



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Apr. 19, 2021

TO: Bishops of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Vice presidents of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Secretaries of synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Members of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Administrative Team of the churchwide organization
 Chief executive officers of separately incorporated ministries
 Seminary leaders

FROM: Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary

SUBJECT: Report of Actions of the Church Council (Apr. 15–17, 2021)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met electronically Apr. 15–17, 2021. Here is a summary of particular actions along with background information.

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1. UPDATE TO MISSION SUPPORT EXPERIMENT

The Church Council requested final data and reporting be received from the Mission Support Experiment Synods at the April 2021 Church Council meeting. [CC20.11.33b]

Church Council action:

To receive the final data/report from the Mission Support Experiment Synods (Lower Susquehanna, Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Nebraska, New England, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast);

To urge the churchwide organization and the synods to incorporate the learnings from the mission support experiments into future collaboration, as appropriate; and

To encourage the formation of a project team (including bishops, churchwide organization staff, and others) to discuss future strategies for mission support sharing between synods and the churchwide organization, including discussion on how revenue received from congregations can best be shared to support the ministries of this church.

2. APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT OFFICERS

Church Council action:

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant treasurers of this corporation: Cecilia Favela, ~~Kathy Freeman Summers~~, Santiago Padilla, and Annette Roman, to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the Treasurer;

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of executing or attesting, when necessary, documents approved and authorized in accordance with actions of the Church Council, the following are hereby appointed as assistant secretaries of this corporation: Thomas A. Cunniff, Aja M. Favors, and Norman K. Fry to serve until replaced or removed by subsequent appointments, with such subsequent appointments to be based upon the nomination and recommendation of the Secretary.

RESOLVED, that prior resolutions adopted by this Council, including CC15.04.31b and the prior actions identified in CC15.04.31b, addressing the appointment of assistant officers are hereby rescinded and replaced by this action.

3. AUTHORIZATION TO ACT FOR THE ELCA AS A TRUSTEE

Church Council action:

RESOLVED, that the Treasurer and the Executive for Development are appointed as a committee having the authority of the Church Council in the management of the business and fiscal affairs of any trust for which the churchwide organization is acting as trustee to authorize and approve, on behalf of this corporation as trustee, transactions to which such trust is a party.

RESOLVED, that the Treasurer and the Executive for Development are appointed as a committee having the authority of the Church Council to authorize and approve establishment of any gift annuity agreement for which the churchwide organization is guarantor, on behalf of this corporation as guarantor.

RESOLVED, that the Treasurer or the Executive for Development, or in absence of both of the foregoing, any two assistant treasurers may execute, and the Secretary or any assistant secretary may attest, any document previously authorized and approved as provided in this resolution, which is required or desirable in connection with the establishment of any gift annuity agreement for which the churchwide organization is guarantor or which is necessary and appropriate for the management of the business and fiscal affairs of any trust for which the churchwide organization is acting as trustee.

RESOLVED, that the Development team within the Office of the Presiding Bishop must keep and maintain appropriate records of all transactions so authorized and, upon request, report such transactions to the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council.

4. FY2021 REVISED ELCA WORLD HUNGER SPENDING AUTHORIZATION

Church Council action:

To revise the 2021 fiscal year ELCA World Hunger spending authorization from \$21,500,000 to \$23,500,000.

5. FY2020 DESIGNATION OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES

Church Council action:

To approve an addition to the Church Council Designated Fund in the amount of \$1.3 million representing excess revenue over expenses from fiscal year 2020 to be released to fund budget shortfall in future years.

6. REVISED *MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ROSTERS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA*

While protocols for sending ELCA missionaries to serve with companion churches are well established, there has not been clear guidance concerning a process for receiving rostered ministers from Lutheran World Federation member churches who wish to be considered for service in the ELCA. The Service and Justice unit, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary, requested that the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* be amended.

Church Council action:

To adopt the revision to the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* related to protocols for rostered ministers from member churches of The Lutheran World Federation who wish to serve in ELCA ministry settings; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make any necessary editorial corrections to the manual for clarity and accuracy.

7. REVISED *DEFINITION AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE*

In accordance with ELCA constitutional provision 20.21, the Committee on Appeals establishes definitions and guidelines, subject to approval by the Church Council, to enable clear and uniform application of the grounds for discipline of officers, rostered ministers, congregations, and members of congregations.

Church Council action:

To approve the revised version as amended of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, effective immediately, but applicable only to conduct occurring (or alleged to occur) after the date of adoption of this resolution;

To confirm that the version of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*, as in effect immediately prior to the adoption of this resolution, shall be applied to conduct that occurred (or is alleged to have occurred) on or prior to the date of adoption of this resolution; and

To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make any necessary non-substantive editorial corrections.

8. AMENDMENTS TO ELCA FOUNDATION BYLAWS

Church Council action:

To approve the amended bylaws of the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—ELCA Foundation.

9. AMENDMENTS TO UNITED LUTHERAN SEMINARY BYLAWS

Church Council actions:

To approve the amended bylaws of United Lutheran Seminary.

10. AMENDMENTS TO LUTHER SEMINARY BYLAWS

Church Council action:

To approve the amended bylaws of Luther Seminary.

11. CHURCHWIDE ORGANIZATION ANNUAL REPORT

Church Council action:

To receive the ELCA Churchwide Organization Annual Report for 2020; and

To thank the staff of the churchwide organization for their ongoing work.

12. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CHART

Church Council action:

To approve the amended Corporate Social Responsibility Roles and Responsibilities Chart.

13. ASSESSING THE NEED FOR AND FEASIBILITY OF INITIATING SOCIAL MESSAGE PROCESSES

In November 2020, the Church Council postponed the question of developing a social message on U.S. National Drug Policy, aging, gender identity, or gun policy until Spring 2021 [CC20.11.33i].

The director for theological ethics recommended deferring again the questions regarding these social messages because it has not been possible to do the groundwork and assessment. The process of assessment and recommendation should be possible for the Fall 2021 Church Council meeting.

Church Council action:

To defer the questions of developing a social message on U.S. National Drug Policy, aging, gender identity, or gun policy until the Fall 2021 Church Council meeting, when a new assessment of each issue, staff capacity, and finances will be made; and

To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.

14. ST. JOHN LUTHERAN HOME—SUBORDINATION OF THE ELCA’S RIGHT OF REVERTER AND RE-ENTRY

St. John Lutheran Home wishes to refinance the mortgage on its property. At one time, the land on which the property sits was owned by the American Lutheran Church (ALC). In 1971, the ALC sold the land to St. John Lutheran Home. The deed states that if St. John Lutheran Home ever ceases to operate title to the land would revert back to the ALC (paraphrased). The lender cannot have a valid mortgage on the property unless the ELCA subordinates its right of reverter and re-entry to mortgage. The transaction can only proceed if the ELCA signs a subordination agreement.

Church Council action:

RESOLVED, that for the sole purpose of permitting St. John Lutheran Home to refinance the mortgage of the property at County Road 5 in Springfield, Minnesota, the ELCA shall subordinate, but not release, its right of reverter and re-entry as it pertains to the property; and

Be it further RESOLVED, that St. John Lutheran Home shall have the authority to sign the mortgage and other loan documents relevant to the transaction without any further action required by the ELCA or its Church Council (Board of Directors).

15. DECLARATION OF THE ELCA TO THE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Church Council action [CC19.06.23.]

To adopt “A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the People of African Descent” as a statement of apology for this church’s complicity in the legacy of slavery;

To thank the African Descent Lutheran Association for their 2015 biennial assembly resolution asking for a declaration of the ELCA to the people of African descent;

To call this church into a time of study and to direct the Office of the Presiding Bishop to consider developing educational resources to support the apology and encourage congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to find ways to share this apology broadly;

To direct Planning, Research, and Evaluation to measure and report progress on the discriminatory treatment within the call process and to urge Portico to assist with providing information to the churchwide organization to measure and report progress on inequitable compensation of clergy of color by the November 2021 meeting of the Church Council;

To request the presiding bishop to name a Day of Repentance for congregations, synods, and churchwide organization to observe annually and to request the Office of the Presiding Bishop worship team develop a liturgical resource of lamentation and repentance to accompany this annual Day of Repentance; and

To affirm the June 2019 Lutheran World Federation Council resolution “Commemorating the 2019 Quad- centennial of the Forced Transatlantic Voyage of Enslaved African Peoples to the Americas—Human Beings Not for Sale!” and, in particular, LWF’s call to engage in anti-racism and racial justice work, work toward economic justice (including the study of reparations), and work to address and end modern forms of slavery and human trafficking.

Church Council action [CC20.11.33p]

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop on the implementation of the resolution of the “Declaration of the ELCA to the People of African Descent” (a statement of apology for this church’s complicity in the legacy of slavery);

To thank the churchwide staff for their efforts in providing educational resources to support the apology and encouraging members, congregations, and synods to find ways to share this apology broadly;

To encourage the continuation of the research and work toward economic justice and the study of reparations and engagement in anti-racism and racial justice work; and

To request a further report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop on the naming of an annual Day of Repentance, including a liturgical resource of lamentation and repentance to accompany this annual Day of Repentance, to the Spring 2021 Church Council meeting.

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (Spring 2021)

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly adopted a social policy resolution “Renewed Action Regarding Racism Toward Lutherans of African Descent Communities, Congregations, and Ministries” and to “recommit this church to growing its ethnic and racial diversity” in leadership, congregations, and communities. The resolution also called the ELCA to confess and repent of the Lutheran church’s complicity in 400 years of enslavement, oppression, and marginalization of African descent people and other marginalized populations. In 2019, a “Declaration of the ELCA to the African Descent Community” was issued during the Churchwide Assembly. In addition, the ELCA Church Council adopted an action to encourage congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization to observe an annual Day of Repentance. In 2021, the presiding bishop in consultation with the director for racial justice, executive for worship, and the director for African descent ministries, named an additional ELCA Day of Repentance from Racism to be observed on the Tuesday following the celebration of the birthdate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The date aligns with the National Day of Racial Healing (NDORH), which was established in 2017 by more than 550 leaders from around the United States who wanted to act together to end racism. This annual observance continues to grow in communities across the U.S., including among this church’s full communion partners.

This date will mark the second day of ELCA observance against racism. The 2019 Churchwide Assembly adopted a resolution designating June 17 as a day of commemoration for the Emanuel 9—the nine persons shot and killed on June 17, 2015, during a Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. The resolution called the ELCA to ground the day in prayer, to develop worship prayers and litanies around repentance from racism. On June 17, 2020, the ELCA observed the first commemoration with a virtual worship service. Worship leaders included ecumenical guests and the development of additional liturgical resources, including an antiracism pledge.

The resource “Lamenting Racism” was commissioned for *All Creation Sings*, the new worship and song supplement for use in the ELCA. This lament and prayer may be used in preparation for the work of faithful listening in discussions about racism and racial reconciliation, and at other appropriate times. This resource has been shared as part of the initial worship resources for the Commemoration of the Emanuel 9, as well as the recent worship resources for the Day of Lament Against Anti-Asian Racism. These are examples of the kinds of worship resources that might be developed for the ELCA Day of Repentance from Racism.

An additional planning consultation with the presiding bishop, executive for worship, the director for racial justice, the ethnic specific directors, the ethnic specific associations, leadership from the Service and Justice and Christian Community and Leadership home areas, and strategic communications will take place in early Spring 2021.

Church Council action:

To receive the response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop on the naming of an annual Day of Repentance, including a liturgical resource of lamentation and repentance to accompany this annual Day of Repentance;

To affirm the presiding bishop's decision to name the Tuesday following the celebration of the birth of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as an annual ELCA Day of Repentance from Racism; and

To encourage members, congregations, and synods to use the “Lamenting Racism” resource in *All Creation Sings* and other liturgical resources of lamentation and repentance offered by the worship team to accompany this annual Day of Repentance.

16. DEACON CROSS DESIGN UPDATE

Church Council Action [CC18.11.22]

...To define the symbols of this ministry as a deacon’s stole and cross, both to be presented at the entrance rite, and to request the Office of the Presiding Bishop worship staff share information about the appropriate use of the deacon stole and facilitate a conversation among deacons regarding a unified cross design;...

Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (February 2020)

In early Fall 2019, Deacon John Weit of the Worship team of the Office of the Presiding Bishop consulted with Deacon Sue Rothmeyer and Deacon Krista Anderson from the churchwide organization to begin addressing the need to facilitate a conversation among deacons regarding a unified cross design to be worn as a pin. A consultation with five additional deacons representing various ministry contexts was held in October. This consultation discussed the various cross designs that already exist within diaconal communities, both those represented by ELCA deacons and

by ecumenical partners. We addressed several paths forward including looking to name a metal worker/designer that could work with the ELCA to potentially both design and produce pins for purchase by individual deacons.

Staffing transitions on the Worship team caused this project to slow through the winter months. This work will continue this spring with the hope of engaging a designer to consider a sustainable process for production and a potential design. Although we anticipate that the production costs of the individual pins would likely be offset by individual purchases, we will likely need to identify funding to begin this design work. As this will become an official symbol of the ministry of Word and Service, a final design would be presented to the Program and Services Committee for affirmation, likely in Fall 2020.

Response from Christian Community and Leadership (Spring 2021)

On Feb. 1, the Worship team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop moved to Christian Community and Leadership.

Since the previous update to Church Council in February 2020, the swift change in focus due to the pandemic necessitated delaying further conversation regarding a unified deacon cross design. The subsequent elimination of a staff position on the worship team further required reprioritization of this work.

Deacon Krista Anderson and Deacon John Weit looked to resume this work in January 2021. Throughout the month of February, informal sharing and conversation among deacons occurred via social media and soliciting direct feedback. It was hoped that this conversation and collaboration might offer some consensus around imagery and concepts that would inform a jewelry designer to be commissioned to craft a proposed design. The feedback among deacons showed that there is a considerable variety of opinions on design concepts, or in some cases, an apparent lack of interest in a common cross design for ELCA ministers of Word and Service. The team's research and conversation have found dozens of symbols used by diaconal communities worldwide, including former and current communities that include ELCA ministers of Word and Service.

This unified cross pin, once designed, will need sustainable manufacturing and distribution venues. A preliminary conversation with Old Lutheran has presented a possible path forward. Such a partnership will need further collaboration and coordination with other ELCA ministries who have existing partnerships with Old Lutheran. The production and sale of these pins should be financially self-sustaining at a reasonable price point for deacons. The manufacturing and sales process must also account for a higher number of pins to be sold in the first months of availability. Subsequent sales will be generally limited to deacons soon to be ordained and those who need to purchase a replacement. Some funding for design, prototype, and start-up costs may be necessary.

A grass-roots effort for online Zoom conversation with ELCA deacons and candidates from across the church will occur in March and April 2021. We hope this emerging venue will allow an additional conversation opportunity prior to commissioning a design. With a designer, funding, and manufacturing and distribution venues in place by Summer 2021, it is possible that a final design could be affirmed in Fall 2021.

Church Council action:

To receive the update from the Christian Community and Leadership unit on a unified cross design for ministers of Word and Service; and

To request a final design be presented to the Fall 2021 Church Council meeting.

17. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

The Church Council has the responsibility of electing people to fill terms on boards of separately incorporated ministries, social ministry organizations, and seminaries. Bylaws 8.21.03. and 8.21.04 outlines basic parameters for the election of members to the boards of ELCA seminaries. Pursuant to 14.22. of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, the Church Council is also to elect nominees to a vacancy on churchwide boards or committees.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of trustees of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA—ELCA Foundation—to fill a vacancy with the term expiring in August 2022: Ms. Ingrid S. Stafford.

Church Council action:

To re-elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc. to a three-year term expiring in 2024: Ms. Patricia A. Nimtze and the Rev. Keith D. Hohly.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a six-year term beginning April 2021 and expiring Dec. 31, 2026: Ms. Miji Bell.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Luther Seminary to a four-year term beginning July 1, 2021 and expiring June 30, 2025: The Rev. Jeanne Hartfield and the Rev. Linda Norman.

Church Council action:

To elect to the advisory board of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary to a term expiring in June 2023: The Rev. Jim Johnson; and

To elect to the advisory board of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary to a three-year term beginning in June 2021 and expiring in June 2024: Ms. Kara Lynne-Benson Haug.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University to a term expiring June 30, 2023: Ms. Marla Butke; and

To elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University to a three-year term beginning July 1, 2021 and expiring June 30, 2024: The Rev. Abraham Allende.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of trustees of United Lutheran Seminary to a three-year term expiring in 2024: Sr. Marianne Brock.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago to a term beginning Oct. 1, 2021 and expiring Sept. 30, 2024: Mr. Oswald Gregory Lewis.