



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Nov. 16, 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 (Nov. 11–13, 2021)

The Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met in Chicago Nov. 11–13, 2021. Here is a summary of particular actions along with background information.

1.	REMEMBRANCE OF BILL HORNE	2
2.	REVISIONS TO “A DECLARATION OF THE ELCA TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY”	2
3.	2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VACCINATION REQUIREMENT	2
4.	EDITORIAL UPDATE ON “SUICIDE PREVENTION” SOCIAL MESSAGE	2
5.	“A FRESH PERSPECTIVE: ELCA CHURCH COUNCIL YOUNG ADULTS”	2
6.	FY2022 REVISED SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS	3
7.	CONTINUING RESOLUTION AMENDMENTS TO THE <i>CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE ELCA</i>	3
8.	RECOMMENDED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS	3
9.	REVISION OF <i>DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE</i>	3
10.	AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND REPORT.....	3
11.	SYNOD MISSION SUPPORT EXPERIMENT	4
12.	NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE	4
13.	REVISIONS TO GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL	5
14.	APPOINTMENTS TO MEMORIALS COMMITTEE	5
15.	APPOINTMENTS TO REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE.....	5
16.	2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY PROCESS FOR ELECTIONS	6
17.	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DOCUMENTS.....	6
18.	ASSESSMENT AND FEASIBILITY OF SOCIAL MESSAGE PROCESSES.....	6
19.	ASPIRATIONAL DOCUMENT.....	7
20.	NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS	7

1. REMEMBRANCE OF BILL HORNE

Background:

William “Bill” Horne II, vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), died Aug. 14, 2021. Bill was elected to serve a six-year term as ELCA vice president at the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans.

Church Council action:

The ELCA Church Council gives thanks to God for the life and faithful service of William “Bill” Burt Horne II. As it meets for its biannual meeting, the council offers its prayers for comfort and peace to his family and friends upon Bill’s death. The council expresses its appreciation for his wise, fair, and strong leadership as vice president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and his collaborative spirit, steadfast commitment, and genuine compassion for the congregations and communities throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

2. REVISIONS TO “A DECLARATION OF THE ELCA TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY”

Background:

In 1994, the Church Council adopted “A Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community,” a statement repudiating Luther’s anti-Judaic writings, opposing anti-Semitism, and expressing the ELCA’s desire to build right relationships with the Jewish community. It was reaffirmed by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly in the document’s twenty-fifth anniversary year. The ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations proposed revisions to the declaration.

Church Council action:

To adopt the proposed revisions to “A Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to the Jewish Community” as an expression of this church’s continual opposition to rising anti-Semitism and ongoing work to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery;

To reaffirm “A Declaration of the ELCA to the Jewish Community” as an enduring message for this church, this church’s Jewish neighbors, and all of this church’s ecumenical, inter-religious, and global partners; and

To call the ELCA into a time of study and reflection using the declaration and other Lutheran-Jewish relations resources available from the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

3. 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY VACCINATION REQUIREMENT

Church Council action:

To direct the churchwide organization to require all participants (i.e., voting members, visitors, volunteers, contract staff and churchwide staff) attending the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to either show proof of being fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or provide upon arrival a negative COVID-19 test result taken 1–3 days prior to traveling to the assembly for unvaccinated individuals, in accordance with the guidance from public health officials.

4. EDITORIAL UPDATE ON “SUICIDE PREVENTION” SOCIAL MESSAGE

Background:

In November 2020 the Church Council authorized an edit of the social message on “Suicide Prevention” (1999) to update outdated terminology, faulty references, and dated statistics [CC20.11.32a].

Church Council action:

To adopt the proposed editorial update as the revised text of the ELCA social message on “Suicide Prevention” (1999) in order to provide accuracy and relevance to the contemporary social context;

To encourage conversation within ELCA congregations and to invite similar conversations with ecumenical and inter-religious partners to study this social message; and

To direct the churchwide organization to promote communication of this message throughout this church.

5. “A FRESH PERSPECTIVE: ELCA CHURCH COUNCIL YOUNG ADULTS”

Church Council action:

To receive the working document entitled “A Fresh Perspective: ELCA Church Council Young Adults” and prayerfully consider it;

To create a working group composed primarily of Youth and Young Adult members of the council, with additional youth and young adults of this church and other members of this church to be lifted up by the Executive Committee; and

To direct this group in consultation with other Church Council members, and churchwide staff, to discuss the ELCA goal to reach one million new, young, and diverse people, and to prepare a report consisting of ideas, concerns, recommendations, and aspirations to be given at the next regular meeting of the Church Council.

6. FY2022 REVISED SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS

Church Council action:

To revise the 2022 fiscal year current fund income proposal from \$68,507,018 to \$65,816,150;

To approve a 2022 fiscal year current fund spending authorization of \$65,816,150;

Church Council action:

To revise the 2022 fiscal year World Hunger income proposal from \$21,500,000 to \$22,665,000; and

To approve a 2022 ELCA World Hunger spending authorization of \$22,665,000.

7. CONTINUING RESOLUTION AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, AND CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS OF THE ELCA

Church Council action:

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

8. RECOMMENDED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Background:

At the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, constitutional provision 4.02.c. [CA19.05.27.] and related provisions [CA19.05.28] were amended. The adopted amendments must go to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly for ratification.

The Churchwide Assembly adopts amendments to the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. The process for amending the governing documents is specified in Chapter 22 of the ELCA Constitution.

Church Council action:

To recommend the following for ratification by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*:

To ratify, *en bloc*, the actions of the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly regarding amendments to constitutional provision 4.02.c. and related provisions in the *Constitutions, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.

Church Council action:

To recommend the following for adoption by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly of the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*:

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

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

9. REVISION OF DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

Background:

In response to the Church Council action to “encourage the Committee on Appeals to add a definition of ‘promiscuity’ to the definitions section within *Definition and Guidelines for Discipline*” [CC21.04.10], the Committee on Appeals proposed a definition.

Church Council action:

To approve the additional definition of “promiscuity” to the definitions section within *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline*.

10. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND REPORT

Church Council action:

To approve the reappointment of Mr. Kevin Anderson, Ms. Tracey Beasley, Mr. Gary Hecht, Mr. Keoni Newman, and Ms. Ingrid Stafford as members to the ELCA Audit Committee for a two-year, renewable term beginning November 2021; and

To approve the appointment of Ms. Kerry Fehrman as a member to the ELCA Audit Committee for a two-year, renewable term beginning November 2021.

Church Council action:

To receive the preliminary report of the ELCA Audit Committee for the churchwide organization's fiscal year ended January 31, 2021; and

To authorize the Executive Committee to approve the final report.

11. SYNOD MISSION SUPPORT EXPERIMENT

Background:

The Synod Mission Support Experiment was approved by the ELCA Church Council at its April 2015 meeting for three years (FY2016–FY2018) and extended at its November 2018 meeting for two years (FY2019–FY2020).

Church Council action:

To express gratitude for all those who participated in the planning, implementation and assessment of the Synod Mission Support Experiment;

To recommend that changes to congregational vitality grants and the funding/employment model for the Director for Evangelical Mission position (DEM) include a review of possible implications to future models of Mission Support sharing between synods and the churchwide expression (to be completed June 30, 2022), and these implications be shared with the Budget and Finance Committee;

To recommend that the five synods which participated in the Synod Mission Support Experiment (4A-Nebraska, 4F-Texas Louisiana Gulf Coast, 7B-New England, 8D-Lower Susquehanna, 8G-Metropolitan Washington, D.C.) continue their models of Mission Support sharing with the churchwide expression until decisions have been made with respect to the Director for Evangelical Mission position and congregational vitality grants. At that time, it is recommended each synod meet with staff from the churchwide Christian Community and Leadership home area and the Mission Support team to discuss how their current models of funding and decision-making with respect to the DEM position and congregational vitality grants compares with the revisions that may be made to these ministry areas. It is recommended that these discussions include ways to move toward closer alignment if areas of difference remain between a synod's model and the revised Christian Community and Leadership model;

To remind all synods that any proposed changes in their models of Mission Support sharing between synods and the churchwide expression are to be undertaken through mutual conversation between representatives of the synod and of the churchwide organization. Section 10.71 of the ELCA Constitution states, "Each synod shall remit to the churchwide organization a percentage of amount of all donor-unrestricted receipts contributed to it by the congregations of the synod. The actual percentage or amount shall be determined through individual consultations with each synod;" and

To recommend that the Resource Development Committee (RDC) continue to review strategies for increasing Mission Support shared with the churchwide organization, as outlined in the RDC charter.

12. NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Church Council action:

To approve the proposed Church Council committee restructure as detailed in "Proposed CC Committee Restructure" for full implementation immediately following the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly;

To direct the Legal and Constitutional Review Committee to prepare and forward to the Church Council the revisions to the continuing resolutions under constitutional provision 14.41, to establish each of the new standing committees and to remove provisions for committees that will be discontinued and to present the continuing resolution amendments to the Spring 2022 Church Council meeting;

To direct the Board Development Committee to plan for the size and composition of the new standing committees and to forward preliminary committee assignments to the Executive Committee;

To direct the Executive Committee to review the proposed committee assignments and to forward to the Church Council for ratification;

To direct all new standing committees of the Church Council to prepare committee charters for alignment with the proposed restructure; and

To express appreciation to the members of the Temporary Select Committee on Committees for their diligent and thoughtful work.

13. REVISIONS TO GOVERNANCE POLICY MANUAL

Background:

In accordance with ELCA Church Council Governance Policy Manual, “At least triennially, provisions of this Church Council Governance Policy Manual shall be reviewed and amended, as necessary. Proposed amendments shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Office of the Secretary in advance of presentation for action to the Church Council. Any Church Council member, liaison bishop, or churchwide staff member may suggest amendments by submitting proposals to the Executive Committee. Amendments will be adopted by majority vote of the Church Council and become effective immediately upon adoption.”

Church Council action:

- To approve the revisions to the ELCA Church Council Governance Policy Manual; and**
- To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.**

14. APPOINTMENTS TO MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Background:

Churchwide bylaw 12.51.21. provides for the appointment of a Memorials Committee to review materials from synod assemblies and make recommendations for Churchwide Assembly action. The 15-member committee includes members of the Church Council and voting members of the assembly, including synod bishops. The Church Council appoints the committee at its November meeting prior to the Churchwide Assembly to allow for adequate notice to members for their participation in the meeting of the Memorials Committee subsequent to the completion of the 2022 synod assemblies.

Church Council action:

- To appoint the members of the Memorials Committee for the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:**

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| 1. Ms. Cheryl Chatman [3G; POC] (co-chair) | 9. Mx. Joan Saltzman [4B; YA] |
| 2. Mr. Joseph Nolte [5D] (co-chair) | 10. Ms. Melissa Peper-Firestone [6D] |
| 3. The Rev. Joanne Engquist [1B] | 11. The Rev. Carey Hovland [6F] |
| 4. Bp. Laurie Larson Caesar [1E] | 12. Mr. Arundel Clarke [7A; POC] |
| 5. Bp. Yehiel Curry [5A; POC] | 13. Mr. Christopher Vergara [7C; POC] |
| 6. Mr. Randall Foster [2B; POC] | 14. Deacon Alicia Anderson [8C] |
| 7. Mr. Glenn Austad [2D] | 15. The Rev. Viktoria Parvin [9A]; and |
| 8. Mr. Mark Hollabaugh [3E] | |

- To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Memorials Committee for the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as needed.**

15. APPOINTMENTS TO REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE

Background:

Churchwide bylaw 12.51.11. provides for the appointment of a Reference and Counsel Committee to review items—proposed resolutions—that are not germane to items contained in the stated agenda of the assembly and also to review all changes or additions to the constitution and bylaws submitted by voting members at the assembly. The 15-member committee includes Church Council members, assembly voting members of the assembly, including synod bishops.

Church Council action:

- To appoint the members of the Committee of Reference and Counsel for the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly:**

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Ms. Tracey Beasley [7F; POC] (co-chair) | 9. Deacon Timothy Siburg [4A] |
| 2. Mr. David Lenz [6E] (co-chair) | 10. Ms. Brenda Pinero [4E; POC] |
| 3. Mr. Kevin Anderson [8G] | 11. The Rev. Michael Ashman [5F] |
| 4. Bp. Regina Hassanally [3I] | 12. Ms. Hannah Limbong [6C; POC; YA] |
| 5. Bp. Paul Erickson [5J] | 13. The Rev. John Longworth [7B] |
| 6. Ms. Marjorie Fiedler [1F] | 14. The Rev. Stephen Herr [8D] |
| 7. Ms. Dorothy Arata [2A] | 15. Ms. Esther Smith [9F; POC]; and |
| 8. Mr. Jason Langworthy [3H] | |

- To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to appoint additional members to the Reference and Counsel Committee for the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly as needed.**

16. 2022 CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY PROCESS FOR ELECTIONS

Church Council action:

To delegate to the Executive Committee of the Church Council responsibility for review and evaluation of and recommendations for Part 16 of the draft Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, particularly the assembly discernment process; and

To bring to the Church Council recommendations for Part 16 of the Rules of Organization and Procedure for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly no later than the April 2022 meeting.

17. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DOCUMENTS

Background:

The Church Council is responsible for reviewing this church's ongoing work in corporate social responsibility. The Program and Services Committee reviewed three issue papers and one social criteria investment screen.

Church Council action:

To approve the amendments to the following corporate social responsibility documents to serve as the basis for ongoing corporate social responsibility work in this church:

- Private Prison Social Criteria Investment Screen
- Environmental Topics Issue Paper
- Climate Change Issue Paper
- Health Issue Paper; and

To request that the original issue papers be archived for historical and research purposes.

18. ASSESSMENT AND FEASIBILITY OF SOCIAL MESSAGE PROCESSES

Background:

In Spring 2021, the Church Council postponed the question of developing a social message on U.S. National Drug Policy, aging, gender identity, or gun policy until Fall 2021. [CC21.04.061] There is also another pending request for a social message on climate change. [EC20.02.12] The capacity for social teaching writing projects during any given year is one social statement, one social message, and one study resource.

Church Council action:

To thank the Southwestern Minnesota Synod for encouraging the ELCA Church Council to authorize the use of existing resources to create a message on climate change;

To authorize the development of a social message on climate change, in light of existing social teaching and in accordance with "Policies and Procedures of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for Addressing Social Concerns" (2018), with council action to be taken at the November 2022 Church Council meeting; and

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

Church Council action:

To receive the assessment from the Theological Discernment Team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop on the feasibility of developing a social message on U.S. national drug policy and to decline to initiate the development of a social message on that topic.

Church Council action:

To thank the Virginia Synod for drawing attention to this social issue with its request that the ELCA "bring the 1978 statement, 'Aging and the Older Adult,' out of retirement and revise it as appropriate to make it a living document;"

To release the request for the development of a social message on aging, with the understanding that an ELCA study on aging should be developed when possible as a means to foster discernment, especially in congregations; and

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

Church Council action:

To release the request to develop a social message on gender identity and gender expression in light of the various actions already underway to address the topic, with the understanding that the ELCA will continue its ongoing efforts to address the concerns expressed in the "Gender Identity" memorial [CA19.02.091].

Church Council action:

To maintain the request for consideration of developing a social message on U.S. national gun policy as pending and to be assessed by the Theological Discernment Team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop for possible recommendation to the Church Council at its November 2022 meeting.

19. ASPIRATIONAL DOCUMENT

Background:

At the November 2020 Church Council meeting, the council deferred “the question of developing an aspirational document until after Spring 2021 when *Definitions and Guidelines for Discipline* is further redeveloped.” [CC20.11.33j]

Church Council action:

To receive with gratitude the response and recommendation from the Christian Community and Leadership unit regarding the question of developing an aspirational document; and

To suspend the consideration of developing an aspirational document until a need arises.

20. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Background:

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. outline 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 a board or committee of the churchwide organization.

Church Council action:

To elect to the advisory board of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary to a term expiring in June 2024: The Rev. Jessica Obrecht.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of directors of Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University to a term expiring June 30, 2024: The Rev. Niklaus C. Schillack.

Church Council action:

To re-elect to the board of directors of Mosaic, Inc. to a three-year term expiring in 2024: Ms. Megan M. Gustafson.

Church Council action:

To elect to the board of trustees of the Board of Pensions of the ELCA—Portico Benefit Services—to fill a vacancy with the term expiring in August 2022: Mr. Todd J. Maloy.

Church Council action:

To authorize the Executive Committee of the Church Council to fill vacancies on the board of trustees to the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—ELCA Foundation between now and the next meeting of the Church Council.

Church Council action:

To approve the classification of board of trustees to the Endowment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—ELCA Foundation:

- **Class 1 (term limit ends in 2022):** Kristy Albrecht, Liza Canino, Pr. Kelly France, and John Quello
- **Class 2 (term limit ends in 2025):** Karen Bohn, Eric Brudos, Keith Christensen, and Eric Golberg
- **Class 3 (term limit ends in 2028):** Bruce George, Naomi Horsager, Kori Reed, and Chuck Self