

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**April 3-6, 2025**  
**Chicago, Illinois**  
**AGENDA**

**Participants**

**Voting Members**

Pr. Lisa Ahlness  
Mr. Kevin Anderson  
Ms. Tracey Beasley  
Pr. Benjamin Bergren  
Pr. Marcus Bigott  
Pr. Nick Billardello  
Ms. Susan Boxberger  
Pr. Heather Brown  
Ms. Jamie Bruesehoff  
Pr. Bill Callister  
Pr. Leroy Cannon  
Bp. Yehiel Curry  
Ms. Divine  
Bp. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop  
Pr. Joanne Engquist  
Ms. Lori Fedyk, Treasurer  
Ms. Kerry Fehrman (*excused*)  
Ms. Sheena Foster  
Mr. Hans Giller  
Pr. Emily Hartner  
Ms. Kristy Henriksen  
Pr. Pamela Hoh

Ms. Cherrish Holland  
Mr. Rindra Josoa  
Pr. Gwendolyn King  
Mr. David Lenz  
Pr. Tara Lynn  
Ms. Olivia Martin-Call  
Mr. Mitch McCartney  
Mr. Joel Miller (*excused*)  
Mr. Ethan Miller-Perez  
Mr. Keoni Newman  
Deacon Kari Olsen  
Mr. Iván Perez  
Ms. Linda Rivera  
Deacon Sue Rothmeyer, Secretary  
Mr. Noah Roux  
Ms. Valerie Shaw (*excused*)  
Mr. Imran Siddiqui, Vice President  
Ms. Andraine Sinaga  
Mr. Loren Solberg  
Ms. Loni Taylor  
Ms. Jennifer Trom

**Liaison Bishops**

Bp. Laurie Jungling, Region 1  
Bp. Brenda Bos, Region 2  
Bp. Craig Schweitzer, Region 3  
Bp. Scott Johnson, Region 4  
Bp. Amy Current, Region 5  
Bp. Suzanne Dillahun, Region 6  
Bp. Christopher deForest, Region 7  
Bp. James Dunlop, Region 8 (*excused*)  
Bp. Kevin Strickland, Region 9

**Resource People**

**Operations: Office of the Presiding Bishop**

Ms. Jackie Baumhover, director for strategy  
Pr. Tim Brown, director, congregational stewardship  
Pr. Wyvetta Bullock, executive for administration  
Mr. Aaron Cooper, senior director, strategic communications  
Mr. Ryan Cumming, program director, theological ethics, education, and community engagement  
Ms. Jennifer DeLeon, director for racial justice  
Ms. Victoria Flood, senior director, Mission Support  
Ms. Cecilia Walker, people business partner  
Ms. Kathryn Lohre, executive, ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment  
Ms. Judith Roberts, senior director, diversity, equity, and inclusion  
Ms. Mary Streufert, director for gender justice and women's empowerment & director for Quality of Call Initiative  
Deacon John Weit, executive, worship  
Pr. Roger Willer, director, theological ethics  
Ms. Rachel Wind, executive, development

**Operations: Office of the Secretary**

Mr. Thomas Cunniff, general counsel  
Mr. Dan Eppley, manager for official documentation  
Pr. Keith Fry, executive, Office of the Secretary administration  
Mr. Paul Irwin, associate general counsel  
Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe, executive, synod relations  
Ms. Jodi Slattery, executive, governance

**Christian Community and Leadership (CCL)**

Pr. Philip Hirsch, executive director  
Pr. Sara Cutter, senior director, operational effectiveness

**Service and Justice (SJ)**

Pr. Khader El-Yateem, executive director  
Pr. Barbara Lund, senior director, operations and innovation

**Innovation (INO)**

Mr. Iain Chester, executive director

**Press**

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, public relations manager

**Separately Incorporated Ministries**

Mr. Tim Blevins, president and CEO, Augsburg Fortress Publishers  
Ms. Jennifer Hockenbery, interim executive director, Women of the ELCA  
Mr. Christopher Johnson, president and CEO, Portico Benefit Services  
Ms. Eva Roby, president and CEO, Mission Investment Fund  
Ms. Annette Shoemaker, interim president and CEO, ELCA Foundation

**Ecumenical Guests**

Pr. Kennetha Bigham-Tsai, The United Methodist Church (*excused*)  
Pr. Dale Buettner, The Reformed Church in America (*excused*)  
Mr. Justin Rabbach, The Moravian Church  
Pr. Deborah Jackson, The Episcopal Church  
Bp. Susan Johnson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  
Ms. Elona Street Stewart, Presbyterian Church in America (*excused*)

**Advisory Members**

Pr. Alejandro Mejia, president, Latino Ministries Association  
Pr. Larry Thiele, representative, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association  
Ms. Dina Tannous, vice president, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage  
Ms. Desta Goehner, president, Association of White Lutherans for Racial Justice  
Pr. Moses Penumaka, president, Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders  
Pr. Jesse W Brown Jr, president, African Descent Lutheran Association  
Ms. Aubrey Thonvold, executive director, ReconcilingWorks

**Thursday, April 3, 2025**

- 9:00 a.m.      Executive Committee, Epiphany I and II
- 12:00 p.m.      Lunch available for Executive Committee, outside Epiphany
- 1:00 p.m.      Officer Performance Reviews
- 2:00 p.m.      **HOLY COMMUNION**, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Chapel  
                  Presider: Pr. Jesse Brown  
                  Preacher: Pr. Bill Callister  
                  Assisting Minister: Tracey Beasley  
                  Lector: Divine

**PLENARY SESSION ONE**

Council Room  
April 3, 2025  
3:15 – 6:00 p.m.

**I.A Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda**

Agenda items have been distributed electronically. Additional items will be distributed at the meeting to the members of the Church Council and invited resource people. The times noted in the agenda are estimates and provided for information only.

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.

**I.B [Report from the Presiding Bishop](#)**

**I.C Ecumenical Greeting, Bishop Susan Johnson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**

**I.D Report of the Executive Committee**

**I.D.1 ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plans** (*executive session for Church Council, Liaison Bishops, Administrative Team, Minutes Team, Legal Counsel, and Portico Benefit Services representatives*)

At its November 2025 online meeting, the Church Council will be asked to consider plan amendments that will implement recommendations made by the Benefits reExamined Project Team.

At this April 2025 Church Council meeting, Portico Benefit Services requests endorsement of the recommended changes that will be included in those plan amendments. This endorsement is requested now in order to begin to communicate those changes to all members. Portico Benefit Services' proposed changes received the endorsement of its Board of Trustees at its meeting on February 20, 2025. These changes were affirmed by the Conference of Bishops at its meeting on Feb. 26, 2025.

The changes are outlined in the "Proposed changes to ELCA Medical and Dental Benefits Plans" document in the Private Executive Session channel.

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

[To be provided during executive session]

**I.D.2 Common Statement on the Filioque**

The 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council of Nicaea is a significant opportunity to reflect on the importance of this church's ecumenical self-understanding and vocation. Recent developments in Lutheran-Orthodox relations present the possibility of continuing the journey toward reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christianity after nearly a millennium of church division over the addition of the filioque clause to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The Joint International Commission on Theological Dialogue between the Lutheran World Federation and the Orthodox Church's 2024 [Common Statement on the Filioque](#) offers a unique breakthrough Reception

of this text by the Churchwide Assembly would reflect the acceptance of the invitation to live into the commitments reflected therein, namely further reflection on our Trinitarian theology and the role of the Holy Spirit and continued steps toward local dialogue, mutual understanding, and reconciliation between Lutheran and Orthodox siblings in light of our common affirmation that the filioque is no longer church-dividing.

### **CC ACTION**

#### **Recommended:**

***To recommend the following for reception by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**RESOLVED, that the ELCA prayerfully engage in commemorating the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ecumenical council at Nicaea, and the common date of Easter, as an opportunity for continued theological reflection on the Trinity and the role of the Holy Spirit and reconciliation between the Western and Eastern churches; and be it further**

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

**I.D.3 Diversity Triennial Percentage Goals**

In accordance with the ELCA continuing resolutions in Chapter 5, each expression of this church is to annually assess its ethnic and racial diversity when compared to the demographic data of its community or territory, and each synod is to submit a report on its progress toward its goals.

The Church Council is to establish triennial percentage goals for this church to meet its commitment to ethnic and racial diversity. “The minimum goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.” [continuing resolution 5.01.D24.]

**I.E Q&A on Vice President, Secretary, and Chair of Conference of Bishops reports**

This is an opportunity to ask questions on the written reports provided by the [vice president](#), [secretary](#), and [chair of the Conference of Bishops](#), approximately 15 minutes is allotted for this time.

**I.F Ecumenical Greetings, The Episcopal Church and The Moravian Church**

*10-minute Recess*

**I.G Presentation on the Report and Recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church**

The CRLC met March 13-15 for its twelfth and final meeting. At the meeting, the CRLC adopted its report and recommendations, giving editorial license to the Planning and Report Committee of the CRLC. The commission members signed off on the final report and recommendations, which can be found [here](#).

The CRLC is publishing further educational materials and information to prepare the wider church to receive the CRLC's full report in advance of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. More information is available at [ELCA.org/CRLC](http://ELCA.org/CRLC).

CRLC co-chairs, Pr. Carla Christopher and Leon Schwartz, will present and address questions during this approximately one-hour agenda time. The recommendations will be considered during plenary session three.

**I.H Personal Reflection on Faith, Pr. Pamela Hoh**

6:15 p.m. Welcome Dinner, Augsburg Room  
*Assorted sodas (complimentary); Wine and beer available (\$5 suggested donation)*

**Friday, April 4, 2025**

- 6:30 a.m. Breakfast, Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 a.m.)
- 7:30 a.m. Board Development Committee, Epiphany I and II (*working breakfast*)

**PLENARY SESSION TWO**

Augsburg Room  
April 4, 2025  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**II.A Racial Justice and Gender Justice Education**

**II.B Announcements**

- 12:15 p.m. Mid-Day Prayer, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Chapel  
Led by Bp. Susan Johnson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch, Augsburg Room  
Ecumenical Liaison Lunch, reserved seating in Augsburg Room
- 1:30 p.m. Individual Board Development Committee members meet with Church Council  
committee chairs and resource staff (*various committee meeting room locations*)
- 2:00 p.m. Committees meet  
Budget and Finance, Epiphany I and II  
Christian Community and Leadership, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Screening Room  
Faith, Society, and Innovation, Pentecost  
Legal and Constitutional Review, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor HR Training Room  
Service and Justice, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Planning Room
- 6:00 p.m. Celebration Dinner, Augsburg Room  
Recognition of Class of 2025

On behalf of a grateful church, we are blessed to have this opportunity to say farewell and celebrate with the Church Council Class of 2025. They have served thoughtfully and diligently as this church's board of directors.

Members of the Class of 2025: Kevin Anderson, Tracey Beasley, Benjamin Bergren, Marcus Bigott, Nick Billardello, Susan Boxberger, Bill Callister, Divine, Joanne Engquist, Kerry Fehrman, Emily Hartner, Pamela Hoh, Cherrish Holland, David Lenz, Tara Lynn, Ethan Miller, Keoni Newman, Noah Roux, Valerie Shaw, Andraine Sinaga, Loren Solberg, and Loni Taylor.

**Saturday, April 5, 2025**

- 6:30 a.m. Breakfast, Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 a.m.)
- 9:00 a.m. ***Deadline for Removal of Items from En Bloc***  
***Deadline for New Business***

**PLENARY SESSION THREE**

Council Room  
April 5, 2025  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**III.A Recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church**

The Church Council will consider and act on the recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. The Executive Committee will be bringing forth the recommendations. The findings and report can be found here.

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

**To receive with appreciation “Immediate Action on Dismantling Racism” Recommendation 1 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church which urges the creation of mutual accountability measures and compliance incentives across all expressions of the ELCA to ensure the proactive centering of dismantling racism within the denomination;**

**To authorize the Executive Committee of Church Council to consult with the Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD) Advisory Team and their resource staff to review the purpose of the Advisory Team;**

**To request the Office of the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with Christian Community and Leadership and Service and Justice home areas, to identify possible individuals for service on the STAD Advisory Team and to provide those names to the Executive Committee;**

**To authorize the Executive Committee to appoint members, including a bishop and a Church Council member, to the STAD Advisory Team;**

**To authorize the Executive Committee to identify persons from the Church Council to work with the STAD Advisory Team to create an ELCA handbook, including recommended Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) standards for congregations;**

**To commit the Church Council to continue to work on cultural competency training in every official meeting of the Church Council.**

**To encourage the Conference of Bishops to work on creating DEIA standards for synods (including synod staff and councils), and to continue to work on cultural competency training within the conference;**

**To request the senior director, diversity, equity, and inclusion to report annually to the Spring meeting of the Church Council regarding diversity of the synods and of the churchwide organization relative to historically underrepresented groups and assessments of initiatives that enable and advance anti-racism and diversity measures across all expressions of this church; and**



To designate financial and human resources to incentivize engagement in multicultural educational events and creation of materials for ongoing leadership development (rostered and lay) across this church.

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

To receive with appreciation “Accountability within the ELCA” Recommendation 2.1 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To direct the Office of the Secretary to continue to explore collaboration with this church’s full-communion partners to develop processes for conflict resolution within this church that are endorsed by, but independent of, the churchwide organization and which are responsive to the needs of historically underrepresented groups, referring, as appropriate, to the considerations outlined in the rationale of “Accountability within the ELCA;” and

To consult with the Conference of Bishops on such resources and present a report by the Fall 2026 meeting of the Church Council.

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

To receive with appreciation “Accountability within the ELCA” Recommendation 2.2 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To request that the Committee on Appeals:

- a. develop resources to help synods identify candidates with the appropriate spiritual gifts and demonstrated competencies in working with varied ethnic backgrounds to serve on synod consultation committees, referring, as appropriate, to the considerations outlined in the rationale of “Accountability within the ELCA;” consult with the Conference of Bishops on such resources; and present a report by the Fall 2026 meeting of the Church Council;
- b. develop resources for training synod consultation committees in conflict resolution, referring as appropriate, to the considerations outlined in the rationale of “Accountability within the ELCA,” consult with the Conference of Bishops on such resources, and present a report by the Fall 2026 meeting of the Church Council; and

To direct the Office of the Secretary and the Christian Community and Leadership home area to provide staff support to the Committee on Appeals for such work.

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

To receive with appreciation “Task Force on Interdependence and Purpose” Recommendation 3 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To establish a task force on interdependence and purpose consisting of no more than 12 voting members, of whom no more than five members shall also have been voting members of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, and directing the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint the task force, fulfilling the responsibilities of the Church Council related to nominations in accordance with 14.41.01.c.;

To populate the task force according to the representational principles of this church;

To request the appointment process be completed prior to the November 2025 Church Council meeting;

To direct the task force to undertake the following:

- Assess the adequacy and clarity of the several purpose statements in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* and make recommendations for modification;
- Assess the impact of the current governance structures and interdependence of the three expressions of this church on the fulfillment of its mission, and in so doing, develop recommendations for governance improvements; and
- Consider how existing governance structures have (or may have) perpetuated systemic inequalities, and in so doing, develop recommendations to promote inclusion and equity;
- Evaluate the current structure of the synods (including number, geographic boundaries, governance structure, and other relevant factors) and make recommendations for change;

To direct the task force to consult with the Conference of Bishops regarding its work;

To direct the task force to present its report and recommendations to the Fall 2027 meeting of the Church Council;

To make periodic progress reports to the Executive Committee as the committee may request from time to time;

To direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Secretary to provide staff support to the task force; and

To invite this church to join us in prayer as this church embarks on this process.

### **III.B Bible Study, led by Bishop Leila Ortiz (*Special Order for 10 a.m.*)**

This 30-minute Bible study will focus on this church's repentance of the sins of patriarchy and sexism, particularly as this church prepares for a public confession and repentance at the 2025 Churchwide Assembly. Bishop Leila Ortiz, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod, will join the Church Council virtually to lead this session at 10:00 a.m. Central time.

### **III.C Recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (*cont.*)**

The recommendations of the CRLC will continue for the remainder of this plenary session.

### **CC ACTION**

#### **Recommended:**

To receive with appreciation "Financial Coordinating Task Force" Recommendation 4 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To authorize the Executive Committee to create a Financial Coordinating Task Force that will be composed of no more than eight members with financial expertise representing all three expressions of this church, including a synod bishop. In addition, a member of the Budget and Finance or Audit committees will be appointed as a member. The ELCA treasurer will be an *ex officio* member. Staff support will be provided by the Office of the Treasurer and the Office of the Presiding Bishop;

To request that the task force:

- a. review existing resources of the ELCA or educational institutions which support financial management;
- b. explore opportunities where greater collaboration or shared processes/resources among the financial functions of the three expressions of this church may be beneficial;
- c. commit to sharing best practices, resources, and tools related to financial management;

- d. affirm the commitment of the financial separately incorporated ministries (ELCA Foundation, Mission Investment Fund, Portico Benefit Services) to continue collaboration amongst themselves and to identify possible ways to enhance operational efficiencies, to leverage synergies, to align strategic initiatives, and to identify opportunities for cost savings and to receive a report from the financial separately incorporated ministries to the Financial Coordinating Task Force by December 2026; and

To present a report on the work of the task force at the Spring 2027 Church Council meeting.

#### **CC ACTION**

##### **Recommended:**

To receive with appreciation the “Creation of a Task Force to Develop a Comprehensive Congregational Management and Governance Toolkit and Orientation Program” Recommendation 5 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To encourage rostered ministers, congregations, and synods to identify and share knowledge of existing congregational management and governance resources from the churchwide organization, seminaries, and the Publishing House of the ELCA, but to decline the establishment of a task force.

#### **CC ACTION**

##### **Recommended:**

To receive with appreciation “Strengthening the Framework for Ministers of Word and Service” Recommendation 6 from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church;

To affirm the vocation of ministers of Word and Service to equip the baptized for ministry in daily life and to serve this church’s mission in the world through teaching, advocacy, and service;

To affirm the existing educational resources about the theology and practice of Word and Service ministry;

To direct the churchwide organization to post such educational resources on the ELCA website; and

To encourage congregations and synods to provide education about the role of ministers of Word and Service and the varied contexts in which they serve, emphasizing their contributions to this church’s mission and ministry.

#### **CC ACTION**

##### **Recommended:**

To receive with gratitude the findings and recommendations from the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) to be shared with the 2025 Churchwide Assembly;

To give thanks to God for the faithful, dedicated, and conscientious members of the CRLC who gave tirelessly of their time and energy to the commission's mandate “to reconsider the statements of purpose for each of the expressions of this church, the principles of its organizational structure, and all matters pertaining thereunto, being particularly attentive to our shared commitment to dismantle racism;” and

To encourage the members, congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and related institutions, organizations, and ministries of this church to use this report in their continued discernment and engagement to live more fully into God's mission in this changing world.

12:15 p.m.

**ADVISORY MEMBER LUNCH PRESENTATIONS**

*Boxed lunches available outside Council Room (see assignments)*

African Descent Lutheran Association, Epiphany I and II

Association of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, 5<sup>th</sup> fl. Screening Room

Latino Ministries Association, Pentecost

Association of American Indians and Alaska Natives of the ELCA, Advent

Asian and Pacific Islander Association, 6<sup>th</sup> fl. Planning Room

Association of White Lutherans for Racial Justice, 10<sup>th</sup> fl. HR Training Room

Reconciling Works, Augsburg Room

**PLENARY SESSION FOUR**

Council Room  
April 5, 2025  
2:00 – 3:45 p.m.

**IV.A Recommendations of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (*cont.*)**

An additional 30 minutes are scheduled for any remaining recommendations to be considered.

**IV.B Report of the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee**

The following report is provided by the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee's meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the [Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee section](#) of Microsoft Teams.

**IV.B.1 Proposed Social Message on White Supremacy**

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

**To authorize staff of the Theological Discernment Team, in accordance with “Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns (2018),” to review and bring a recommendation regarding the request for a social message on White Supremacy to the November 2025 Church Council meeting.**

**IV.B.2 Proposed Social Statement on *Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All***

The 2019 Churchwide Assembly voted to “authorize the development of an ELCA social statement on government, civic engagement and the relationship of church and state that will allow thorough attention to scriptural, historical, theological, and social issues as a means to probe for shared convictions and establish this church’s comprehensive teaching in accordance with ‘Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns’ (2018).” [CA19.05.29]

The ELCA Task Force on Studies on Civic Life and Faith began its work in the fall of 2020. This work included Listening Events, creation of a study for use throughout the church, the posting of a Draft from January to October 2024 and some 50 Hearings on the Draft. The task force revised the Draft in light of feedback and offers this church the [Proposed Social Statement entitled \*Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All\*](#). This text has unanimous consensus of the task force. The Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee reviewed the text and considered any amendments at its committee meeting.

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

*To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:*

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

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

*To recommend the following implementing resolutions for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:*

1. To urge members of this church to pray, participate in, and advocate for civic life in the United States that reflects God's activity and call seeking the well-being of all people and creation marked by justice and peace;
2. To encourage members to draw inspiration from the ELCA social message on Government and Civic Engagement: Discipleship in a Democracy, which highlights the call to embrace daily our baptismal vocation through active participation in self-governance;
3. To reaffirm and encourage use across our church of other existing social teaching and policy documents that promote robust and wise civic participation, such as those that address matters of voting, campaign finance, public service, nonviolent protest, and the like;
4. To recognize with deep appreciation the commitments and efforts by those in this church—including but not limited to churchwide organization teams such as Witness in Society and Building Resilient Communities, as well as the many church-related social ministry organizations and educational institutions—that contribute to healthy civic life through service, advocacy, or education;
5. To call upon all members of this church to intentionally evaluate the dangers of polarization and the threats posed by disregard for democratic practices and self-government;
6. To encourage ELCA worshiping assemblies and ministries to build bridges, foster reconciliation, practice communal discernment, provide opportunities for difficult conversations, and address polarization constructively in their communities;
7. To encourage synod leaders, in collaboration with other appropriate bodies, to explore creating or expanding state public policy advocacy in their domains as part of the ELCA Witness in Society network, similar to those already existing in several states;
8. To direct the churchwide office, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, the theologians, and ethicists, rostered leaders, as well as elected lay leaders, to develop guidelines and protections consistent with this social statement regarding the roles in civic life of representatives of this church with official responsibility to preach, teach, and lead on behalf of our church;
9. To call upon the publishing and educational ministries of this church, including but not limited to Augsburg Fortress Publishers, to consider the need for civics education curricula, civic participation guidance, and related theological reflection, and to create these in multiple formats, including multimedia and online;
10. To call upon the publishing and educational ministries of this church, including but not limited to Augsburg Fortress Publishers, to explore the need for resources dedicated to nonviolent resistance and peaceful engagement in civic life, with special concern for materials dedicated to religious and political histories, liturgical guidance, and training for rostered and lay leaders;
11. To direct the Witness and Society Team of the Churchwide Organization and call upon all expressions of this church in their advocacy efforts to support and advocate for policies and laws consistent with this social statement and to give sustained attention to the fresh convictions and commitments found here in its creation of programs and projects;

12. To direct the Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop to share this statement as a resource for dialogue, discernment, and collaboration with ecumenical and Inter-religious partners toward the well-being of all people and creation from within the U.S. context;
13. To urge faculty, staff, and administrators of ELCA-related colleges, universities, and seminaries to renew and emphasize education toward callings in public service and to model and encourage dynamic civic participation among their students;
14. To direct appropriate units in the churchwide organization, coordinated by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, to establish or oversee processes for implementation of these resolutions, with an initial report to the fall meeting of the ELCA Church Council in 2027.

#### **IV.B.2 Proposed Edited Social Statement on *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009)**

The 2022 Churchwide Assembly voted “to authorize a social statement reconsideration to revise *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (2009) so that its wording reflects current church understanding, church policy, civil law, and public acceptance of marriage of same-gender and gender non-conforming couples in accordance with ‘Policies and Procedures of the ELCA for Addressing Social Concerns’ (2018).” [CA22.01.07]

This action authorized reconsideration for potential editing of three specific sections of the social statement. Consistent with the procedure for a reconsideration to edit, this action did not authorize reconsideration of the substantive meaning of the sections. Additionally, the 2022 Churchwide Assembly voted to authorize a reconsideration for possible revision of pages 19-21 of the original social statement. [CA22.03.23]

The ELCA Reconsiderations Task Force began its work in 2024 and was directed to handle the two reconsiderations consecutively – first, the reconsideration for possible edits and, second, the reconsideration for possible revision.

Consistent with other social statement processes, the task force heard from experts, prepared a draft edited social statement, and collected public comment on the draft edited social statement from October 2024 through January 2025. At its February 2025 meeting, the task force considered the public feedback, included an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data gathered via a survey, and made revisions in light of this feedback. The task force now offers this church the [Proposed Edited Social Statement](#) entitled *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*. This text has unanimous consensus from the task force. The Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee will review the text and consider any amendments at its committee meeting.

#### **CC ACTION**

##### **Recommended:**

*To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:*

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

3:45 p.m.      Break

**PLENARY SESSION FIVE**

Council Room  
April 5, 2025  
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**V.A Personal Reflection on Faith, Pr. Bill Callister**

**V.B Update on God’s Love Made Real**

Jackie Baumhover, director for strategy, will present a 15-minute update on God’s Love Made Real. An additional 15 minutes is allotted for any questions following the presentation.

**V.C Legal Briefing** (*executive session for Church Council, Liaison Bishops, Administrative Team, Minutes Team, and Legal Counsel*)

5:30 p.m. Dinner (on your own)



**Sunday, April 6, 2025**

6:30 a.m. Breakfast, Marriott Hotel (Buffet opens at 6:30 am)

9:00 a.m. **HOLY COMMUNION**, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Chapel

Presider: Pr. Pamela Hoh

Preacher: Bp. Elizabeth Eaton

Assisting Minister: Jennifer Trom

Lector: Hans Giller

Offering: ELCA World Hunger

**PLENARY SESSION SIX**

Council Room

April 6, 2025

10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**VI.A Personal Reflection on Faith, Pr. Marcus Bigott**

**VI.B [Report from the Treasurer](#)**

**VI.C Report of the Budget and Finance Committee**

The following report is provided by the Budget and Finance Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee's meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the Budget and Finance Committee section of Microsoft Teams.

**VI.C.1 Church Council Designated Fund**

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

**To approve adding \$159,399 (the balance of net revenues over expenses for the year ended Jan. 31, 2025) to the Church Council Designated Fund, "Support for possible work from Churchwide Assembly Actions."**

**VI.C.2 [Revision to FY25 Current Fund Spending Authorization](#)**

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

**To approve a reduction in the 2025 fiscal year current fund spending authorization from \$67,875,000 to \$65,375,000.**

### **VI.C.3 Proposed 2026–2028 Triennium Budget**

The Church Council is responsible for submitting budget proposals for approval by the Churchwide Assembly and authorizing expenditures within the parameters of approved budgets [ELCA Constitution 14.21.05.].

### **CC ACTION**

#### **Recommended:**

*To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:*

#### **2026 Budget Proposal**

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

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

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

#### **2027 Budget Proposal**

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

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

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

#### **2028 Budget Proposal**

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

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

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

### **VI.D Report of the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee**

The following report is provided by the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee. Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following the committee's meeting. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in the meeting. Background information can be located in the [Legal and Constitutional Review Committee](#) section of Microsoft Teams.

#### **VI.D.1 Additional Definition to *Definition and Guidelines for Discipline***

At its November 2024 meeting, the Church Council referred to the Committee on Appeals the further consideration of proposed bylaws 7.31.12. and 7.61.08. [CC24.11.18] because the proposed bylaws dealt with matters outlined in *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*. The Committee on Appeals recommends:

- adding a definition of 'hate groups' to the definitions section within *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* (see p. 5);
- modifying B.8. of Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers (see p. 9); and
- modifying B. of Guidelines for Discipline of Members of Congregations (see p. 13).

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

**To approve the additional definition of ‘hate groups’ to the definitions section within *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* and the related modifications to the Guidelines for Discipline of Rostered Ministers and Members of Congregations as set forth in “[Proposed Changes to Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline](#).”**

**VI.D.2 Proposed continuing resolution amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America***

The Office of the Secretary recommends proposed amendments to various continuing resolutions in the ELCA Constitution. In addition, the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee members worked with members of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church regarding the inclusion of Association of Synod Vice Presidents into Chapter 10 of the ELCA Constitution.

All the proposed amendments will be found in “[Proposed Amendments-Continuing Resolutions](#)” in the Public Current Meeting channel under the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee folder.

The process for continuing resolutions is specified in Chapter 22 of the ELCA Constitution. A two-thirds vote of the Church Council is required for adoption.

**CC ACTION** [Two-thirds approval required]

**Recommended:**

**To adopt the amendments in Chapter 10 of the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as described in “Proposed Amendments – Continuing Resolutions.”**

**VI.D.3 Proposed bylaw amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America***

Since the November 2024 Church Council meeting, [additional amendments to certain bylaws](#) have been identified for consideration by the Churchwide Assembly. The process for adopting bylaw amendments at a Churchwide Assembly is specified in Chapter 22 of the ELCA Constitution.

A two-thirds vote of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly is required for adoption.

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

*To recommend the following for adoption by the 2025 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:*

**To adopt, *en bloc*, with the exception of such amendments as may be considered separately, the amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*; and**

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

**VI.E Brief reports from other committees**

During this 25-minute agenda time, the following reports will be provided by the Christian Community and Leadership Committee, Service and Justice Committee, and the Board Development Committee.

Additional items or revised actions may be distributed following committee meetings. *En Bloc* items will be acted upon later in this plenary session. Background information can be located in the relevant committee section of Microsoft Teams.

12:00 p.m. Lunch, Augsburg Room

**PLENARY SESSION SEVEN**

Council Room  
April 6, 2025  
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

**VII.A Unfinished Business**

**VII.A.1 Report of the Executive Committee**

**CC ACTION** *[two-thirds approval required]*

**Recommended:**

**To adopt the amendment of continuing resolution 5.01.A24. in the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as follows:**

***...The minimum goal shall be that at least 10 percent of the members of this church shall be persons of color and/or persons whose primary language is other than English.***

**VII.B Update on Church Property Resource Hub**

This 20-minute update will introduce the newly launched Church Property Resource Hub. The goal of this initiative is to encourage pastors and leaders across the church to use this resource to make informed and smart real estate decisions. Church Council members can be key advocates for this project in their synods and congregations. Feedback from Church Council on issues to address and the delivery system used is welcomed to help strengthen and broaden the resource's use.

Additionally, staff are prioritizing a reassessment of the churchwide organization's existing policies and procedures regarding Holy Closures. Any policy changes will require Church Council involvement. Rachel Wind, executive for development, and Pr. Tim Brown, director for congregational stewardship, will be present to provide this update and respond to any questions.

**VII.C New Business**

**VII.D Consideration of Items Removed from *En Bloc***

**VII.E *En Bloc* Approval of Certain Items**

The following *en bloc* resolution includes agenda items that will be considered on the last day of the Church Council meeting. Inclusion of these items in the *en bloc* action reflects a judgment that these items are relatively non-controversial in nature and may not require plenary discussion and a separate vote.

Each of the items is noted as [*En Bloc*] in [En Bloc Items](#), [Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions](#), and [Responses to Synod Actions](#). On the first day of the Council meeting, the chair will remind members of the deadline to remove items from *en bloc* consideration in order to discuss separately any of the items listed in the *en bloc* resolution; any such item will be removed from the *en bloc* resolution and discussed at the appropriate point in the agenda.

The chair will not call for a discussion or separate vote on those items that are not removed from the *en bloc* resolution. The items remaining in the *en bloc* resolution normally will be considered as one of the last items of council business.

**CC ACTION** [Two-thirds approval required]

**Recommended:**

**To adopt the amendments, other than amendments to Chapter 10, to the *Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* as described in “Proposed Amendments – Continuing Resolutions.”**

**CC ACTION**

**Recommended:**

**To take action *En Bloc* on the items listed in *En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions, and Responses to Synod Actions.**

**VII.F Primer on Church Council Role at 2025 Churchwide Assembly**

The Board Development Committee recommended that a primer on the role of Church Council members at the Churchwide Assembly be presented by Jodi Slattery, executive for governance and chair of the Churchwide Assembly Planning Committee. A summary of the information to be shared is below.

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is currently comprised of 43 members, including the four officers of this church and the chair of the Conference of Bishops. The 38 elected members of the Church Council serve as voting members of the assembly. The four ELCA officers are also voting members by virtue of the offices held.

Church Council members provide leadership by facilitating the hearings prior to the Churchwide Assembly, serving as a resource on the Church Council actions recommended to the Assembly, serving on assembly committees, and serving as liaisons for the presiding bishop and secretary nominees. Members will be notified by the vice president of specific assignments early in the summer.

Information about the [public schedule](#) for the 2025 Churchwide Assembly is available on ELCA.org.

**VII.G Evaluation and Debriefing**

**Adjournment**