

**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN  
AMERICA**

**Church Council**

**MINUTES**

**Apr 20, 2023**

**Prepared by the  
Office of the Secretary**



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**EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
CHURCH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES  
April 20, 2023**

The 114th meeting of the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) convened electronically at 5:00 p.m. on April 20, 2023 (all times Central Daylight Time unless otherwise noted).

**ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING**

The following people were present for all or part of the meeting:

***Voting members***

**Officers:**

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop  
Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president  
Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary  
Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer

**Chair of the Conference of Bishops:**

The Rev. Tracie L. Bartholomew, bishop of the New Jersey Synod

**Church Council:**

The Rev. A. Elizabeth (Lisa) Ahlness	Mr. Rindra Josoa
Mr. Kevin Anderson	The Rev. Gwendolyn S. King
Ms. Tracey A. Beasley	Mr. David M. Lenz
The Rev. Marcus A. Bigott	The Rev. Tara R. Lynn
The Rev. Nicholas M. Billardello III	Ms. Olivia L. Martin-Call
Ms. Susan Boxberger ( <i>excused</i> )	Mr. Mitch S. McCartney
The Rev. Heather E. Brown	Mr. Joel A. Miller
Ms. Jamie Brueschoff	Mr. Ethan G. Miller-Perez
The Rev. William H. Callister	Mr. Keoni Newman
The Rev. Leroy Cannon	Deacon Kari A. Olsen
The Rev. Karn S. Carroll	Mr. Iván A. Pérez
Ms. Divine	Ms. Linda C. Rivera
The Rev. Joanne E. Engquist	Mr. Noah F. Roux
Ms. Kerry A. Fehrman	Ms. Valerie J. Shaw
Ms. Sheena R. Foster	Ms. Andraine A. Sinaga
Mr. Hans W. Giller	Mr. Loren A. Solberg
The Rev. Emily C. Hartner	The Rev. Kjersten L. Sullivan
Ms. Kristy K. Henriksen	Ms. Loni Taylor
The Rev. Pamela J. Hoh	Ms. Jennifer E. Trom
Ms. Cherrish Holland	

***Representatives of the Conference of Bishops:***

Bishop Brenda K. Bos, Region 2	Bishop Paula J. Schmitt, Region 8
Bishop Sue J. Briner, Region 4	Bishop Kevin Strickland, Region 9
Bishop Donald M. Kreiss, Region 6	Bishop Shelley R. Wickstrom, Region 1
Bishop Patricia J. Lull, Region 3	

***Advisory members of the Church Council:***

Mr. Roberto Lara Aranda, president of the Asociación de Ministerios Latinos de la ELCA  
Ms. Shari Seifert, president of the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice  
Ms. Aubrey Thonvold, executive director of ReconcilingWorks  
The Rev. Lamont A. Wells, president of the African Descent Lutheran Association

***Churchwide Staff Resource People:***

**Office of the Presiding Bishop:**

Ms. Jennifer G. DeLeon, director for racial justice  
Ms. Victoria Flood, senior director for Mission Support  
Ms. Jocelyn Fuller, senior director for strategic communications  
The Rev. Louise N. Johnson, executive for administration  
Mr. Nick Kiger, director for mission support  
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment  
Ms. Judith E. Roberts, senior director for diversity, equity, and inclusion  
The Rev. Carmelo Santos Rolon, director for theological diversity and engagement  
Ms. Jodi L. Slattery, executive for governance  
The Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics  
Ms. Rachel K. Wind, executive for development

**Office of the Secretary:**

Mr. Thomas A. Cunniff, general counsel  
Mr. Dan F. Eppley, official documentation manager  
The Rev. N. Keith Fry, executive for Office of the Secretary administration  
Mr. Paul K. Irwin, associate general counsel  
Mr. Joseph Schmidt, administrative services coordinator  
Deacon Mary Ann Schwabe, executive for synod relations

**Christian Community and Leadership:**

The Rev. Sara A. Cutter, senior director for operational effectiveness  
Ms. Evelyn Soto, senior director for resources and relationships

**Service and Justice:**

Ms. Tammy Jackson, interim executive director  
The Rev. Barbara Lund, senior director for operations and innovation

**Innovation:**

Mr. Iain Chester, executive director

**Media:**

Ms. Candice Hill Buchbinder, public relations manager

**Guests:**

The Rev. Paul D. Erickson, bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod and bishops' liaison to the Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color  
The Rev. Jim Martin Schramm, lead author of the social message, "Earth's Climate Crisis"

***Separately Incorporated Ministries:***

The Rev. Jeffrey D. Thiemann, president and CEO, Portico Benefit Services

***Ecumenical Guests:***

The Rev. Margaret R. Rose, The Episcopal Church

## CALL TO ORDER AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

(Agenda I.A.)

Mr. Imran Siddiqui, vice president of the ELCA and chair of the Church Council, called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. Agenda items were distributed electronically prior to the meeting. Vice President Siddiqui welcomed council members and guests and offered a land acknowledgment. Ms. Cherrish Holland read from I Peter and the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, opened the meeting with prayer.

A motion was made to adopt the agenda.

There being no discussion, the chair called for the vote.

### VOTED:

**CC23.04.01 To adopt the agenda and to permit the chair to call for consideration of agenda items in the order the chair deems most appropriate.**

## ADOPTION OF THE STANDING RULES

(Agenda I.B.)

The Church Council conducted its business in this online meeting using standing rules. The document provided deadlines for removal of items from *en bloc* and introduction of new business, instructions for Church Council members on how to ask questions or make comments during the meeting, and the process for voting. The standing rules were distributed electronically to Church Council members prior to the meeting.

### VOTED:

**CC23.04.02 To adopt the standing rules for the April 2023 Church Council meeting.**

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

(Agenda I.C.)

Presiding Bishop Eaton greeted Church Council members from Bogotá, Columbia, where she was attending the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) pre-assembly meeting of the North American and Latin American–Caribbean regions of the LWF, mentioning that many of the challenges facing the ELCA are also being faced by Lutherans in Latin America. The presiding bishop thanked the Executive Committee of the Church Council and churchwide office staff for their considerable effort in preparing a slate of 35 nominees for appointment to the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC), noting that at every step in the process the intention was to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The presiding bishop updated the Church Council on the search for new leadership for the Service and Justice home area. She provided an overview of the career of the Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, who has now retired as executive director for the Service and Justice home area. She announced that Ms. Tammy Jackson will serve as interim director for Service and Justice during the search process for a new executive director.

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.D.)

On behalf of the Executive Committee, Vice President Siddiqui announced that the first business before the Church Council was the appointment of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC). At its November 2022 meeting, the Church Council established parameters for a nomination process and authorized the Executive Committee of the Church Council to serve as the Nominating Committee. [CC22.11.38]

The Executive Committee launched a two-month nomination process beginning Jan. 9 and ending March 9, 2023. A total of 402 nominations were received through both the synod nomination process and the open nomination process. The Office of the Secretary provided staff support for the process. A web page on ELCA.org ([www.ELCA.org/CRLC](http://www.ELCA.org/CRLC)) was also created to provide public information about the commission and the timeline for the work and will be updated as the commission's work progresses.

The Executive Committee presented a slate of nominees for the council's consideration. All nominees were interviewed by members of the Executive Committee. The Office of the Secretary will notify both appointees and those nominees who were not appointed. If a vacancy occurs on the commission, the Executive Committee is authorized to fill those vacancies as deemed appropriate and necessary for the commission's work.

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The first in-person CRLC meeting is scheduled for July 13-15, 2023, with 14-15 additional meetings anticipated. Generally, there will be two in-person meetings each year with the other meetings to be held online. The commission will be responsible for determining the dates of its future meetings. The churchwide organization will cover travel expenses for members of the CRLC to attend all in-person meetings.

Because discussion of appointments to the CLRC involved personnel matters, the conversation was held in executive session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The 114th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA entered into executive session at 5:21 p.m. Minutes for meetings held in executive session are added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary. The Church Council returned to open session at 5:45 p.m.

**APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMISSION FOR A RENEWED LUTHERAN CHURCH**

(Agenda I.D.1.)

On behalf of the Executive Committee, Deacon Sue E. Rothmeyer, secretary of the ELCA, moved to accept the slate of nominees proposed by the executive committee. Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote. Mr. David M. Lenz abstained from the vote.

**VOTED:**

**CC23.04.03**

**To appoint the following members to the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church: Mr. Roberto Lara Aranda, the Rev. Sean Avery, Ms. Felecia Boone, Mr. Michael J. Chan, the Rev. Tiffany Chaney, Mr. Don Corson, Mr. Antoine Cummins, the Rev. Elizabeth Friedman, the Rev. Charlene Guiliani, the Rev. Gail Hagerty, Bishop Regina Hassanally (*at-large*), the Rev. Douglas A. Hill, Mx. Ruth Ellen Howard, Ms. Thelma Pruitt Jacks, Mr. Ryan Johnson (*at-large*), Ms. Stacy D. Kitahata, the Rev. Kristin Johnston Largen, Mr. David M. Lenz (*at-large*), Ms. Alexandra Mack, Mr. Thomas Madden (*at-large*), Ms. Susan Wilds McArver, Ms. Candy McCorkle, Mr. Evan Moilan (*at-large*), Ms. Sarah E. Morris, Ms. Laurel Muhly-Alexander, Mr. Anthony Ormsbee-Hale, Bishop Matthew Riegel (*at-large*), Mr. Leon Schwartz, Deacon Dallas Shealy (*at-large*), the Rev. Adam Sornchai, Ms. Melody Stachour, Ms. Cheryl Stuart, Ms. Loni Taylor (*at-large*), Ms. Linda M. Timmons, and the Rev. Carla Christopher Wilson; and**

**To authorize the Executive Committee to appoint members as necessary if a vacancy occurs.**

**PROPOSAL FOR EXCHANGEABILITY OF THE DIACONATE: THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH AND THE ELCA**

(Agenda I.D.2.)

*Background*

At its March 2023 meeting, the ELCA Conference of Bishops voted to commend to the ELCA Church Council a "Proposal for Exchangeability of the Diaconate" between the ELCA and The Episcopal Church (TEC) as an interpretation of the full communion agreement, "Called to Common Mission."

Long-awaited, the exchangeability of deacons between the two churches became possible following the action of the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly confirming ordination as the entrance rite for rostered ministers of Word and Service. The proposal mutually recognizes each church's order of deacons as authentic and provides for the possibility of interchangeability for occasional ministry or extended service. Exchangeability itself is subject to the approval of the respective bishops and guided by the "Orderly Exchange."

As an ecumenical text, this proposal can only be acted upon, and not altered. TEC is undertaking a similar process to implement this proposal as the ELCA.

The proposal was developed over 18 months by an implementation team of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC), which is the body entrusted to oversee both churches' "reception" (living out) of the full communion agreement, "Called to Common Mission." LECC endorsed the proposal on January 11, 2023.



In February, a consultation was convened by the ecumenical staff and implementation team chair with the ELCA Deaconess Community and ELCA churchwide candidacy staff. The importance of the proposal was affirmed. A parallel consultation is underway in the TEC.

In March 2023, the ELCA Conference of Bishops voted to commend the proposal to the ELCA Church Council for reception. Again, TEC will undertake a similar process.

In the meantime, work on the “Orderly Exchange” document, which provides guidelines for the exchangeability of ministers of Word and Sacrament, will be expanded to include guidelines for the exchangeability of deacons. Specific realities, such as the asymmetry in the compensation of ELCA and TEC deacons, will be carefully and clearly addressed. This work on the “Orderly Exchange” will also provide opportunities for mutual growth and accompaniment, including best practices in formation, compensation, and the role and responsibilities of deacons.

The proposal was shared electronically with Church Council members prior to the meeting.

*Discussion*

A Church Council member highlighted the significance of “reception” in this context, emphasizing that it means a commitment to live into the agreement moving forward. The Rev. Donald M. Kreiss, bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod, chair of the Conference of Bishops Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Committee, and co-chair of the LECC, Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment, and the Rev. Margaret R. Rose, ecumenical and interreligious deputy to the presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church, presented the proposal, thanking all those involved in producing the document, outlining next steps, and emphasizing the historic significance of the proposal.

Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

**VOTED:**

**CC23.04.04 To receive a proposal for exchangeability of the diaconate between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

**REPORT OF TASK FORCE ON THE ELCA DISCIPLINE PROCESS FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS OF COLOR (Agenda I.D.3.)**

*Background*

At the spring 2022 Church Council meeting, the Church Council authorized the creation of a task force “charged with reviewing the current process for discipline and its impact on persons of color and other historically marginalized groups, considering recommendations for staffing, community healing and restoration, and learning best practices from full communion partners” and requested a report with possible recommendations be provided by the Spring 2023 meeting. [CC22.04.04]

At its April 20 meeting, the Executive Committee discussed the report and recommendations from the task force. The report and recommendations were provided to the Church Council electronically prior to the meeting.

*Discussion*

Ms. Judith E. Roberts, senior director for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the Rev. Paul D. Erickson, bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod and bishops’ liaison to the Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color, introduced the report and recommendation, emphasizing the collaborative nature of the process that produced the report and key elements of the recommendations.

Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

**VOTED:**

**CC23.04.05 To receive the report and recommendations from the Task Force on the ELCA Discipline Process for Rostered Ministers of Color and thank the members of the task force for their care and due diligence to the work;**  
**To refer the recommendations regarding the current discipline process to the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with the Conference of Bishops, with a report to be made to the Church Council at its November 2023 meeting;**  
**To refer the recommendations regarding the creation of an ombudsperson position/office to the Administrative Team, in consultation with the Conference of**

**Bishops, with a report to be made to the Church Council at its November 2023 meeting; and**

**To refer the recommendations regarding revisions to the *Manual of Policies and Procedures for Management of the Rosters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* to the Task Force on Specialized Ministry and On-Leave-From-Call Status.**

#### **RECESS**

The Church Council recessed at 6:04 p.m. and reconvened at 6:15 p.m.

#### **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

(Agenda I.E.)

Ms. Lori S. Fedyk, treasurer of the ELCA, provided an update on financial results for fiscal year 2022 (FY22), noting that the audit was not complete but expressing confidence that there would not be significant changes. She began with an overview of unrestricted fund results for FY22. In this budget area, revenues exceeded expenses by about \$3.4 million due to below-budget expenses offsetting below-budget revenues. She called attention to the fact that balancing the budget required the release of only about \$800,000 from designated funds, though the Church Council had authorized the release of up to \$3.4 million. The treasurer provided a breakdown of sources of unrestricted revenue, highlighting the important role of Mission Support and expressing gratitude for the generosity of members of this church. Ms. Fedyk also provided a breakdown of unrestricted expenditures for FY22, noting that the Christian Community and Leadership home area represented the largest category of expenses and that within this home area the largest expenditures are for directors for evangelical mission (DEMs) and for Congregational Vitality grants. The Innovation home area expenditures were relatively small during FY22, but the plan is to grow this area in coming years. Discussion of unrestricted funds concluded with a summary of recent actions of the Budget and Finance Committee of the Church Council, calling attention to proposals coming before the council from the committee, including funding for the CRLC and designated funds to cover future budget shortfalls.

Turning to restricted funds, Ms. Fedyk reported that this was the largest revenue year ever for Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) with over \$24 million and also the largest combined revenue year for LDR and ELCA World Hunger, with combined revenues of \$46.8 million. During FY22, ELCA World Hunger spending was about \$23 million while LDR spending was about \$14.6 million. The largest source of LDR funding was donations in support of people impacted by the crisis in Eastern Europe, with \$12.5 million received and \$4.5 million distributed as part of a five-year distribution plan.

In response to a question, Ms. Fedyk clarified that the additional spending the Church Council is being asked to authorize at this meeting is being drawn from the FY22 budget surplus; it does not reflect a change to the FY23 budget.

#### **REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

(Agenda I.F.)

Ms. Cherrish Holland, chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, provided the report of the committee. In addition to forwarding motions to the Church Council, the committee also reviewed the FY23 budget and potential changes to investment policies of this church. She presented changes to the unrestricted budget for FY23, noting that there was no proposed change to the FY23 unrestricted spending authorization at this time.

#### **REVISIONS TO FY23 SPENDING AUTHORIZATIONS**

(Agenda I.F.1.)

Ms. Holland presented proposed changes to the ELCA World Hunger budget, noting that the fund balance for World Hunger allows for increased spending in FY23 without a corresponding increase in projected revenue.

Vice President Siddiqui invited discussion and, there being none, called for the vote.

#### **VOTED:**

**CC23.04.06**

**To increase the FY23 spending authorization in ELCA World Hunger by \$1,520,000, from \$25,250,000 to \$26,770,000.**

## REPORT OF THE FAITH, SOCIETY, AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

(Agenda I.G.)

The Rev. Tara R. Lynn, chair of the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee, provided background on the *en bloc* items brought before the Church Council by the committee regarding the timing of addressing social messages called for by the Churchwide Assembly, noting that the actions were recommended by the Rev. Roger A. Willer, director for theological ethics, and endorsed by the committee.

### SOCIAL MESSAGE ON CLIMATE CRISIS

(Agenda I.G.1.)

#### *Background*

In November 2021, the ELCA Church Council acted 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).” (Social message development typically happens within a year; this process was delayed due to staff capacity.)

A revised draft text was shared in February with the Conference of Bishops. The Theological and Ethical Concerns Committee of the Conference of Bishops gave the text a final close review. In early April, the Faith, Society, and Innovation Committee (FSIC) reviewed the final proposed text. This recommended social message represents the result of these careful efforts to hear public comment and work with reviewers, bishops, and FSIC to craft the final text for Church Council consideration.

The recommended proposed social message on “Earth’s Climate Crisis” and a FAQ sheet were distributed to Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting.

#### *Discussion*

Pastor Lynn introduced the motion and invited questions or discussion. There being none, Vice President Siddiqui called for the vote.

*[Two-Thirds Vote Required]*

*Yes- 39; No- 0*

**VOTED:**

**CC23.04.07 To adopt “Earth’s Climate Crisis” as a social message of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.**

### CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM *EN BLOC*

(Agenda I.H.)

Secretary Rothmeyer reported that no members had requested removal of items from *en bloc*.

### *EN BLOC* APPROVAL OF CERTAIN ITEMS

(Agenda I.I.)

The *en bloc* resolution includes agenda items that were judged to be non-controversial in nature and did not require plenary discussion and a separate vote. The documents *En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions, Responses to Synod Actions, and Responses to Previous Church Council Actions were distributed to Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting. As the items were voted on *en bloc*, there was no discussion. The vice president called for the vote.

**VOTED:**

**CC23.04.08 To take action *en bloc* on the items listed in *En Bloc* Items, Responses to Churchwide Assembly Actions, Responses to Synod Actions, and Responses to Previous Church Council Actions.**

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ACTIONS OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL

A. Support for the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church

VOTED: *EN BLOC*  
CC23.04.08.a To approve the establishment of a Church Council designated fund, entitled Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church, in the amount of \$300,000, to be used to cover the costs of meetings and other resources.

B. Budgeted Operations Support Designated Funds Adjustment

VOTED: *EN BLOC*  
CC23.04.08.b To add \$1.7 million to the Budgeted Operations Support designated fund to provide support for future budgetary needs.

C. Redesignation of Endowment Funds

From time to time, the intended distributions of an endowed gift are no longer possible as the ministry is no longer operational, the ELCA may no longer be in partnership with the intended organization, etc. If a change is necessary and the ELCA Church Council is not listed as the decision maker on originating documentation, staff's priority is to reach out to the donor and next of kin to see if they would agree to a proposed recommended successor beneficiary. Should staff not be able to connect with the donor and next of kin, the endowment agreement names either the ELCA Foundation Board of Trustees or the ELCA Church Council as the governing body with authority to make changes where the law allows. ELCA churchwide staff will provide a recommendation that best aligns with the original donor intent and secondarily, churchwide organizational priorities.

VOTED: *EN BLOC*  
CC23.04.08.c To approve the naming of successor beneficiaries of the distributions from the following endowment funds to the new areas as described below:

*E270660 - Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos Chicago, Ill.*

**Recommendation:** To name Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida en Argentina y Uruguay (IELU) as the successor beneficiary of the Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos Endowment Fund.

**Rationale:** This fund was established to support theological education at the Instituto Superior de Educación Teológica (ISEDET) in Argentina. After the closing of ISEDET, the Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida en Argentina y Uruguay (IELU) developed a training program under the leadership of Dr. Mercedes García Bachmann (OT Professor at ISEDET). These funds will continue to assist IELU in the formation of its leaders in collaboration with the Universidad Pedagógica, the recipient of ISEDET Theological Library, which IELU continues to access for the formation of its leaders. Leadership of the Service and Justice home area of the churchwide organization recommend that this endowment begin distributing to IELU given the fact that ISEDET is no longer in existence.

*E270634 – The Vincent L. and Annette L. Myers Memorial Endowment Fund*

**Recommendation:** The endowment names Stand With Africa as a beneficiary. The Stand With Africa initiative concluded in 2009. Staff kept the account open to receive additional gifts for a number of years (which is consistent with the churchwide organization existing practices because this church is still doing the work of seeking to eradicate hunger, address HIV/AIDS, and seek conflict resolution in Africa via ELCA World Hunger programming). It is time to close this initiative completely. At its March 17, 2023, meeting the ELCA Foundation Board of Trustees approved the recommended action to name ELCA World Hunger as the successor beneficiary of this endowment to support the ELCA's work in Africa. Staff propose the ELCA Church Council concur with this decision.

D. Authorization to Amend Repurpose of Endowment Funds

The churchwide organization is currently performing a review of all endowments benefiting the churchwide organization to ensure donor intent is still being met along with alignment to churchwide organizational priorities. To ensure alignment with donor intent and organizational spending, staff believe that the Budget and Finance Committee,

which also includes resource staff from development, is best suited to review these requests for changes in named beneficiaries on an ongoing basis.

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.d** To authorize the Budget and Finance Committee on behalf of the Church Council to approve recommendations from churchwide staff of successor beneficiaries for various endowments benefitting the churchwide organization, based on recommendations from the Resource Development Committee.

**E. Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies**

Additional paid holidays were added to Section 6.5. Updated proposed Personnel Policies reflecting the changes and revisions were distributed to Church Council members electronically prior to the meeting.

Employees of the churchwide organization of the ELCA are expected to read, understand, and comply with the Personnel Policies of the Churchwide Organization, which are adopted by the Church Council in accordance with 14.21.06.

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.e** To approve the amended Churchwide Organization Personnel Policies; and  
To authorize the Office of the Secretary to make any necessary editorial corrections for accuracy.

**F. Mission Investment Fund Supplemental Retirement Plan**

The Mission Investment Fund of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (MIF), a separately incorporated ministry of the ELCA, presented the MIF Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan (MIF SERP) for adoption by the ELCA Church Council at its November 2020 meeting. The MIF SERP provides tailored retirement distributions to key executives in addition to those provided by the standard retirement savings plan. Revisions are now needed to the plan. These revisions were prepared by outside counsel and reviewed by both the MIF corporate and compliance counsel and ELCA general counsel.

The revisions to the MIF SERP were distributed to council members electronically prior to the meeting.

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.f** To approve the revised Mission Investment Fund Supplemental Executive Retirement Plan.

**G. Assessment and Feasibility of Social Message Processes: Message on Epidemic of Gun-Related Trauma**

At this time, there are three pending requests for social messages, two of which come from the 2022 Churchwide Assembly. It is the recommendation of the director for theological ethics to move forward with authorizing the development of one of the social message requests and to delay action on the other two requests until after the 2023-24 social message development cycle.

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.g** To authorize the development of a social message on the epidemic of gun-related trauma in the U.S. with attention to the cluster of issues underlying it, such as national gun policy, personal security, growing community violence, public health, and social perplexity 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).

**H. Assessment and Feasibility of Social Message Processes: Message on Child Abuse and Revision of “Message on Homelessness”**

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.h** To maintain as pending the request for consideration of developing a social message on child abuse and child protection and the request of a substantive revision of the “Message on Homelessness” (1990) to be assessed by the Theological Discernment team in the Office of the

**Presiding Bishop for possible recommendation to the Church Council following the 2023-24 social message development cycle.**

**I. Approval of Minutes and Ratification of Actions of the Executive Committee of the Church Council**

The minutes of the Church Council meeting on Nov. 10-13, 2022, were provided to council members electronically on Church Council Microsoft Teams.

The minutes of the council's Executive Committee meetings on Nov. 10-13, 2022, Dec. 13, 2022, Jan. 17, 2023, Feb. 14, 2023, and March 23, 2023, were provided electronically to members on Church Council Teams. Minutes for the Feb. 21, 2023, and March 14, 2023, meetings held in executive session were added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.i**           **To approve the minutes of the Nov. 10-13, 2022, meeting of the Church Council; and  
To ratify actions of the council's Executive Committee as indicated in the minutes of the  
Nov. 10-13, 2022, Dec. 13, 2022, Jan. 17, 2023, Feb. 14, 2023, Feb. 21, 2023, March 14, 2023,  
and March 23, 2023, meetings.**

**J. Nominations and Elections**

The Church Council has the responsibility for electing people to fill terms on boards of Separately Incorporated Ministries (SIMs), 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.

Biographical information of nominees was provided to council members electronically prior to the meeting.

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.j.1**           **To elect to the advisory board of directors of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at  
Lenoir-Rhyne University to a term beginning June 1, 2023, and expiring May 31, 2027: The  
Rev. Philip A. Bouknight, Ms. Sandra R. Cline, the Rev. Rachel L. Connelly, Deacon Adrainne  
J. Gray, Mr. LaMont J. Johnson, and the Rev. Franklin Eric Wester.**

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.j.2**           **To elect to the board of directors of Luther Seminary to a term beginning July 1, 2023,  
and expiring June 30, 2027: Ms. Charlotte Haberaecker and Mr. Paul Siegele.**

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.j.3**           **To elect to the board of directors of Wartburg Theological Seminary to a term beginning  
April 20, 2023, and expiring Dec. 31, 2029: The Rev. Emily Harkins Norris.**

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.j.4**           **To elect to the advisory board of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary at California  
Lutheran University to a term beginning June 1, 2023, and expiring June 1, 2026: The Rev.  
Erik Utto-Galarneau.**

**RESPONSES TO CHURCHWIDE ASSEMBLY ACTIONS**

**K. Gun Violence Advocacy**

*Churchwide Assembly action [CA22.01.05e]*

To receive with gratitude the memorials from the Oregon Synod, Northwestern Ohio Synod, and Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod concerning gun violence;

To reaffirm this church's social teaching to address the broad issues of violence in society as called for in "Message on Community Violence" (1994);

To reaffirm this church's sense of urgency for advocacy for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (expired in 2004), including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013 and expanded background checks and other measures to increase gun safety;

To reaffirm that ELCA social policy does not reject gun ownership or the recreational activities associated with guns as morally wrong; and

To refer to the Witness in Society team in the Service and Justice home area for implementation and a report of the continuing advocacy efforts related to gun violence and universal background checks to the Church Council at its Spring 2023 meeting.

*Response from the Service and Justice Home Area (April 2023)*

The Service and Justice home area addresses gun violence in a manner consistent with ELCA social teaching through the education and advocacy work of the Witness in Society team in the Washington, D.C., office, state advocacy ministries, and through the Corporate Social Responsibility program.

Presiding Bishop Eaton works with the ELCA Public Messages Working Group to determine opportunities for timely communication with members of Congress regarding “this church’s sense of urgency for the renewal or replacement of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, including a definition of assault weapons comparable to that in the renewal attempt of the Assault Weapons Ban bill of 2013” and “this church’s long-standing support for managing gun purchases, such as background checks for all gun sales including private sales.” Messages of the presiding bishop are often released alongside an advocacy action alert to the ELCA advocacy network to encourage Lutherans and others to write their own letters to members of Congress. While difficult in a state of “divided government” our hope is that there will be political will to address these concerns before the end of the 2023–2025 legislative session.

On May 26, 2022, Presiding Bishop Eaton issued a pastoral message in support of the March for Our Lives march in Washington, D.C., and similar marches across the country, providing a teaching moment for the ELCA about responding to community violence.

On June 25, 2022, Congress passed and the U.S. President signed into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (P.L. 117-159), the first major gun reform legislation in nearly three decades. The new law makes changes to the acquisition of firearms. It includes funding directed to identifying and addressing mental health as well as school safety provisions. The ELCA supported this legislation. The National Association of Counties produced a blog that included a synopsis of provisions included in the new law.

Equally as important as this church’s federal advocacy efforts, the ELCA’s robust State Public Policy Network works on state-based legislative opportunities. The following are examples of those important efforts.

Pennsylvania

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-PA (LAMPa) will work to advance Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) legislation, also known as “red flag” laws, that allow family and police to petition judges to temporarily confiscate firearms from persons at risk of harming themselves or others. Such a person would get an expedited hearing before a judge and could have their firearms seized for three months to a year. The legislation would grant police a search warrant to take a person’s guns if there is probable cause to suspect that they have not been relinquished. LAMPa will also share within its network any federal advocacy alerts created by the Washington, D.C., advocacy office regarding gun violence.

Colorado

The Rocky Mountain Synod has partnered with The Episcopal Diocese of Colorado to support the March for Our Lives movement. Lutheran Advocacy has equipped advocates in ELCA congregations with theological and moral formation resources around gun violence prevention, particularly for the sake of engaging Colorado Faith Communities United to End Gun Violence. Advocacy staff continue to monitor the progress of various bills addressing gun violence, extreme risk protection policies, and other public safety-oriented issues in the Colorado General Assembly each year.

Washington

Faith Action Network in Washington state has been working in coalition on legislation to prevent gun violence for more than a decade. With the leadership of the statewide Alliance for Gun Responsibility, the Faith Action Network has been supporting the passage of bills through the state legislature. In 2022, there was a successful advocacy effort on bills restricting high-capacity magazines, banning weapons in public locations such as school board meetings and election-related facilities, and closing the ghost guns loophole. In the 2023 legislative session, the Faith Action Network is working on three bills that have some momentum:

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- prohibiting the sale, manufacture, transport, and import (but not possession) of assault weapons in Washington, while allowing reasonable exemptions for law enforcement and the military;
- requiring the firearms industry to establish, implement, and enforce reasonable controls; and
- requiring a comprehensive background check, safety training, and waiting period to purchase a firearm in the state of Washington.

With multi-faith communities, the Faith Action Network gathers in vigil when mass shootings occur, and pledges to work harder for comprehensive reforms at the state and national level.

**VOTED:**

*EN BLOC*

**CC23.04.08.k To receive the response on “Gun Violence Advocacy” from the Witness in Society team in the Service and Justice home area;  
To commend the continued advocacy efforts being implemented across this church related to gun violence and universal background checks; and  
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synods of this action.**

**L. Salary Equity in the ELCA**

*Churchwide Assembly Action [CA22.01.11]*

To receive with gratitude the memorial on “Salary Equity in the ELCA” from the Delaware-Maryland Synod;

To refer the memorial to the Church Council to consider commissioning a study of pay gaps for rostered ministers in the ELCA, particularly as they relate to women, people of color, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQIA+ community, and to consider using such a study not only for the purposes described in this memorial but also for the study of inequitable compensation of clergy of color previously called for by the Church Council (CC19.06.23.), for the Quality of Call Initiative for Women in Ministry, for the study of educational debt, and for such other purposes as might serve the needs of this church;

To encourage Portico Benefit Services and the Churchwide organization to make appropriate changes to their bylaws and data privacy policies in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of compensation patterns for rostered ministers;

To replace the “Current gross compensation” question from the Rostered Minister Profile with “Minimum Compensation for Next Call;”

To amend the “Current Health Benefits” question to read “Needed Health Benefits;” and

To remove the “Current Retirement Contribution” question from the Rostered Minister Profile.

*Executive Committee Action [EC22.09.23b4]*

To refer the 2022 Churchwide Assembly action on “Salary Equity in the ELCA” to the Office of the Secretary, in consultation with the Office of the Presiding Bishop and Christian Community and Leadership home area, for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from Christian Community and Leadership and the Office of the Secretary (November 2022)*

As the memorial from the Delaware-Maryland Synod pointed out, there is evidence that across society and in churches there exist pay gaps that affect equity for women, people of color, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, people who are marginalized or living in poverty, and the LGBTQIA+ community. One serious difficulty the ELCA faces in determining the extent to which inequity exists in compensation for rostered ministers, however, is that data on compensation has been extremely difficult to come by. The churchwide organization holds no data on compensation for rostered ministers. While Portico Benefit Services has salary and retirement contribution data for those rostered ministers who are sponsored in its plans, there are challenges that have hindered sharing of data, including the fact that Portico is bound by federal privacy laws as a fiduciary agent, as well as the reality that it has been bound by its own bylaws and policies that protect the privacy of plan participants. There is the additional complication that, while a large majority of rostered ministers are sponsored through Portico, it is likely that a number of those who serve smaller congregations or those with fewer financial resources are not sponsored, and thus would not be included in any information that Portico might be able to share. Furthermore, Portico does not maintain ethnicity data on its members, and the data in the churchwide database of rostered ministers is often incomplete concerning ethnicity. Neither Portico nor the churchwide organization maintain information on rostered ministers’ identification



as LGBTQIA+, gender is recorded primarily on the binary with the possibility of a rostered minister to report gender only as “other,” and no information on disabilities is tracked by the churchwide organization for ministers on the active rosters.

Conversation has begun about the study called for by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly and how the churchwide organization can most efficiently and effectively gather information that will serve the needs of the various studies already underway or about to get underway (as listed in the assembly’s action) that intersect with questions of compensation and equity. Adam DeHoek, ELCA congregation statistics analyst, will serve as a liaison to help ensure that there are efficiencies in data collection and reporting and that the various groups are sharing information across the studies. A timeline for the study will be reported at the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting.

Portico has asked for bylaw changes that the Church Council is being asked to approve at this meeting that would allow it to share compensation data for sponsored rostered ministers, which has been a challenge for such research in the past. The churchwide organization is working on data sharing policy revisions, and, working with Information Technology (IT), is completing a new quarterly report that will give Portico more of the information they need and that will allow for data matching to enable the churchwide organization to pull useful conclusions from compensation data provided by Portico.

The various changes to the Rostered Minister Profile (RMP) compensation questions that the assembly called for have been addressed and are currently in production for release in the very near future.

*Church Council action [CC22.11.34.v.]*

To receive the progress report on “Salary Equity in the ELCA” from the Office of the Secretary;

To request a report on the consideration of a study identified in the memorial by the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting; and

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

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (April 2023)*

In 2020, compensation information was collected from participants in the study on the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the ELCA which provided some data for a pay gap analysis. This fall, the ELCA Task Force to Study Educational Debt plans to collect updated compensation information as part of a quantitative survey of ELCA rostered ministers. Collecting the most relevant and actionable information will require the collaboration of several existing and forming task forces and study committees, including Urban Ministry, Justice for Women, Quality of Call Initiative, and the Candidacy Working Group. The hope is to realize efficiencies by gathering information in a single survey that will intersect with the work of these and other groups whose perspectives will inform the research questions about gaps in compensation and what information will be most beneficial to collect. Adam DeHoek, program director for Resourceful Servants and congregation statistics analyst, will coordinate this effort.

Enhanced data sharing with Portico Benefit Services from the churchwide organization has begun, with a preliminary quarterly report having been sent to Portico in recent days that will allow them to improve the accuracy of data matching and analysis and that sets the stage for enhanced mutual sharing of data in the future, subject still to any legal limitations within which Portico must operate.

All of the other items specified in the Churchwide Assembly action have been implemented.

**VOTED:**

*EN BLOC*

**CC23.04.08.1 To receive the response from the Office of the Secretary on “Salary Equity in the ELCA” to consider a study;  
To affirm the timeline and commissioning of a single survey about inequitable gaps in compensation for rostered ministers in the ELCA; and  
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

**RESPONSES TO SYNOD ACTIONS**

**M. LGBTQ+ Programming for Events**

*Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod (8G) [2022]*

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) adopted the social statement *Human Sexuality: A Gift and Trust* in 2009, providing guidance on how to live with our LGBTQ+ neighbors; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA adopted in 1995 a social policy resolution that “gay and lesbian people, as individuals created by God, are welcome to participate fully in the life of the congregations” of the ELCA; and

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WHEREAS, the gatherings of the church (including, but not limited to, the National Youth Gathering) often include pre-gathering events or in-gathering sessions focused on specific communities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod in assembly direct the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod Council to request the ELCA Church Council direct the appropriate churchwide offices to develop LGBTQ-focused and LGBTQ-specific programming for use as pre-gathering events and in-gathering sessions whenever the gatherings of the church include such sessions for other communities.

*Executive Committee Action [EC22.06.19c6]*

To refer the “LGBTQ+ Programming for Events” resolution from the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod to the Christian Community and Leadership home area for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from the Christian Community and Leadership home area (November 2022)*

Tammy Jones-West, interim program director for the ELCA Youth Gathering, has been apprised of this request for a pre-gathering of LGBTQIA2S youth. A response can be expected in the first quarter of 2023 for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering.

*Church Council action [CC22.11.34.aa]*

To receive the timeline on “LGBTQ+ Programming for Events” from the Christian Community and Leadership home area;

To request a response by the Spring 2023 Church Council meeting on LGBTQ-specific programming for pre-gathering events and in-gathering sessions for other communities; and

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

*Response from the Christian Community and Leadership home area (April 2023)*

The Youth Gathering Leadership Team (in consultation with some youth leaders in the LGBTQIA+ community) reviewed the memorial and decided on having space for LGBTQIA+ Youth and their allies during the Interactive Learning time of the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

A pre-gathering for LGBTQIA+ youth was considered but was not implemented because it would be too risky for youth who have not come out to everyone and would force a choice between MYLE, TABLE, and a third event that would have overlapping identities.

The Rostered Ministers Gathering has no capacity this year for any pre-event gatherings. Workshops with a LGBTQ-focus are welcome.

The Christian Community and Leadership home area will continue to review events going forward to meet the memorial's intent.

**VOTED:**

*EN BLOC*

**CC23.04.08.m To receive the response on “LGBTQ+ Programming for Events” from the Christian Community and Leadership home area and to encourage consideration of the development of LGBT-focused sessions for churchwide events as appropriate whenever the churchwide organization gatherings include such sessions for other communities; and  
To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

**N. Council of Nicea 1700th Anniversary**

*Slovak Zion Synod (7G) [2023]*

WHEREAS, the year 2025 will mark the 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council of the Church, commonly known as the Council of Nicea; and

WHEREAS, the sainted members of this council produced certain pronouncements of the faith that, being faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures and of Christian truth, became the rule and norm of the entire Christian Church, foremost among them the Nicene Creed; and

WHEREAS, the Lutheran Confessions declare that we “unanimously hold and teach, in accordance with the decree of the council of Nicea” (AC 1), and that we “pledge ourselves to [the ecumenical symbols]” which were “accepted as the unanimous, catholic, Christian faith and confessions of the orthodox and true church” (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Rule and Norm, 3), etc.; and

WHEREAS, the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America likewise states that this church accepts, teaches, and confesses the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the faith of this church (2.04); and

WHEREAS, we believe the teaching of the ancient church has much to teach us about the meaning of Holy Scripture and the apostolic faith, and aids the increase in the unity of the Church; and

WHEREAS, the Nicene Creed is the norm and rule of faith for the many Eastern, Oriental, and Western Christian Churches; and

WHEREAS, this anniversary will be the first such centenary of the council since the wider reception of the modern ecumenical movement that has occurred in the last century; and

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has committed to “manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives” (4.02.f) and “fostering Christian unity by participating in ecumenical activities, contributing its witness and work and cooperating with other churches which confess God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (4.03.e); therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Slovak Zion Synod Assembly memorialize the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to acknowledge and celebrate this anniversary with thanksgiving to Almighty God who gives the Church its unity; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Synod Council communicate to the Church Council the request that, in the interim, the Office of the Presiding Bishop arrange for the development of resources to assist congregations and synods in observing this anniversary, especially in ecumenical settings, and encourage study of the Nicene Creed and canons as an opportunity for deepening Lutheran identity and as an impetus to nourish ecumenical relationships between churches and congregations.

*(Note: Discussion regarding this resolution included a willingness and consensus in the Slovak Zion Synod to facilitate the compilation of such a resource, in consultation with the presiding bishop’s office, to be made available to the whole church. Discussion also recognized a desire that full-communion partner churches and ELCA companion churches be made aware of these efforts and be invited to do similar work.)*

*Executive Committee action [EC23.02.05]*

To refer the “Council of Nicaea 1700th Anniversary” resolution from the Slovak Zion Synod to the Office of the Presiding Bishop for a report or timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (April 2023)*

This resolution is received by the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations team in the Office of the Presiding Bishop (OPB) with gratitude to the Slovak Zion Synod for its faithful recognition of this historic and forward-looking opportunity to reaffirm this church’s Lutheran self-understanding and ecumenical commitments.

The intention of the OPB is to lift up and invite the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to connect with the global initiatives being planned by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Both bodies are in the process of developing resources (for local and global contexts), scholarship (books and articles), events (online and in person), and initiatives through which the member churches will engage together. In due time, staff will be able to roll out a clear plan for how the ELCA might utilize these compiled resources in this church’s context and with ecumenical partners. Proceeding in this way allows for the ELCA to embody the ecumenical commitments of Christians going back to the ancient ecumenical councils and lived out today through the one ecumenical movement.

The WCC has publicly posted its initial planning toward “a year of reflection and renewal,” which will include a worldwide Faith & Order conference, worship resources, study group resources, a study program, public webinars, books, creative opportunities for online and local engagement, and links with other commemorations. The LWF is currently working with its Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) partners, which includes the Catholics, but also the three global communions that affirmed the JDDJ in 2017: Methodist, Anglican, and Reformed – as well as Orthodox partners, on common ecumenical commemorations that will include resources for member churches and local engagement.

As staff awaits these developments from the WCC and LWF and engages in further conversation with this church’s ecumenical partners in the United States and North America, the offer of the Slovak Zion Synod to contribute to the ELCA’s engagement is noted. The initiators of the resolution are welcome to connect directly with Kathryn M. Lohre, executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations and theological discernment in the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

**VOTED:**

*EN BLOC*

**CC23.04.08.n** To receive the response on “Council of Nicaea 1700th Anniversary” resolution from the Office of the Presiding Bishop;

To commend the Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations team in its efforts to lift up and engage ELCA congregations and synods in observing this anniversary by distributing and contextualizing resources from the World Council of Churches and The Lutheran World Federation as encouragement to study the Nicene Creed and canons, and as an opportunity for deepening Lutheran identity and ecumenical witness;

To welcome the Slovak Zion Synod to connect with Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations in the Office of the Presiding Bishop; and

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

**O. LGBTQIA+ Presence among ELCA Governing Bodies**

*Upstate New York Synod (7D) [2022]*

RESOLVED, that the Upstate New York Synod Council respectfully requests that the Church Council of the ELCA adopt a continuing resolution setting a goal of having an intentional and dedicated LGBTQIA+ presence among the voting members of the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, and churchwide boards and committees.

*Executive Committee action [EC22.12.34b]*

To refer the “LGBTQIA+ Presence among ELCA Governing Bodies” resolution from the Upstate New York Synod to the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (April 2023)*

The Office of the Secretary is in ongoing conversation with colleagues in Theological Discernment concerning this request and will present an update to the Church Council at the November 2023 meeting.

**VOTED:**

*EN BLOC*

**CC23.04.08.o** To receive the timeline on “LGBTQIA+ Presence among ELCA Governing Bodies” resolution from the Office of the Secretary and to anticipate a response at the November 2023 Church Council meeting; and

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

**P. Amend Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21.**

*Saint Paul Area Synod (3H) [2023]*

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Area Synod has need to appoint interim ministers of Word and Service to fill congregational ministry vacancies where the particular gifts of a minister of Word and Service are appropriate and needed; and

WHEREAS, Continuing Resolution 7.44.A19.b. 1.5 grants authority to synod councils to appoint interim ministers of Word and Sacrament; and

WHEREAS, Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21. does not currently grant authority to synod councils to appoint interim ministers of Word and Service; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Area Synod deeply appreciates and learns from the gifts and talents of ministers of Word and Service; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Area Synod Council requests that the Church Council amend Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21. by inserting the following into b. Table of Sources of Calls for Ministers of Word and Service:

1.5 Interim deacon Synod Council

*Executive Committee action [EC23.03.10]*

To refer the “Amend Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21.” resolution from the Saint Paul Area Synod to the Office of the Secretary for a report or for a timeline on when this will receive further attention; and

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

*Response from the Office of the Secretary (April 2023)*

The Office of the Secretary will bring this question of amending continuing resolution 7.74.A21. before the Roster Committee and the Leadership Committee of the Conference of Bishops for discernment. As the amendment might

require a bylaw change, a report and recommendations will be provided to the Church Council at the November 2024 meeting.

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.p**        **To receive the timeline on “Amend Continuing Resolution 7.74.A21.” resolution from the Office of the Secretary and to anticipate a response at the November 2024 Church Council meeting; and**  
                         **To request that the secretary of this church inform the synod of this action.**

#### RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS CHURCH COUNCIL ACTION

##### **Q. Review of ELCA Response Team**

*Church Council action [CC22.06.20]*

....

To review the role and membership of the ELCA Response Team.

*Response from the Office of the Presiding Bishop (April 2023)*

The Administrative Team reviewed the role and current membership of the ELCA Response Team.

The team’s purpose is as follows:

- 1) Maintain integrity and effectiveness of ELCA programs;
- 2) Minimize negative publicity and, whenever possible, use the situation to the best public relations advantage for the ELCA;
- 3) Ensure the flow of accurate and helpful information within and outside the ELCA; and
- 4) Provide support and guidance to synod staff when a synod is managing a crisis.

These people comprise the core membership of the ELCA Response Team:

- Executive, Governance (co-convener)
- Senior Director, Strategic Communications (co-convener)
- General Counsel
- Executive, Synod Relations

Additional people are included in the team as needed to respond to a crisis. The team’s work is to discuss and determine a strategy for an ELCA response that has looked at the issue from a variety of perspectives and to inform the audience(s) who need to know.

Following the review of the role and membership of the ELCA Response Team, the Administrative Team decided not to make any changes.

**VOTED:** *EN BLOC*  
**CC23.04.08.q**        **To receive the report from the Office of the Presiding Bishop and affirm the decision of the Administrative Team of the churchwide organization concerning the review of the ELCA Response Team.**

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#### **NEW BUSINESS**

(Agenda I.J.)

The Rev. Joanne E. Engquist offered a motion.

**Moved;**

**Seconded:**        To establish that the Executive Committee of the ELCA Church Council determine a process by which Council members on the Service and Justice Committee will participate in developing the position description for the Executive Director of Service and Justice position, collaborating in the search and interview process for the successor to the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla.

Pastor Engquist explained her reasons for the motion, including the importance of the position and the expressed desire of some members of Church Council to be more engaged in processes at the churchwide organization. Some

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council members spoke in support of the motion, and others spoke in opposition. Secretary Rothmeyer provided context on constitutional language adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly that gives the presiding bishop the authority to appoint executive directors of the churchwide organization.

**Moved;**

**Seconded;**

*Yes-9; No-27*

**Defeated:**

To establish that the Executive Committee of the ELCA Church Council determine a process by which Council members on the Service and Justice Committee will participate in developing the position description for the Executive Director of Service and Justice position, collaborating in the search and interview process for the successor to the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

(Agenda I.K.)

The Church Council entered into executive session at 7:24 p.m. for a legal briefing. Minutes for meetings held in executive session are added to the protocol file in the Office of the Secretary.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT**

(Agenda I.L.)

The 114th meeting of the Church Council of the ELCA meeting electronically returned to open session at 7:45 p.m. and adjourned at 7:48 p.m. on April 20, 2023, following a closing prayer offered by Presiding Bishop Eaton.