges, campus ministries, outdoor ministries, social ministry organizations, synods and congregations to highlight women preachers, teachers and speakers throughout 2020 in recognition of the diversity of gifts women's ordination has brought to this church;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to renew efforts in education on the intersection of the sins of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and classism, and to develop healing interventions offering hope and support to those who experience these sins to the point of despair about ministry;

- Call upon ELCA seminaries to include intentional course work and resources to equip pastoral leaders in identifying and ministering in situations of gender-based discrimination and violence;
- Urge all congregations, synods and the churchwide organization in 2020 to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus on addressing the areas of preparation for ministry, call process including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step at the Churchwide Assembly in 2025;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women access to ministry roles where women are currently underrepresented, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women of color receiving viable first and second calls;
- Call upon the churchwide organization's Domestic Mission unit to develop, undertake and successfully complete a strategy specifically related to the debt that women of color experience after seminary;
- Call upon all candidacy committees to examine their practices in light of the findings in the 45th anniversary research;
- Ask the Office of the Presiding Bishop to provide in 2025 updated research on the achievement of these initiatives and other matters pertinent to the full and just participation of ordained women in this church;
- Ask all church publications to plan features in 2020 on the ordination of women, lifting up the amazing talents and gifts this church has received from its ordained women, the barriers ordained women still experience in this church, and the steps outlined in this memorial to overcome those barriers; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

21. Virginia Synod (9A) [2018]

WHEREAS, in 1970, the conventions of both the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejoices in these actions of its predecessor church bodies and in 2020 will recognize the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Synod expresses its profound gratitude for the many and varied ways that the gifts of ordained women have advanced God's mission through this church; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA learned in research related to the 45th anniversary of women's ordination of some progress but also significant disparities for women in the areas of preparation for ministry, all calls including first calls, mobility, compensation, ministry roles, and debt following seminary education; and

WHEREAS, the same research uncovered denigrating and discriminatory experiences of many ordained women, some particularly acute for ordained women of color; and

WHEREAS, this church is called to reflect in church and society its roles as advocate and model for the respect, dignity and equal rights due all women, including the ordained women of this church; and

WHEREAS, this church is simultaneously addressing justice and women in its social statement under consideration and the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Virginia Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to:

- Call upon all ELCA synods in their 2020 assemblies to include celebration and special recognition of ordained women upon the 50th anniversary of authorizing this ordination practice;
- Call upon congregations throughout the ELCA to participate in the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in this church through worship services, Bible studies and other efforts celebrating and recognizing the importance and contributions of ordained women;
- Call upon all members of this church to examine their consciences and to confess their sins and complicity in whichever circumstances, by outright or silent actions, that women have faced including barriers, discrimination or sexual harassment as they prepared for and served as ordained women in this church;
- Call upon this church to establish goals and strategies in each synod of achieving for ordained women comparable compensation with that of ordained men in all calls by 2024, reporting the outcome of this action step to the Churchwide Assembly in 2025; and
- Invite the prayers of all members of this church for the successful outcome of these initiatives.

Background

This response is offered with gratitude to the synods that memorialized the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly with pointed resolutions related to the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

After much study and dialogue, in 1970, the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), predecessor bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), decided to ordain women into the ministry of Word and Sacrament because these churches realized that a Lutheran theology of ministry did not restrict ordained ministry to men. Synods, congregations, study groups, seminaries, colleges and universities, campus ministries, social ministry organizations and the churchwide organization all have opportunities to recognize and celebrate the decisions predecessor Lutheran churches made and the diversity of gifts women bring to the ELCA and to the Church.

The 2019 Churchwide Assembly kicks off the 2020 anniversary year. It is also the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the ordination of a woman of color in the Lutheran tradition in the United States and the 10th anniversary of the ELCA's decision to remove the barriers to ordination for people in same-gendered marriages. These intertwined anniversaries (50-40-10) are an opportunity for this church to rejoice, reflect, repent and reorient. The anniversary committee, chaired by Bishop Jessica Crist and in collaboration with the Office of the Presiding Bishop, is responsible for the focus on the anniversaries at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly and at select events in 2020.

The anniversary theme calls the whole church to celebrate, reflect and act: "We are church. We are called. Proclaiming, Reforming, Celebrating." The 2019 Churchwide Assembly will participate through speakers, worship and a banquet, each of which can be drawn upon for ideas for other contexts. The committee created resources for worship, Bible study and reflection, which will be available online in fall 2019 for all to use. The anniversary year of 2020 holds events for the whole church: celebration and recognition at the Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering, a gathering for ordained women in ministry, and celebration and recognition at the ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering. These events will all take place in Phoenix, Ariz., in July 2020.

The memorials call upon the whole ELCA to confess, study and take action. People can rely on a variety of tools and resources that already belong to the whole church, not the least of which is the recommended proposed social statement "Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action." Other tools and resources available include the 45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women Research and Report, Bible studies, a tool for gender analysis, reflections from ELCA women of color in ministry, "God's Faithfulness on the Journey," and the Lutheran World Federation's Gender Justice Policy, all of which are free online through <https://www.elca.org/justiceforwomen> under the resources tab. The 45th anniversary report in particular shows the aspects of this church's life related to rostered ministry that need repentance and action. Over the years, each of these significant resources has been shared with ELCA synod offices, colleges, universities and seminaries with encouragement to use them.

The memorials call upon synods, congregations and the churchwide organization to collaborate in systemic work to address disparities based on gender and race for people in ordained ministry. Many of the issues raised in the memorials are addressed in the implementing resolutions of the proposed social statement. The churchwide organization will administer a survey and report on the 50th anniversary that is similar in scope to the 45th and prior anniversaries. Call committees, congregations, synods and schools are urged to study and use the findings.

A promising model among synods emerged in 2018-2019 through collaboration among leaders in Region 9 with support from the Domestic Mission unit and in collaboration with the Justice for Women program. This model addresses compensation, access to a variety of calls, leadership and the complexities of intersectional problems, particularly sexism and racism, for women in ministry. This and similar models that emphasize education in sexual harassment and misconduct, gender justice and racial justice hold potential for other synods to collaborate with each other and with the churchwide organization to realize some of the effects called for in this memorial. Making a commitment to intersectional gender justice as it pertains to rostered ministry in the ELCA would reflect commitments and priorities of the Lutheran World Federation, as well. Although ELCA polity allows churchwide assemblies to call for actions from synods and congregations, the constitution does not authorize the churchwide organization to hold synods and congregations accountable for actions of the churchwide assemblies. However, accountability to systemic commitments is necessary. To that end, it does seem appropriate to call on the Office of the Presiding Bishop to be in relationship with synods and to ask synods for information to include in a progress report pertaining to such initiatives called for in these memorials to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

Seminary debt is a significant problem for many ELCA rostered ministers, particularly for women of color. Domestic Mission, the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Mission Advancement are collaboratively involved in testing out possible solutions.

Budget and Staff Time Analysis

The multifaceted memorials submitted by the synods imply commitments of finances and time of varying amounts. The call for synods, congregations, the churchwide organization, social ministry organizations, campus ministries and schools to focus on the anniversaries (50-40-10) through lectures, courses, worship services and publications can, indeed, be done through already existing practices and financial commitments. It will take “intentional focus” of people in these varying spheres to guide the recognition and celebration in order to be a time to confess, repent, study and act.

At the same time, for synods and the churchwide organization “to conduct a gender analysis wherein each can develop strategies to promote and protect gender equity and justice, with particular focus” on a variety of aspects of ministry will likely require additional staff time to what existing staff members have.

The same may be the case with a plan “to develop, undertake, and successfully complete a strategy” to address seminary debt for ELCA women of color in rostered ministry.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Oregon, Southwest California, Western North Dakota, Northeastern Minnesota, Minneapolis Area, Saint Paul Area, Nebraska, Central States, Arkansas-Oklahoma, Northern Illinois, Southeastern Iowa, Western Iowa, North/West Lower Michigan, Northeastern Ohio, New Jersey, New England, Metropolitan New York, Upstate New York, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Allegheny, and Virginia synods concerning the 50th anniversary of the ELCA’s ordination of women to the ministry of Word and Sacrament;

To encourage all synods and congregations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the ELCA’s ordination of women in 2020 and recognize the diversity of gifts that women’s ordination brings to this church;

To call upon synods, congregations and the churchwide organization to recognize the need for repentance and continued examination regarding equity for ministerial leadership and to collaborate in systemic work to address disparities based on gender and race for people in rostered ministry;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with other churchwide units, to conduct a gap analysis of rostered women, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by rostered women of color; and

To recognize the implementing resolutions for the proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” as a response to the sexism and racism concerns raised by these memorials.

Category D2: Sexual Misconduct

1. Central States Synod (4B) [2019]

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) clearly and explicitly renounces sexism and sexual misconduct in all its forms and its continued impact on the church and the communities that the church serves. Further, this synod repents of all the ways in which people of this synod have been complicit, either explicitly or implicitly, in acts of sexism and sexual misconduct. This synod also commits to higher standards of accountability for those who commit acts of sexism or sexual misconduct, thus fulfilling the promise of Jesus that the truth has the power to set people free of the powers of sin and evil that attempt to bind individuals; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Central States Synod memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to clearly and explicitly renounce sexism and sexual misconduct in all its forms as well as its continued impact on the church and the communities that the ELCA serves; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Churchwide Assembly is called upon to repent of all the ways in which people have been complicit, either explicitly or implicitly, in acts of sexism and sexual misconduct and then commit to higher standards of accountability for those who commit acts of sexism or sexual misconduct, by enacting the following measures:

- Direct the crafting of “Trustworthy Servants of the People of God,” or equivalent guide to clergy conduct in a timely manner including voices from women, non-gender-conforming persons, lay and rostered leaders, people of color, members of the LGBTQ community, and people representing multiple generations, so that it frees and empowers victims of sexual misconduct, who are either in candidacy or rostered, to come forward without fear of being removed from the candidacy process or roster or experience other forms of recrimination.
- Direct the seminaries and colleges, and universities of the ELCA to take steps to increase the visibility of Title IX policies. (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that provides: No person

in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.)

- Commit to a renewed diligence on matters pertaining to sexual misconduct which prevents misconduct from being dismissed or hidden.

2. Southeast Michigan Synod (6A) [2019]

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA to reaffirm the actions of the 1989 Churchwide Assembly by clearly and explicitly renouncing sexism and sexual misconduct in all its forms and acknowledging its continued impact on the church and the communities that the church serves; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeast Michigan Synod calls upon the ELCA to offer up a statement of repentance of the ways in which the ELCA has been complicit, either explicitly or implicitly, in acts of sexual misconduct and then commits to higher standards of accountability for those who commit acts of sexual misconduct, by enacting the following:

- Encourage any future revisions of “Vision and Expectations” and “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” to be worded so that they free and empower victims of sexual misconduct, who are either in candidacy or rostered, to come forward without fear of being removed from the candidacy process or the roster or of experiencing other forms of recrimination;
- Encourage the seminaries, colleges, and universities of the ELCA to take steps to increase the visibility of Title IX policies and officers; and
- Set up a system of reporting, that pertains to all institutions of the ELCA, that prevents confirmed incidents of sexual misconduct from being dismissed or hidden.

3. North/West Lower Michigan Synod (6B) [2019]

WHEREAS, “Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known” (Luke 12:2, NSRV).

WHEREAS, in 2006, Tarana Burke sparked the #metoo movement, which sought to bring light to incidents of sexual misconduct while also seeking to support the victims of said misconduct, particularly in underprivileged communities. This movement took off in 2017 with allegations against and revelations about highly visible individuals within society. The list of perpetrators also includes multiple public members of the church at large.

WHEREAS, in light of the #metoo movement, how instances of sexual misconduct are handled is decidedly important to maintaining public trust so that the church can continue the faithful proclamation of the gospel. As followers of Christ, this synod acknowledges that individuals are all broken people living in a broken world. People are called as the church, by virtue of their baptism, to act in ways that maintain the public trust so that the proclamation of the good news of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ can continue to be spread to all nations. This call includes creating safe spaces for victims where their stories can be heard and believed without fear of recrimination as well as where victims can find advocates to help them navigate what it means for perpetrators to have forgiveness while still being held properly accountable and called to repentance. Therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the North/West Lower Michigan Synod memorializes the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to request that the churchwide and synodical constitutions and the Candidacy Manual of the ELCA be revised so that they free and empower victims of sexual misconduct, who are either in candidacy or rostered, to come forward without fear of being removed from the candidacy process or the roster or experience other forms of recrimination (and revise all pertinent policy and procedural documents to the same end); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the seminaries, colleges, and universities of the ELCA take steps to increase reporting transparency of all incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the above-mentioned institutions set up a system of reporting that prevents confirmed incidents of sexual misconduct from being dismissed or hidden. This should include requiring all institutions of the ELCA to disclose incidents of sexual misconduct to appropriate bodies as it pertains to candidacy, call or other hiring processes, and bishop elections.

Background

In 1987, the Constituting Convention of the ELCA passed a continuing resolution forming the Commission for Women, which in part carried the responsibility “to assist this church to address sexism” [1987 ELCA Constitution 16.41.D87]. In the years leading up to 2005, the commission’s budget and staff capacity were decreased, and at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly, it was deleted from the churchwide organizational structure. At that time, a position for director for Justice for Women was created; the Justice for Women program has served this church since that time.

In 1989, at the first Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA, a resolution passed on making the church a safe place, free from sexual abuse and harassment [CA89.4.18]. The Churchwide Assembly called upon each synod to create policies and procedures to empower victims to report incidents of sexual abuse, provide healing for victims and safeguard the rights of those accused.

In 1992, the Church Council followed through on that resolution by adopting an [ELCA Strategy for Responding to Sexual Abuse in the Church](#) (“response strategy”), which ELCA members are encouraged to review. The response strategy recommends key components for synod policies, including how to respond to and investigate allegations of misconduct. The response strategy also recommends an extensive program of training and education on these issues for synod staff, rostered ministers, candidates and lay members. In addition, the response strategy emphasizes the importance of disclosing misconduct so that it is not covered up. Typically, disclosure is made to the congregation or other affected ministry, to congregations or other ministries previously served and to the other rostered ministers in the synod.

Pursuant to the response strategy, the synods have adopted and implemented misconduct policies, which are available on the respective synod websites. These policies have been refined and revised over the years. The policies include provisions for confidentiality and protection of all victims, as well as provisions for disclosure of misconduct. New bishops receive extensive training on responding to and investigating allegations of misconduct. This training specifically addresses the protection of victims, no matter one’s status as lay, rostered or in the candidacy process.

In addition, the legal staff at the churchwide organization assists bishops and synods in responding to allegations of misconduct. Synods maintain roster files on rostered ministers, which include information on misconduct. If a rostered minister seeks a call in another synod, the bishop is required to provide a recommendation on the rostered minister profile (RMP), which would reference this information. If a rostered minister takes a call in another synod, the roster file follows them to that synod. Also, rostered ministers seeking a new call are required to disclose any allegations of misconduct on the RMP. When a rostered minister resigns or is removed from the roster, the synod sends the roster file to the churchwide organization, where the files are maintained in the Office of the Secretary so all synod offices can have access to them.

The synods’ primary responsibility for preventing and responding to sexual misconduct by rostered ministers is consistent with 5.01.c of the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA* (CBCR), which provides (in relevant part): “Whenever possible, the entity most affected by a decision shall be the principal party responsible for the decision and implementation, with the other entities facilitating and assisting.” Because the synods are primarily responsible for candidacy, status on the rosters, and the commencement of disciplinary proceedings, it is most appropriate that synods take the lead in addressing misconduct by rostered ministers.

While no policy or strategy can eliminate all sexual abuse in the church, the response strategy has been remarkably effective as an aid and guide in responding to sexual misconduct by rostered ministers.

The ELCA’s commitment to renounce sexism and sexual misconduct and to acknowledge its effects in the church and the communities it serves is strongly expressed through the ELCA social message “Gender-based Violence” (2015) and the recommended proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” (up for assembly vote at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly). Both of these social teaching and policy documents clearly profess this church’s complicity and repentance in sexism and gender-based violence, which includes sexual misconduct. Both documents also call for renewed vision through the treasures of a Lutheran expression of Christian faith and ethical action in church and society. Congregations are encouraged to study these documents and to discern the best action for their respective contexts.

The following information provides context and rationale related to the memorial’s resolve on committing “to higher standards of accountability for those who commit acts of sexual misconduct.”

The first listed action misapprehends the role and content of “Vision and Expectations” (or equivalent document), “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline,” the CBCR, and the Candidacy Manual. “Vision and Expectations” sets forth the expectations for rostered ministers; “Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline” defines the conduct that can give rise to discipline; *CBCR* sets forth the procedures for governance; and the Candidacy Manual describes the candidacy process. None of these is a manual for how to respond to allegations of misconduct, nor do they address the protection of victims. These issues are explicitly addressed in the synod misconduct policies and the training received by synod bishops. Accordingly, the synods should be encouraged to make sure their policies and the application thereof are up to date and adequately protect victims.

Further, a blanket rule that immunizes anyone who comes forward could be dangerous and counterproductive. For example, if two rostered ministers were together engaged in misconduct, the one who self-reported first would be immune from any consequences, regardless of relative fault or the power dynamic between the ministers. A

senior employee could “race to the bishop” to report the junior employee the person was abusing and avoid any consequences.

The second listed action relates to Title IX. Since seminaries, colleges and universities of the ELCA are independent institutions, the most a churchwide assembly can do is encourage the institutions to implement Title IX policies.

The third listed action to “set up a system of reporting, that pertains to all institutions of the ELCA” and require all institutions of this church to report incidents of misconduct to the Churchwide Organization goes beyond the authority granted to a churchwide assembly. Due to the polity provided for through the ELCA Constitution, a churchwide assembly has no authority to require the synods or congregations—or other institutions in this church, such as social ministry organizations, colleges and universities—to report misconduct to the churchwide organization, and the churchwide organization has no ability to enforce such a rule. The action would require the formation of a database and reporting system at the churchwide organization that would be inaccurate, incomplete and unreliable because there is no enforcement mechanism. These concerns would only be exacerbated regarding past misconduct or misconduct that occurred in predecessor church bodies.

Paradoxically, the action could increase the risk to members, students, candidates and others. People both inside and outside the church would likely put misplaced trust in a database and mistakenly view the absence of a report as a guarantee that there had been no prior misconduct. As noted, however, the database would be incomplete and unreliable. As a result, the action would likely create a false sense of security.

The action also would create substantial risks to the churchwide organization that, due to polity, do not rightly belong with the churchwide organization and that the churchwide organization has no ability to control. If someone relies on absence of a report in the system, and it turns out there was a prior case of abuse that was not reported, the churchwide organization could be exposed to substantial liability. At a minimum, these files would give rise to additional litigation in which the identities of victims and their stories could be revealed. These risks will substantially increase the churchwide organization’s insurance, litigation and liability costs. Primary responsibility must continue to reside with the synods of this church on matters of misconduct by rostered ministers.

Under current policies, when misconduct is discovered, it is disclosed to affected congregations and ministries and to rostered ministers in the synod. The roster files for rostered ministers who have been removed or have resigned are maintained in the churchwide organization, so if there is a question regarding any former pastors or deacons, that information is already available. When a rostered minister seeks a call in another synod, that information is shared between bishops and the roster file follows the pastor or deacon to the new synod. Further, rostered ministers are required to disclose any allegations of misconduct on their rostered minister profile.

Another concern is the broad scope of the third listed action because it does not distinguish between lay misconduct and rostered minister misconduct. As drafted, it would require congregations and synods to report all lay misconduct to the churchwide organization. The churchwide organization has no authority or ability to track 3.5 million members. Responsibility for lay misconduct must remain with the congregations, as congregations are the only expression of the church with the authority to address it.

Staff time and finances are needed to further the work of this church to address sexism, including renouncing, repenting and reforming this church’s complicity in sexism and sexual misconduct. Much of this work lies before synods, congregations and the churchwide organization through the study and action related to the “Gender-based Violence” social message and potential implementation of the recommended proposed social statement “Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action.”

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Central States, Southeast Michigan and the Northwest Lower Michigan synods concerning sexism and sexual misconduct;

To reaffirm the actions of the 1989 ELCA Churchwide Assembly action [CA89.4.18] “to make our church a safe place for all persons” and to “not tolerate any forms of sexual abuse or harassment by any of its personnel”;

To renounce sexism and sexual misconduct in all its forms and acknowledge its continued impact on the Church and the communities it serves;

To encourage synods to review and, as necessary, revise their sexual misconduct and safety policies to ensure they are updated and represent current best practices, provide for the confidentiality and protection of victims, including protection against retaliation, and recognize the power imbalances often present in such misconduct;

To encourage the seminaries, colleges, and universities of the ELCA to continue making their Title IX policies and officers visible to their campus communities and the general public and to implement the policies clearly and fairly; and

To urge synods to commit to a renewed diligence on matters pertaining to sexual misconduct which prevents misconduct from being dismissed or hidden, including accurately recording information related to misconduct in roster files and sharing such information with other synods as appropriate.

Category D3: Unaltered Augsburg Confession

1. Allegheny Synod (8C) [2019]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) confesses “This church accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession” (2.05.); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA requires its synods to accept and only recognizes congregations that accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the gospel (†S4.05., *C2.05., and 9.21.b); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA requires ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service to accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith of this church (7.22. and 7.52.); and

WHEREAS, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession is what gives the diverse church its Lutheran identity and its unity by grounding Lutherans in the proper proclamation of the gospel (Unaltered Augsburg Confession Article VII); and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA, the presiding bishop, and the Conference of Bishops have stated that “Our values are grounded in faith, in our biblical and Lutheran confessional sources and our love of God and neighbor. They speak to the way this church lives and practices our faith, and they will guide how we journey forward in Christ as church together” (*ELCA Future Directions*, 2016); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA commemorated the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation in 2017, in part, by promoting the study and knowledge of Luther’s Small Catechism while working to increase access to it (elca500.org); and

WHEREAS, the 500th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession will be June 25, 2030; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to call for all three expressions of this church, the churchwide organization, synods, and congregations, to refresh and renew their knowledge of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to request 1517 Media to produce affordable resources to help individuals and congregations in their study, application, and appreciation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to invite and encourage the seminaries of the ELCA to broaden their use of and references to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in coursework, particularly (but not exclusively) in homiletics and liturgics, as well as offering workshops on the Augsburg Confession; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to direct the ELCA churchwide organization to promptly begin negotiations with 1517 Media to determine a means by which members of the ELCA could have online access to the translation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession found in the *Book of Concord* edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert after which the potential cost will be considered in the budget presented at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to direct the ELCA churchwide organization to recommend, encourage, and equip the synods, particularly for the 2030 synod assemblies, as well as congregations, agencies, and institutions of this church to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession.

RESOLVED, that the Allegheny Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to increase awareness of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

2. Southeastern Synod (9D) [2019]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) confesses “This church accepts the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the Gospel, acknowledging as one with it in faith and doctrine all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession” (2.05.); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA requires its synods to accept and only recognizes congregations that accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true witness to the gospel (†S4.05., *C2.05., and 9.21.b); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA requires ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service to accept and adhere to the Confession of Faith of this church (7.22. and 7.52.); and

WHEREAS, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession is what gives the diverse church its Lutheran identity and its unity by grounding Lutherans in the proper proclamation of the gospel (Unaltered Augsburg Confession Article VII); and

WHEREAS, the Church Council of the ELCA, the presiding bishop, and the Conference of Bishops have stated that “Our values are grounded in faith, in our biblical and Lutheran confessional sources and our love of God and neighbor. They speak to

the way this church lives and practices our faith, and they will guide how we journey forward in Christ as church together” (*ELCA Future Directions*, 2016); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA commemorated the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation in 2017, in part, by promoting the study and knowledge of Luther’s Small Catechism while working to increase access to it (elca500.org); and

WHEREAS, the 500th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession will be June 25, 2030; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to call for all three expressions of this church, the churchwide organization, synods, and congregations, to refresh and renew their knowledge of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to request 1517 Media to produce affordable resources to help individuals and congregations in their study, application, and appreciation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to invite and encourage the seminaries of the ELCA to broaden their use of and references to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in coursework, particularly (but not exclusively) in homiletics and liturgics, as well as offering workshops on the Augsburg Confession; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to direct the ELCA churchwide organization to promptly begin negotiations with 1517 Media to determine a means by which members of the ELCA could have online access to the translation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession found in the *Book of Concord* edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert after which the potential cost will be considered in the budget presented at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to direct the ELCA churchwide organization to recommend, encourage, and equip the synods, particularly for the 2030 synod assemblies, as well as congregations, agencies, and institutions of this church to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession.

Background

The Unaltered Augsburg Confession refers to the document first presented to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 and published in 1531 at a time of religious and political turmoil. Martin Luther’s colleague Philip Melancthon composed it in consultation with Luther and others. The rulers of several German territories who had subscribed to it as their confession of faith presented it to Emperor Charles V on June 25, 1530. Their purpose was not only to give a clear statement of their religious convictions (which were often misunderstood or misrepresented by others) in response to the Emperor’s request. They also sought to demonstrate that their teaching and practice—including their critique of some practices in the church at their time—were not a departure from Christian faith and practice but a faithful expression of it. Moreover, as a faithful Christian witness, they offered their confession as an expression of their unity in faith with other Christians who shared this witness.

In the 16th century, this document became a milestone in the emerging “evangelical” movement when an increasing number of religious and political representatives endorsed or “subscribed” to it. Because of its growing significance, Melancthon and others treated it as a “living document.” They composed and published later editions (called “variata editions”) that included new language—clarifications and rewordings that, in some instances, were thought to alter the meaning of the original confession. For this reason, later Lutheran church bodies and theologians have referred to the version first presented and published as the Unaltered Augsburg Confession (UAC) in their subscriptions and confessions of faith. (See the ELCA’s Confession of Faith in the [Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the ELCA](#), 2.05. For additional historical background, see *The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, [Fortress Press, 2000]).

For these reasons, the UAC is more than an antiquarian curiosity. It has been and continues to be a valuable resource for faithful Christian witness and proclamation, for unity and collaboration with those who share its witness, and for ecumenical and interreligious conversations. The actions proposed in these memorials would most directly support goal one of *Future Directions 2025*—“A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people.”

These memorials propose a variety of actions throughout the ELCA and its interdependent institutions and among its members to increase awareness of and promote use of the UAC. These proposals include the development and distribution of study resources, especially access to digital editions of the English translations of both the German and Latin texts included in *The Book of Concord*, edited by Kolb and Wengert. (This action would be comparable to the development of resources related to the Small Catechism in connection with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation’s beginning in 2017.)

A number of print resources are already available in a variety of formats for English-speaking readers from 1517 Media (the ELCA's publishing ministry) and other publishers. More are in development. For example, Fortress Press is already planning to publish a study by Timothy Wengert of the Augsburg Confession next year, and development of a new adult study resource similar to [*Roots of Our Faith: A Six-Session Course on Lutheran Teaching*](#) is under consideration.

A succession of English translations of the UAC have been published in the United States since the mid-19th century. Older, once widely used translations by C. P. Krauth (1882) and F. Bente (1921) are in the public domain and are available for free online from sources like [Wikisource](#) and [Kindle](#). Other editions available digitally at little or no cost include some older translations incorporated in larger collections and more recent translations made by enterprising individuals and made available online with commentary. (Wikipedia provides a fuller but not complete listing of English translations and commentary in the public domain: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augsburg_Confession#External_links).

The copyrighted English translation in *The Book of Concord* (Fortress, 2000), including translations of both the German and Latin texts, specifically requested by the memorials, is available for purchase both in print from [Augsburg Fortress](#) and digitally from [Logos](#). Less expensive, but not cost free, editions of the UAC alone are available from [Augsburg Fortress](#), [Logos](#) and other publishers.

The proposal for action in the memorials is broad, potentially involving interdependent expressions and institutions of the ELCA and multiple units in the churchwide organization. Moreover, as noted by several staff consulted, the details of any plan for implementation if the proposal is adopted will be complex and involve variables that are unclear at this time. It is unlikely that an adequate analysis of interest, need and a plan for development, distribution and promotion could be completed in time for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from Allegheny and Southeastern synods concerning renewed awareness and use of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; and

To refer the proposed actions to the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with 1517 Media, Mission Advancement unit and other units, for additional analysis and planning in the churchwide organization for a report and possible recommendations to the Church Council.

Category D4: Thrivent

1. Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod (1D) [2018]

WHEREAS, over the years Thrivent Financial, a member-owned fraternal organization, and its predecessors have been financial advisors and have sold insurance and other financial products to Lutherans and their families, and many Lutherans have served on its boards at the local, regional and national levels, helping to distribute funds to charities and individuals in need either through direct grants or service products; and

WHEREAS, Thrivent Financial has provided funds and resources to local programs such as Habitat for Humanity, regional Lutheran camps, local and regional food banks, local congregations, church schools and other ministries; and

WHEREAS, Thrivent Financial has opened its membership to other Christians and moved from local branch decision-making regarding many of its grant distributions to Regional Member Networks that may not necessarily appreciate ELCA positions on social issues; and

WHEREAS, Thrivent Financial has changed its method of fund dispersal to a more individual basis, such as Choice Dollars, but has limited dispersals to 501(c)(3) organizations "whose principal purpose is [not] to influence law, policy or church doctrine or practice" thus prohibiting funds to organizations that are dedicated to civil rights, environmental concerns, LGBTQ+ rights or women's reproductive rights while allowing Choice Dollars to be contributed to such organizations as Christian Life Resources and Focus on the Family, both of which say homosexuality is a sin that can be cured and want to limit reproductive choice; and

WHEREAS, such activities run counter to the ELCA positions on church in society, human sexuality, reproductive choice, and women and justice (pending); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod Assembly memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to encourage the presiding bishop to express concern to the Thrivent Financial home office about how Thrivent Choice Dollars are being restricted from organizations that support civil rights, congregational inclusion for LGBTQ+ people and women's reproductive rights; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Thrivent Financial be encouraged to develop a more open and transparent policy allowing individuals to contribute to 501(c)(3) organizations without restrictions as long as they meet IRS criteria and are domiciled in the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, that regional bishops, pastors, congregations and especially Thrivent members contact the Thrivent Financial regional vice presidents/general agents, the Regional Member Networks and local agents to express their concerns about how Choice Dollars are limited.

Background

Thrivent is a separate organization with its own board of directors and policies. In 2013, Thrivent membership voted to change its common bond from Lutheran to Christian. In 2014, it began serving the broader Christian community.

The Office of the Presiding Bishop held a meeting with Thrivent Executives for Church Relationship. The memorial on Thrivent Financial was discussed and questions asked about restrictions placed on Choice Dollars for some organizations and what are the future plans to review the current policy. Staff were told that these, along with other questions raised regarding the memorial, would need guidance from upper management for response. As of June 2019, no response has been received from management.

The response in the past has been the following: Thrivent is a membership organization of Christians and works with many different members who hold a variety of, and at times divergent, views and beliefs. It respects the differences of its members and does not, independently or on behalf of its members, advisors or employees, provide outreach funding or support to organizations and issues that distract or have the potential to distract from its common purpose, which is to guide its members and society to be wise with money and live generously.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod concerning Thrivent Financial; and

To thank the presiding bishop for the conversation with Thrivent Financial staff and to encourage ELCA Thrivent members to express concerns to Thrivent about how Thrivent Choice Dollars are being restricted from organizations that support civil rights, congregational inclusion for LGBTQ+ people and women's reproductive rights.

Category D5: Social Purpose Funds (Portico)

1. Greater Milwaukee Synod (5J) [2019]

WHEREAS, new Portico Benefit Services members are currently automatically enrolled in the ELCA 60e Balanced Fund; and

WHEREAS, according to an email sent by Portico to plan members on February 2, 2017, "about 45% of plan members have all of their ELCA Retirement Plan savings invested in the plan's default fund, the ELCA 60 e Balanced Fund"; and

WHEREAS, some plan members who were automatically enrolled in the ELCA 60 e Balanced Fund have no preference for what plan they are enrolled in or do not know how to make an enrollment selection; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA 60e Balanced Fund is partially invested in alcohol, business practices that negatively impact community development, fossil fuels and business practices that degrade the environment, gambling, military weapons, pornography, and tobacco, and private prisons (including the companies that operate the private prisons that held immigrant children separated from their parents); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA already has created alternative funds, the eight ELCA Social Purpose Funds, screens (does not invest in) investments in alcohol, business practices that negatively impact community development, fossil fuels and business practices that degrade the environment, gambling, military weapons, pornography, and tobacco, and private prisons; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Purpose Funds positively invests in activities that promote: community development, affordable housing, sustainable forestry, women- and minority-owned businesses, and clean energy and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Purpose Funds are in alignment with our biblical tradition that encourages us to seek the welfare of our communities. (See Jeremiah 29:4-7); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Purpose Funds are in alignment with our biblical tradition that teaches us to love our neighbor (see Luke 10:25-37); and

WHEREAS, Continuing Resolution 17.20.B11 of the governing documents of the ELCA states that "The Corporate Social Responsibility Committee of the Board of Pensions shall receive advice and counsel from the churchwide organization and, within the context of fiduciary responsibility for ELCA assets, make appropriate recommendations to the board"; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to recommend that Portico Benefit Services conduct a campaign designed to increase awareness of and participation in their Social Purpose Investment Funds by plan members, reporting annually to the ELCA Church Council on the status of this effort.

Background

As the ELCA's largest institutional investor and retirement plan administrator, Portico Benefit Services is called to support this church's social responsibility ministry. Portico applauds the spirit and intent of this memorial and is always open to exploring new ways to help plan members better understand the unique value offered by the ELCA social purpose funds.

Portico, as plan administrator, is prohibited from providing investment advice and cannot, therefore, recommend one fund over another. Striving to “increase participation” in a sub-set of funds would violate the responsibility of Portico as plan administrator.

In addition, since the wording of the memorial itself cannot be changed, here is a brief summary of key items within the memorial that Portico states may not be accurate/require further clarification:

- The current percentage of plan members with all their ELCA Retirement Plan savings in the plan’s default fund is about 41% as of March 31, 2019.
- The whereas language about the ELCA 60e Balanced Fund says the fund “is partially invested in,” but more accurate language is that the fund “does not screen out investments” in these types of companies. This is a primary difference. Social Purpose Funds use the ELCA social criteria screens, those that aren’t Social Purpose Funds don’t screen, but it doesn’t mean they always own the companies that Social Purpose Funds screen out.
- It’s not accurate to say the ELCA 60e Balanced Fund invests in “business practices that negatively impact community development.” It’s more accurate to say the ELCA Social Purpose Funds positively invest in activities that promote community development but those that aren’t Social Purpose Funds don’t specifically seek out these types of investments.

In response to the request, Portico is able to do the following:

- Provide investment education to members.
- Strive to increase member awareness of all 20 funds, including the eight Social Purpose Funds. Disclose that each Social Purpose Fund and its similarly named unscreened fund will contain different securities. Therefore, risk and return projections are somewhat different, and actual risk and return experience will differ.
- Share with all members the positive outcomes stemming from:
 - Shareholder advocacy across all the funds,
 - Positive investing and screening via Social Purpose Funds.
- Explain to members what funds they’re in and how to take action should they want to invest some or all of their ELCA retirement plan savings in the Social Purpose Funds.
- Provide information to the churchwide organization and other ELCA organizations wanting to raise awareness of and encourage participation in the ELCA Social Purpose Funds.
Example: Portico recently provided the contact information for Portico Financial Planners to the ELCA-affiliated nonprofit Lutherans Restoring Creation (LRC) so that, when interacting with ELCA retirement plan members, LRC can direct them to Portico financial planners for help determining if they’re in the Social Purpose Funds and whether to use them.

On an ongoing basis, Portico keeps Social Purpose Funds on our members’ radar; for reference:

- All new enrolling members are automatically defaulted into the ELCA 60E Balanced Fund, with the option any time after that to go online and change their fund selection. At eight weeks following their start date, they receive an email from the manager of our financial planning team with:
 - An invitation to work with a planner to consider and select ELCA funds, and
 - A link to a web page inviting them to “consider investing for social impact.”
- Portico’s optional preretirement seminars—serving age 40 and above—describes how Social Purpose Funds work and the kinds of positive impact they create, and takes time to dig in deeper on this subject if participants ask questions.
- Portico publishes four to six news articles a year online describing efforts and outcomes related to shareholder advocacy, screening and positive “social impact first” investing. Portico then typically links to the latest article in its quarterly emails sent to all sponsored and retired retirement plan members.
- Portico describe efforts and outcomes related to shareholder advocacy, screening and positive “social impact first” investing in all Portico reports to the Church Council, Conference of Bishops and synod assemblies.

Given Portico’s role as ELCA Retirement Plan administrator, and given the limitations imposed by that role, Portico believes striving to increase both awareness and participation is a worthy goal, but to accomplish it requires this church to think “church together.” For this reason, Portico will seek input from ELCA Corporate Social Responsibility staff when considering Portico’s approach to increasing awareness of Social Purpose investment funds.

Portico supports the spirit of this call to action and will strive to deliver in ways consistent with its responsibilities as retirement plan administrator. Specifically, Portico can conduct an educational campaign for plan

members designed to increase awareness of the Social Purpose Investment Funds and provide an update to the Church Council by November 2020 on the status of this effort. Portico believes this action would further the ministry of the ELCA by being another tool to implement *Future Directions 2025* and support the teachings of several ELCA social statements and messages, including *Caring for Creation*.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Greater Milwaukee Synod concerning Portico Benefit Services Social Purpose Funds; and

To urge Portico Benefit Services to conduct an educational campaign for plan members designed to increase awareness of the Social Purpose Investment Funds and provide an update to the November 2020 Church Council meeting.

Category D6: Seminary Tuition

1. Montana Synod (1F) [2018]

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops has declared that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has a critical need for rostered ministers; and

WHEREAS, seminary student debt is a major factor in the ability of rostered ministers to serve congregations; and

WHEREAS, debt is a deterrent to students entering seminary; and

WHEREAS, the burdens of seminary costs for the individual candidates for rostered ministry are burdens of the whole church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Montana Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly that the ELCA commit to paying all seminary tuition costs for all entranced candidates for rostered ministry by 2023.

Background

In *Future Directions 2025*, this church commits to the “formation, education and continuing development” and care of rostered ministers. A holistic approach to the education and continuing development of rostered leaders includes recognition of the financial burdens of rostered ministers and their ability to be efficacious, empathic and faithful rostered leaders.

Current Situation of Tuition in our ELCA Seminary System

In general, annual tuition and fees for regular students in the ELCA’s seminary system is about \$18,000, representing about 40% of a student’s total annual expenses. All of the ELCA seminaries provide scholarships and grants to their students. Two of them offer full tuition. A third one will begin offering full tuition next academic year and a fourth one is considering full tuition. Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University will be offering eight full-tuition scholarships to ELCA M.Div. students who are Capital graduates and choose to enroll at Trinity beginning with the fall 2019 semester. Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary at California Lutheran University covers 92% of tuition, on average. In addition to these opportunities for tuition support, future seminarians are eligible to apply for scholarship resources through the churchwide organization provided for by the ELCA Fund for Leaders. In 2018-2019, the ELCA Fund for Leaders (FFL) and FFL Synod Partner Scholarships supported 254 seminarians and awarded over \$2.6 million. This included 112 FFL full-tuition scholarships in 2018-2019.

This church is committed to continue to fund full-tuition scholarships. For the past eight years, the churchwide organization has also held 7% of Mission Support dollars (approximately \$3 million annually) to support the seminaries. The commitment to supporting the education and preparation of leaders for this church is strong.

Student Debt and Tuition

A 2015 ELCA study found that, since 2006, the average educational debt carried per borrower increased 26% (approximately 3% per year). This represents an increase of 1% per year above annual inflation rates. The proportion of ELCA M.Div. graduates with no theological education debt remained relatively steady between 21% and 26% in the years studied. At the high end of the theological education debt spectrum, the proportion of graduates carrying more than \$50,000 in theological education debt after adjusting for inflation has also remained relatively stable in the mid to high 20% range. This figure peaked at 31% for 2013 graduates and has declined to 24% in 2014 and 22% in 2015.

A study conducted by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) shows 43% of seminarians already have undergraduate student loans averaging \$32,600 when they start theological schools. Forty-nine percent of seminarians borrowed an average of \$35,700 in theological schools. Less than 10% received help from their denomination for loan repayment and 70% of graduates’ salaries are less than \$30,000. Seminaries do not have control over how much seminarians borrow. This is regulated by the United States Department of Education.

Financial Capacity of the Churchwide Organization

In 2018-2019, there were 703 ELCA M.Div. students enrolled (this is a head-count number, not a full-time equivalent number). However, if this number is assumed over the next five years, and tuition is approximately \$20,000/year, over \$14 million would be needed to fund full tuition for all students. If the students that already receive full tuition (either by attending one of the seminaries that cover this or full tuition FFL recipients) are excluded, assume 350 students require support, the funding requirement would be \$7 million. The ELCA Fund for Leaders endowment (including synod funds) is approximately \$58 million. Projecting additional gifts, growth and withdrawals to 2023, the estimate is a fund of \$72 million. That would roughly yield \$2.8 million in scholarships. This would leave a gap of approximately \$11 million per year for full tuition. This church would need to grow the fund to approximately \$400 million by 2023 to meet the projected need. Also, using current budgeted income numbers through 2022 as a guide, the churchwide organization would not have enough resources to cover full tuition for all students without making significant reductions in other areas of the budget.

While ELCA seminaries are helping to ease the burden of seminary debt, along with programs such as Fund for Leaders, the stated goal of this memorial is not financially feasible. Research is necessary for the churchwide organization to conclude that the proposed memorial would rectify its stated problem. Seminary tuition is likely not the root cause of student debt. The intention of this memorial and this church's commitment to rostered ministers invites us to consider alternative initiatives such as living-expense subsidies for seminarians and financial wellness counseling programs. It also invites us to document and research the issue as new and innovative programs and financial alternatives surface within this church seminary system landscape.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Montana Synod concerning seminary tuition for rostered ministry candidates;

To recognize an ongoing concern regarding the funding of seminary tuition;

To commend synods, congregations, the churchwide organization and other agencies for their roles in partnering with seminaries to fund seminary tuition;

To direct the Domestic Mission unit, in consultation with other churchwide units, to conduct a comprehensive analysis of current and potential seminary tuition funding sources, with a report and recommendations regarding funding for seminary tuition to be provided to the Church Council by its spring 2021 meeting.

Category D7: Health Care Benefits

1. Lower Susquehanna Synod (8D) [2019]

WHEREAS, Jesus came that all may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10), and spent his earthly ministry proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God and healing all who were brought to him (Matthew 4:23); Jesus healed those who had spent all the money they had on doctors as a free gift (Luke 8:43); and Jesus gave his disciples the authority and empowerment to continue his work of healing (Luke 9:1); and

WHEREAS, although the official stance of the ELCA that the Portico Gold+ plan is the recommended benchmark health plan for synods and congregations, the ELCA Church Council at its November 8-11, 2018, meeting, approved a health insurance reduction as part of the approved spending authorization for the 2019 budget, which switched Churchwide employees from the Portico Gold+ plan to the Silver plan (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Council, November 8-11, 2018, Minutes, Page 18, [CC18.11.20]) ; and

WHEREAS, this change disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable churchwide employees financially, and could cost them up to \$1,200-2,400 extra per year in deductible costs; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to take immediate action to restore churchwide employees to the Portico Gold+ plan; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to direct Portico to provide information in a timely manner regarding the financial impact incurred by churchwide employees while insured under the Silver plan to the Church Council for budgetary consideration.

2. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2019]

WHEREAS, health care coverage is a necessity in these times; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in cost-cutting measures, took away the insurance coverage of spouses and families of ELCA Churchwide employees and reduced the coverage of ELCA churchwide employees from gold status to the level of silver status in early 2019; and

WHEREAS, the compensation of ELCA churchwide employees is adequate but not commensurate with the pay of personnel in the public sector and in similar positions of responsibility there; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA needs to maintain top-notch, high-caliber employees for the benefit of the ELCA and continuity among programming directions and needs; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA's treatment of its employees serves as a model for synods and individual congregations and their provision for rostered persons and church workers; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to restore the Portico insurance coverage to the spouses of ELCA Churchwide employees effective immediately; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod memorialize the ELCA Churchwide Assembly to restore the Portico coverage to the original gold-status level of coverage for churchwide employees.

Background

Since the inception of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the health and well-being of rostered ministers and lay employees have been underlying priorities of this whole church and a principal focus of the work of Portico Benefit Services (Portico), a ministry of the ELCA (formerly known as the board of pensions of the ELCA). Through Portico, the ELCA offers health coverage, including hospital and medical, dental, prescription, vision, behavioral health, and an employee assistance program. The churchwide organization provides a comprehensive benefit program, administered by Portico, for its full-time employees and other employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week (15 hours per week for rostered employees) for six months or more per year. The program includes health coverage, the ELCA Retirement Plan, a life insurance benefit, long-term disability benefits, and a flexible spending plan.

The Church Council has approved an ELCA Philosophy of Benefits [CC19.04.08] that provides guidance to the three expressions of this church (i.e., congregations, synods and the churchwide organization) in providing health care benefits; however, as distinct legal entities, each expression has flexibility in the determination of benefits that are provided. Following is an excerpt from the [Philosophy of Benefits](#).

“In implementing this ELCA Philosophy of Benefits, the design and administration of benefit programs should respond to changing societal and economic realities affecting the ministry of this church, as well as national trends in financial markets, the cost and delivery of medical care and other benefits, and the regulatory landscape. Benefits also should be administered efficiently in order to both enhance the well-being of rostered ministers and lay employees and capture value and savings where possible. At the same time, rostered ministers and lay employees are stewards of benefits provided to them and are called upon to use them wisely to improve their health and well-being for the sake of ministry.”

Below are the details of changes made by the churchwide organization for the 2019 plan year. It is important to note that the memorial submitted by the Delaware-Maryland Synod on this issue misstates the changes that were made. The second clause of the document states, “whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in cost cutting measures, took away the insurance coverage of spouses and families of the ELCA churchwide employees and”

Two points of clarification are required:

- 1) Where the Delaware-Maryland Synod cites the ELCA, the churchwide staff thinks they meant to say the churchwide organization.
- 2) The churchwide organization did not take away the insurance coverage of spouses and families; rather, it continues to cover employees at 100% and implemented a cost-share program for employees who choose to cover spouses and families. This is further explained in the next section.

In 2019, the churchwide organization offered the following health benefits for all eligible employees:

- 1) Silver+ plan became the standard plan for the churchwide organization.
- 2) The premium cost of coverage for employees is fully paid by the churchwide organization.
- 3) All eligible employees and their spouse and/or dependents are eligible for coverage under the plan; however, employees that choose to cover their spouse and/or dependents contribute from 8% to 15% (based on their compensation and age) of the cost of their spouse/dependent coverage, not to exceed 10% of the total cost for that employee's elected coverage.
- 4) The Silver+ plan is a high-deductible plan that allows for a Health Savings Account; the Gold+ plan is not. The churchwide organization contributes 50% of the increase in deductible to go from Gold+ to Silver+ for each employee that selects Silver+ into the employee's Health Savings Account (HSA) at the beginning of the year. The one-time annual contribution into a member's HSA account ranges from

\$600 to \$1,525 per employee, depending on the coverage level elected. Employees can also contribute to their HSA on a pretax basis, and it can be carried forward to future years.

- 5) Employees are given the option to purchase Gold+ or Platinum+; however, the employee is responsible for the incremental premium.
- 6) Employees who choose to waive coverage for either themselves, their spouse or their dependents are given a waiver credit (added to their paycheck) for opting out of coverage. The waiver credits range from \$150 to \$400 per month, depending on level of coverage waived. Proof of alternative coverage is required.

These changes resulted in a savings of over \$1.5 million in 2019. This savings will continue at varying degrees in future years based on changes in the cost of coverage and elections of churchwide organization employees; however, it is expected to remain near this level for the foreseeable future.

This change required prayerful consideration and research; however, it was supported by the following factors:

- 1) The Silver+ is an outstanding plan. In fact, Portico offers a choice of Silver+ with a \$1,200-\$2,400 employer HSA contribution (depending on coverage elected) or Gold+ to their employees and reported that they have more employees that choose Silver+, largely due to the benefits of the health savings account features. Plans with health savings accounts are predominant in the health care benefits arena.
- 2) There are various metal options within the Portico suite of health benefits: Platinum+, Gold+, Silver+ and Bronze+, some with options within the metal. Across the ELCA ecology, synods and congregations have selected the metal plan that best fits their needs and economic realities.
- 3) Expansion of the waiver incentive encouraged employees to consider other options for their spouses/dependents. Previously, there was little incentive for an employee's spouse to choose their employer's plan, and as a result, the ELCA spent its resources to provide full coverage for individuals whose employer also provided coverage.
- 4) Providing coverage at 100% to all employees and asking employees to share in a small portion of the cost of coverage for their spouses/dependents is more equitable to all employees, regardless of their family situation.
- 5) The churchwide organization has a responsibility to properly steward those resources that have been entrusted to it. The churchwide organization recognizes each employee has different needs and believes its responsibility is to provide effective coverage for all and allow employees a choice in how to best manage their current needs.
- 6) The ELCA church polity allows each organization to make independent decisions, recognizing that economic conditions vary from church to church, synod to synod and organization to organization. The Philosophy of Benefits serves as a guide in this process. The churchwide organization is following these guidelines.
- 7) Without these savings, other programmatic work or staff reductions will be required, or the churchwide organization will be dependent on increased support from synods and congregations. It is important to note that these savings are recurring; other changes such as not providing a compensation increase will impact only one year, and new savings will need to be identified in each subsequent year.

The churchwide organization is committed to providing for the health and well-being of its employees and recognizes the importance of this benefit. Accordingly, there will be a survey of churchwide organization employees to understand the impact of this change in fall 2019. The hope is that this information will help the churchwide organization to evaluate whether there are other affordable yet sustainable changes that would be beneficial to its employees.

There are numerous passages in scripture that speak to multiplying our treasures. Given the options, churchwide leadership believe the decisions that were made are in the best long-term interest of the organization and those it serves. A return to the Gold+ plan is not believed to be sustainable without a reduction in the work that the churchwide organization does or an increase in Mission Support. Should these memorials be adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, the 2020 budget would need to be reworked to identify an estimated additional \$1.5 million reduction in the expenditure authorization, or a \$1.5 million increase in the income proposal, and presented to the Church Council at its November 2019 meeting.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from Lower Susquehanna and Delaware-Maryland synods concerning health care benefits for churchwide staff;

To request the churchwide organization survey employees to understand the impact on staff and identify any modifications that can be made within budgeted funds for 2020;

To encourage Portico to continue to provide educational tools to assist employees of the churchwide organization which thoroughly explain the different plans; and

To decline to restore the churchwide organization health care benefits to Portico Benefit Services Gold+ plan at this time.

Category D8: Vision and Expectations Task Force

1. Delaware-Maryland Synod (8F) [2019]

WHEREAS, the Conference of Bishops and churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) discerned a pastoral need to address both the deficiencies of “Vision and Expectations” and the ways in which that document has been applied in the life of this Church; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is an interdependent church where “each expression of this church—churchwide, synod, and congregation—is held together in a relationship of interdependence that encourages each to respond to its context” (Secretary Wm Chris Boerger, Introduction to *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, August 18, 2016 pg. 9); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to call for the creation of a task force comprising members of the Church Council and Conference of Bishops as well as pastors, deacons, and lay members of this Church, with a majority of this task force being persons who self-identify as LGBTQIA+, persons of color, persons with disabilities, and persons whose first language is other than English; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to charge this task force to discern and propose an inclusive process in the creation of a new document regarding the vision and expectations of rostered leaders to replace the current “Vision and Expectations,” reflecting the interdependence of this Church to discern faithful ways forward; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to request that the proposed process be reported to the Church Council for review and comment, giving an appropriate amount of time so all voices are heard, and in keeping with the goal of having a new draft document to present to the Church Council in the fall of 2020.

2. Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod (8G) [2019]

WHEREAS, the document “Vision and Expectations” (V&E) has outlined standards of behavior for rostered ministers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) since 1990, including the prohibition of publicly out and partnered LGBTQIA people from seeking and attaining positions of public ministry within the ELCA; and

WHEREAS, the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a social statement on human sexuality that affirmed human sexuality is a gift from God and “Vision and Expectations” was subsequently updated to be inclusive of “lifelong, monogamous, same-gendered relationships”; and

WHEREAS, civil same-sex marriage became legal nationwide in 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Domestic Mission unit of the ELCA began a process in 2018 to further update “Vision and Expectations” as a result of roster consolidation and to reflect legal same-sex civil marriage nationwide resulting in a draft document entitled “Trustworthy Servants of the People of God”; and

WHEREAS, due in part to the fact that this draft document was only available for public comment for 10 days, the ELCA Church Council at its meeting on April 6, 2019, voted “to decline to consider” “Trustworthy Servants of the People of God” and referred it back to the Domestic Mission unit for further study and revision, to bring a replacement document for “Vision and Expectations” to be considered by the ELCA Church Council in the fall of 2020; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to acknowledge the ways Vision and Expectations has been used to disqualify LGBTQIA people from rostered leadership and has perpetuated a culture of shame and secrecy regarding human sexuality and repent for the pain and harm it has caused by directing the Domestic Missions unit of the ELCA to take the following actions in preparing a successor document to “Vision and Expectations” for consideration by the ELCA Church Council:

- establish and promptly disclose a process to intentionally engage LGBTQIA rostered ministers and lay people in the further development of a replacement document to “Vision and Expectations”; and
- make the draft replacement document to “Vision and Expectations” open to comments by rostered ministers, members of the church, and other interested parties for no fewer than 60 days; and to provide a means for such comments to be offered anonymously if so desired by a commenter; and
- submit a written report to the Church Council that documents their consideration of the ELCA’s social teachings and the process by which it was determined which teachings should be elevated into expectations for rostered ministers, including justifications for expectations in the draft successor document which were

not previously part of “Vision and Expectations” and the rationale for decisions that omit expectations previously part of “Vision and Expectations”; and

- reaffirm in the draft successor document the expectations of “Vision and Expectations” for rostered ministers “to be committed to justice in the life of the church, society, and in the world” and “to acknowledge the church’s past and present failures and to lead the church in its repentance and renewal.”

Background

Since 1990, this church has used a document called “Vision and Expectations” to define the aspirations it has for rostered leaders. Rostered leaders who have come through the candidacy process in the ELCA or signed mobility papers have probably been asked, “Are you living in accordance with ‘Vision and Expectations’?”

This document was updated over the years, and during the latest revision, in 2019, the Conference of Bishops asked that it be rewritten and renamed. A new document called “Trustworthy Servants of the People of God” was written and sent to the Church Council in April 2019. During this time, it became clear that the process of writing this document (defined in the ELCA Constitution as being the work of the Domestic Mission unit, with review by the Conference of Bishops and approval by the Church Council) was inadequate due to the lack of diversity of voices necessary for the content development. Seminaries, lay members, pastors, deacons, candidates, people of color, women and members of the LBGTOIA communities especially asked for more input.

The Church Council “declined to consider the document ‘Trustworthy Servants of the People of God;’ and referred it back to the Domestic Mission unit for further review and redrafting... saying ‘such further consideration shall include a roadmap that consists of a process that intentionally includes diverse voices especially of those who have been most harmed by the misuse of ‘Vision and Expectations’ and to address, within the review, the current process of development and the faithful and just use of a policy document as a guide for this church.” [CC19.04.11]

The Church Council also “affirmed the pastoral message regarding ‘Vision and Expectations’ from the Conference of Bishops and support[ed] them in living into their commitment to apply the church’s standards for ministry with equity and compassion, to listen and take seriously the concerns of all our leaders—particularly those who historically have been marginalized—and to treat with dignity all those seeking to lead in our church” [CC19.04.11]

The Domestic Mission unit is tasked in the ELCA Constitution with developing this document. It is working to create a new process that will be inclusive and transparent. To that end, it has established a web page that will keep everyone up to date on what is happening. The new draft is to be ready by fall 2020 for Church Council action. The progress can be followed [here](#).

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorials from Delaware-Maryland and Metropolitan Washington, D.C. synods concerning the redrafting of the “Vision and Expectations” document; and

To affirm the inclusive process begun by Church Council action [CC19.04.11] which involves diverse voices and decline to take further action at this time.

Category D9: Bishop Evaluation

1. Western Iowa Synod (5F) [2019]

WHEREAS, ELCA bishops, at their installation are asked,

Will you carry out this ministry in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, and in harmony with the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ...

Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures and in your use of the means of grace? Will you love, serve, and pray for God's people, nourish them with the Word and Holy Sacraments, and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living ...

Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do ...

Will you guide, encourage, and support the ministers and the congregations of this Synod in their ministries ... ; and

WHEREAS, the people of the synod are asked, upon their bishop’s installation, “Will you pray for him/her, help and honor him/her for his/her work’s sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?”²⁶ and

WHEREAS, the bishops have stated in their pastoral message regarding “Trustworthy Servants,” “We aspire and pledge in the future to apply the church’s standards for ministry with equity and compassion, to listen and take seriously the concerns of all

²⁶ Sundaysandseasons.com Installation of a Bishop, Augsburg Fortress 2019

our leaders—particularly those who historically have been marginalized—and to treat with dignity all those seeking to lead in our church”;²⁷ and

WHEREAS, the bishops have also stated in *A Relational Agreement Among Synodical Bishops in the ELCA: A Shared Vision of Episcopacy and a Relational Agreement*,²⁸ “Bishops also are accountable to those among whom they serve, to one another, and to this entire church”;

WHEREAS, pastors are expected to undergo mutual ministry evaluations and discussions with a select group of people to self-evaluate as well as mutually evaluate their job descriptions, (†S14.12, S14.13, S14.14, S14.15 for pastors, †S8.12. for bishops) to identify what’s going well and what needs help in their ministry together for the purpose of identifying goals and objectives for their shared ministry; and

WHEREAS, current policy and polity structure does not provide to those whom bishops serve (synod staff, congregation members and rostered leaders) the opportunities commensurate with the mutual ministry evaluation process developed for pastors to evaluate and make accountability guidelines and recommendations in concert with the bishop and synod council in an effort to faithfully fulfill their vows made at that bishop’s installation; and

WHEREAS, a mutually agreed-upon ongoing process of evaluation and accountability of bishops by those they serve would foster a healthier and more effective approach to faithfully fulfilling the vows made by both bishop and church at the bishop’s installation, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA form a Trustworthy Bishops: A Mutual-Ministry Episcopal Evaluation Commission to provide a structure by which bishops are elected, evaluated, and participate in appropriate accountability standards to the expectations of their role as bishop by those in their synod whom they serve; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the evaluation process be clearly defined and added into the ELCA constitution and model constitution for synods by the next Churchwide Assembly.

RESOLVED, that there be adequate education, financial resources, and support to ensure the evaluative structures are put into place in the year following.

RESOLVED, that there be clear and just responses, such as Chapter 20.21.07 in the ELCA constitution, and added in the model synod constitution, in the event that such episcopal evaluation and accountability is not practiced faithfully within the synod.

Background

The memorial from Western Iowa Synod requests that a commission be formed “to provide a structure by which bishops are elected, evaluated, and participate in appropriate accountability standards to the expectations of their role as bishop.”

The authority and structure of a synod are outlined in the Constitution for Synods. The Conference of Bishops relies on its relational agreement with each other, which is a shared vision of Episcopacy and a Relational Agreement, as well as the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* for guidance on conduct issues. Synod Constitution **S9.02-S.12** covers how a synod will elect a bishop, and each synod uses its own constitution for its bishop elections. Some synods have an evaluation process. All synods have the ability to develop an evaluation process for their bishop.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Western Iowa Synod concerning evaluation of synod bishops; and

To decline to take action.

Category D10: Merging or Consolidating Synods

1. Western Iowa Synod (5F) [2019]

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 2018 and

WHEREAS, the ELCA continues to function under the original structure of sixty-five synods in nine regions; and

WHEREAS, the number of congregations, rostered leaders, and congregational members constituting the ELCA has declined significantly throughout those years: 5.2 million members in 1988 to 3.5 million today; 11,138 congregations in 1988 to 9,062 in 2018; 9,105 clergy with active calls to 6,868 between the years of 2005 to 2014; and

²⁷ <https://www.elca.org/About/Leadership/Church-Council/Trustworthy-Servants> 4/23/2019

²⁸ RELATIONAL AGREEMENT AMONG SYNODICAL BISHOPS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, [https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/2018 Toolkit for Synod Bishop Elections.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/2018%20Toolkit%20for%20Synod%20Bishop%20Elections.pdf) 04/29/2019

WHEREAS, contributions to synods and to the churchwide organization continue to decline at a rate that is raising serious concerns and questions about the fiscal sustainability of these structures of the church; and

WHEREAS, ELCA members as a church body are called to be excellent stewards of all God's resources, including but not limited to financial and people resources; and

WHEREAS, decline cannot steal this church's vibrancy and vitality it does invite and challenge the ELCA to become more efficient, faithful, and intentional about how the ELCA structure itself for faithful mission and how the ELCA functions best to the glory of God; and

WHEREAS, the constitution of the ELCA Chapter 10.01. states: "This church shall be divided into synods, the names and boundaries of which shall be determined by the Churchwide Assembly and included in the bylaws"; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Western Iowa Synod Assembly memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, requesting that a working group be established to work with and assist synods to evaluate the number and composition of synods needed to carry out faithful mission in a manner consistent with a Lutheran understanding of faithful stewardship and mission; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this working group report back to the ELCA Church Council at or before their November 2020 meeting; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA Church Council encourage the Conference of Bishops to take actions in their respective synods to implement changes that will strengthen the ELCA in its sustainability for mission and service to God's Kingdom and to the world.

Background

This memorial calls for the need to evaluate the number and composition of synods. The Conference of Bishops is already engaged in a process of looking into the size, structure and need of synods. This process is based on the recommendations of the "Towards a Faithful and Multidimensional Understanding of Sustainability" statement agreed upon by the Executive Committee of the Conference of Bishops, Executive Committee of the Church Council and administrative team of the churchwide organization. That recommendation is "Discussions on roles and structures of synods and the churchwide organization be accelerated as a priority action under goal 5 of Future Directions 2025, under the leadership of the Conference of Bishops. A plan and timeframe is to be established for decisions that need to be made within two years and how consultation with church leaders and members will be conducted." The Conference of Bishops is currently having these conversations. The sustainability statement with accompanying recommendations was approved by the Church Council at its April 2019 meeting [CC19.04.04], and is in accordance with *Future Directions 2025*, goal five: "A well-governed, connected and sustainable church."

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Western Iowa Synod concerning merging or consolidating synods; and

To encourage the Conference of Bishops to continue their work and planning on the number and composition of synods in accordance with goal five of *Future Directions 2025*.

Section E

ELCA Governing Documents

Category E1: Word and Service Constitutional Amendments

1. Nebraska Synod (4A) [2019]

WHEREAS the Church is forever reforming its means of witness and service; and

WHEREAS the current era of the Church brings both echoes of the Church of the first century and outlines of expanded models of witness for the Church of the twenty-first century; and

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has combined its Word and Service rosters into a single roster for Ministers of Word and Service, otherwise known as deacons; and

WHEREAS deacons have served in varied but consistently service-based ministry since the first generation of the Church and continue to minister in continually adapting modes and contexts; and

WHEREAS at its 2019 Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee, the ELCA will be considering a number of changes to its *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* relative to ministers of Word and Service, including making ordination the rite whereby deacons enter the roster of Word and Service; and

WHEREAS, the Nebraska Synod recognizes and gives thanks for the gifts that ministers of Word and Service bring to its congregations and ministries, and envisions the faithful and creative adaptability that deacons offer its mission today and into the future; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Nebraska Synod in Assembly memorializes the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt the changes to its *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* regarding the office of Word and Service as put forth by the ELCA Church Council.

Background

A memorial was received on the amendments proposed in *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* related to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service. One of the responsibilities of the Churchwide Assembly is to adopt amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The proposed constitutional amendments related to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service were part of the recommendations from the Entrance Rite Discernment Working Group, which was tasked with studying the entrance rite for ministers of Word and Service and the “representational principle” as it pertains to laity [ELCA Constitution 5.01.f.]. Their recommendations are the establishment of ordination as the entrance rite for the roster of Ministers of Word and Service and that ministers of Word and Service would not be counted as laypersons when implementing the “representational principle” of this church.

The Office of the Secretary incorporated the recommendations into the proposed constitutional amendments for Church Council consideration. In accordance with provision 22.11.a., the Church Council recommended adoption of the constitutional amendments at its November 2018 meeting. [CC18.11.25].

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Nebraska Synod recommending adoption of the constitutional amendments related to the roster of Ministers of Word and Service; and

To acknowledge the action of the 2019 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as the response of the Churchwide Assembly to the memorial from this synod.

Category E2: Binary Designations

1. New Jersey Synod (7A) [2019]

WHEREAS “humankind was created as God’s reflections” and “there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or citizen, male or female” and “all are one in Christ Jesus”; and

WHEREAS gender identity is increasingly recognized as a fluid, nonbinary facet of human identity, societal expectation, and social interaction; and

WHEREAS the current gender expectations for “lay members of assemblies, councils, committees, boards, or other organizational units” found within the Synod’s constitution arose out of the need for gender diversity, gender justice, and equal representation amongst all members of the Church; and

WHEREAS requiring the use of binary gender terms erases the self-declared and God-given identity of individuals within the Body of Christ, particularly of those transgender, gender-fluid, and nonbinary expressions; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize the 2019 Churchwide Assembly to *include nonbinary gender designations* within its Constitution and other governing documents; and be it further

RESOLVED that the New Jersey Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America memorialize Church’s Domestic Mission unit to *include nonbinary gender references* within its Candidacy and Mobility documents.

Background

Two actions of the 2016 Churchwide Assembly instructed the Church Council to address the issues of gender identity in our governing documents. This section, often called the “representational principles,” currently limits gender identity to male or female, stating that 50% be female and 50% be male. The proposed change is for the 50/50 to be changed to 45/45, thus allowing for the inclusion of those who previously felt excluded. The use of gender language is in transition in our society and culture, but it is hoped that this amendment is a beginning step to address concerns related to gender identity language in the governing documents.

The candidacy manual was revised with the replacement of he and she, and other candidacy forms will be revised by January 2020. Mobility documents still use the binary references.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the New Jersey Synod concerning the use of nonbinary gender designations or references in ELCA constitution, other governing documents, candidacy manual and mobility documents;

To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops Domestic Mission: Leadership Committee, to update mobility documents to allow for nonbinary gender designations and/or references;

To acknowledge the recent updates to the Candidacy Manual and scheduled updates to candidacy forms; and

To refer to the Church Council consideration of a continuing resolution that would identify the unnamed 10% in constitutional provisions naming 45% women/45% men as “women, men and gender nonbinary.”

Category E3: Titles of Ministers

1. Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod (8B) [2019]

WHEREAS, the term “minister of Word and Sacrament” is used as a title for ordained pastors in the ELCA, and the term “minister of Word and Service” is used as a title for deacons in the ELCA, and

WHEREAS, the titles are confusing to clergy and laity alike, and

WHEREAS, the title of “pastor” and of “deacon” are not confusing but specific titles for specific responsibilities as outlined in the Model Constitution for Congregations of the ELCA”; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod memorializes the 2019 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly to change the title of “minister of Word and Sacrament” to “pastor” and to change the title of “minister of Word and Service” to “deacon” for simplicity and clarity.

Background

The terms “minister of Word and Sacrament” and “minister of Word and Service” were developed to illustrate the similar yet distinctive functions of each of these rosters of this church. The terms also allow for “rostered ministers” to be used as a collective term. The terms “pastor” and “deacon” are used throughout the governing documents of this church as well. A reason to not use them solely is that there are synods who use the term “deacon” to refer to those who have been part of a synod program but are not on the roster of this church.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod concerning the title of ministers in the ELCA constitution but to decline to take action.

The Office of the Secretary has determined that four Synod Assembly memorials are resolutions that more properly should have been forwarded to Synod Councils. These resolutions were transmitted to the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through its Executive Committee.

The Church Council voted in November 1988 “that future communications from synods will be dealt with according to ELCA constitutional and bylaw provisions.” This affirms that

- Synod Assemblies address the Churchwide Assembly;
- Synod Councils address the Church Council; and
- Synod Councils address churchwide units through the Church Council’s Executive Committee, including forwarding resolutions adopted by the Synod Assembly.

The content of a Synod Assembly’s action determines whether it is a memorial or a resolution. Generally, memorials are reserved for broad policy matters that are the primary work of the assembly. Resolutions concern implementation of policies that already have been established or specific requests that concern either work already assigned or work that is related to the responsibilities of churchwide units. For example, if a previous assembly has taken action to establish a policy, the work is underway. Advice about the work goes to those units carrying out this responsibility.

The Office of the Secretary has provided the following information for all synods prior to each Synod Assembly:

Memorials

Synod Assemblies pass memorials to the Churchwide Assembly. This is in keeping with bylaw 12.21.c. in the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which declares, “The Churchwide Assembly shall . . . receive and consider proposals from Synod Assemblies.” Memorials should be reserved for broader policy issues that belong in the Churchwide Assembly. A memorial addresses only the Churchwide Assembly, not the Church Council or churchwide units. Memorials adopted by a Synod Assembly are submitted to the secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for transmittal to the Churchwide Assembly with a recommendation for action prepared by the Memorials Committee of the Churchwide Assembly. One of the final “Resolved” clauses should make clear that the action is a memorial, and should contain the concern to be discussed, such as:

RESOLVED, that the _____ Synod Assembly memorialize the [YEAR] Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to . . . [describe the proposed course or action for consideration.]

Resolutions

Synod councils may pass resolutions to the Church Council. Resolutions follow a more direct route than memorials, which must go to the Churchwide Assembly. “The Church Council shall act on resolutions from synod councils,” according to bylaw 14.21.11. Synod councils also may seek to address churchwide units through resolutions. These must be submitted to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for appropriate referral, according to bylaw 14.41.01.b., which specifies that the council’s Executive Committee shall “transmit resolutions from synods to the appropriate unit or units of the churchwide organization.”

Synods also may forward resolutions emerging from the Synod Assembly for attention by the Church Council or referral to churchwide units by the Church Council’s Executive Committee. This is the appropriate method for addressing specific churchwide units about a given concern.

In the final “Resolved” clause of a resolution to be referred to a churchwide unit, the Synod Assembly’s action should include the following:

RESOLVED, that the _____ Synod Assembly direct the _____ Synod Council to forward this resolution to the Church Council’s Executive Committee for proper referral and disposition under the bylaws and continuing resolutions of this church.

In response to the four Synod Assembly actions listed below, the Executive Committee recommended specific actions for consideration by the ELCA Church Council at its April 4, 2019, meeting. A report of the recommendations and referrals is included in the Report of the Church Council, Section XI of the Pre-Assembly Report, as information to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. The Synod Assembly actions are:

- Non-Stipendiary Service Under Call [Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D), 2017]
- Synodically Authorized Ministry [Northwestern Minnesota Synod (3D), 2017]
- Christ's Great Commission [New England Synod (7B), 2017]
- Membership in ELCA Congregations [Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod (8G), 2017]

Memorials Form

Appendix B

If a voting member desires the assembly to discuss a synod memorial or the Memorials Committee's response that is proposed for *en bloc* consideration, she or he may request that it be removed from the proposed *en bloc* resolution, provided the member's request is supported by ten other voting members. Such request shall be made in accordance with the following paragraph. The assembly then will consider and vote separately on the proposed response of the Memorials Committee. After removals, the *en bloc* resolution shall be voted upon without amendments or debate.

► **Separate consideration:** To call for such separate consideration, a voting member must submit notification electronically or on a paper form to the secretary of this church or the secretary's deputy prior to the established deadline on the memorials form. Paper forms are available from the secretary's deputy.

The deadline to submit a request for separate consideration of a recommended response to synodical memorials or to offer a substitute response to synodical memorials is Monday, August 5, 2019, at 9:45 p.m.

Motion Form

Appendix C

With respect to any recommendation made by the Memorials Committee in this report, a voting member of the assembly may offer a substitute motion to the committee's recommendation only if such member has given notice electronically or on a paper form by the established deadline. For such notice, a voting member who desires to offer a substitute to the recommendation of the Memorials Committee must complete the memorials form and submit it to the secretary of this church or the secretary's deputy prior to the established deadline. In addition, the text of the proposed substitute should be submitted on a **motion form** electronically or on a paper form to the secretary or the secretary's deputy. Paper forms are available from the secretary's deputy.

Consultation with at least one of the co-chairs of the Memorials Committee is required when a substitute will be moved and is recommended when any other amendment will be proposed to the response recommended by the Memorials Committee.

The deadline to submit a request for separate consideration of a recommended response to synod memorials or to offer a substitute response to synodical memorials is Monday, August 5, 2019, at 9:45 p.m.