

Text as adopted by ELCA Church Council on November 14, 2015. A final copy edit and format revision have yet to be done according to ELCA publication style; this preliminary version should be cited or referenced as such.

## Foundational Documentation for the Social Message on Gender-based Violence

With the social message on gender-based violence and this accompanying document, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America speaks to both church and society. This document is intended to be used for in-depth analysis and reference.

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### 1. What is gender-based violence?

Gender-based violence is physical, sexual or emotional harm directed at a person in order to create or maintain power and control.<sup>1</sup> This power and control is linked to gender, sex and sexuality. Some people hurt other people because of ***biological characteristics***, [font in bold and italics indicates a word in the glossary] because of perceived or self-identified *gender* or sexual orientation, or because of their difference from social or religious definitions of masculinity and femininity.

Gender-based violence expresses power through coercion and threat of another's well-being. The person committing the violence violates someone's physical, psychological and/or spiritual integrity. Gender-based violence occurs in a multitude of forms and may be experienced at any point in a person's life. This violent exercise of power may occur for a brief moment or may be a long-term pattern. This power dynamic is possible in every relationship. Everyone is, therefore, potentially affected by gender-based violence.

### Where is gender-based violence happening in our world?

People of all classes and of all ethnicities in all nations suffer violence inflicted on them by others for reasons based on gender. Gender-based violence happens in both private and public situations. It occurs in families, other social relations, the church, the state, education and in society more broadly. It is a problem in the United States and globally. What happens in this church and in this country is interconnected to manifestations of gender-based violence around the world.

The ELCA social message and this foundational documentation address the U.S. context in which we have immediate call and responsibility. While focused nationally, however, these documents recognize the global character of the problem and the importance of working worldwide to address it. The ELCA celebrates the relationships of ongoing accompaniment concerning gender-based violence with

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<sup>1</sup> The ELCA has addressed other aspects of violence in God's world in several social teaching documents. As an illustration, see "A social message on Community Violence" (Chicago: ELCA, 1994), which can be accessed at [www.ELCA.org/socialmessages](http://www.ELCA.org/socialmessages).

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41 global partners and companions. It is through shared service, advocacy, theological dialogue, and  
42 ecumenical and inter-faith relations that it becomes possible to care wisely for people’s immediate needs  
43 and to address the sources and contexts of gender-based violence.<sup>2</sup>

## 44 2. Who is involved?

### 45 Who is especially targeted?

46 While many different people, including men and boys, are affected by gender-based violence,  
47 women and girls<sup>3</sup> are especially targeted. Nationally, 25 percent of women over the age of 18 have  
48 experienced sexual or physical violence at the hands of a current or former intimate partner. Globally the  
49 percentage rises to 30 percent.<sup>4</sup>

50 Girls are especially vulnerable. Of the 18.2 percent of women who have survived rape or  
51 attempted rape, 12.3 percent of those were younger than age 12 when they were first raped, and 29.9  
52 percent were between the ages of 11 and 17. Girls ages 16-19 are four times more likely than the general  
53 population to be the victims<sup>5</sup> of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault.

54 In addition to women and girls, those who are *gender non-conforming* also live with the memory  
55 and/or the fear of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence. Three-fourths of people who are  
56 gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender non-conforming have been targets of some form of violence related to  
57 gender, sexuality and intimacy.<sup>6</sup>

58 There is increasing awareness of sexual and physical violence against men and boys, particularly  
59 in sports teams, prisons, hospitals, and in churches and schools.<sup>7</sup> Though much less pervasive, women,  
60 girls and gender non-conforming people also may carry out gender-based violence; for example, intimate  
61 partner violence can be against men by women. Gender-based violence also includes intimate partner  
62 violence within same-gender relationships, as well as some forms of elder abuse.

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<sup>2</sup> The work of The Lutheran World Federation is one example of the global efforts in which the ELCA participates. See, e.g., “Churches Say ‘No!’ to Violence Against Women” (Geneva, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2002), [www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Churches%20Say%20No%20to%20Violence%20against%20Women.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Churches%20Say%20No%20to%20Violence%20against%20Women.pdf), and Elaine Neuenfeldt, ed., “Lutheran World Federation Gender Justice Policy” (Geneva, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2013), [www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-lwf-gender-justice-policy](http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-lwf-gender-justice-policy), which is implemented through all realms of The Lutheran World Federation service, advocacy and dialogue. The ELCA participates in such work in several ways, e.g. The Lutheran Office for World Community.

<sup>3</sup> “Women and girls” is here used as an inclusive term.

<sup>4</sup> All statistics were current as of the writing of this message, see Appendix for more.

<sup>5</sup> The literature refers to both victims and survivors. This document uses both terms. The term *victim* stresses that someone has hurt someone else by exercising their power; the term *survivor* indicates the reality for many people after violence.

<sup>6</sup> To-date there is not enough research in the United States to be able to express the actual number of gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender non-conforming targets, but an estimated percentage is available, given current research. See the Appendix for further information.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Lara Stemple and Ilan H. Meyer, “The Sexual Victimization of Men in America: New Data Challenge Old Assumptions,” *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 6 (June 2014): e19-e26. This research focuses on male victimization in institutions such as mental health and criminal justice. There is also growing public knowledge of male victimization by clergy, coaches, teachers, caregivers and peers (such as through sexual harassment and hazing). Notable in this research is that when men and boys are in situations in which they are vulnerable to the power of others over them, it can lead to physical and emotional harm to them. Age, race and class can be contributory factors in situations of vulnerability. For greater insight into violence against gender non-conforming men, see Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, with Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), 3.

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### 63 **Who inflicts gender-based violence on others?**

64 Those who perpetrate gender-based violence can be acquaintances, friends strangers, family,  
65 intimate partners, caregivers, clergy, teachers and work supervisors. Perpetrators include a surprising  
66 number of individuals from every statistical category and yet research indicates that heterosexual men  
67 make up the majority of perpetrators. Among gender- and sexuality-based hate crimes, one study  
68 identified White men as the largest racial/ethnic group of perpetrators.<sup>8</sup>

### 69 **Intersecting identities**

70 Every act or threat of gender-based violence, every perpetrator and every survivor is influenced  
71 by *intersections* of identities and systems of privilege and oppression. Intersections of race and ethnicity,  
72 age, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity can increase the likelihood of violence. In the United  
73 States, for example, some women of color experience higher rates of intimate partner violence and rape  
74 than all women on average. What is universal about gender-based violence is that gender is a central  
75 motivating factor, even while it may not be the only one.

## 76 **3. Why do people inflict gender-based violence?**

77 Though the sources and contexts of gender-based violence are complex and multiple, this church  
78 recognizes that its fundamental source is sin. This sin is rooted in the ways people create and misuse  
79 power over others. It is simultaneously a personal responsibility and a sin rooted in social systems.  
80 Faithful work against gender-based violence requires a deep understanding of the pervasive and complex  
81 personal, social and religious dynamics of the problems. Thorough analysis helps us to care well for our  
82 neighbors.

### 83 **Personal choices**

84 Acts of gender-based violence always involve sinful individual choices. What an individual  
85 chooses to do is often influenced by personal factors. For example, alcohol consumption or drug use does  
86 not cause gender-based violence, but some studies indicate that it can increase the severity of injury.<sup>9</sup> A  
87 person's experiences, such as familial abuse or post-traumatic stress syndrome, may increase the  
88 likelihood of gender-based violence.<sup>10</sup> These factors are important to take into account when seeking to  
89 hold perpetrators accountable or to help them change.

90 How human beings think and act, however, is closely intertwined with systemic and social forces,  
91 including the dynamics of power and control. While each act of gender-based violence may be an  
92 individual's action, it is always shaped by power dynamics and social factors. This exercise of power may  
93 occur for a brief moment or may be a long-term pattern. The power dynamic is possible in every  
94 relationship. Everyone is, therefore, potentially affected by gender-based violence.

### 95 **Social context**

96 Regardless who is the perpetrator or target of gender-based violence, this dynamic of power and  
97 control is rooted in the values of a particular social system. Internationally, the dominant social system is  
98 widely recognized as patriarchal. While the many acts of gender-based violence are each sinful, they are  
99 sourced by and interrelated with the more obscure sin in this social system.

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix for further information.

<sup>9</sup> Brecklin, L.R. "The role of perpetrator alcohol use in the injury outcomes of intimate assaults." *Journal of Family Violence* 17 (2002): 185-197.

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., P. Tjaden and N. Thoennes, *Extent, nature and consequences of intimate partner violence: findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000), 72.

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100 A patriarchal social system is *dominated* by the voice and authority of men. In such a social  
101 system, what is most highly valued is *identified* as male-oriented. A patriarchal social system is *centered*  
102 on males; the world is portrayed with men as the main actors in life and reflects their ideas and values.  
103 Women, gender non-conforming people and non-dominant men are socially de-valued, diminished or  
104 controlled.<sup>11</sup>

105 The definition of patriarchy as a social system is not a description of every person, social  
106 relationship, Christian congregation, etc. It is, instead, a description of a complex array of social relations,  
107 habits, laws, ideas and beliefs in which *everyone* participates in varying measures.<sup>12</sup> Though there has  
108 been much social progress toward gender equity in the United States, patriarchy is still the dominant  
109 social system in the United States and within Christianity.

110 Patriarchy remains in place through tools of power and control. Gender-based violence functions  
111 as one such tool, whether as threats, discrimination, actual acts or inadequate responses. This tool is used  
112 across time and place in varying degrees and in multiple forms. For example, sexual harassment in  
113 schools and work places serves to intimidate girls, women and gender non-conforming people from  
114 asserting themselves and from developing their gifts fully.

115 Rape also serves as a means of control, whether within dating, marriage or war. As particular  
116 targets of rape, women thus learn to live in fear, wrestling with this ceaseless threat and its implication  
117 that they are objects of control.

118 In light of this systemic sin, the reduction of gender-based violence requires changes in social and  
119 religious beliefs and practices that support conditions for violence. Existing efforts like therapy and  
120 counseling focused on different needs in response to cycles of violence must be strengthened and  
121 encouraged. Advocacy for changes in law and policy must continue. Both are beneficial and essential.

122 Years of activism, research and scholarship demonstrate, however, that these alone cannot  
123 address the depth and tacit approval of this society's gender-based violence.<sup>13</sup> Gender-based violence  
124 must come to be understood in the context of the patriarchy in which individual choices or beliefs and  
125 multiple social factors operate.

126 Intertwined with personal choice and patriarchy, specific social factors influence and support the  
127 nature of gender-based violence. The factors named here include racism, the media, commercial sexual  
128 exploitation, fears of sexualities and bodies, economics, and the legal system.

## 129 **Racism**

130 *Racism increases the likelihood of gender-based violence and decreases the likelihood of justice.*

131 Racism is an inherently evil force that has shaped not only the history of the United States and the  
132 world, but also individual lives and the social fabric of the present. Racism is rooted in the sinful idea that  
133 skin color determines the social value and ability of people.<sup>14</sup> In the United States, racism profoundly  
134 affects gender-based violence in at least two important ways.

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<sup>11</sup> See Allan A. Johnson, *The Gender Knot*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2005) and *Privilege, Power, and Difference* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See Elizabeth M. Schneider, *Battered Women & Feminist Lawmaking* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 20-56. Advancement of international human rights – women's rights as human rights – is important in the creation of global change based on universal claims. Working to end gender-based violence and other gender-based discrimination through human rights arguments and standards can provide empowerment for people's legal consciousness, sense of identity, psychological health and political and moral agency. Addressing gender-based violence depends in part on human rights-based arguments. Nevertheless, human rights assertions alone cannot create the conditions to weaken the prevalence and intensity of gender-based violence. Rather, lessening gender-based violence depends upon changes in social and religious consciousness; thus, part of this church's work is to address the ways we see and think about God, the world and ourselves. If there is no social and religious change, people who are harmed by gender-based violence will only be able to continue to ask for mercy and protection in a world that sees and thinks about them as deserving the violence.

<sup>14</sup> See *Freed in Christ: Race Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: ELCA, 1993), 4.

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135 First, women of color are more often targeted by men both outside of and within their  
136 communities. Multi-ethnic women and American Indian and Alaskan Native women are far more often  
137 the targets of gender-based violence than all women on average.<sup>15</sup> The legacy of White privilege shapes  
138 the way bodies are viewed and treated, causing inordinate suffering for millions of women of color who  
139 are overwhelmingly targeted.

140 Second, racism may affect how victims and survivors of color think about turning to the U.S.  
141 legal system for justice. In a marginalized community, the risks to expose each other to the U.S. legal  
142 system may be high.<sup>16</sup> A survivor in the same racial or ethnic community as the perpetrator, especially an  
143 immigrant community, may, therefore, be less inclined to press charges. This situation may account for  
144 the fact that women of color are less likely to report intimate partner violence than the average rate of  
145 reporting for all women nationally.<sup>17</sup> (See also: *intersecting identities*.)

## 146 **Media portrayals**

147 *Females are objects of desire, control and violence and are made to seem “naturally”*  
148 *subordinate to men.*

149 “Public imagery of women is the text for all the other forms of violence [based on gender],” notes  
150 one expert.<sup>18</sup> There is a steady message in this society that women are subordinate to men, which is  
151 communicated through advertising, news and magazines, gaming, music, movies and television.

152 As “entertainment,” music and many video games, TV shows, movies commonly incorporate  
153 images of violence against women or girls as central elements in their story-lines. Viewers of mainstream  
154 media are exposed repeatedly to subtle or not-so-subtle messages that women and girls are largely sexual  
155 objects, or deserve and enjoy pain and humiliation, or are so irrational that they need to be dominated.<sup>19</sup>  
156 This fosters stereotypes learned at an early age and legitimates the “everydayness” of gender-based  
157 violence.

158 The steady message that women are subordinate to men is also communicated through a variety  
159 of ways in the social glorification of sports and athletes. The history of protecting and excusing star  
160 athletes from accountability relating to gender-based violence is one example. This problem exists from  
161 high school to professional circles.

## 162 **Commercial sexual exploitation**

163 *Women and girls are targeted as objects of sexual and sexualized violence.*

164 The ELCA defines commercial exploitation as organized, for-profit sexual exploitation. It  
165 includes audio or video sex, prostitution, human trafficking, pornography, stripping and related activities  
166 that express deep desires for power over and fear of women.<sup>20</sup> Approximately 80 percent of all victims of  
167 human trafficking are women and girls. In addition, pornography demeans and devalues people as  
168 thoroughly objectified, typically through violence.<sup>21</sup> Most often, the objects of pornography, even when a  
169 male is in the scene, are female.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix for statistics as of publication.

<sup>16</sup> See *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* (Chicago: ELCA, 2013), for a discussion of risks such as dramatically higher incarceration rates, effect on employment prospects and others, 13.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., “Statistics on Violence Against API Women,” *Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence*, accessed Sept. 4, 2014, <http://www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php>.

<sup>18</sup> Cooper-White, 66.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, the film *Miss Representation*.

<sup>20</sup> See “ELCA Social Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation,” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2001), 1-3. See also ELCA study resources on human trafficking. [www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Justice-for-Women](http://www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Justice-for-Women).

<sup>21</sup> See Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence against Women and the Church’s Response*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 64-65.

<sup>22</sup> See Cooper-White, 78. According to Cooper-White, exceptions are gay male pornography.

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## 170 **Fears of sexualities and bodies**

171 *Fear of and hatred for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or gender non-conforming is*  
172 *connected to patriarchy because both assume the superiority of the heterosexual male and strict gender*  
173 *roles for men and women.*

174 Although often not recognized, violence against anyone who does not act according to  
175 predominant gender and sexual expectations is also a form of gender-based violence. For example,  
176 violence against gay men because they are gay is gender-based violence. So is violence against people  
177 who are transgender because they are transgender. The memory or fear of violence shapes the lives of  
178 anyone who does not conform to socially dominant gender and sexual expectations. (See also:  
179 ***intersecting identities.***)

## 180 **Economic factors**

181 *Gender-based violence can threaten and destroy survivors' economic security and/or be a means*  
182 *for perpetrators to make money at their expense.*

183 There are at least three general ways that experiences of gender-based violence and money are  
184 intertwined. First, people who have experienced or are experiencing gender-based violence may lose their  
185 jobs. Survivors of gender-based violence may be so significantly traumatized that they are unable to  
186 work, or they may suffer severe depression from the experience. They may miss work repeatedly for legal  
187 or medical appointments, and they may be seen as a risk by employers *simply* for having been victimized.  
188 Any of these situations may be the reason for the loss of a job with the accompanying hardships for a  
189 survivor and family.

190 Second, some victim/survivors feel compelled to remain in situations of gender-based violence in  
191 order to maintain economic stability. For instance, someone abused by an intimate partner may be  
192 compelled to remain in the abusive relationship because that partner earns the necessary income to care  
193 for children. In other instances, victim/survivors remain in jobs or situations, such as schooling, in which  
194 they are sexually harassed, coerced or abused because the job or the education is their only means to  
195 economic stability.

196 Third, some victim/survivors of gender-based violence are psychologically, emotionally and  
197 physically forced or coerced into gender-based violence by people who want to make money at their  
198 expense. Such is the case in the systems of human trafficking, prostitution, pornography, "mail-order  
199 brides" and other forms of forced marriages.

## 200 **Laws and the legal system**

201 *Despite significant progress, gender-based bias in the law and its enforcement still foster a*  
202 *culture of gender-based violence.*

203 This church recognizes and affirms the proliferation of laws pertaining to gender-based violence  
204 in the last 50 years. For example, it is now illegal to sexually harass a co-worker, to rape a spouse and to  
205 abuse a spouse. It is good that there is increased realization that people should not have to experience  
206 gender-based violence in various forms.

207 Research reveals, nevertheless, continued gender bias in the law and the legal system. For  
208 example, in many jurisdictions a substantial proportion of intimate partner defendants are given deferred  
209 prosecution or dispositions that do not involve findings of guilt. A trio of studies found that at least 25  
210 percent of the defendants that received deferred sentences will re-abuse or re-offend.<sup>23</sup>

211 A recent study also found that only approximately *half* of sexual assault cases that resulted in an  
212 arrest were ever prosecuted. Prosecution was more frequent when the victim was viewed by the

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<sup>23</sup> See "Practical Implications of Current Domestic Violence Research: For Law Enforcement, Prosecutors and Judges: Chapter 6. Prosecution Responses." National Institute of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. United States Department of Justice. June 2009, accessed Sept. 17, 2014. [www.nij.gov/topics/crime/intimate-partner-violence/practical-implications-research/ch6/pages/diverting-first-offenders.aspx](http://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/intimate-partner-violence/practical-implications-research/ch6/pages/diverting-first-offenders.aspx) .

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213 prosecutor as “blameless.” It was less frequent where the victim was viewed as having engaged in “risk-  
214 taking behavior” or where the person’s “reputation or character were questioned.”<sup>24</sup>

215 Rape is not solely a crime by men against women. However, until 2011, the Federal Bureau of  
216 Investigation defined rape exclusively as a crime against a female involving the use of physical force. The  
217 FBI now uses a much more comprehensive definition.<sup>25</sup> Despite this advance, the law and the legal  
218 system continue to be more consistently biased in cases of gender-based violence against gender non-  
219 conforming individuals or people in same-sex relationships. In other words, laws and the legal system do  
220 not yet properly protect the freedom, autonomy and full participation of all people within our  
221 communities.

## 222 **Social institutions**

223 *While policies have been put in place on institutional levels, change requires everyone’s*  
224 *consistent participation in them.*

225 The nature of violence against women in institutions of higher education and in the military  
226 further illustrates how multiple factors combine to support gender-based violence.<sup>26</sup> In 2009, the U.S.  
227 Department of Education found it necessary to write to all colleges to remind them of their obligations  
228 under federal law to provide a “prompt, thorough, and impartial” inquiry into allegations of gender-based  
229 violence. It reminded them of their obligations, consistent with state law, to determine “whether  
230 appropriate law enforcement or other authorities should be notified.”<sup>27</sup>

231 Sexual violence also occurs at a high rate in the U.S. military. Women are over five times more  
232 likely to be the targets of sexual assault than men are in the military, even though women make up only  
233 14 percent of U.S. armed forces.<sup>28</sup> According to a Department of Veterans Affairs mental health  
234 screening report, 1 in 4 females and 1 in 100 males say they were sexually assaulted while serving in the  
235 military. The extent of the problem suggests the difficulty in redressing and curbing systemic violence.

## 236 **4. How does Christianity sometimes contribute to these problems?**

237 While religion is not the sole contributor to gender-based violence, this church acknowledges  
238 how religious factors often contribute extensively. Religions across the globe must wrestle with their  
239 contributions; among Christians there are several failures that need to be addressed. These include the

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<sup>24</sup> See C. Spohn and D. Holleran. “Prosecuting Sexual Assault: A Comparison of Charging Decisions in Sexual Assault Cases Involving Strangers, Acquaintances, and Intimate Partners.” [www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/199720.pdf](http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/199720.pdf). Among the author’s observation was that sexual assault prosecutions were most likely when prosecutors believed “the evidence is strong, the suspect is culpable, and the victim is blameless.” “In cases that involved friends, acquaintances, and relatives, prosecutors were significantly less likely to file charges if the victim engaged in risk-taking behavior at the time of the incident or if her reputation or character were questioned.”

<sup>25</sup> Prior to December 2011, rape was defined as “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will.” According to the new definition, anyone can be a victim of rape, as it is “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.” See Federal Bureau of Investigation, “UCR Program Changes Definition of Rape: Includes All Victims and Omits Requirement of Physical Force,” accessed Feb. 11, 2015, [www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/cjis-link/march-2012/ucr-program-changes-definition-of-rape](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/cjis-link/march-2012/ucr-program-changes-definition-of-rape).

<sup>26</sup> [www.publicintegrity.org/2010/02/24/4360/lack-consequences-sexual-assault](http://www.publicintegrity.org/2010/02/24/4360/lack-consequences-sexual-assault)

<sup>27</sup> One in five women is sexually assaulted in college, but colleges often fail to respond appropriately. In a study of data submitted to the Department of Justice by 130 colleges, the Center for Public Integrity found that just 10 to 25 percent of perpetrators were expelled from college, leaving many victims of sexual assault to attend classes or live on the same campus as their rapist. [www2.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html](http://www2.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html).

<sup>28</sup> These statistics come from [http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/09242013\\_Statutory\\_Enforcement\\_Report\\_Sexual\\_Assault\\_in\\_the\\_Military.pdf](http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/09242013_Statutory_Enforcement_Report_Sexual_Assault_in_the_Military.pdf). See also [http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/mst\\_general\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/mst_general_factsheet.pdf).

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240 harmful use of Scripture, church tradition and theology, as well as the problems of silence, denial,  
241 resistance and inadequate practical responses.

## 242 **Harmful interpretations of Scripture**

243 Some interpreters point to Scripture as an expression of God-ordained gender and sex hierarchy.  
244 In particular they point to the depiction of humanity’s creation in Genesis and to New Testament texts  
245 associated with Paul. Likewise, interpretations of sin, based on Genesis 3 for example, have led to  
246 ongoing ideas that some people are more inherently sinful and responsible for sin than others. Such  
247 interpretations create a hierarchy of sin among humanity.

248 From these angles, it can seem that some people deserve sexual violence. The ELCA, however, is  
249 called to speak out against interpretations of Scripture that cheapen the treasure of faith and give license  
250 to those who harm and fail to stand with victims.

251 This church has its own treasures to address the harmful ways Scripture and its interpretation  
252 contribute to gender-based violence. At the heart of Lutheran biblical interpretation is Luther’s own  
253 ardent priority: Interpretation of Scripture should reveal God’s love to humanity. Interpretation of  
254 Scripture should “carry Christ” to the listener or reader.<sup>29</sup>

255 This biblical interpretation challenges some contemporary Christian theology in the United States  
256 that supports the “value” of submission, the praise of suffering as a “good,” and forgiveness without  
257 accountability. For example, some Christian leaders argue that if people would act according to biblical  
258 gender roles (“feminine” if you have female biology and “masculine” if you have male biology), violence  
259 would not happen. Other Christian leaders are hesitant to support the well-being of women because they  
260 interpret Scripture to say that women must be obedient and submissive to men.

261 This church has the opportunity to engage communities of faith and wider society to affirm a  
262 biblical understanding that does not explicitly or implicitly support gender-based violence. At the same  
263 time, this church has the opportunity to attend to its own theology, seeking to address what is harmful and  
264 remaining attentive to the needs of the neighbor.<sup>30</sup>

## 265 **Harmful church traditions**

266 The faith community also participates in perpetuating gender-based violence whenever it holds to  
267 ways of thinking and speaking that deftly reinforce gender-based violence. These ways can include  
268 holding onto certain church histories, harmful biblical interpretations and harmful theologies.

269 Historically, church and society both have supported the idea that there is a necessary earthly  
270 hierarchy accorded to gender and sex. This pattern serves to reinforce women’s lesser status and deprive  
271 them of legal and economic rights necessary to make their own decisions and care for themselves and  
272 sometimes their children.<sup>31</sup> Lutherans need to acknowledge our own history in perpetuating these,

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<sup>29</sup> The ELCA has an important opportunity to lift up and support reinterpretations of texts that have for centuries been used to keep women and girls in social and religious positions “below” men and boys, such as creation and sin in Genesis and New Testament epistles commonly referred to as the “domestic texts.”

<sup>30</sup> Texts that portray violence against women that the ELCA at-large has not addressed include, for example, Abraham’s use of Sarah for his own safety (Genesis 12:10-20); Lot offering his daughters to rapists in order to protect male guests (Genesis 19:1-11); Schechem raping Dinah (Genesis 34:1-19); King David’s response to do nothing in order to protect his son Amnon when he rapes his half-sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13); and the second wife who was betrayed by her husband and raped and murdered by a gang of men (Judges 19). Texts that reveal God in diverse ways include Genesis 1:2; Isaiah 49:15; Matthew 23:37; and Luke 15: 1-10.

<sup>31</sup> Only by 1993 was marital rape declared illegal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Historically, this slowly formed change is related to the common-law doctrine of “coverture,” which stipulated that a free, married woman did not have a separate legal existence from her husband. Married women could not own property in their own names, sign binding contracts, file suit, or, except under specific circumstances, control their earnings; in the event of their husband’s death, they were not able to act as guardian to their own children. See “Women, Enterprise & Society: Women and the Law” (manuscript collection), Harvard Business School and President and Fellows of Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass., 2010, [www.library.hbs.edu/hc/wes/collections/women\\_law/](http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/wes/collections/women_law/). Slave women

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273 including the use of Martin Luther’s writing on women and “domestic discipline” and the long church  
274 history of blaming victims for violence.<sup>32</sup>

## 275 **Harmful theologies**

276 This church needs to reckon with forms of Lutheran theology related to the cross, suffering and  
277 forgiveness that urge people suffering from gender-based violence to unjustly endure it.<sup>33</sup>

278 The sacrifice of the cross sometimes is interpreted to mean that any suffering “like Jesus” is good.  
279 In instances of gender-based violence, this can be an incredibly harmful teaching because people can be  
280 led to believe that any suffering is being like Jesus.

281 Instead, the New Testament reveals that Jesus does not seek suffering for its own sake. Rather,  
282 Jesus sought above all to live out God’s love in the world and then accepted the cross as the consequence  
283 *for him*. Those who follow Jesus, likewise, are called above all to live out God’s love in the world.  
284 Sometimes suffering will be the consequence of living God’s love, but this does not require living with  
285 gender-based violence.

286 In a similar vein, sometimes the ideas and practices about forgiveness are problematic. When  
287 forgiveness is encouraged in a gender-dependent way – when victims are told they should easily and  
288 quickly forgive perpetrators – people are more likely to continue to be hurt. Coerced or premature  
289 forgiveness runs the risk of re-inflicting trauma. We must distinguish accountability, justice, confession,  
290 and repentance from forgiveness.

291 Because language shapes how people know and understand reality, a further Lutheran theological  
292 consideration involves the language of faith. Some people are asking this church in its concern about  
293 sources of gender-based violence to wrestle more particularly with the predominance of male references  
294 to God. They are asking this church to consider the ways that predominantly masculine and male-  
295 associated language for God not only denies the fullness of who God is but perpetuates the assumption  
296 that men are closer to the image and likeness of God.

## 297 **Silence, denial and resistance**

298 Far too often people of faith have been silent even when becoming aware of horrific acts. Silence  
299 sometimes seems to flow from not seeing what is everywhere. Sometimes it takes the form of willful  
300 ignorance: when we choose to be uninformed or deliberately turn away.

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had no legal existence apart from those who claimed to own them: They were traded, used and sometimes forced to have children by those with power over them. See “Women, Enterprise & Society.” Early laws and judicial decisions gave “legitimacy” to these concepts by permitting physical “chastisement” by husbands of their wives, permitting marriage to be asserted as a defense to rape, and by denying aid to victims based on their theory that judges should “not interfere with family government in trifling cases.” It would take more than 100 years before a state would enact a law criminalizing a physical assault by a husband on his wife. See *Bradley v. State*, 2 Miss. (Walker) 156 (1824) in “History of Battered Women’s Movement,” *SafeNetwork: California’s Domestic Violence Resource*, 1999, [www.icadvinc.org/what-is-domestic-violence/history-of-battered-womens-movement/](http://www.icadvinc.org/what-is-domestic-violence/history-of-battered-womens-movement/).

<sup>32</sup> See, e.g., Mary Pellauer, “Lutheran Theology Facing Sexual and Domestic Violence,” 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2011),

[http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Violence\\_Theology\\_Booklet.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Violence_Theology_Booklet.pdf). Pellauer outlines Luther’s strong writing on the “proper” submission of women to men and his ambivalence on child abuse and wife-beating. Although he exhorts husbands to be peaceable, he writes, “[T]he female sex inclines naturally to what is forbidden to it, to reign, to rule and to judge. From this there come marital discord, blows and beatings.” (“Titus, 1527,” *Luther’s Works* 29:57). See, e.g., Joy A. Schroeder, *Dinah’s Lament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007) for a disquieting historical explanation of Christian theological victim-blaming.

<sup>33</sup> Careful analysis of the way that religion and culture are intertwined and attention to the effects of religious ideas and beliefs on gender-based violence is key to Christian action. See, e.g., Jimmy Carter, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014). Thus, Christian attention to all doctrine and theology is in order. This includes the doctrine of God, theological anthropology, the doctrines of sin and salvation, christology, ecclesiology, eschatology and ethics.

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301 Christian people and institutions often deny the presence of gender-based violence because it is  
302 easier to resist naming what is happening than to confront it. For example, when intimate partner violence  
303 is misidentified as marital misunderstanding or anger mismanagement, what is really happening is denied  
304 and resisted. In such cases the dynamic of power and control that is strategically used by one partner to  
305 harm another is not seen or acknowledged.

306 Resistance is manifest in congregational or institutional attempts to discredit hints or reports of  
307 gender-based violence by victims. Resistance is often rooted in fears of confronting people, appearing to  
308 take sides, or triggering traumas for others by talking openly about gender-based violence.

309 Different forms of silence, denial and resistance result in failures to care for victim/survivors of  
310 gender-based violence. Far too often, far too many of us have failed God and others by remaining silent or  
311 oblivious and by failing to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. God calls God's people to care  
312 for the neighbor: God calls us to stop, listen, see, name and minister in the midst of ugliness and pain.  
313 God calls us to confront honestly these realities for the sake of those whose lives are affected by gender-  
314 based violence.

### 315 **Inadequate responses**

316 When Christian people or institutions respond, they must take care to do so wisely. When the  
317 response is carried out inadequately, it actually may intensify the problem. Insufficient and misguided  
318 Christian responses include victim-blaming, failure to demand accountability, and remaining ill-equipped  
319 to respond.

320 Direct and indirect forms of victim-blaming, on either religious or social grounds, do irreparable  
321 harm to survivors. Likewise, when the church fails to hold perpetrators and society (i.e., the law and  
322 criminal justice system, health care, child care, education, etc.) accountable to prevent, address and  
323 redress gender-based violence, we fail to care and so participate in the perpetuation of gender-based  
324 violence.

325 Being ill-equipped to respond to and prevent gender-based violence also perpetuates the violence.  
326 For example, those ministering to a person abused by an intimate partner cannot provide appropriate care  
327 if they do not understand the cycle of power and control in abuse or do not seek out the help of  
328 professional advocates. Likewise, an emphasis on saving the relationship above all else enables abusers  
329 and denies the needs and safety of the person who is being abused.

330 Finally, faulty practical responses include Christian institutional policies that stand in the way of  
331 caring for people suffering. These policies are harmful and inadequate when they, for example, do not  
332 make victims the priority of situations, do not allow everyone to name and respond to gender-based  
333 violence, or are outdated or inaccessible.

## 334 **5. Where is God in the midst of this pain and suffering?**

335  
336 God's beloved creatures suffer gender-based violence at the hands of each other. Such violence  
337 violates human dignity, divides humanity and abuses power. The pain and suffering of people confronts  
338 this church as a body and as individual members. Where is God in all this, where do we turn, and what do  
339 we do to end such terrible violence? We turn simultaneously to God and to neighbor. While reaching to  
340 care for people suffering from violence, we remember that our faith resides in the triune God. God's grace  
341 through Jesus Christ binds the Christian church to God and the body of Christ one to another.

### 342 **God with us in pain and suffering**

343 Within the Lutheran tradition, there are a number of theological emphases with implications for  
344 understanding, addressing and preventing these problems. The biblical theme of the incarnation teaches  
345 that God shares fully in human life. In particular, on the cross Jesus Christ shares fully in our deepest  
346 need and vulnerability. Jesus was betrayed, laid low, and his very being was ripped apart; his whole body

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347 suffered from the evil of violence. Whoever is likewise laid low, made into non-being, and ripped apart  
348 by gender-based violence is fully known by God. God is there, in the depths of suffering.

### 349 **The sacraments: being one in Christ**

350 Scripture proclaims there is a future determined by the risen Christ as ruler of God's realm of  
351 peace and justice. This means that the marked body of the risen Christ is drawn toward healing and  
352 transformation. To confess Christ means that the church as the body of Christ knows and sees itself as the  
353 violated body, as the body that is marked in the flesh, together. Not them, us. We are marked.

354 God draws us into this future now through word and sacrament. Through these means of grace,  
355 God binds us with God and each other. Sacraments are enacted Word, God's communal acts that are the  
356 very meaning and root of our relationships.

357 Through baptism, we die and rise in Christ as we are washed by the Spirit through water and  
358 marked with the sign of Christ, the cross. Through the gift of baptism, God holds the body together in its  
359 vast plurality, in its dying and rising in Christ.

360 In sharing bread and wine, our very bodies become part of Christ's body. And through the work  
361 of the Holy Spirit, we experience the body of Christ as relational – "one inseparable body and flesh."<sup>34</sup>  
362 Through Holy Communion we participate in "all the unjust suffering of the innocent, with which the  
363 world is everywhere filled to overflowing."<sup>35</sup>

### 364 **Confession of sin<sup>36</sup>**

365 Through the means of grace, we are knit together in our vulnerabilities through Christ, who is  
366 active in our beings. This church and its members are, therefore, free first to confess our failures and then  
367 free to begin anew to understand, to care, to educate and to take action.

368 As part of the church catholic, the ELCA confesses its sin. We have contributed to gender-based  
369 violence through actions and inaction as individual and corporate sin in which we are bound and cannot  
370 free ourselves. Such confession allows the truth to be told and orients our efforts to address all aspects of  
371 gender-based violence (1 John 1:5-9).

372 We believe confession is not the end but a beginning. We pray that such confession would turn us  
373 by the power of the Holy Spirit to new paths that completely alter our understanding of and our response  
374 to gender-based violence. We give thanks that we are freed to take the risks of the cross to love and serve  
375 others and pray such confession might turn us to work that better conforms this church to the life-giving  
376 ways of God.

### 377 **Law and gospel**

378 Lutherans emphasize that we simultaneously live under the law while we live because of the  
379 gospel. When this church thinks and acts together in the face of gender-based violence, it does so in light  
380 of God's relationship with creation. That relationship is expressed through the civil use of the law to order  
381 society. God's law is expressed summarily as a baseline for the common good in the Ten Commandments.  
382 The commandments refute the belief that any human being has the authority to make someone else into  
383 an object, especially through violence. The Fifth Commandment, for instance, teaches that we should  
384 "neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbor, but instead help and support them."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 6-8," *Luther's Works* 23:149.

<sup>35</sup> "Word and Sacrament I," *Luther's Works* 35:54.

<sup>36</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes the call to communal confession very well: "It is not enough for individuals to repent and be justified. . . . [T]he church must likewise repent and be justified. The community that is from God to God, that bears within itself eternal meaning, endures in God's sight and does not melt into the fate of the many. It is willed and created and has become culpable; it must seek repentance, believe in and experience justification and sanctification, and experience judgment and grace at the limits of time." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 119.

<sup>37</sup> Small Catechism. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 352.

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385 Christians live by God's grace, which frees us to take action so that every neighbor is served with  
386 love and justice and not harmed. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God's grace is active in us to see the  
387 neighbor's need and to take action for change now.

## 388 **6. What should we do?**

389 The following recommendations identify means to confront and change the problem of  
390 gender-based violence. This church commends those individuals, communities and  
391 institutions already engaged in any of these efforts. Yet, it clearly is time for wide-spread  
392 efforts toward change in the face of the multiple sources supporting gender-based  
393 violence.

### 394 **A. What are we called to do within this church**

395 The commitment of this church to recognize violence, ensure care, provide for education and  
396 create accountability calls for efforts among:

397 *Congregations and other ministry sites to*

- 398 • pray for healing, wisdom, guidance and the courage to face the issues.
- 399 • put in place and enforce congregational policies and practices that promote safe and  
400 healthy congregations.
- 401 • provide information for visitors and congregants on access to crisis care and safety plans  
402 in ways that maintain confidentiality and safety.
- 403 • provide safe spaces for members or others who experience gender-based violence to tell  
404 the truth of what happened to them.
- 405 • provide support for survivors that entail very practical needs: safety, shelter, food,  
406 clothing, mental health care, legal counsel, work and transportation, child care and  
407 education.
- 408 • be clear with anyone experiencing gender-based violence that God condemns how they  
409 have been hurt.
- 410 • be clear that God calls perpetrators to repentance, accountability and the obligation to  
411 make amends; this includes calling church leaders to the same.
- 412 • provide support for perpetrators seeking to repent and change.
- 413 • understand and uphold ELCA "Vision and Expectations" for church leaders.
- 414 • employ liturgy, steadfast prayer and Bible study to counter those forces that legitimate  
415 or encourage gender-based violence in any way.
- 416 • engage in education through dialogue, analysis and careful study of the social and  
417 religious factors that contribute to gender-based violence.<sup>38</sup>
- 418 • learn about and be prepared to respond to the specific contexts, needs and characteristics  
419 of various forms of gender-based violence.
- 420 • learn about social science theories and practices that have proven effective in addressing  
421 gender-based violence and dialogue with others.
- 422 • support and teach healthy relationships, including sexual relationships.
- 423 • love unceasingly, in the midst of pain, violence and ugliness, as a visible manifestation  
424 of the love of Christ for all.

425 *Rostered and lay leaders to*

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<sup>38</sup> See for instance the resources available at [www.elca.org/justiceforwomen](http://www.elca.org/justiceforwomen) or the document "Churches Say No to Violence Against Women," available at [www.Lutheranworld.org](http://www.Lutheranworld.org).

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- 426 • be prepared to respond to crises with the help of experts in the fields of gender-based
- 427 violence through training, education, dialogue and collaboration with local and national
- 428 partners.
- 429 • care for people experiencing gender-based violence by believing them and helping them
- 430 to find the resources they need.
- 431 • collaborate with local experts in care and advocacy to respond to survivors' needs.
- 432 • preach about gender-based violence in order to speak the truth and care for others.
- 433 • provide leadership to foster discussion, education and discernment.

434 *Synods to*

- 435 • review and put in place transparent policies and practices that provide for safety,
- 436 confidentiality and due process for survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- 437 • provide and make public their policies on sexual harassment at public and sponsored
- 438 meetings and events.
- 439 • identify a means to make available lists or guides to resources for those responding to
- 440 gender-based violence.
- 441 • partner with local experts and agencies to provide services to survivors and education for
- 442 the community.
- 443 • support education for congregations and pastors about laws and practices concerning
- 444 mandatory reporting of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence.
- 445 • require training and education of their leaders on responding to and preventing all forms
- 446 of gender-based violence.

447 *The churchwide organization and its ministries to*

- 448 • review its organizational policies and practices to ensure that they provide for the safety,
- 449 confidentiality and due process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based
- 450 violence.
- 451 • review ELCA "Vision and Expectations" to ensure the text adequately expresses
- 452 standards and expectations regarding gender-based violence.
- 453 • provide a concise online resource communicating the core ideas of this message
- 454 appropriate for a catechism setting, or one like it, for middle school age youth.
- 455 • provide a study guide to this social message that includes resource lists and ministry
- 456 illustrations.
- 457 • collaborate with leaders in all expressions of this church to encourage discussion and
- 458 discernment around the ways that theology serves to prevent or contribute to gender-
- 459 based violence.
- 460 • collaborate with theologians and ecumenical and interfaith partners to discuss the ways
- 461 theology serves to prevent or contribute to gender-based violence.

462 *Seminaries to*

- 463 • review or put in place policies and practices that ensure safety, confidentiality and due
- 464 process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- 465 • include theological and practical preparation among seminarians that considers the
- 466 problems and resources found in Scripture and the Lutheran theological tradition.
- 467 • provide the means for seminary communities to discuss and reflect upon the intersections
- 468 of gender, violence, theology and ministry.

469 *Church-related educational institutions to*

- 470 • review or put in place policies and practices that ensure safety, confidentiality and due
- 471 process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- 472 • give appropriate attention to policies intended to curb gender-based violence and to foster
- 473 appropriate responses that avoid "re-victimization" of those who have suffered gender-
- 474 based violence on their campuses.

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- 475 • review their curriculum to break silence by ensuring that matters regarding gender-based  
476 violence are treated fully in courses appropriate to the subject matter.
- 477 • review the possibilities for educational or informational events that encourage awareness  
478 among students of the nature of gender-based violence and the means to dialogue.
- 479 • provide for community-based conversations on gender-based violence, its sources and  
480 ways to respond.

481 *Social ministry organizations to*

- 482 • review their organizational policies and practices to ensure that they provide for the  
483 safety, confidentiality and due process among clients and staff, who may be both  
484 survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- 485 • provide care through protection and support of the many needs of survivors for safety and  
486 well-being as appropriate to the kind of service offered by the organization.
- 487 • communicate crisis-based expertise with appropriate ELCA partners.

488 **B. What do we seek and advocate be done in wider society?**

489 The intent to become allies, seek improved laws and social patterns and adopt improved policies  
490 leads the ELCA to call upon:

491 *Congregations, church leaders and members to*

- 492 • be local advocates within schools, judicial systems, health care and social services for  
493 transparent and appropriate responses to survivors and perpetrators and for measures to  
494 decrease the possibilities of gender-based violence.
- 495 • collaborate with others who advocate for legislation that reduces and prevents gender-  
496 based violence and provides services for intervention, protects victims and ensures  
497 accountability for perpetrators.
- 498 • advocate for improved crisis response in their communities through dialogue and  
499 partnership with various public services.
- 500 • advocate for improvements in social discourse and practice about the intersections of  
501 gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation and age.
- 502 • serve as witnesses and advocates for individuals going through legal processes.
- 503 • speak words of both law and gospel that counter religious contributions to gender-based  
504 violence.
- 505 • call for accountability from prosecutors, the judicial system and those in power when  
506 they fail to respond, appropriately, to gender-based violence in society or their  
507 institutions.

508 *The churchwide organization to*

- 509 • advocate for legislative and administrative efforts that reduce gender-based violence,  
510 provide care for victims and survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and empower  
511 people to work for continual safeguards and change through local, state, federal and  
512 global initiatives.
- 513 • make clear in appropriate public address that this church opposes religious contributions  
514 to gender-based violence.

515 *Social ministry organizations to*

- 516 • seek from their experiences in ministry with survivors to support passage of preventive  
517 laws and the encouragement of alternative models of responding to gender-based  
518 violence.
- 519 • expand means that empower survivors of gender-based violence to be leaders for change,  
520 advocates and caregivers on behalf of others also hurt by gender-based violence.

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## 523 **Glossary**

524 **Biological characteristics:** The physical and physiological traits that we often associate with either males  
525 or females, but observation and research show that such physical and physiological traits do not  
526 exclusively belong to one or the other. These traits include not just genitalia, but also body hair, facial  
527 hair, height, muscle mass, body fat, body shape, breast tissue and the size of hands and feet, to name a  
528 few. These traits often shape how people are perceived or identify in terms of their gender.

529 **Gender:** Categories into which cultures/societies separate behaviors and characteristics that are usually  
530 considered masculine or feminine. The most common gender identities are *woman* and *man*, but other  
531 identities exist and are becoming more widely used and understood.

532 **Gender non-conforming:** Within this message, gender non-conforming refers to people whose gender  
533 identity, gendered way of acting in the world, and biological characteristics do not completely fit within  
534 predominantly expected ways of acting as a man or a woman. There are many identities and experiences  
535 included under the umbrella of gender non-conforming.

536 **Intersection:** Human identities that are tied to systemic privilege and oppression can *intersect* with one  
537 another and thus shape the unique ways that people experience gender-based violence. These identities  
538 have to do with sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, race, ethnicity, nationality/citizenship, social  
539 class, economics and religion, to name a few. This means that the gender-based violence and oppression  
540 experienced by a lesbian woman of color will be different than that experienced by an economically  
541 impoverished gender non-conforming White person. All human identities and all forms of privilege and  
542 oppression are made up of many intersections.

543 **Justice:** Generally justice refers to an underlying sense of fairness, right treatment and reciprocity. When  
544 someone uses the word, that person may have a particular kind of justice in mind. Some of these include:  
545 retributive justice, corrective justice, distributive justice, restorative justice, structural justice, fair or equal  
546 treatment under the law, ending oppression based on power differences, or biblical righteousness. In this  
547 document, the term justice emphasizes the latter half of these meanings but always with the biblical  
548 emphasis on justice as right relationship with God and within community.

549 **Patriarchy:** The social, institutional, legal, political, educational, economic, religious and interpersonal  
550 systems of society that best serve men and the interests of men with status and power. While all people  
551 within a patriarchal system participate in it, the system functions with men at the center. This means that,  
552 sometimes unconsciously, people participate in systems that control and oppress women, girls, gender  
553 non-conforming people, LGBTQ people, and all those who are not normative, heterosexual men.

## 554 **Appendix: Global and national statistics**

- 555 • Globally, an estimated 30 percent of women who have been in a relationship have experienced  
556 sexual or physical violence at the hands of their intimate partner.<sup>i</sup>
- 557 • Nationally, 25 percent of women over the age of 18 have experienced sexual or physical violence at  
558 the hands of a current or former intimate partner.<sup>ii</sup>
- 559 • Nationally, race and ethnicity significantly affect the frequency of intimate partner violence.<sup>iii</sup>
- 560 • Globally, an estimated 38 percent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.<sup>iv</sup>
- 561 • Nationally, almost 33 percent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.<sup>v</sup>
- 562 • Globally, one in five women will be a victim of attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.<sup>vi</sup>
- 563 • Nationally, one in six women will be a victim of attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.<sup>vii</sup>
- 564 • Nationally, 97 percent of rapes committed against adults (both men and women) are committed by  
565 men.<sup>viii</sup>

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- 566 • Nationally, 60 percent of sexual assaults are not reported to the police, and 97 percent of rapists  
567 will never spend a day in jail.<sup>ix</sup>
- 568 • Nationally, 83 percent of girls aged 12 to 16 have experienced some form of sexual harassment in  
569 public schools.<sup>x</sup>
- 570 • Nationally, of those people who express a gender non-conforming identity while in grades K-12, 78  
571 percent are made the victim of harassment, 35 percent are made the victim of physical assault, and  
572 12 percent are made the victim of sexual violence.<sup>xi</sup>
- 573 • Nationally, 25 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual people have been the victim of rape, and 72  
574 percent have been the victim of other forms of sexual violence.<sup>xii</sup>
- 575 • Nationally, an estimated 20-25 percent of lesbian and gay people experience hate violence within  
576 their lifetimes.<sup>xiii</sup>
- 577 • Nationally, of gender- and sexuality-based hate-crime homicides in 2012, 53 percent of victims  
578 were transgender women.<sup>xiv</sup>
- 579 • Nationally, of gender- and sexuality-based hate-crime homicides in 2012, 73 percent of victims  
580 were people of color.<sup>xv</sup>
- 581 • Nationally, in 2013, White men were more likely than any other racial and ethnic demographic to  
582 be perpetrators of gender- and sexuality-based hate violence. Of all men who perpetrate gender-  
583 and sexuality-based hate violence, the majority by age were 19 to 29 years old.<sup>xvi</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> World Health Organization, “Violence against Women: Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women,” *WHO*, last modified October 2013, [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/).

<sup>ii</sup> According to this survey, almost 64 percent of women who reported being raped, physically assaulted and/or stalked since the age of 18 were targeted by a current or former husband, cohabiting partner, boyfriend or date. Likewise, those reporting assaults within the past year averaged more than three assaults per year. See Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2000), iii.

<sup>iii</sup> According to *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence*, women of color are more likely to be victimized than average, with American Indian/Alaskan Native women experiencing significantly higher rates of intimate partner violence (37.5 percent) than do women of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. According to the Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence, 41-60 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander women experience intimate partner violence, “Statistics on Violence against API Women,” *APIIDV*, accessed Sept. 4, 2014, [www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php](http://www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php). See A. Raj and J. Silverman, “Intimate Partner Violence against South-Asian Women in Greater Boston,” *Journal of the American Medical Women’s Association* 57, no. 2 (2002): 111-114, and Mieko Yoshihama, “Domestic Violence against Women of Japanese Descent in Los Angeles: Two Methods of Estimating Prevalence,” *Violence Against Women* 5, no. 8 (1999):869-897, cited in “Statistics on Violence Against API Women,” *APIIDV*, accessed Sept. 4, 2014, [www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php](http://www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php).

<sup>iv</sup> World Health Organization, “Violence Against Women.”

<sup>v</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports “Crime in the United States, 2000,” (2001), cited in National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, “Domestic Violence Facts,” *NCADV*, accessed Aug. 28, 2014.

<sup>vi</sup> United Nations, “Ending Violence against Women and Girls,” *Resources for Speakers on Global Issues*, accessed Aug. 28, 2014, [www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/endviol/](http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/endviol/).

<sup>vii</sup> Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1998), 11.

<sup>viii</sup> Percentage was calculated from data in Tjaden and Thoennes, *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women*, 47.

<sup>ix</sup> The 3 percent statistic has been calculated by taking reporting rates into consideration. See, *National Crime Victimization Survey*, Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008-2012, and *Felony Defendants in Large*

Text as adopted by ELCA Church Council on November 14, 2015. A final copy edit and format revision have yet to be done according to ELCA publication style; this preliminary version should be cited or referenced as such.

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*Urban Countries*, Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice, 2002-2006, cited in “Reporting Rates,” *RAINN*, accessed Sept. 5, 2014, [www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates](http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates).

<sup>x</sup> American Association of University Women, “Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School,” (Washington, D.C.: AAUW, 2001), 20-21, cited in United Nations, “Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women,” *UNWomen.org*, accessed Aug. 28, 2014, [www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures).

<sup>xi</sup> Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A Mottet, and Justin Tanis with Jack Harrison, Jody L. Merman, and Mara Keisling, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), 3.

<sup>xii</sup> Of the 25 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual people who have been the victim of rape, survey statistics showed that all of them were lesbian or bisexual women. Both percentages were found from our own calculations of survey data from Mikel L. Walters, Jieru Chen, and Matthew J. Breiding, *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation* (Atlanta, Ga.: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013), 6-11.

<sup>xiii</sup> Shelby Chestnut, Ejeris Dixon, and Chai Jindasurant, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2012* (New York, N.Y.: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2013), 10-13.

<sup>xiv</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>xv</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xvi</sup> The most recent studies of hate violence show that in 2013 39 percent of perpetrators were perceived as White by victims, as opposed to other racial or ethnic backgrounds, 72.45 percent were male as opposed to female or transgender, and 30.7 percent were between 19 and 29 years old. See Osman Ahmed and Chai Jindasurant, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2013* (New York, N.Y.: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2014), 51-53.