



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

## Timeline of the ELCA Task Force on Church, State & Civic Participation

--firm dates in bold, *rest subject to adjustments*--

### **2019**

**Aug.** ELCA Churchwide Assembly authorized development of a social statement on Church, State and Civic Participation

### **2020**

*June* ELCA Church Council seats task force

**Nov. 6 & 7** Task force meeting #1

### **2021**

**Jan. 22-23** Work focuses on *Listening Events* and intensive study for task force

**Task Force meeting #2**

**March 13** Task Force meeting #3

**April 16** Report to Program and Services Committee of ELCA Church Council

**Sept. 10 & 11** Task force meeting #4

**Oct. 29 & 30** Task force meeting #5

### **2022**

**Feb. 4 & 5** Task Force meeting #6

**March 25 & 26** Task Force meeting #7

**May 6 & 7** Task Force meeting #8

*August 8-12* Progress report to CWA

**August 31** Conclusion of Listening Event period

**Sept. 24** Task Force meeting #9

*Late Nov.* Task Force Study published  
*Study response period begins throughout ELCA*

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|-----------------------|--|
| <b><u>2023</u></b>    | <i>Work focuses on developing a draft</i>  |
| <b>Feb. 11</b>        | <b>Task Force meeting #10</b>  |
| <b>April 21-22</b>    | <b>Task Force meeting #11</b>  |
| <b>May 6</b>          | <b>Task Force meeting #12</b>  |
| <b>Sept. 22-24</b>    | <b>Task Force meeting #13</b>  |
| <b>Oct. 15</b>        | <i>Study Response period ends</i>  |
| <b>October 28</b>     | <b>Task Force meeting #14</b>  |
| <i>Early Dec.</i>     | <i>Draft of a Social Statement published online and mailed to each congregation<br/>Draft response period begins throughout the ELCA</i> |
| <b><u>2024</u></b>    | <i>Comment period &amp; synod hearings on Draft continue through Oct. 1</i>  |
| <b>Jan-March</b>      | Comments and hearings underway   |
| <b>April/mid-June</b> | Synod assemblies, many will host hearings  |
| <b>Sept. 30</b>       | <b>Draft comment &amp; hearing period ends</b>   |
| <b>Oct. 11-12</b>     | <b>Task Force meeting #15</b>  |
| <b><u>2025</u></b>    |  |
| <b>Jan. 25-27</b>     | <b>Final task force meeting</b>  |
| <i>Mid-Feb.</i>       | <i>Proposed Social Statement &amp; Implementing Resolutions released</i>   |
| <i>Late Feb.</i>      | <i>Review by Conference of Bishops</i>   |
| <i>April 4-7</i>      | <i>ELCA Church Council considers for recommendation</i>  |
| <b>July 28-Aug. 2</b> | <b>Churchwide Assembly (considers statement for adoption)</b>  |
| <b>Early Sept.</b>    | Adopted text published online; text sent for Spanish translation   |
| <b>December</b>       | Official social statement printed & made available   |
| <b><u>2026</u></b>    |  |
| <b>Winter</b>         | Spanish Translation published  |
| <b>Fall</b>           | Study guide to statement published   |

## **Key Terms for understanding the timeline**

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

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

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

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

During the development process of a social statement, various **study documents** may be created to help members of the ELCA probe and think about issues under discussion. Most of these are brief, one-to-three session resources focusing on a specific topic. The task force also creates a "**full study**." The full study is written by the task force based on its investigations and provides a comprehensive resource of sustained themes and key topics. Each study document includes a response form that can be completed and sent to the task force by individuals or groups who have used this study.

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

\*Process Builders (PBs) are ELCA volunteers trained to strengthen the participation in developing an ELCA social statement. Process Builders work together with staff on the Theological Discernment Team (Office of the Presiding Bishop) to build awareness, communication, conversation, and engagement during a social statement process.