



Summary of Church Council Meeting April 15-17, 2021

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met electronically April 15–17, 2021.

The Church Council took action on the following:

- recognized that the ELCA's ministry as a sanctuary church body is a public witness that calls ELCA members to value the dignity of each human being made in God's image; encouraged an understanding of the word "sanctuary" that is rooted in the principles of walking alongside, or accompanying, immigrants and refugees while acknowledging that the word "sanctuary" has no legal or universally accepted definition; and affirmed the guidance provided in the "ELCA Sanctuary Church Guidelines" for ways congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization can accompany and support the ministry of sanctuary
- approved, with amendments, a revision of *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* and encouraged the Committee on Appeals to add to the document a definition of "promiscuity"
- received a report and recommendation from Portico Benefit Services regarding the "ELCA Disability Offset for Dependents" and affirmed Portico's recommendation not to change the existing offset policy
- received the final report from the five Mission Support Experiment synods; urged the churchwide organization and the synods to incorporate the learnings from the experiments into future collaboration; and encouraged formation of a project team of bishops, churchwide organization staff, and others to discuss future strategies for mission support sharing between synods and the churchwide organization
- deferred to the Fall 2021 Church Council meeting questions of developing social messages on U.S. National Drug Policy, aging, gender identity, or gun policy
- adopted a revision to the *Manual of Policies for the Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to include a set of protocols for ministers of Word and Sacrament from Lutheran World Federation companion churches who wish to serve as missionaries in congregations and synods of the ELCA
- in response to an earlier Church Council action, affirmed 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 encouraged 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
- received a gap analysis of rostered women, with particular focus on rostered women of color, from the Office of the Presiding Bishop in response to a Churchwide Assembly action on the "50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women"
- received a response and recommendations regarding seminary tuition from the Christian Community and Leadership unit and supported various actions to continue addressing these recommendations

- responded to various Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and synod council actions
- referred a resolution from the Northeastern Iowa Synod Council on “ELCA Advocacy Support for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act” to the Service and Justice unit
- received the report of the Temporary Select Committee on Committees and approved an extension to November 2021 for consideration of a revised Church Council committee structure
- increased the spending authorization for ELCA World Hunger to \$23,500,000 in FY 2021
- approved a \$1.3 million addition to the Church Council Designated Fund for FY 2020 to fund budget shortfalls in future years
- ratified amendments to the constitutions of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and the Southwestern Texas Synod
- approved amendments to the bylaws of the ELCA Foundation, United Lutheran Seminary, and Luther Seminary
- elected members to the governing bodies of the Endowment Fund of the ELCA, Mosaic, Inc., and six seminaries
- received the annual report of the ELCA Churchwide Organization for 2020
- took necessary action to allow St. John Lutheran Home to refinance the mortgage on its property

The Church Council received/engaged in the following:

- reports from the officers, its committees, and the Conference of Bishops
- reflection on migration and the work of AMMPARO (“Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities”)
- a primer on “Indigenous Perspective in Our Country” from Council member Loni Taylor, member of the Chippewa Cree Nation
- information on Future Church and the Open Doors congregation grants initiative to encourage innovation in reaching new people in congregations’ contexts as we transition from the pandemic
- informal conversation on authentic diversity, sanctuary church, and *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*
- worship using resources from the new *All Creation Sings* worship supplement